



In Memoriam of Dick Urban Vestbro



Prof. Dick Urban Vestbro
(23/04/1940 – 16/06/2019)

When a friend is gone.....

*...there is an empty space that the arrival of another friend cannot fill.
...there is a firebrand lit that the waters of a river cannot turn off.
...a star was lost that now illuminates a place where a child sleeps.
... the roads stop, and starts to rebel the tame goblin of the wine.
...galloping his destiny the soul begins to vibrate because cold fills it.
...there is a vacant lot that time wants to fill with the stones of tedium.
...a fallen tree does not sprout again because was beaten by the wind.*

***When a friend is gone an empty space is left,
that the arrival of another friend cannot fill.***

*(Translated and adapted from Alberto Cortez "Cuando un amigo se va...", by the Editor).
Sang in Spanish by his author: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxQajNZMkPo>*

"There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that receives it."

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The loving care of two exemplary women



Ann Mari Engel (left), Dick's partner was a pillar for him in hospital along five years. Her faithful presence surely strengthened both his mind and heart, while he fought his cruel illness.

Jenny Vestbro (right) divided her time between home and hospital. Not easy for a mother bringing up two children. She anyway succeeded thanks to her deep love of daughter.



Unforgettable funeral ceremony at a Stockholm architectural jewel

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COLLEAGUES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD PAY TRIBUTE TO THE GREAT DRIVER OF ARC • PEACE INTERNATIONAL

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Being candles or just mirrors

Some inevitable reflections after attending Dick Urban Vestbro funeral

Despite the applied science and its technological advances, in opinion of not few enlightened thinkers this is one of the darkest periods in human history. In effect, Mankind is confronted with many immoral situations which endanger the global sustainability due to the harmful combination of greed and negligence on the part of powerful men.

At drafting this Editorial on the late KTH Emeritus Professor Dick Urban Vestbro a brainstorm was produced in the editor mind. Was this an unconscious reaction to dispel his deep sadness?

This Newsletter special issue includes a selection of many heartfilled thoughts on Dick, as shared by friends and colleagues from all over the world.

The Editor adds a few things on the punctually run ceremony that was held in an atmosphere of deep recollection and inner peace.

The hall, admirably designed in the best Swedish style, gave the compact attendance a silent welcoming lit with hundreds of candles. Covered with a brilliant red mantle, exactly as he wanted, the body of the absent friend lied in a coffer.

It was then that a quote by Edith Wharton recently chosen to open ARC•PEACE webpage rattled in the Editor's mind:

“There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that receives it.”

A candle gives light; a mirror receives and reflects it. The candle is active; the mirror is passive.



Dick Urban flamed like a candle while studying, researching, visiting, planning, writing, teaching, leading, sharing or accompanying.

There are others who are called to be candles in their professions; but they behave like mirrors.

Those who appreciate the light received from Dick now have the opportunity to accept the challenge of consuming their lives for the benefit of others and this decaying world. **Like Dick did with his.**

The Editor

Skogskyrkogården or Woodland Cemetery

This cemetery is located south of central Stockholm in Enskededalen district. It resulted of a 1915 design competition. Swedish architects **Gunnar Asplund** and **Sigurd Lewerentz** were winners. The land had been old gravel quarries that were overgrown with pine trees.

Following some changes on the design recommended by the competition jury Phase I ended by 1920. The use of the natural landscape created an environment of tranquil beauty that had a profound influence on cemetery design throughout the world.



Above left: **Erik Gunnar Asplund** (1885-1940). Alvar Aalto, famous Finnish architect, regarded Asplund as his mentor.

Above right: **Sigurd Lewerentz** (1885-1975). This architect created together with his colleagues Erik Lallerstedt and David Helldén between what is regarded one of the masterpieces of functionalist architecture: the Malmö Opera and Music Theatre (1933 - 1944).

Left: a view of the beautiful matured architectural complex harmoniously integrated to a magnificent park.

Research and notes by The Editor

Colleagues and friends unite in Dick Urban's memory

A selection of phrases sent via email to Jenny Vestbro and ARC•PEACE Secretariat

PAUL BROCHES, New York

Unable to be at the Funeral in person, the representative of ARC•PEACE to UN, told the Editor: *"I will be there in spirit, and am happy to know that you will be there in body and spirit to represent the members in the diaspora."* Then, added:



"Among the best ways to honour Dick is to continue to be messengers of hope for peace and actions we can take in our chosen fields of architecture and urbanism in the cause of bettering human conditions throughout the world."

