

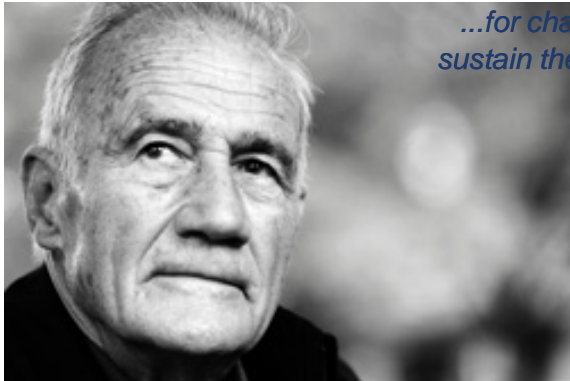


The Right Livelihood Award

for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people

John F. Charlewood Turner (UK)

(1988)



...for championing the rights of people to build, manage and sustain their own shelter and communities.

Photo: Wolfgang Schmidt

John F C Turner, born in 1927, has been involved for 40 years in developing the theory, practice and tools for self-managed home and neighbourhood building - in Peru, the United States and the United Kingdom.

Turner graduated in architecture from the Architectural Association in London in 1954 and worked in Peru for eight years from 1957, mainly on the advocacy and design of community action and self-help programmes in villages and urban squatter settlements. From 1965 he was for two years a Research Associate at the Joint Centre for Urban Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University and then lectured at MIT until 1973. Returning to London, he was a lecturer at the Architectural Association and the Development Planning Unit, University College London, until 1983, when he resigned to devote himself full-time to his non-profit consultancy AHAS.

During these years, Turner's many publications have had a great influence on housing policies worldwide. They include: *Uncontrolled Urban Settlement: Problems and Policies*, first published in 1966; and the books *Freedom to Build, dweller control of the housing process* (with Robert Fichter, Macmillan, 1972), and *Housing by People: Towards autonomy in building environments* (Marion Boyars, 1976).

From 1983 through 1986, Turner was coordinator of the Habitat International Coalition's NGO project for the UN International Year of Shelter for the Homeless (1987). Under this project, a global survey of local initiatives for home and neighbourhood improvement led to the report *Building Community: A Third World Case Book*, edited by Turner's wife, Bertha, and for which he wrote the

introduction and conclusions.

Since his move from London to the south-coast town of Hastings in 1989, Turner has worked as a Trustee of the Hastings Trust, a non-profit organisation dedicated to the sustainable development of the town. This has provided him with an opportunity to confront the social and economic consequences of corporate urban-industrialism on his own home ground. Convinced that a sustainable civilisation has to be founded on local economies, he has concluded that a liveable future depends as much on regenerating the community base of the dominant industrial nations as on strengthening the surviving community-base of the exploited nations. He is concentrating his efforts on the search for two neglected elements and their dissemination: the 'tools for building community', so many of which are widely transferable, and the universal principles which guide successful adaptation.

Quotation

"When dwellers control the major decisions and are free to make their own contributions in the design, construction, or management of their housing, both this process and the environmental produced stimulate individual and social well-being. When people have no control over nor responsibility for key decisions in the housing process, on the other hand, dwelling environments may instead become a barrier to personal fulfilment and a burden on the economy."

John F. C. Turner

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