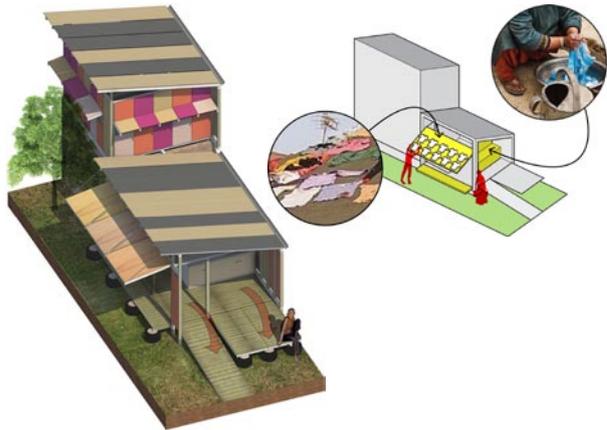# Healthy communities by design

VISIONARY
Design Development
Pty Ltd

GREETINGS from all of us at Visionary Design Development Pty Ltd. In this issue, we would like to share with you some thoughts on our approach to community development as reflected in our competition projects. We also introduce our brand-new pro bono arm, VDD Studio!

FEATURED PROJECT

VDD is proud to be announced co-winners of the recent Cambodia Sustainable Housing International Competition. Run by Building Trust International, Habitat for Humanity and Karuna Cambodia, the project is to be built later this year.

Our approach is to understand the problem from a communal viewpoint: openings and small footprint are designed to maintain communal interaction that is common to this region. This house will be home to a widowed mother of 5 wanting to open a shop to provide for her family. Check out this release by Habitat for Humanity and lovely press at Phnom Penh Post.

Why Community Development Matters

Community Development involves change within communities that improves the quality of the lives of the local people. This change can originate from government and non-government organisations as well as from the community itself. The record of governments in helping disadvantaged people is at best uneven. Post WW2 safety nets in developed countries have benefited millions. Their erosion by neo-liberalism and the resultant inequity between enriching of a tiny economic and corporate elite and the "other 99%" %" has hindered community development over the last 30 years. Recent research has revealed strong correlations between inequity and an extensive range of social ills[1].
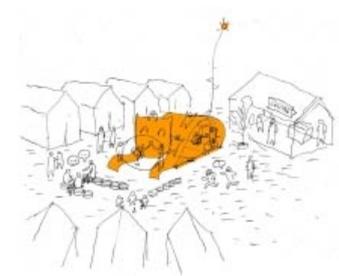
Recent understandings of what development actually entails include an emphasis on autonomy, for example, Amartya Sen's Capabilities Approach[2]. Visionary Design Development recognises and respects the autonomy of people with disabilities to control the context and direction of their lives. VDD research tools, such as the Universal Mobility Index, place people with disabilities at the centre of decision making. VDD Studio is committed to enhancing community development through pro-bono assistance.

1 Wilkinson R, and Pickett K. (2009). "The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone" Allen Lane, London.
2 Sen, A. (1989). "Development as Capability Expansion." Journal of Development Planning 19(41): 58.
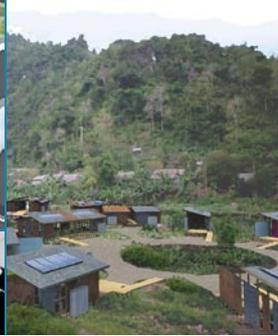
In Progress: Crowd-Funding Campaign

Help us build a cat in Fed Sq!
pozible.com/emotionalsheltercat

Visionary Design Development + VDD Studio, and our friends at Here Studio, are excited to announce that our entry has been selected as a part of the Emergency Shelter Exhibition at Federation Square in May 2013.

EMOTIONAL SHELTER is designed for children, who, along with the aged and people with disabilities, are often the most vulnerable to natural disasters. The distinctive and playful design in the form of a cat houses a sheltered space in the body of the structure - shelter that can bring communities together to connect and provide comfort on social, psychological and emotional levels. We're interested in the power of play, and how the wisdom of children can bring hope and imagination to difficult situations.

In order for the prototype to be built and exhibited at Federation Square, and in the spirit of community, we will be crowd-funding and building the shelter ourselves! We are currently running a pozible campaign so please check it out and make a pledge!

Latin America Bulletin

Visionary Design Development in conjunction with Victorian Government Department of Business and Innovation recently hosted a group of Argentinean and Uruguayan Architect/Planners at a working lunch in Melb CBD. Topics discussed ranged from Urbanisation issues in various contexts to Accessibility to University Travelling Design Studios to Sustainability Data Capture. In the interests of cultural and commercial exchange between Latin America and Australia, Visionary Design Development looks forward to hosting many similar events in the future.

We have also been ably represented by Thyago Miranda at the recent Brasil - Australia Dialogue, Sao Paulo 21 March. Thyago contributed to discussions around Liveable Cities, Sustainable Lives.

THROUGHOUT THIS YEAR and beyond, Visionary Design Development Pty Ltd looks forward to collaborating with you in accessibility, architecture, research, community development and sustainability. Come and visit us in our office, address details below, or at a location of your choice.

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CALENDAR (Click on the title for more information)

April
5-19   Design Challenge: Ageing Award Exhibition at RMIT Design Hub.
18   Sep Yama / Finding Country (Public Talk) at Melbourne University.
21   Mosaic Festival at QV Square.

May
All   Laneways of Melbourne Tour.
30   AIA National Architecture Conference Melbourne 2013
30   Melbourne Architours: Evolution of Public Space Tours.

June
6   Spotlight on Corrigan: Peter Corrigan Cities of Hope at RMIT Gallery.

VDD Studio

VDD Studio is born out of our commitment to community development. The group is comprised of volunteers and student/internship placements. Working under the supervision of Visionary Design Development's Management Team, projects undertaken by VDD Studio team are community-centred, and services provided probono.

Examples of current projects include:

Eco Cubby at Warringa Park School, Hoppers Crossing

Bayside Community Bike Hub, Hampton East

Other News

- Check out Director of Research Ralph Green's insight on the future of Mexico City in Victor Perton's blog.

- We look forward to Thyago spending some time with us here in Melbourne mid of this year.

- AusAID as recently released Accessibility Design Guide, a comprehensive document aimed at development practitioners in implementing universal design.