FRANZISKA AMACHER, New York

"He was such an important advocate for our community and will be sorely missed." She also sent her *"deepest sympathy"* to all.



YASMINE CARLSSON, Stockholm

While regretting *"the grief so much"* Yasmine shared:



"Dick Urban was my anchor during the education at KTH and he meant a lot to many. Not just for me. I hope he got a nice and quiet end in the vicinity of family and friends."

DOAA ELDERDIRI, Khartoum

She wrote: *"My deepest thoughts of condolence for the great loss of our mentor, father, friend and inspiring Architect Professor Dick Urban."*



"Our memory with him will last forever. May he rest in peace, is my wish."

ANDREA FITRIANTO, Jakarta

"I offer my heartfelt condolence for the bereavement on the demise of Dick".



The Asian young colleague goes on by stating:

"Our colleague friend and mentor has been an inspiration in his steadfastness, energy and enthusiasm in pursuing more equal and democratic architecture."

DAINA GONZÁLEZ COURET, Havana.

"I am very sorry, my condolence from Cuba to the family. He was a great man and a good friend of mine."



ØYSTEIN GRØNNING, Oslo

ARC•PEACE Vice Secretary shared his personal sorrow *"for this loss"* to his family and to the organization at large.



He recalled Dick as *"a name back in my student days at the Oslo School of Architecture"*.

Furthermore, he shared a personal anecdote:

"In 1983 or 84 he visited me at my home, a small, newly built cooperative apartment, when he was in Oslo for a conference."

"He was truly curious and searching, totally lacking of the kind of conceit that often follows fame."

And Øystein ends up with an accurate definition about Dick influence on many students and colleagues:

"He was a source of inspiration to the many that looked for impulses outside of convention."

AKIO HAYASHI, Tokyo

The Cofounder of ARC•PEACE on 15 July 1987, writes from Japan: *"I had my heart filled with sadness when I learned of the death of Dick."*

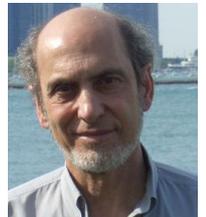


After extending his condolences to the family and colleagues, Akio said: *"Dick contributed toward the organization of activities, taking over from Sven Thiberg. He worked hard so widely."*

Hayashi then recalled that at the beginning of the 90s *"he visited Japan to support the activities of Japanese Architects for Peace. He also gave us valuable instructions to solve housing and environmental problems. Later, some researchers went to Sweden and learned from Dick. I remain grateful for this great favor."*

ABE HAYEEM, London

This known activist sent his *"heartfelt condolences at the loss"* of Dick, *"who became a legend in the ARC•PEACE movement"*.



To Abe: *"Dick will be remembered for his truly gentle and sincere promotion of a humane architecture that could be achieved practically; and for his support of human rights."*

He's sure that Dick's long lasting work *"with communities and also in the field of education"* will survive him. *"He will be sorely missed, but remembered with great affection."*

KIGARA KAMWERU, Nairobi.

"Who knew well Dick at Nairobi University will be deeply saddened. He will be dearly missed like an inspirational figure."



"His influence will continue."

APOLLINAIRE SALUMU KITENGE,
Kinshasa

"A man for the people, humble and serious is gone."

Professor Dick Urban will remain a true reference to the scientific world."



ALEXANDER KUDRYAVTSEV,
Moscow

This ARC•PEACE pioneer, shared "his sincere condolence over the death of our friend" on behalf of IAAM: the



International Academy of Architecture Moscow Branch.

MADI GRAY, Cape Town

"Through Dick's work in Building Functions Analysis at the School of Architecture in Stockholm I became acquainted with his mentor and colleague, Professor Sven Thiberg."



Madi became aware of Dick's many other interests, in particular co-housing and ARC•PEACE. She assisted in organising at least three international conferences and edited their reports.

"I visited Dick at Stockholm's Sjukhem, where he spent his final years after the cruel stroke." But there she found that *"Dick's interest in the world around him was as vibrant as ever."* So much so that she would go away, thinking: *"I'd just spent time with a genuinely GOOD MAN."*

JANE MCGROARTY, New York



Jane remembers being in Peru, at a meeting hosted by Marilú. There she met Dick Urban among other members.

"He was such a committed person. ARC•PEACE has lost a good friend."

