



ARC•PEACE

Activity Plan 2012-2014

Adopted by the Board in June 2012 through a decision by email, following the decision of the General Assembly meeting on the 12th of April 2012 in Copenhagen.

1. Introduction

Our organisation has at present eight registered member organisations and about 65 individual members. We can assume that a great number of colleagues are unaware that ARC•PEACE exists, while others, who know about our network, still have no interest in joining. There is however a big potential to recruit members and sympathisers.

ARC•PEACE has reached its 25th anniversary thanks to volunteers who worked hard from the moment it was decided that our Secretariat be established in Stockholm, in July 1987. During recent years our Secretariat continued its work counting with membership fees and other few contributions as the only incomes.

Structure of ARC•PEACE

General Assembly. According to the Charter the General Assembly (GA) is the highest decision-making body of ARC•PEACE. Of the 17 GA meetings arranged since 1987 all have taken place in Europe or North America, except the ones in Rio Hondo, Argentina 1991, Istanbul 1996 and Lima 1997. A wider rotation of venues is desirable. It is also vital that all members can participate. For this to happen we need funds for travel costs and accommodation.

Most often the meetings have been combined with other events of professional interest such as the UIA Congress, the Habitat/World Urban Forum, other UN conferences or meetings of Architecture Sans Frontières (ASF-Int). The reason for this is both to allow participants to benefit from more than one event during the same week and to exchange views with colleagues of the other events.

The Board is the highest steering body between GA meetings. At present it has 20 members, which is the maximum allowed. *The Executive Committee* is the acting executive instrument of the Board. It consists of two co-chairs, one secretary and one treasurer. The Board and the ExCom take decisions by email.

Representation in United Nations. Since 1992 ARC•PEACE has consultative status with ECOSOC of the UN. This provides good opportunities to make our voice heard and to collaborate with other Non-Government Organisations with interests similar to ours.

Means of communications

In order to achieve its aims ARC•PEACE has the following instruments for external and internal communication at its disposal: a website, a newsletter, a Yahoo discussion list, a membership list, a brochure and other publications. The Secretary regularly sends out information to members (103 email addresses as per April 2012). Now and then statements are made on current issues in line with the ARC•PEACE Charter. Such statements often get a limited circulation.

These communication instruments have improved substantially in the recent years but much can be done to develop them.

2. Challenges

For higher efficiency in operational work and to create opportunities for growth our organisation faces a number of problems. The main challenges are described below.

The Board has a fairly balanced composition with regard to geographical distribution, gender and age, but more can be done to promote the participation of women and young professionals. Members in all continents should be recruited.

The Board has a challenge to be more active in taking and implementing decisions. The work load is uneven between Board members. Too much is dependent on the Secretary. Decisions are taken by email, but not all Board members take time to reply. There is no funding for travel costs for members of the Board or the ExCom to meet physically.

UN representation. There is no funding of the UN representative. This means that our representative must work entirely voluntarily and live in or near New York. In the past too little dialogue has taken place between the UN representative and members. This weakness is to be adjusted by developing procedures for better communication.

Human and financial resources. Whereas voluntary work is a most valuable resource, there is an undeniable relationship between current fragility of our network and the very modest financial resources we manage to create. Being a member of ARC●PEACE is a privilege that has to be accompanied by a commitment such as due payment of membership fees and donations. To be a member also means that we live and communicate socially responsible ethics and make commitments in our professions when building resilient futures.

Status quo versus growth. 20 years ago ARC●PEACE consisted of many big architect organisations. In the 1990s these withdrew their support but our network nevertheless did fairly well because special ARC●PEACE groups were formed. Later several of these stagnated or dissolved themselves. Recently many individual persons have become members and two new organisations have joined ARC●PEACE. To enjoy the standards we deserve, and to reach higher, we must work shoulder to shoulder to make ARC●PEACE grow. This is only possible when personal commitment is combined with healthy financial support.

Lack of a formal secretariat. If we aim at growing then we have to act in terms of organising a proper structure for the Secretariat with financial support. This is becoming the biggest challenge in view that current veteran Secretary plans to retire after 25 years of voluntary work.

Communication Challenges. During the last years the newsletter has been issued 3-4 times a year. It aims to satisfy the needs of members at the same time as it strives to be of interest to the general members of our professions. However, it has quite limited circulation. The Yahoo discussion list is an important facility but it is rather seldom used. Another question has been how ARC●PEACE can improve its media contacts. When a newsletter or a political statement has been produced it is sent out with an appeal that members shall forward it to relevant bodies, but this probably does not happen in practice. Reaching a wider audience is one of most needed areas for our aspirations to grow.

