

Arch. Training/Research: Foreign Aid-Funded Knowledge (Stockholm, 9-10 Sep 21)

Online / KTH School of Architecture, Stockholm, Sep 9–10, 2021

Deadline: Apr 1, 2021

Sebastiaan Loosen

Architectural Training and Research in the Foreign Aid-Funded Knowledge Economy, 1950s-1980s.

Two-day symposium, 9-10 September 2021.

CALL FOR PAPERS

From the 1950s to the late 1980s, the politics and economies of foreign aid – instigated by both the ‘capitalist West’ as well as the ‘communist East’ – gave rise to a whole infrastructure destined to assist the progress of ‘developing countries’ on their ‘path to development’. The various North-South exchanges that took place in the name of ‘development’ have left a deep imprint on the geopolitical landscape of postcolonial Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Largely instituted through bilateral relations between individual states, these ‘aid’ initiatives involved not only financial and material resources but also various forms of knowledge and expertise; as such, the modalities of this global, foreign aid-funded infrastructure boosted the creation and reinforcement of all sorts of institutional actors to efficiently exchange knowledge – largely through training courses, educational programs and/or research projects. In the light of widespread rural migration and intensive, rapid urbanization processes, expertise on the built environment was a particularly salient form of knowledge to the aims of foreign aid. Hence, architecture, urbanism and planning were no strangers to an emerging foreign aid-funded knowledge economy – a context in which the production and circulation of knowledge were intimately tied to the political-economic value attributed to them by foreign aid diplomacy.

How did architectural knowledge figure in foreign aid-sourced international relations, and what frameworks were set in place to efficiently exchange that knowledge? For this two-day symposium, we seek scholarly work that critically analyzes, contextualizes, or theorizes the establishment and functioning of such institutional actors, training courses, educational programs, research centers, and other infrastructures for knowledge exchange that emerged under the aegis of development and targeted ‘Third World’ clients. We welcome a wide range of methodological and creative perspectives as well as less empirical (but well-informed) theoretical approaches that interpret this phenomenon from a postcolonial or decolonizing perspective. We also encourage contributions that scrutinize the intersections of these histories with discussions of gender, race, religion and nationalism.

This two-day symposium will be held in Stockholm on 9-10 September 2021. In light of the current pandemic the event will be organized either in a hybrid format, allowing for both in-person and online attendance, or, if health regulations dictate, as a fully online event. The symposium is envisioned as one long, thematically well-focused discussion, without parallel strands, and aims to bring 12 to 15 established as well as young scholars together from every discipline that engages with the topics outlined above.

We're happy to receive anonymized abstracts of up to 300 words and 1 optional image until 1 April 2021, submitted via email to architectureforeignaid@arch.kth.se. Acceptance will be dependent on an anonymous review of the abstract by the scientific committee. If a different format than that of a presentation based on a paper would be more suitable to your work, please contact us (same deadline applies).

Scientific committee: Sebastiaan Loosen (KTH), Erik Sigge (MIT), Helena Mattsson (KTH), Viviana d'Auria (KU Leuven) and Kenny Cupers (University of Basel).

Please visit our website to find the full CFP and for up-to-date information: architectureforeignaid.arch.kth.se

Reference:

CFP: Arch. Training/Research: Foreign Aid-Funded Knowledge (Stockholm, 9-10 Sep 21). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 16, 2021 (accessed Jan 23, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/33414>>.