BIJAYANAND MISRA, Delhi

Former Co Chair of ARC•PEACE thinks on the need of *"a special book in memoriam of Dick Urban. I will be delighted to write a piece on my two and half decade's old relationship with him."* Bijay is sure that *"many of our friends in ARC•PEACE also would love to write, in appreciation of our deep reverence and feeling for Dick."*



ARC•PEACE passed through times of excellence and joy over the three decade long existence. Keeping the family united and positive to carry on our mission has been our endeavour and is a challenge on its meaningful survival."

Delays to obtain a visa from India prevented Bijay from being at the funeral. *"Though I will not be on July 12 my mind and heart will be there."*

HIROKO MIZUMURA, Tokyo

"This news is too sad for me and for all of you."

We should take over Dick's will and go ahead."



KRISTINA NIKOLOVSKA, Paris



"I wished I could be there to express in person my sincere condolence to all concerned."

Professor Dick Urban Vestbro has been a great inspiration to us all."

OSMAN ELKHEIR, Khartoum

ARC•PEACE Board Member on behalf of Sudanese Group Osman was at the funeral in company of the organization Secretary.



It is well known that the Sudanese colleagues have been highly appreciated by the late Professor Vestbro. He showed his love for them during the dictatorship.

The moral support provided by Dick, and other Swedish professionals, meant a lasting encouragement to many.. Several of them contributed to the institutional development, in spite of the difficult times.

Osman coordinated from Stockholm the arrival and movements of the Secretary, taking care of all the details of his three-day stay. He was also close to Ann Mari helping punctually in the logistic aspects. Deeply moved, he was encouraged to address a few words during lunch on Friday 12. There, Osman paid honour to his friendship with Dick.

Finally, he encouraged all present to keep up Dick's memory in practical ways.

GEOFFREY PAYNE, London

"I will raise a glass to Dick's memory on the day and aspire to live up to his values. Many thanks indeed for preparing and circulating this memorial to Dick."



He embraced the world with his warmth and commitment." Geoff concludes saying of Dick: **"He's a great friend and a legend."**

JAIME ROYO-OLID, Madrid

"Needless to remind anybody in the ARC•PEACE network, that Prof. Urban Vestbro was an absolutely amazing man."



One can be proud of what he has done throughout his life and what he stood for. I do not think I have met an architect with such clarity of purpose, ethical stance and knowledge of social activism and development. He convinced me to keep a foot in academia and a major motivation for me is to honour his advice."

LUZ MARÍA SÁNCHEZ HURTADO (Marilú), Lima



Former Co Chair of ARC•PEACE Marilú suffered two consecutive losses; Dick's first and her father's, just 24 hours later.

Nonetheless she found words to recognize the positive influence received from Dick and other Swedish colleagues,

"This has been very sad news for all of us who knew Dick closely. We've got both his example and dedication to keep ARC•PEACE on the move. Like Sven Thiberg, he will always be with us and in our hearts." Marilú also remembers the days when she enjoyed a scholarship in Stockholm.

"The sadness I feel this day has to do with Dick being my best tutor and teacher; he was a great friend to me and many others of my condition."

Marilú concludes: *"I think all ARC•PEACE members, should pay tribute to Dick for his dedication and struggle, by moving the organization forward. We must follow Dick's goals, through making ARC•PEACE recognized and visible!"*

PAWAN K. SHRESTHA, Kathmandu

"We are all very Sad in Nepal.

He was a Guru, Mentor and Great support to us for establishing ASF Nepal.



We will all miss him forever."

RUMA SHUKLA, Delhi

"All ARC•PEACE India members are grieved after knowing about the demise of Prof. Dick U. Vestbro.



It is also a loss to the ARC•PEACE mission.

We pray to the Almighty to give strength to the family."

HELEN SLADE, Chicago

"The world has lost a great advocate and mentor.



From all of the Facebook posts and responses here, we can see what an impact he has had.

I am honoured to have known him.

He is the HERO."

RYO SHUTO, Tokyo

Ryo is in the Board of ARC•PEACE. He recalls of his friendship with Dick and says:



"I send my deepest condolence to the family and to all ARC•PEACE membership for this great loss."

