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    Design Like You Give a Damn: Architectural Responses to Humanitarian Crises

       This book starts off with writings by the founders of Architecture for Humanity. The first writing was by Cameron Sinclair in which he describes the history of how this NGO started and has evolved. The second writing was Kate Stohr who lays out the full history of humanitarian architecture. The book then goes on to show examples of humanitarian architecture projects that have been made and implemented.

       In the writing about Architecture for Humanity, Cameron talks about how they started to bring awareness to humanitarian architecture by holding international competitions such as mobile healthcare centers for Africa. These competitions taught Cameron that architects are interested in helping such causes, but there are still many hurdles to overcome to implement a successful project. Some of the hurdles he mentioned were getting sufficient funding and having control of the funding, need to have on-site connections, the amount of time that the architect can donate, getting a designer to donate a design (some worry about others taking that design and using it for profit), and getting the architect to understand the culture of the place they are designing for. These are some of the reasons that Cameron and Kate decided to create Architecture for Humanity. The NGO has become a way to fund these projects effectively, has reduced the fear of unpatented buildings by working with Creative Commons to patent donated designs, and has connected architects with other NGO's in need of architectural assistance. It has become a "conduit for change in the industry" and has promoted and implemented humanitarian design.

       Kate Stohr lays out a detailed timeline of how humanitarian design started and has evolved. She believes that the first example of humanitarian work goes back to the 1906 earthquake in San Francisco. After this event, many low-income people were displaced from their homes to parks. To encourage these people to move out of the parks, the city provided a temporary house in the park. People would pay $2 a month and could pay to move the house, but all the houses had to be gone by August 1907 or they would lose ownership of the house. This example of temporary housing was one of many social projects that she mentions. She recognizes that there is still a struggle with housing people because it is situation specific and complex. Also, there will be many natural disasters, but she seems hopeful because technology has allowed for a rapid exchange of ideas and cuts on cost of time.

       The bulk of the book presents designs that were implemented. The projects are grouped into housing; community; water, energy, and sanitation; and politics, policy, and planning. Not only do you learn the concept and reason behind each project but also learn the lessons from each on what works and what doesn't. Since there are so many examples, I want to outline five major lessons I learned from reading about these projects.

1. It is important to think of every cost when it comes to humanitarian architecture such as shipping of temporary shelters because it can be the end of a project.

2. There are so many innovative ideas out there, but the most successful were ideas that from people who worked closely with those they were for.
3. Don't let policy limit you. Policy limitations should be used as inspiration.
4. Construction details should be drawn with the local architect or builder, so that they know that it can be built.
5. The smallest ripple can start a wave such as raising money for sleeping bags for the homeless which made a city look at its problem with lack of facilities for the homeless.

In general, the book is pretty positive and gives many great examples of humanitarian design. It also proves the importance of giving design because it can empower and help others.

P.S. Great book for case studies!