

Editorial

By now, ISVS has come a long way from its modest beginnings in 1999 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Over the eleven years, five conferences have been held, first three circulating around Indonesia itself, and subsequently moving into India and Sri Lanka. Many dedicated participants have been coming together every two years, in search for, and wanting to share their passion for the vernacular settlements. Many others have joined in over the years too, and I have been lucky to have joined in from the very beginning to learn from them. A movement had begun when it was first launched, conceptualized by the team led by Prof. Gunawan Djahjono of University of Indonesia, although perhaps unknowing what its potentials were, and how it would evolve. Undeniably, the movement really took off when Prof. Miki Desai joined us in Indonesia, and proposed the challenging task of setting up a secretariat which we achieved in Ahmadabad, India in 2008. Had it not been for Prof. Pratyush Shanker, who shouldered the great responsibility of being the Secretary however, perhaps its current presence and visibility would not have been possible. Today, the ISVS-6 is being planned in North Cyprus, and the signs are that this movement will reach greater heights in Cyprus than where we have recently been to. Prof. Hifsiye Pulhan from North Cyprus has made it her sacred duty to plan the ISVS-6 meticulously with constant contact with the secretariat and the advisors; the ISVS community can be assured that it is in safe hands.

One of the obvious objectives of the ISVS has been to share our passion for the vernacular settlements which provide places for habitations for the vast majority of the people on the planet, and to generate and share knowledge on the richness and relevance of these for the modern world. Those of us flocking around the ISVS believe that the traditions and the vernacular are as much as, if not more important to the designed settlements, from where the greater lessons for the modern human civilizations could be delineated. It is with the intention of generating such an understanding that the ISVS embarked upon the e-journal in 2010.

This publication shows the wide variety of issues the ISVS community is focusing attention to and the multitude of approaches they are taking. Noteworthy is the article of Peter Kellett, whose call for the recognition of contemporary vernacular through the informal settlements has opened up new vistas of understanding the vernacular. In fact, the ISVS-6 will elaborate on this theme, and this article will provide the necessary impetus for possible contributions to the ISVS-6. Somasiri Devendra brings in a new perspective when he shows us how the *Oru* culture of Sri Lanka has been a distinct and unique component of Sri Lanka's vernacular coastal settlements. He raises an interesting question through the mapping of changes to the *Oru* and asks; when does vernacular cease to be vernacular? Miguel Costa and Desidério Batista takes up the issue of diffused cities, which often absorb the vernacular settlements in the peri-urban areas of cities where they remain inadequately integrated. Their proposal for integrating them through a study of Algarve, Portugal is an eye-opener for the planners grappling with the expansions of cities, and wondering how to retain the vernacular heritage gobbled up in the process. Arda Karasu shares with us her research on ways by which traditional houses in Bodrum in Turkey could be transformed with modern ideas and techniques to improve their energy consumption through innovative shadings. Finally, Titien Saraswati takes us back to Indonesia, where we started, to showcase some of the traditional buildings there: the 'los' or the barns for drying tobacco which as she claims are facing threats to their vernacular quality. Together, they enrich our understanding of the vernacular settlements across the world and will hopefully ensure their continued existence and contribution to the human habitats.

I am grateful to all authors, who have made great efforts in facing the numerous editorial demands in transforming the papers originally presented at ISVS conferences. Prof. Pratyush Shanker has been the bedrock of the idea, without whom this would not have been possible at all. I have great faith that the Journal could now be nurtured and look forward to your papers to do so.

Ranjith Dayaratne, editor-2011.