BEATRIZ MATURANA COSSIO, Santiago, Chile



"A little more than a month has passed since our colleague, friend, and mentor, Dick Urban Vestbro sadly died. I met

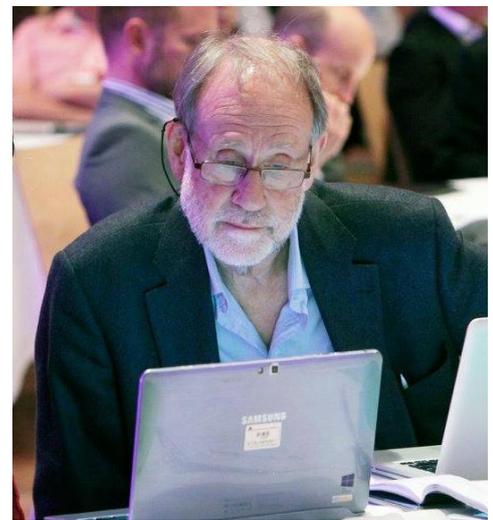
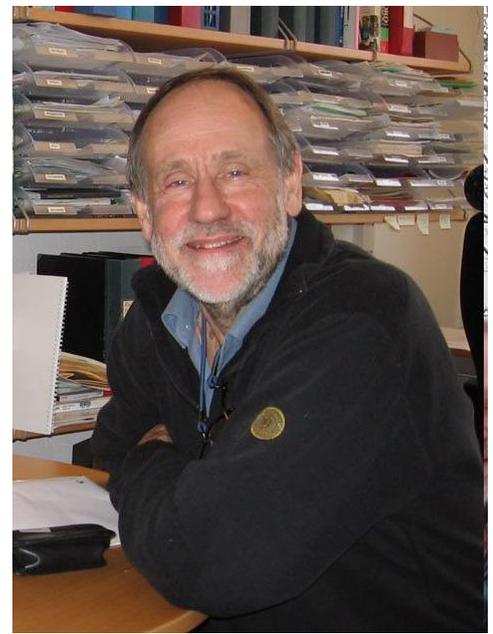
him in person for the first time in Stockholm in 2007. He introduced me to his love for co-housing, his beautiful city, Stockholm, and the KTH University where he worked.

He was a special person with what today is an "old fashion" sense of commitment and responsibility for the world we live in. I will miss our sporadic conversations on social housing, co-housing, Architects for Peace. Dick Urban, you will be missed.

Editor's Note

At closing this page with a selection among many messages on Dick's memory this Editor counted a couple of hundred relatives, friends and colleagues from all over the world. They enhanced the memory of that special human being that was Dick on this world.

Right pics are from Dick's Facebook page



Congenial lunch time in a community housing

Dick's family and close friends organized a lunch for the funeral attendants, after the ceremony.

A specially hired double deck bus transported the group from the cemetery to the community housing to spend a fraternal lunch time (Photos below).

Generous beverages and appetizing dishes were strategically prepared to facilitate the little crowd self service.

As this was a first time for the Editor to take part in a Swedish gathering of this nature; he followed the locals trying to do what he was seeing.

Following the locals, he learned a way to pay tribute to a Swedish relative and friend that has just left.

That was an opportunity for getting acquainted or to renewing old time relationships. Besides, some of the people knew aspects of Dick's life.

A guitar player and singer shared moving pieces from his repertoire.

Some quoted a piece of poetry she thought to be anonymous; but to our great surprise an elderly lady silently sitting there was the author!

Osman Elkheir shared aspects of his long friendship with Dick Urban.

ARC•PEACE cofounding member and Secretary Oscar Margenet Nadal (photo below) then spoke in Spanish and Eva Björklund interpreted in Swedish. At inviting all to continue the enormous task he inherited from Dick, Oscar said:

"It is a fact that Dick left us physically; but it's also true that his spirit survives him. We wouldn't be here if it was otherwise."

Sven Thiberg, Per Iwansson and Dick Urban Vestbro passed away leaving ARC•PEACE with no Swedish representatives. I strongly encouraged you to do whatever you can to keep Swedish heritage alive through ARC•PEACE activities."

[The Editor](#)



Four strong reasons to work hard in memoriam of Dick Urban Vestbro

ARC•PEACE Secretary **Oscar Margenet Nadal** (right) informs that the NGO currently has eleven regional and national group members. Adding the individual associates



this represents around two hundred colleagues spread all over the world.

According to the UIA there are some million and half architects in the world. In other words: one out of 7.500 colleagues is a member of our institution. This statistics repeatedly leads us to one important question:

What needs to be done to attract more colleagues to the vision, mission and tasks of ARC•PEACE?

After reviewing the NGO's thirty year history and refreshing Dick's writings Oscar suggests at least four clues to respond the still unanswered question.

I. Architecture is art and service
Natural beauty is due to the close harmony between the elements that sustain all living creatures: sun, water, oxygen and the nutrients of the earth.

