

## INTRODUCTION

### *AIA Report on University Research (volume 5)* The American Institute of Architects

Like the building process, research doesn't end with design and execution. Good researchers reflect on their work and ask, "Now what?" In this fifth volume of the American Institute of Architects' Report on University Research, our authors look back at their work previously supported by the AIA Research for Practice program and the Upjohn Research Initiative. By making their own past research the subject of their current research, they assess its impact on people and profession, improve their methods, and draw new connections that only time can bring to the surface.

In research, self-reflection and evaluation are often difficult amid the rush to the next project—another characteristic that research shares with design and building. This volume clearly shows some of the benefits of reflection. It reveals that in many cases, work funded by the AIA has led authors in new directions as they seized on unexpected insights brought to light by their initial investigations. In others, their work has blossomed into large-scale projects with significant social impact.

You will see, for instance, how a project to create temporary classrooms in Mumbai has grown from its roots as a collaboration between U.S. student designers and Indian teachers and developers into a potentially self-sustaining mobile school system that will benefit local schoolchildren long after its initiators have gone home. In another project, the LabStudio has evolved into a self-sustaining organization that applies insights from the study of biological systems to the fields of design and biomedicine. Their work brings together architects, scientists, engineers and mathematicians, generating new insights into both ecological design and architectural practice as they explore how biological systems are formed and operate.

This kind of thinking—across systems, across continents, across time, and across the gap between the academy and profession—is what the AIA Research for Practice program is all about. We're delighted to share these 21 examples of interdisciplinary teams looking back on the work undertaken in the first four volumes, and looking ahead as they connect their previously funded research with the future.

The AIA Report on University Research series aims to sample exemplary research, stimulate interest and discussion among the AIA's emerging knowledge communities, and strengthen the relationship between the profession and the universities. The series began in 2004 with the first call to universities from the AIA Board Knowledge Committee to gather, highlight, and distribute reports on research that advance professional knowledge and practice.

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Through the Report on University Research, the Latrobe Fellowship, the Upjohn Research Initiative, and other programs, the AIA is bridging the gap between the profession and the academy, to the benefit of both. These beneficial collaborations and their results would not be possible without the efforts of many members and staff of the AIA. As in years past, this volume never would have come about without the effort and insight of Richard L. Hayes, PhD, AIA, CAE, Director of AIA Knowledge Resources. Alison Norris was once again invaluable in creating the final document.

We think you'll agree that reflection, as revealed in these pages, is an essential part of research, broadening its social and environmental impact through the continuing analysis and development of the ideas that shape our profession and our world.

Regards,

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