3. Activity Plan

Membership, internal communication and fund-raising

Support to organisations and individuals. Some member organisations of ARC●PEACE are formally registered in their respective countries, while others are informally run. Colleagues wanting to found new organisations need guidance and support from existing members. It is equally important to recruit both organisations and individuals into membership. The ExCom and Board ought to assist individual members to form groups and groups to become formal organisations.

Recruitment of students. ARC●PEACE has an unbalanced age structure, with many old and middle aged members. Recently fruitful attempts have been made to recruit students. These ambitions ought to be strengthened during the coming period. The statement on education of architects and planners, adopted by the Copenhagen meeting constitutes a good basis for reaching out to schools, student bodies and individual students. Design and planning competitions can very well be included as a convenient means to promote ARC●PEACE vision and mission.

Internal communications. We ought to explore the possibilities to use Skype and other types of teleconferences, and also to investigate the benefits of having an ARC●PEACE portal. Through such a portal we can invite UN organisations to share our work and to make our work more visible.

The Yahoo list aims to facilitate discussions and dissemination of information. It is open to both members and sympathisers. In May 2012 it comprised 158 names. Guruprasad Rane has taken over as an administrator together with Dick Urban Vestbro. All member organisations are requested to send email addresses of their members to be included in the list. The list should be used to discuss

issues of importance for the development of our organisation, including such where we have different opinions. All subscribers should feel free to contribute to the discussion. Much can be done to get more subscribers and to make discussions more intensive. The list should continue to be open to non-members and ought to be used to make people join ARC●PEACE.

Fund-raising. Our institutional growth must be the outcome of members faithfully following a viable action plan, which in turn is supported by a budgeting that wisely allocates financial resources. In accordance with group discussion at the GA meeting 2012 new approach to recruiting of members and procurement of funds is recommended. A fundraising committee was constituted. It consists of Oscar Margenet Nadal, Bijay Misra, Marilú Sánchez and Graeme Bristol (+ Paul Broches adjuncted) to look into the following possibilities:

- To review the membership fee structure and establish a PayPal function on the website for smooth payment of fees on a regular basis, while attracting others to join in; all to enjoy an active and continuous participation.
- To work out a Sponsor policy to be used to get sponsors and individual donations. For this purpose the sponsor policy of ASF-Int can be used as a starting point.
- To produce a series of attractive institutional brochures, CDs and videos in parallel with our renewed website, highlighting the benefits of being members of ARC●PEACE.
- To encourage members who are hired or pro bono in projects run by others to raise and donate symbolic fees to ARC●PEACE.
- To make good use of our consultative status with ECOSOC and partner with other NGOs which need architectural design and planning consultancy to implement their projects.
- To approach the UN Habitat in order for ARC●PEACE to be eligible for running capacity building training courses funded by UN, for example in enabling strategies in housing, empowerment of women and land for public housing for the poor.
- To organise events charging an admission fee (like the one organised by ARC●PEACE Sudan in 2009 when Dick Urban Vestbro was invited, and the one proposed for November 2012).
- To invite public administration officials, international foundations and businessmen to sponsor ARC●PEACE projects and events.

Promotion materials and website.

So far ARC●PEACE has not developed routines for press releases or media contacts in general. Social media have not been used much. There is a need to strengthen the means of communications by making the existing ones more user-friendly and by exploring new ones. The experience of the young generation should be used. It is proposed that a page is opened on Facebook and that communication channels of sister organisations are used more.

Website. In an age when communication technology is a must we need an active and user-friendly website. This is the most important instrument to make ARC●PEACE visible to the world. During the last year it has been extended and improved substantially. There are many ways to improve our website to attract not only members but also other colleagues and acquainted people. Members should be asked to send material for publication in the website and the ExCom should decide which material to publish. Video spots as well as PowerPoint presentations are recommended for publication. There shall be links to members interacting via Facebook, Twitter and Youtube. All of them are free of charge.

Brochure. The existing brochure has not been updated for a long time and should be replaced by a more professionally made product, to be used both for fund-raising purposes, for the use by members and for website visitors. The fund-raising committee is in charge of producing the first issue of the brochure. It ought to be used during important events like the next *World Urban Forum* to be held in Naples in September 2 to 6, 2012 and *Our Common Action* conference in the Balearic Islands, Spain November 1 to 4, 2012.

Newsletter. Readership is to be composed not only of members but also of people wanting to know about our vision and mission. The ExCom is to suggest names in consultation with other members in order to identify a group to undertake the job of procuring material. The ExCom is also to explore among members who could function as an editor of a particular newsletter, and who could do the

graphic design. In that way we end up having a most representative newsletter and all will feel more identified with it. If all members participate, we may have six issues in a year (instead of three or four). Many who are afraid of writing could feel personal satisfaction when contributing to the NL. Contributors to the newsletter should expand and efforts should be made to increase circulation.

