

Summary - Global Bamboo Summit, HCMC (Saigon),
April 21-22, 2014

The Vietnamese enterprise Grass Co with Hao Dang, in cooperation with international bamboo organizations, arranged this 3-4 day event for some 120 participants from all over the world.

The leading theme was - mainstreaming bamboo production, design and marketing - , meaning that the worldwide demand is now reaching a level where large scale business is just around the corner. This wide scope was reflected by the participants: agroforestry producers, pulp and biomass industrialists, investors, researchers, government stakeholders, design practitioners, engineers and architects...

The focus was partly on high end exports to Western markets where e-commerce is increasingly important thanks to new concepts in logistics, warehousing and economy, even on a small scale.

Also the supply chain with synergy effects and win-win business was vividly described by Gunter Pauli as the “Blue Economy”, where ecological nightmares are turned into resources for local economy. An open cut goldmine in Colombia with wasted topsoil was restored by bamboo farmers who thereby generated an income.

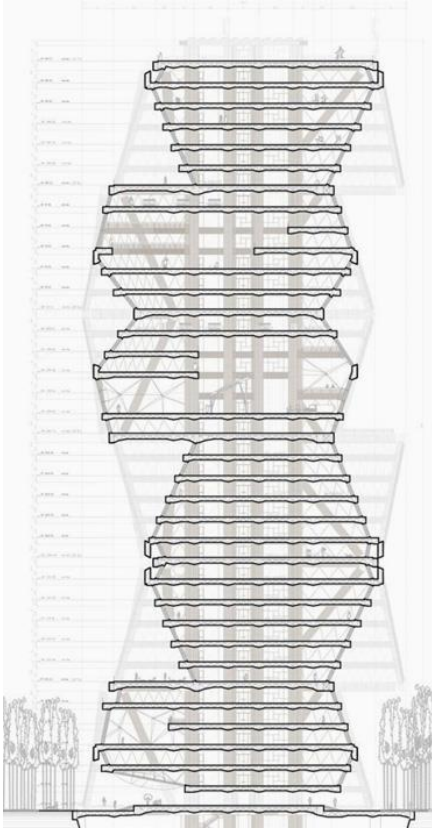
Social housing solutions and their urban context were other tracks such as Corinna Salzer’s presentation from Manila. Project ownership by the users, participatory design and technical support are keys to solving the maintenance issues with bamboo based housing.

Bamboo growing regions happen to coincide with the most powerful urbanization trends in the world. This fact could partly be the solution for producing vast quantities of construction materials. In the light of the severe urban pollution already manifested in China and the culpability of cement and steel industries in energy consumption, the CO2 consequences are now obvious.

Multistory bamboo housing could be instrumental to counteract the worldwide urban sprawl with its paralyzing transport problems. Both the unemployed people suffer and the rich, sitting in bottlenecks.



Urban sprawl in Kinshasa, now 13+ million people covering an area the size of LA – without the freeways! Photo: Ingemar Saevfors



Spectacular projects of bamboo skyscrapers as presented by Jaime Espinosa are no longer utopia, since the technology is already here.

The “Saigon Declaration” with recommendations to promote the multi-sector use of bamboo was drafted in groups. All in all, a plethora of new ideas for projects and designs were the results of this worthwhile encounter.

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Bamboopolis, Hong Kong, project by Jaime Espinosa

