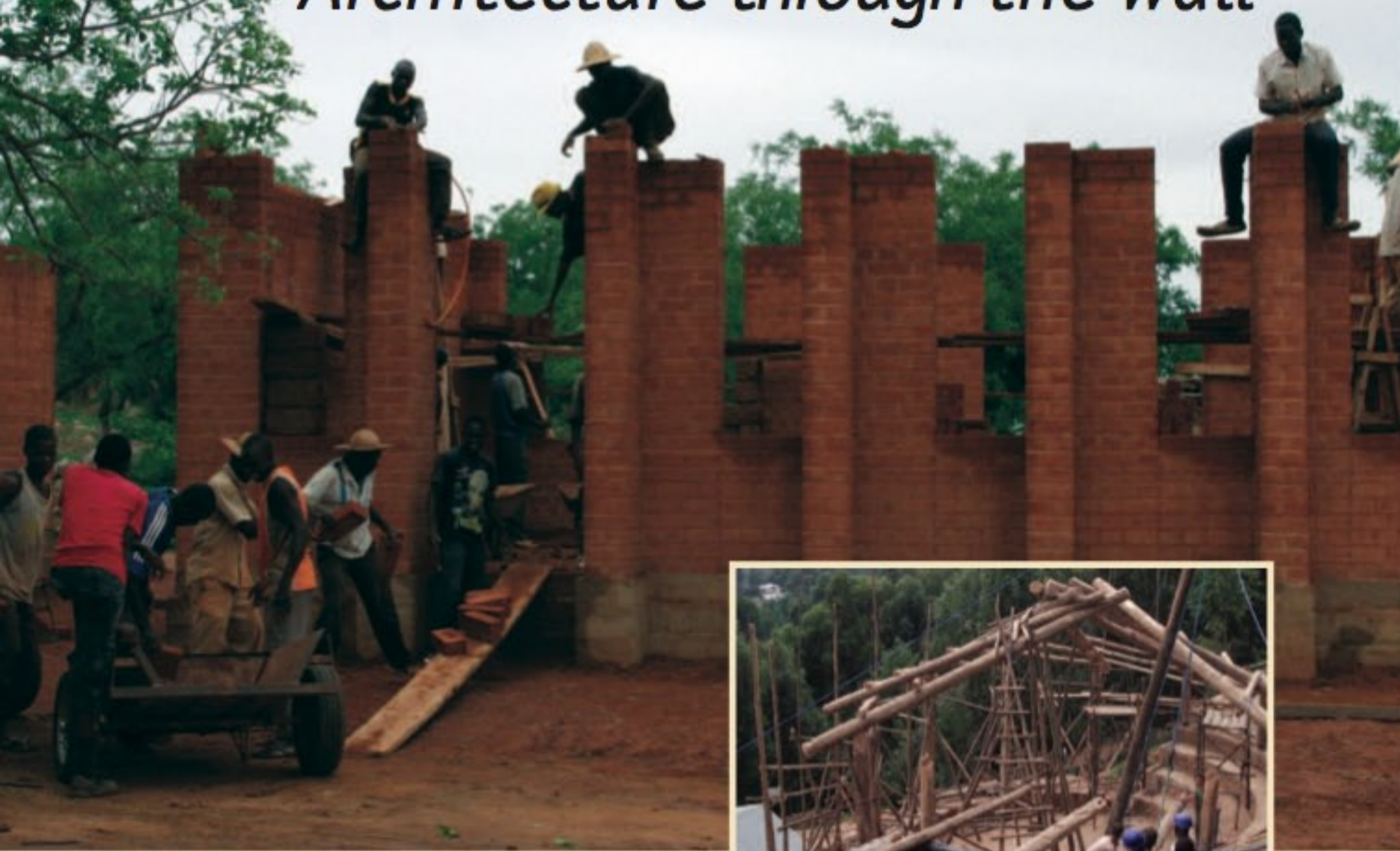


# Ground Up Need: Architecture through the wall



Across the planet a new generational network is redefining architecture's role by working in some of the most impoverished parts of the world

