TEACHING-LEARNING-RESEARCH: DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTS

• Paper / Proposal Title:
Reflections and Learnings from Research Seminar Courses on UAE National Housing

• Author(s) Name:
Omid Zia Rouhani

• University or Company Affiliation:
Zayed University

• Abstract (300 words):
In collaboration with the Abu Dhabi Housing Authority (ADHA), a series of undergraduate research seminar courses were planned and conducted at Zayed University to better understand the needs and expectations of young United Arab Emirates (UAE) Nationals. This was primarily to help ADHA plan the future of national housing in the UAE for the next thirty years and to ensure that the houses that they provide best suit the requirements of the UAE nationals. The research was conducted through a series of questions such as: how should heritage and culture affect the design of a home? Is culture static or evolving and if it is evolving how has it evolved in the UAE over time; how will it continue to evolve over the next 30 years? Can domestic architecture contribute to the happiness of a family? What is the difference between social needs and entitlements? Should national housing be based on said social needs or entitlements? These questions were researched, through literature reviews, interviews and field research and then the findings discussed as a group before documenting them both as a poster presentation and a research paper.
This paper aims to reflect on the challenges and outcomes of these research seminar courses initiated in collaboration with governmental agencies in order to better understand its credibility as a new method of governance and planning. The academic integrity of such collaborative research seminar courses in the field of design will also be further examined.
KEYWORDS: National Housing, UAE, Education, Research, Social needs
• Author(s) Biography (200 words each):
Omid Rouhani, has been working in the field of architecture for 30 years. With Master of Architecture from the University of Arizona and a Bachelors of Arts with Honors in Architecture from the Birmingham City University. Omid Rouhani has been a practicing architect in three different continents, he has designed and supervised more than eighty projects ranging from custom mansions to head offices for large multinational corporations. He is also a full time faculty at Zayed University teaching Interior Design since 2001, having established an Interior Design major in the Dubai and Abu Dhabi campuses of Zayed University.
Working very closely with the UAE Housing Authorities, his current research interests are in the areas of housing and the effects of design and cultural development on end user happiness. Papers based on his research have been presented at national and international conferences and his professional work has been published in regional and international architectural journals. His work can be viewed on www.rouhaniarch.com