Other publications. Publications in the name of ARC●PEACE have been important to promote ourselves as a vital forum of pertinent professional and political debate. So far we have published ten books and reports of significant value, four of which have been translated into Arabic. The old hard copy reports have been converted into pdf format and can be downloaded from the website. It is estimated that few people discover the publications. Therefore efforts should be made to market the books and reports. We should trace existing interesting publications that can be issued in the name of ARC●PEACE and stimulate the production of new ones.

Statements production. Hitherto the statements adopted by ARC●PEACE have been few and not widely circulated. To produce and publish statements on current issues in line with the ARC●PEACE mission is quite appropriate for our network, considering the fact that we have a clear platform on which statements can be based. The ExCom should be responsible to suggest to the Board for acceptance pertinent issues from time to time. Members should be encouraged to review existing statements and to take initiative for new ones. The statements should be translated into other languages than English and sent to professional and other journals.

Media contacts and press releases. Our network has sent out press releases only very few times in its 25 years of existence due to the fact that there were no effective contacts with media. The Board should appoint a couple of persons in charge of media contacts. This group should establish a list of addresses to relevant journals. Members should be asked to supply addresses of journals in their respective countries.

Meetings, UN representation and cooperation

Location of next General Assembly meeting. It is proposed that the next GA be held 2014 in India and that the locations for this important gathering shall be rotated more evenly across continents in the future. The meeting is to be further developed by the ExCom before making a final Board decision. We ought to use the opportunity to make ARC●PEACE known in India and other Asian countries.

Official languages. To reach a wider audience it is desirable to publish ARC●PEACE materials in languages other than English. This has already been done to some extent. The Charter is available in Arabic, Spanish, Japanese and French, and some newsletters have been translated into Arabic and Spanish. In the coming period the Charter should be translated into Russian and Polish, and the Mission statement should also be translated, while new statements should be translated at least into Spanish and Arabic. At our meetings attempts should be made to arrange “whispering interpretation” for those participants who do not speak English. Later – when resources allow – professional interpretation should be introduced.

UN representation. It is important to enlighten all members about the benefits of having an active representative in the UN while members should actively support and share their experience with him. ARC●PEACE participation in UN related conferences should be well planned and used to spread the message of our causes at the same time as we use the events to recruit new members. The World Urban Forum in Naples in September 2012 is the first opportunity to be used.

Development and other projects. Some member organisations continuously run projects. Also individuals are involved in projects such as school and orphanage constructions, use of local building materials, conversion of old buildings for communal purposes and rehabilitation projects. Some of these projects have been published in the newsletter while others were submitted to the portfolio of ASF-Int. There is a need for rules about how to approve projects as ARC●PEACE projects. The fund-raising committee is to include guidelines for approval of projects.

Cooperation with other organisations. Originally ARC●PEACE consisted of many official national associations of architects and had good contacts with the International Union of Architects (UIA). For various reasons these links could not be sustained. In the last decade and a half, ARC●PEACE has been working closely with international organizations, especially with ASF Int. It should be valuable to re-establish contacts with UIA and others to increase ARC●PEACE’s visibility and to

explore new venues for cooperation. ARC●PEACE is one of the biggest members of ASF-Int and has contributed substantially to build this network. This cooperation is important for the future of ARC●PEACE. Since ASF-Int does not have individual membership there is a potential for ARC●PEACE to welcome interested individuals. There is a general consensus about joining a large number of representatives from ARC●PEACE and ASF-Int to spend a few days together at combined GA meetings. Getting to know each other and exchanging professional experiences are essentials for strengthening organisational links.

In the last decade contacts have been established with partners in the Human Settlements Committee related to ECOSOC. These contacts should be developed and common actions be explored. Members of ARC●PEACE are also connected to other organisations which eventually would accept partnering with ARC●PEACE. One good opportunity for partnering is “*Our Common Action*” (*Let’s talk less and cooperate more! It’s time for real Sustainability*) an international Conference and Market Place to take place in the Balearic Islands, Spain , in celebration of the 25th Anniversary of Our Common Future, November 1 to 4, 2012 with ARC●PEACE as one of the sponsors.

In our contacts with other organisations the expertise of ARC●PEACE members ought to be advertised. This can be done through the exchange of work experiences and through contacts with universities. A special budget for this kind of programs should be established.

Advocacy role in human rights. Following the admission of CAHR (Centre for Architecture and Human Rights) as a new organisation member, and having shared additional information on the involvement of other members of ARC●PEACE in activities for the defence of human rights, it is proposed that ARC●PEACE shall take an advocacy role with Human Rights.

Archives. ARC●PEACE has a rich archive of minutes, reports from meetings, newsletters, correspondence and many other documents. The material carefully preserved over years by Dick Urban Vestbro is now taking considerable space in his office. There is a need for an alternative place where the archive will be kept at least from the time of the GA meeting 2014. Most of the documents are available in digital form, and most of them can be downloaded from the website.