The planet's population recently reached the seven billion figure. This adds pressure to the vast numbers of people across the world still living in the most basic, not to say squalid, conditions; shantytowns and slums through to refugee camps are without any of the basic health, education and sanitary services that are taken for granted in the rich first world. Despite the scale of the challenge, those trained and knowledgeable about building culture bring skills to the table which can be applied in many contexts; from post-disaster and emergency situations through to rethinking from the ground up the urban fabric of the mushrooming, vast world cities of the 21st century.

Central to this, a network of architects has been emerging in the last decade, focused on working with people at a community level, and building small-scale projects to benefit the whole community. Alongside the

Shigeru Ban feature, in this edition of *Architexts*, *Fourth Door Review* highlights some of the who are leading a quiet revolution in the way in which building in the development field can be done. Collaborative, participatory, using local materials, techniques and craft skills, generally focused on basic infrastructure like schools, medical and women's centres, each project provides practical, accessible approaches on which communities can build. These are examples of different cultures working, sharing and solving problems together, while challenging the top-down approaches employed by many governmental and NGOs engaged in construction projects in similar situations. For these architects, the experience is an inspiring one of exchange, learning from their hosts, of seeking and finding shared values, a meeting space for a kind of building multi-culturalism, rather than first world templates ready to be rolled out and imposed by an established development order.

These issues are particularly embodied in the work of two architects of this generational wave, Francis Kéré and Anna Heringer. Kéré, (p00) who is from a small village in Burkino Faso, has become an architectural cause célèbre for his dedication to school, health and other developmental projects in his home country and other parts of Africa. Heringer, who is from Austria, contributes *Sustaining Beauty* (p00), an essay which, although focused on her work in a small Bangladeshi village, encapsulates the stark differences between the sensibility of humanitarian architecture and much of the mainstream, also explored further in an in-depth interview (p00), and by Bangladeshi architect Rabeya Rahman (p00). Christoph Ziegert and Eike Roswag, the Berlin based engineer-architect team, historically closely connected to Kere and Heringer, write about their own recent Jar Maulwi school in Pakistan (p00). Two young Nordic practices, Helsinki based Hollmänn ReuterSandman (p00), and Trondheim's TYIN, highlight recent projects, while student Rozita Rahman brings an on-the-ground volunteer perspective to working on the TYIN project (p00 & 00). A comparative elder, FCBa Studio's Peter Clegg, overviews recent Ugandan schools projects for the Richard Feilden Foundation (p00), while Indian architect Suhasini Ayer contributes an essay on post-2006 tsunami housing projects in Auroville South India (p00). Threaded through these pieces, *Fourth Door* also looks at differing aspects of the wider cultural picture, from the influence of the internet, social media and communications on this networked part of the planet's architectural and building cultures, to how these projects are fundamentally informed by sustainability and environmental futures; and how changing times are reflected in the growth of this youthful architectural culture (p00).

photo Helena Sandman



Opposite page and above: Deep in the Sahel – Francis Kéré's Gando school, under construction and complete

Inset opposite page: Frame up at the Richard Feilden Foundation's Lake Bunyonyi school, Uganda



photos Shigeru Ban Architects

## PLANET OF WASTE Shigeru Ban's life-long exploration of weak materials

In the first of a two-part interview with Shigeru Ban, *Fourth Door* focuses on the Japanese architect's well known absorption in 'weak' and non-traditional materials, including paper, bamboo, wood and containers; where this fascination comes from, and how it has been at the heart of his post-disaster work in different parts of the planet.



Top and above: Cardboard complexity – Shigeru Ban's emergency homes and temporary church pillars



Top left: Inner chamber to HollmännReuterSandman's Rufisque Women's Centre

Above: School's out at Anna Heringer's METI-Handmade school, in Rudrapur, Northern Bangladesh

photo Kurt Hoenst