

EDITORIAL

This issue continues to establish the high-quality of the ISVS e-journal and its standing as one of the well-represented research publications dealing with the built environments with a focus on the vernacular settlements. The fact that it has moved from four issues per year to twelve issues per year amply demonstrates this. Indeed, it has been now well established that it is able to sustain this frequency without any doubt. The difficulty however is getting the reviewed papers revised well and on time, which hopefully, with the support of all the authors, we will be able to accomplish continuously. It is accepted that the review process is rigorous and the demands made by the reviews take time and effort to produce revisions. However, they truly help in developing the papers and bring them up to the standards expected. We appreciate and value the tremendous efforts being made by the authors and their cooperation even in the midst of severe criticisms made often on the first versions of the submissions in the reviews.

In this issue, the papers numerously examine the built-environmental issues in England, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Vietnam, Malaysia and Kazakhstan. New countries are always added, like the Bahraini and Vietnamese contributions in this issue. In fact, there are new and interesting developments too. Now, the authors come not only from the field of architecture, but from project management, philosophy, law, public administration and literature. Nevertheless, they all deal with the aspects of the built-environments and demonstrate that the issues of our surroundings are complex and need to be examined through multiple lenses.

Issues are numerous and range from the vernacular as well as the issues of philosophies such as Confucianism and patriotism, law and community wisdom as well as transport and developments of business centers. In more specific terms, the papers in this issue have focused on the following.

Huda Al Madhoub critically examines the issue of managing large infrastructure projects and argues that they are always a complex because they change rapidly. Being nonlinear, unpredictable interconnected, interdependent, and multilateral, they affect any planned and systematic completion. She points out that the popular project management techniques often depend on hierarchical structures and strict professional boundaries, to manage such projects. She also points out that they often fail to take advantage of the 'temporary' systems that always exist and emerge to respond to increasing complexities. Hence, she asks the question if there is a possibility of employing what she calls "peoples' processes" and informal networks to facilitate their management. This is in a way and vernacular trait. She demonstrates the viability of this idea through a case study in England.

B. Vedhajanani and Lilly Rose Amirtham examine the links between culture, social benefits and courtyards with a focused study of the traditional and the transformed courtyard houses of Kumbakonam, in Tamil Nadu, India. Having established the nature of these relationships, they point out that understanding the links between these can aid designers and planners in retaining the essence of such courtyards in modern buildings.

Weihan Rong and Azizi Bahauddin also look at courtyards but from a different perspective. They examine the vernacular courtyard houses known as Hutongs, under the influence of Confucianism: Their focus is on identity and values as seen in the Hutongs in Linqing, China, to show that the culture of Confucianism contributes to the construction of a harmonious sense of place and has a positive impact on the residents' lives, urban development, spatial behaviour and spirituality. Moreover, they argue that the cultural values and the potentials of courtyards and hutongs can be recognized as essential in the pursuit of sustainable development of the cities in China.

Santoni, Uras Siahaan and Rumiati Rosaline Tobing examine a more contemporary issue. Conducting an evaluation of the Marunda Flats in Jakarta, Indonesia, they ascertain how the relocations of illegal urban settlements fulfil human needs through physical order and developments. For this purpose, they employ Maslow's theory of the hierarchy of needs. They point out that although many of the aspirations have been met, there is a need to deal with the crowded habitations for which no solution has been found at the Marunda Flats.

Faizal Baharuddin, Afifah Harisah, Abdul Mufti Radja and Mohammad Mochsen Sir take us back to the vernacular settlements. They look at how the communal spaces are formed in the

vernacular settlements through the examination of a unique phenomenon known as the Bawo Phenomenon at the Lamin House in Kalimantan, Indonesia.

Naniek Widayati Priyomarsono on the other hand examine the approaches to the revitalization of areas with historical and cultural values, at the Baluwerti Royal Surakarta Palace, Surakarta, Indonesia. He groups the regions of the palace as macro, mezzo and micro as a framework to produce guidelines for such revitalizations.

Hafia Salim Abdulkareem and Dheah Hameed Basee are interested in transforming the Iraqi cities to be more sustainable. For this purpose, they look at the problems and potentials of the Iraqi cities and summarizes what kind of actions, a road map and a framework should be devised to achieve a transition towards smart sustainable Iraqi cities.

Trang Do and Huy Quang Ngo presents to us how the Vietnamese nation has survived the onslaught of invasions and wars and point out that it is all because of the national philosophy of Vietnam. Examining Patriotism, the philosophical foundation of the Vietnamese people, she shows how it manifests in the rural villages there.

