

edited by FLAVIA VACCHER

OCOCOLOV

One Cinema, One Clinic, One Library, One Village



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Università Iuav
di Venezia



WORKSHOP SERIES

OCOCOLOV

One Cinema, One Clinic, One Library, One Village

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Flavia Vaccher

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IF YOU WANT TO GO FAST, GO ALONE. IF YOU WANT TO GO FAR, GO TOGETHER (AFRICAN PROVERB)

Flavia Vaccher, *Architetti Senza Frontiere Veneto ONLUS*

In recent years, architecture for international cooperation has again become a highly topical issue and the subject of renewed interest. In 2016, for example, the 15th edition of Biennale Architettura, curated by Alejandro Aravena under the motto *Reporting from the front*, is full of numerous projects from different parts of the world. Among the most recent and notable works, we may highlight Gino Strada's last great dream: the Centre of Excellence in Paediatric Surgery in Entebbe, in the heart of Uganda, designed by the Renzo Piano Building Workshop, together with the TAMassociati studio and the EMERGENCY Building Division.

In fact, many architects have been working extensively in "other" territories, different from our closest neighbourhood. For them, approaching such realities – beyond a professional opportunity – represented a chance to get to know seemingly unusual environments.

Provided you avoid "taking too much with you"¹, the encounter with "other" people or places forces you to read situations and locations from different angles, in a perspective of mutual exchange that favours the hybridisation of knowledge and understanding.

Without a doubt, working in these places demands first and foremost sensitivity towards the environmental and cultural context, which can only

be acquired by learning to know it. Likewise, every design, construction or strategic choice in such a context is actively constrained by the real needs of people, the places, the climate, and the technical and practical possibilities, all of which primarily arise from an open and shared dialogue starting from the expectations, organisation, and rhythms of those who will experience those places and architectures every day.

Thus, architectures placed in a physical, geographical, and above all human and relational context. “By building things, people build the feeling of self: forging a citizen with skills and capable of building is more important than erecting a building”, are the words addressed by Hassan Fathy to the Egyptian President G.A. Nasser. These words serve as a reminder, almost sixty years ago now, of architecture’s value as a tool (by no means the only one) for the development of communities and their territories.

“The moral space. Architects in Cooperation between solidarity and sustainability”, a traveling exhibition organised at the end of 2020 by the National Council of Architects, Planners, Landscape Architects, Conservators (CNAPPC) and 18 non-profit organisations consisting of architects and interdisciplinary profiles, showcased their commitment in places with scarce resources, where building a space to meet beauty and quality requirements becomes even more urgent and necessary.

Participants also included Architetti Senza Frontiere Veneto ONLUS, a non-profit association, part of the Architects Without Borders international network, made up of architects based in Veneto, which since 2013 has been delivering projects in highly critical areas, also by supporting international associations.

The international design workshop OCOCOLOV | One Cinema, One Clinic, One Library, One Village, an acronym that summarises the underlying themes, emerged from a solid sharing of ideas and convergence of goals with Adriano Wajskol, Secretary-General of the association of small cocoa producers ghanic.org (10,064 growers concentrated in the so-called cocoa district of Sefwi Wiawso, north-western Ghana.)

Since 2020, the cooperative endeavours to create an innovative ecosystem to make cocoa cultivation more sustainable and deliver a high-quality product, guaranteeing fair prices and investments in local communities. By doing this, growers can offer a better future for themselves and their families while taking care of the environment.

With the workshop, Architetti Senza Frontiere Veneto ONLUS sought to provide assistance and design support to this initiative, which will be enriched by a series of subsequent interventions such as: educational and training facilities, a



Ghana, Abodua, sale of agricultural products and small shops along the main road.



small cocoa museum, accommodation facilities for sustainable tourism linked to the presence of plantations and cocoa processing on site with a view to sustainable growth in the territory of Aboduam, one of the villages in the cocoa district.

A first important consideration was that, rather than working on a single building, the framework had to be that of the village. Thus, it was necessary to build a space for the use of the community and, above all, to recall that erecting a building was but one of the operations.

Starting from the indications and suggestions of the association, the design focused on a community centre consisting of: a small cinema equipped with a space for outdoor projections that could also serve other uses (market, events, etc.); a library with reading and consultation areas but also with meeting and discussion spaces for the community and training activities; a first-aid and outpatient post (FAP), in some cases associated with a small clinic in response to the specific needs expressed by the local area. A small piece of a much larger and more ambitious mosaic, the Cocoa Village, conceived as a cultural project to promote sustainable development while involving the local population. A pilot project that could be replicated – appropriately adapted – in other district villages.

The workshop was conceived as an encounter for national and international teachers and professionals, students of architecture courses at the Università Iuav di Venezia and a few young Italian and foreign architects, engaged in the frantic drafting of project proposals over a two-week period.

