



Deutsche Bank



The Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award

Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award given to a successful partnership in the heart of São Paulo

Wolfgang Nowak, Director of Deutsche Bank's Alfred Herrhausen Society is pleased to announce the winners of the Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award (DBUA) Sao Paulo 2008 in the presence of the Governor of the State of Sao Paulo, José Serra. The announcement follows an unanimous decision by an international jury. The award of \$100,000 goes to "Do Cortiço da Rua Solón ao Edifício União".

The second edition of the Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award attracted 133 entries from across the Sao Paulo metropolitan area, twice as many as those submitted for Mumbai in 2007. The submissions reflected the Paulistanos' vibrancy and ingenuity in responding to the severe environmental. In addition, the international jury singled out three projects for special mention: the "Cooperativa Nova Esperança" recycling initiative in the peripheral "Vila Nova" district; the Biourban urban intervention scheme in the "Mauro" favela; and, the "Instituto" Acaia's project for an arts workshop and public space interventions in favelas in the Vila Leopoldina. All schemes responded to the award's objectives to celebrate projects that improve the environment of city dwellers lives and promote new partnerships between the city's local actors and institutional agencies.

Considering the high quality of the projects, Gary Hattem, Managing Director of the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation, spontaneously decided to reward the three finalists: Instituto ACAIA, Cooperativa de Reciclagem Nova Esperança e BioUrban, with \$ 5,000 dollars each.

The jury, composed of a range of international urban experts and local figures with knowledge of city's diverse urban communities, met in Sao Paulo on 9-10 November 2008. Members included Brazil football star Raí, whose own foundation is dedicated to the improvement of young people in the city's favelas; the filmmaker Tata Amaral and leading arts curator Lisette Lagnado, and one of Sao Paulo's foremost emerging architects Fernando de Mello Franco. They were joined by the former Mayor of Washington DC's Anthony Williams and Ricky Burdett, an urban expert from the London School of Economics who acted as chairman of the jury. New York and Mexico City-based architect Enrique Norten was unable to participate in the jury sessions. After selecting a shortlisted of twelve highly qualified submissions, the jury visited a selection of projects to inspect their implementation on the ground and evaluate their impact on the built environment and

local communities to confirm their adherence to the Deutsche Bank Urban Age's Award selection criteria.

The "Do Cortiço da Rua Solón ao Edifício União" clearly fulfils all these criteria. It deals head-on with the urgent need to house the urban poor in decent conditions at the heart of the city, rather than relegate poverty to the periphery. It promotes the concept that to be economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, urban dwellers need to live close to their place of work, reducing the need for extensive commuting and optimising the potential to find local jobs, use local schools and benefit from local resources. It makes a statement about how we should make the most of our urban assets – abandoned buildings or derelict industrial areas - to promote the paradigm of the compact, well-connected city. Furthermore, it represents a process of community empowerment that benefits from an innovative partnership between the university, society and its civic institutions.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- The Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award (DBUAA) was established in 2007 to encourage citizens to take initiatives to improve their cities.
- The award is organized by the Deutsche Bank's Alfred Herrhausen Society.
- It is a traveling award organized in parallel with the Urban Age Project, a joint initiative of the London School of Economics and Deutsche Bank's Alfred Herrhausen Society. In 2009, the award will be located in Istanbul, Turkey.
- The Deutsche Bank Urban Age Award Presentation will be followed by the Urban Age India Conference is on 4 and 5 December. Attendance by invitation only.

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PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Winner: Do Cortiço da Rua Solón ao Edifício União

Like many other buildings of its period, 934 Rua Solón is a raw, partially completed concrete-frame multi-storey structure located in the Bom Terio neighbourhood close to Sao Paulo's central district and its range of economic activities. Constructed in the 1970s the building remained unfinished due to the death of the developer, and was subsequently taken over by squatter families in the 1980s. As with many other 'invaded buildings', the early residents established a precarious system of electrical and water supply with exposed wires and unreliable water provision, and a very basic form of waste and garbage disposal. Overcrowding became severe with 73 families crammed into the building, using all available spaces including the incomplete elevator shafts. Following a project with students from Sao Paulo's Faculty of Architecture (FAU) that indicated a young immigrant community—over 80% were under 40, and over 60% were from the traditionally poorer North and Northeastern regions of Brazil—efforts to improve the site began.