Graeme Bristol (right) is ARC•PEACE Co chair. He knows of architects who live in harmony with natural landscape and reflect it by serving the neighbours better than colleagues served by them.



To Graeme students that have received a formation which includes not only Beaux Arts, Arts and Crafts, and High Technology, but also a sound humane approach to service will have a higher approach to professionalism than any others.

He is now searching for Architectural Schools wishing to start a UNESCO Chair on Human Rights.

II. Design increases quality of life
Design has acquired an impressive level thanks to the advancement of the information technology. In Marketing it is taught that a good design ensures the best positioning of a brand.

Innovation and creativity are put to the service of the product. Thus, people become a numerical target.

On the other side, the architectural and urban designer who influences quality of life of citizens for the best is the one who puts technology to the service of human beings, not the other way around. To succeed, rather than working for people, this professional works with people.



Ahmad al-Jowder is ARC•PEACE Board member. He teaches in the Kingdom of Bahrain (above pic). [\(To Page 7\)](#)

Four strong reasons to work hard in memoriam of Dick Urban Vestbro

III. Planning saves costly errors



ARC•PEACE Co chair **Ibtihal Yousif** (left) is from Sudan and lives in UAE where she has successfully finished pos grade studies. "Lean principles are being introduced in

Design, Plan and Build professions with the aim to maximize the value and reduce the waste within the work process" says Ibtihal.

"LEAN approach helps to address and handle all the deficiencies related to the practice in order to achieve more efficiency and viability of the work (Forbes 2011)".

Our colleague recommends: "As soon as the project is initiated, and prior to construction, attention should be given to streamlining the flow, minimizing waste and maximizing value; thus, **more important that to 'do things right' is to 'do the right things'.**

I encourage colleague professionals to prevent committing costly mistakes thanks to applying LEAN concept."

IV. Social Responsibility is synergy

Alejandra 'Ale' Cerutti Jacob is the Secretary of the Ibero America chapter of ARC•PEACE. "Palma – Rio 2020" is one of the Projects she coordinates.



She likes the challenge "*carpe diem quam minimum credula postero*" ('seize the day and distrust the tomorrow'), as a mental program.

Alejandra uses 'synergy' (word coined and popularized by R. Buckminster 'Bucky' Fuller, an architect-innovator from Great Britain (1895 – 1983). "**Honest individual efforts are more productive when are part of team work**" says Ale.

She advocates for investing personal time and effort in cooperation. "*In our materialistic and selfish society, our contributions will always yield more if focused on Sustainability and the Common Good.*" Alejandra sees power concentration and war industry as two enemies; "*opposing both of them makes socially responsible citizens*".

SOME BIBLIOGRAPHY By DICK URBAN VESTBRO

- *To build for equality* (1968)
- *Women's struggle: for a revolutionary women's movement* (With Irene Matthis, 1971)
- *What does it cost to live in a public house?* (With Stig Westberg, 1976)
- *Social life and dwelling space: an analysis of three house types in Dar es Salaam* (doktorsavhandling, 1975)
- *Collective house in Sweden: goals, design, development 1900-1980* (1979)
- *Current collective housing projects* (With Maj-Britt Grossman, 1982)
- *The new generation of collective houses: experiments with social integration, administration and room design* (With Alison Woodward and Maj-Britt Grossman, 1989)
- *Public housing research* (1993)
- *Human Settlements and Professional Responsibility* (ARC•PEACE Contributions to the Habitat II Conference, 1996)
- *How should the post-apartheid city be planned?* (With Teresa Almgren, 1999)
- *Architecture as politics: the role of design and planning for peace and sustainable development* (Edited by Dick U. Vestbro, 2002)

PLANNING ARC•PEACE XXI^o GENERAL ASSEMBLY 2020

When GA XIX^o and XX^o were held at Palma (2016 and 2017) Dick U. Vestbro was prevented to attend. He had been present at the two previous GAs; i.e. at Copenhagen (XVII^o, 2012), and at Vienna (XVIII^o, 2014).

It has been considered by the Executive Committee that it would be quite convenient to hold the next meeting in Brazil. This is so taken into account that Rio do Janeiro has been declared World Capital of Architecture, by UNESCO and UIA*.

Besides, as the UIA XXVII^o Meeting will be also celebrated in that occasion the Secretary circulated a Survey among Board Members, to hear comments on this initiative, early this year. It will soon be repeated to a broader membership.