The continuous comparison has stimulated the conception and design of solutions generating new spaces, the result of experiments and surprising hybridisations, suspended between tradition and innovation, supported by the conviction that an architecture linked to the place and designed with human, material and cultural heritage of that specific environment leaves a positive imprint on the territory.

Design results collected in this volume are “measured” architectures, sensitive to the context, with particular focus on a landscape strongly marked by cocoa plantations, and attentive to the use of “appropriate and appropriable” technologies, materials and local construction techniques.

The workshop was hosted at the EMERGENCY ONG ONLUS headquarters in Venice, whose manager Mara Rumiz – whose support I sincerely appreciate – immediately accepted the proposal to collaborate. Specifically, she provided spaces and equipment with great generosity and invited professionals, who had worked for many years alongside Gino Strada, to share their field experience. This has allowed us to approach the complex issue of healthcare structures in

equally complex contexts from a geographical, economic and social point of view. Such situations, which one seldom comes across in the academic or professional path, provide an opportunity to expand and enrich our skills.

Together with EMERGENCY ONG ONLUS, the Università Iuav di Venezia, the OAPPC della provincia di Venezia participated and supported the initiative, with the precious support of the Kwame Nkrumah Pan-African Centre: the thread that weaves together these plurality of subjects was an unprecedented collaboration, an experimentation field that proved fruitful and full of ideas on many levels, a cooperative task for a concrete utopia².

“Behind every social revolution there is an intellectual one. We have to imagine, dream, design and plan before we can achieve the harmonious growth we want to see in the world”. These are the words of Samia Yaba Nkrumah³, daughter of the first president of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah, founder of the Pan-African Centre of the same name.

Notes

1. Marco Aime, *L'incontro mancato. Turisti, nativi, immagini*. Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2005.
2. Ernst Bloch, *Il principio speranza*. Milano: Garzanti, 1994, vol.3.
3. Samia Yaba Nkrumah, *The future of cities*. Milano: Domusforum, 2018.





Ghana, Abodua, the main street of the village that leads to the project area.



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DESIGN WORKSHOP

promoted by
Architetti Senza Frontiere Veneto ONLUS
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in collaboration with
EMERGENCY ONG ONLUS, Università Iuav di Venezia, OAPPC della Provincia di Venezia

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Vicenza, 2005: Architetti Senza Frontiere Veneto ONLUS is a non-profit association of architects with office in Veneto, which promotes research and planning initiatives for the sustainable growth of critical areas in developing countries, working with underprivileged communities and territories. We are part of ASF rete Italia.

ghanic.org

Accra, 2020: ghanic.org is a non-profit foundation established in Ghana, where the world's best quality cocoa is produced. The type of crop is at risk of extinction due to reduced profitability. Over the next five years, research and support for 5270 farmers, on an area of 31794 acres, will increase productivity exponentially, adding value to local communities.



Milan, 1994: EMERGENCY ONG ONLUS is a humanitarian organisation founded to help civilian victims of war and poverty. Since then they have worked in 18 countries, building hospitals, surgical centres, rehabilitation centres, paediatric centres, health centres, outpatient and mobile clinics, a maternity centre and a cardiac surgery centre.



Venice, 1926: Università Iuav di Venezia is one of the first Architecture Schools in Italy. It is a design-themed university focusing on the teaching, research and practice in the design of living spaces and environments (buildings, cities, landscapes and territory).



Accra, 2018: is a non-profit organisation that promotes the ideas, teachings and vision of Ghana's First President Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. Through education, social interventions and research seeks to contribute to address many of the challenges that confront the poor and vulnerable in human societies to help build a just and a better World.



Venice, 1925: The OAPPC della provincia di Venezia is a non-economic public institution under to the control of the Ministry of Justice. It is a representative structure of the profession of Architect, Planner, Landscape Designer and Conservator, established and regulated according to the current laws of the Republic, whose institution derives from the need to regulate the relationships between the activity of members and the protection of the public interest. The professional Order has territorial jurisdiction, oversees the protection of professional practice and the preservation of the dignity of the Order.



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The OCOCOLOV Design Workshop | One Cinema, One Clinic, One Library, One Village was shaped by the idea that global sustainability issues of an economic, social, and environmental nature should be tackled in accordance with the needs and expectations of local communities.

The workshop was promoted by Architetti Senza Frontiere Veneto ONLUS and ghanic.org, Ghanaian association of small producers of the cocoa district of Sefwi Wiawso, in collaboration with EMERGENCY ONG ONLUS, the Università Iuav di Venezia, the OAPPC della Provincia di Venezia and with the support of the Kwame Nkrumah Pan-African Centre. Specifically, the workshop involved teachers and national and international professionals, architecture students and young Italian and foreign architects in the design of a community centre for the village of Aboduaam.

The projects collected in this volume, namely “measured” architectures which were attentive to the use of “appropriate and appropriable” technologies, illustrate the results of an experience that favoured a reflection on architecture’s social role, as well as on the possibility of starting transformations from built-up spaces.

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