The building needed improvement if this vulnerable population of the urban poor was going to keep a safe and habitable roof over their heads. Through varied partnerships, including local government, the university, public institutions, human rights groups and private enterprise, part of the task became one of raising resources and 'de-densifying' the building. Over 30 families were rehoused, and the remaining residents focused on raising the living standards for the entire community. With resources secured, the architecture students decided to live in the building with the residents for one week. The aim of this total immersion, was to continue collecting information, to build stronger relationships of trust with the local residents and to carry out a preliminary design of reform, taking into account the lived context of the building. This joint effort was called Cortiço Vivo.

This joint action resulted in three immediately visible results. First, the *multirões* or collective initiatives between the students and the residents organised to clean the site, beginning with the common areas and with the often blocked access to the building. Second, the installation of a collective power grid enabled each family to have a reliable measure of their electricity bills, and thus provided improved economic stability beyond removing the fire risks of the previous design. Third, improvement to the *façade* of the building, security gates, and letters with the name of the building, Edifício União (or 'Union Building', the name decided upon at a general meeting where all decisions about the improvements were collectively made), engendered a sense of ownership and pride in the residents, many of whom are employed locally.

The physical improvements to the 'look' of the building and its common areas engendered a new-found motivation that led many of the residents to make improvements inside their own apartments. Internal walls have been rendered and painted, new kitchens and bathrooms have been installed, with a determined interest in the collective improvement and maintenance of the site. Openings have been introduced into dark corridors and stairwells to improve the environment and reduce electricity consumption. The partnership between the university institution, future practicing architects, and the residents of the Cortiço Rua Solón establishes a method for interaction between the social and the physical, between the built and the lived, right at the heart of the city next to jobs, schools and social amenities.

Instituto ACAIA

Since 1998, the Instituto ACAIA has provided a rare resource for young people from neighbouring favelas – a spacious and well-designed art and crafts workshop with extensive training facilities in the middle of a rapidly changing industrial area. While this successful project has provided much-needed facilities for deprived children outside their place of residence, the initiative has been recently expanded by making interventions in the favelas themselves. The Instituto ACAIA has worked closely with the residents' association (which they helped form) to develop strategic development plans and make spatial improvements in Vila Leopoldina—a neighbourhood struggling to accommodate 960 families from two slums that have settled there since 2006 next to the city's wholesale food market which provides the majority of jobs for local residents. Apart from the construction of a new sewage infrastructure and paved surfaces across the dense and compact favela, the initiative has led to the creation of a new public space with play equipment and an 'art-cabin' extensively used by local children on the doorsteps of their homes.

BioUrban

BioUrban is a unique urban initiative pioneered by a young sociology student Jeff Anderson in the Mauro favela, an inner city area in São Paulo that has suffered from socio-environmental degradation. The project has seen the realization of a series of aesthetic interventions that have transformed the spatial quality of the neighbourhood in a short period of time. Interventions include the cleaning up of small spaces and threshold areas in front of people's homes, planting of flower beds in place of concrete kerbs, introduction of colour and materials to humanise the facades of buildings and exposed infrastructure, the creation of public artworks by local children and the staging of collective activities – such as painting sessions - within these 'found' urban places. All material used in the project comes from waste and garbage found in the neighborhood. Building on the work of artist and architect Friedensreich Hundertwasser who advocates "the right to the window", BioUrban is dedicated to the development of leadership capacity and the creation of healthy urban spaces within the areas of social risk of São Paulo.

Cooperativa de Reciclagem Nova Esperança

The Cooperativa de Reciclagem Nova Esperança is an innovative partnership between the State of São Paulo's housing agency (CDHU) and local residents developed under the Integrated Program of Urbanization of the Pantanal. Over 30,000 people live in an area located in the eastern periphery of São Paulo occupying a former floodplain of the River Tiete, which has been the subject of successive landfills over the past 30 years. The project has pioneered a new system of waste and garbage collection that both generates income for the cooperative and reduces the volume of waste, previously deposited in the neighbourhood's streets, public spaces and water courses. Apart from establishing new forms and technologies of recycling, the project aims to create an open space for the community by recovering a stretch of the River Tiete as part of a wider urban improvement programme for the area. The cooperative also organises social and educational activities that promote environmental awareness in the community, putting in practice the best principles of sustainable planning.