

Implementation of the UFRJ Workshop and Research Activities on Sustainable Urban Architecture and Planning with São José do Vale do Rio Preto

1. The results of the Alfa Aurora Workshop in Rio de Janeiro

The Alfa Aurora Workshop in Rio de Janeiro has focused the issues of sustainable urban development of the Rio de Janeiro Metropolitan Area. Rio suffers from the fast growth of migration from the rural areas and the lack of an complex social housing program to manage the highly needed residential space for the new inhabitants. This leads to an uncontrollable growth of its urban area with the consequence of increasing agglomeration of informal areas (Squatter town) in and around the city. One of the fundamental problems of this marvellous city is the lack of an opportunity to develop a sustainable growth in between its own spaces, e.g. to develop a sustainable master plan concept linked with a concrete social housing concept. These problems are highly discussed among local planning actors and the and planning administration.

The Brazilian experts see as a solution for this urban situation to establish and improve the concrete and substantial improvement of the urban development of the central circle of smaller and also fast growing cities in the surrounding of the Metropolitan Area for example São José do Vale do Rio Preto (SJVRP).

The tasks for the smaller cities are to develop sustainable urban concepts as an answer to the huge pressure on the Megacities to integrate and to reduce the migration from the rural areas.

The smaller cities, e.g. São José do Vale do Rio Preto in the state of Rio de Janeiro has still the opportunity to implement a sustainable development and growth of their municipality. The scale of SJVRP can still be influenced and has several chances to establish a planing structure focusing and solving these tasks of an accelerating agglomeration of inhabitants without producing tremendous areas of informal settlements as the like in Rio de Janeiro Metropolitan Area.

The projects in SJVRP focuses on three priority action lines: Urban planing, social (low) housing, infrastructure and regional development. The projects topics had been discussed on the workshop in Rio and had been discussed with the city hall representatives of SJVRP and the international contributors and participants. The task is to support the town with sustainable ideas and urban concepts to develop and establish a sustainable urban planing structure for their municipality. The exchange of ideas about urban development and the contributions of international experts is a pilot project for the city and an important step towards their sustainable future.

2. Summary of the research & training projects

The aim of ALFA-AURORA research on SJVRP is to provide different project strategies for its sustainable urban development and to implement improved social housing concepts, revitalisation of public services and space. This will also define useful background for regional planning in areas surrounding Megacities.

In the beginning the city representatives presented the economical, social, geographical, climatic, rural, urban and demographic structure of the municipality. Former and contemporary projects of the city had been presented by contributors from Berlin, e.g. an urban development study on a new settlement in the geographical centre of the urban area near Brucuçu, diploma works on urban strategies, a waste disposal plant and the implementation of a sewage system in the various districts of SJVRP.

Public space and public services

The administration of SJVRP asked the workshop participants to develop with students from Alicante and Amsterdam a revitalisation and public space and services concept for the town part Pedras Brancas where a former social housing project was realised by the state and the city hall in 2004. The lack of the integration in the urban context and the lack of public space and services in this district will be the subject in European universities. This project was prepared after the workshop in November 2005 and will be established as project study in Amsterdam and Alicante in the upcoming summer semester 2006.

Social housing and low-cost housing projects

The Aurora participants had been asked by the city hall to analyse the realised social housing project in Pedras Brancas and to give an expertise for the upcoming housing projects in Contendas and Pouso Alegre realised by the town hall.

In Pedras Brancas participants from Milano and Alicante already worked on fieldwork to analyse the structure, the status of the dwellings and the functions of the social housing units. This analysis for the proposals for the New Housing and Urban Renewal in São José do Vale do Rio Preto was done by Dr. Claudio Pavesi from Milano.

The participants from Amsterdam led by Architect Friso ten Holt who work on a concept for Low-Cost housing on slopes are contemporary on fieldwork in SJVRP to discuss this project with officials from SJVRP and to analyse the project area. They do research on the way of constructions of the building and analyse the dwelling typologies. They are looking on-site for an location for an example the realisation of a new low cost building in SJVRP and they especially interview the inhabitants which are effected by the projects and ask for the demands from the town government and officials.

Urban planning project and concepts

The participating students from Alicante who are working on Research for Alfa in Rio and SJVRP are generating information and plans about the urban area and the structure of the municipality. This work is preparing a project for developing the basis data for a student project on urban analysis and planing in Alicante and Amsterdam for SJVRP in the summer semester 2006.

Regional Planing

These topic of the workshop is related to the participants from Rio de Janeiro. They are gathering and analysing information on social, economic, geographical, demographically aspects.

These above mentioned parts of the Alfa-Aurora project are the first result which allows the participants a consequent exchange and establish the basis for an

sustainable urban development from smaller cities around the metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro.

Public Relations

These projects require an integrated training by research approach pooling expertise from Architects, Civil Engineers and Urban Planners.

All the tasks, project conditions and data are published on the Alfa Aurora web platform. The information is distributed among the ALFA-AURORA participants and is able to give an overview on the contemporary state of the work and research of the above mentioned projects.

The web platform is organized and maintained by the University of Applied Sciences in Berlin. This media allows interested students and experts from all over the world to communicate and exchange ideas with the ALFA-AURORA project.