Mohammed Kasid Al- Swaiedi and Shatha Abbas Hasan take us back to Iraq. They examine the factors weakening the recreational activities of the third spaces particularly in the case of the Tigris River Bank in Iraq. The research discovers that there are four factors that contribute to the lack of recreational activities on the river bank. They are: the absence of functions such as restaurants and cafes, safety and security, accessibility and the land use along the circumference of the river bank.

Satyanshu Kumar, Abhiney Gupta, Navin Gupta, Abhimanyu Sharma and Sourojee Dutta look at the multi-hazard vulnerability of the vernacular houses of Supaul, Bihar, India. They point out that in the absence of building bye-laws and guidelines, the houses have been built without any understanding of their exposure to the hazards. They thus propose how to reduce vulnerability against multi hazards in the region and recommend the procedures and criteria that can be adopted.

In contrast, Hermin Werdiningsih, Ni Kadek Ayu Yulita, Indriasjario, Arnis Rochma Harani have conducted an evaluation of the student center building at the Diponegoro University, Semarang, Indonesia. They argue that this will enable the production of strategies to improve the quality of educational environments.

Raman Kant & Harshit Sosan Lakra look at vernacular construction techniques of the Kangra Region of Himachal Pradesh, India. They have analyzed two distinct house types to determine their total embodied energy: a traditional vernacular house constructed using dry stone and a modern contemporary house. They point out that the total energy usage of the traditional house was just 2% of the energy consumption of the modern house making it a more environmentally friendly option.

Parul Kiri Roy, P.S.N. Rao and Manoj Mathur examine taxonomy, housing preferences and transformations of the rural dwellings in India. They look at the shift in relation to the *kacchā* translated as raw or unbaked, untenable, unrefined and *pakkā* translated as cooked, solid or concrete, refined materials. They conclude that perceptions of poverty, intensive maintenance, lack of development but thermal comfort being associated with *kacchā*, while linkages of durability, social alleviation, being maintenance-free and progressive or modern associated with *pakkā*.

Mira Maulsharif, Bibigul Kilyshbayeva, Aigul Beimisheva, and Mariya Aznabakiyeva take us to Kazakhstan. They look at the perceptions of urban logistics by the residents of cities there by focusing on Almaty, a city in Kazakhstan. They reveal the inefficient approaches to city planning, economics, and infrastructure development in Kazakhstan. They argues that instead, it should be based on sustainable development concepts.

Tatyana Gvozdikova and Dina Amandykova on the other hand are concerned about the inclusive education in Kazakhstan. They argue that appropriate environmental and architectural conditions could promote such education there.

Yoserwan examines the legal aspects of vernacular settlements in Indonesia. This is undeniably a very rare perspective. He examines how local Wisdom can be employed in the supervision of village fund management as a corruption prevention effort in Nagari Governments in West Sumatra, Indonesia. A very valuable contribution indeed.

Rany Syafrina, Sekolah Tinggi Bahasa Asing H, Agus Salim, and Bukittingi also bring us a rare perspective of the communities in Indonesia. They show the impact of fanfiction on youth communities in Indonesia, by examining published literature.

IF Bambang Sulistyono, Andrik Purwasito, and Nadia Sigi Prameswari look at religious and cultural perspectives of interiors. They study the Gunungan Wayang Wahyu in the Catholic Church of Surakarta, Java, Indonesia, and provide an insight into the symbolic meaning of Wayang Wahyu in a Catholic church.

Turar Uzakbayev, Lyazzat Nurkusheva, Galina Iskhojanova, Zhanerke Imanbayeva and Karina Chiknoverova are interested in providing guidelines and ideas for developing business centres in Kazakhstan. In this regard, they look at evolutionary and integrated features for designing Business Centers there.

Finally, Taiba Mohammed Mahdi & Mustafa Abdul Jalil Ibrahim offer lessons from an exercise for Tikrit City, Iraq, which examines how to implement intelligent and smart transportation systems in cities in Iraq.

Overall, this issue of the ISVS e-journal—as it always is—has been a collection of very meaningful studies into the vernacular settlements as well as the human settlements in general bringing out insights hitherto not available. We are most encouraged by their contributions; indeed, we are also thankful to all our authors for their great contributions.

Dr. Ranjith Dayaratne
Editor-in-Chief

Asian School of Architecture, Melbourne, Australia.