A good number of members are of the idea that ARC•PEACE should create a practical way to pay tribute to our great Swedish driver.

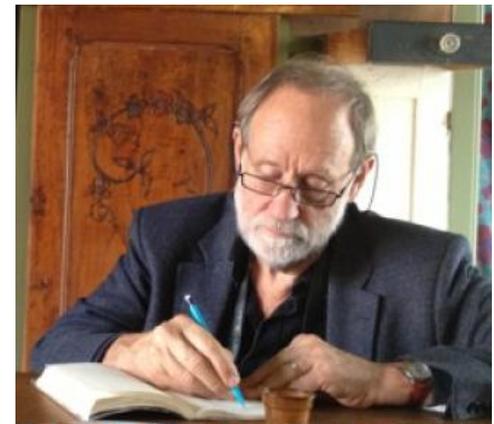
Then, the updated multiple choice Survey will introduce a new one including the above suggestion.

Therefore, the Editor recommends all NL readers to start thinking about attending next GA, one year ahead.

Below: the beautiful 'Carioca' city.



*See Newsletters No 59 and 60

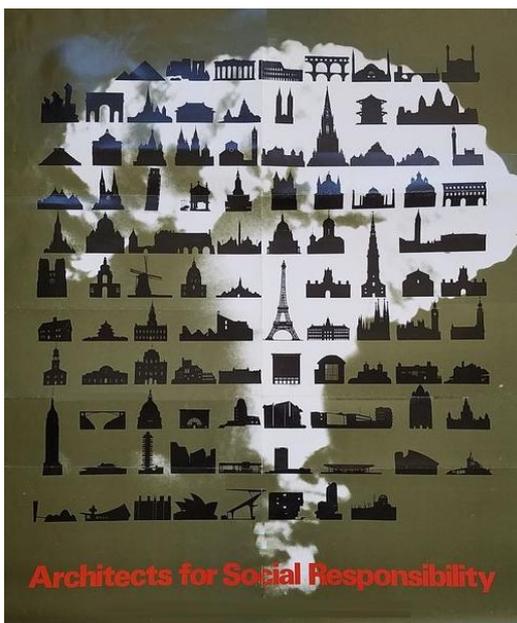


- *Methodologies in housing research* (edited by Dick Urban Vestbro, Yonca Hürol, Nicholas Wilkinson, 2003)
- *Are architects and planners obstacles to upgrading slums?* (Edited by Dick U. Vestbro, Barcelona, 2008)
- *Architecture & Planning under Different Political Systems*, by ARC•PEACE (International Architects Designers Planners for Social Responsibility, Dick U. Vestbro editor) 2014.

[Research and pics by The Editor](#)

DICK'S LEGACY NEEDS SUPPORT TO BE CONTINUED ALL OVER THE WORLD

This perhaps is the first page of a new era in ARC•PEACE history. After 32 years there is no Swedish active member left. Below there are 17 pics describing activities around the world. They need sponsorship to continue, improve or replicate. Would you contribute?



From left to right and from top down: **ADPSR (USA)** fighting against nuclear armamentism; **ARC•PEACE Peru** empowering women's right to land and habitat; **ARC•PEACE Sudan** caring traditional architecture; **ARC•PEACE India** advocating women's right to land; **ARC•PEACE Ibero America** fostering Social Responsibility programs; **ARC•PEACE R.D. Congo** educating from childhood on Human Rights; **MCCI Argentina** teaching prisoners arts and crafts; **SGR (UK)** assessing on renewable energies; **CAHR** denouncing abuse on children; **ARC•PEACE Mexico** training young architects on Bio construction; **Cuba Solar** developing renewable energies; **prospect Kenya partner** donation to buy clothing for 20 children; **teaching children with 'The Scroll of Palma'** to attract attention from Local Authorities to respect their rights; **prospect Nepal partner** meeting with Ben Spencer at Kathmandu; **prospect Uruguay partner** Yacaré Football Club training more than 100 children; **prospect Argentina partner** training adults to teach children under judiciary situation.

This NL Special Edition was edited by Oscar Margenet Nadal, ARC•PEACE Secretary. The Editor thanks the Swedish colleagues and friends of ARC•PEACE who organized the Funeral and the memorial lunch time on Friday 12 July. They made Dick's farewell an unforgettable occasion to renew old and strong relationships. Special thanks to Ann Mari Engel and Jenny Vestbro for their generosity at commenting the draft version of the NL before publishing. NL #61 is due on September 2019