

REBUILD BY DESIGN

Design and Politics: Understanding Global Resiliency

[Rebuild by Design](#) has established a small global working group on the design and politics of resiliency. This group is looking at—and assisting in shaping—how cities and regions around the world incorporate design into resiliency approaches, initiatives, and policy. Its first collective task is a collection of essays addressing two questions: First, identifying how design thinking is being incorporated and translated into political processes and understanding the obstacles that prevent design insights from informing policy practices. Second, collecting ideas for improving these processes, so that design and politics might be better integrated.

This initial group will form the core of a larger network that we aim to build over the long run. Meanwhile, are engaging directly with existing programs and initiatives. We will not duplicate efforts, but instead use this global working group to ignite broader discussions and further collaborations.

About the Network:

Harnessing the momentum we have gained through Rebuild by Design’s experience of this year-long process of regional exploration in the northeastern United States, we are reaffirming our desire to collaborate across borders more extensively to better understand the intersection of design and politics. Henk Ovink, principal of Rebuild by Design, has worked extensively on this topic, as have others in a number of settings. Now, to develop more and better research, we must draw on examples from across the globe. We aim to facilitate conversations across borders, to learn important lessons quickly and avoid duplicating efforts. To this end, we are establishing a selectively diverse working group of leading thinkers.

Our goal is to build a high-level, influential group, able to focus its collective energy on some increasingly urgent problems in public policy. As part of this global braintrust, we will seek opportunities to plug into existing networks to influence design and politics on the broadest base possible, both by serving in an advisory role, and by exploring opportunities to join international, public events at different global sites as a network of experts.

Lead Supporter
The Rockefeller Foundation

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Short Term Objectives

A collection of papers

Together, we will develop a body of engaged research that draws upon the group's combined expertise in areas of resiliency, infrastructure, and governance—in each case, connected to design. We want to build on academic insights, while speaking to audiences beyond the university. Our goal is to generate a series of cutting-edge, accessible texts, informed by our collective reflections, which will advance state of the art thinking about the intersection of politics and design. The content of this series is ever-evolving and we look to your expertise to help it take shape.

By the end of 2014, each member of the group will contribute a paper on an area of his or her choosing that explores the questions “What potential role does a design-driven process have in effecting change in a politically complex setting? What place does research and design hold in government-driven planning processes? How can research and design create the political circumstances that foster design-driven results? How can this network shape and propose innovative solutions for political discussion?” Potential topics for exploration include: people, places, events, future developments, uncertainties and vulnerabilities, risks, policy processes, decision making, governance, politics, or other relevant areas. Cutting across these themes, we are interested in members' unique insights on design and politics, which come from acting at the intersection of research and the policy process.

These papers will be disseminated online through Rebuild by Design; some or all may appear in a journal or edited volume. Rebuild by Design will convene a series of virtual meetings, beginning in early September, to frame and shape this research, and to share knowledge on best practices and challenges for individual regions towards a collective purpose.

A mobile, global braintrust

Rebuild will seek funding to bring network members together for several roundtables, in advance of a potential summit in 2015. Each of these roundtables will be organized around the network members and their partners, building upon the capacity and experience of the place and knowledge already in the making, but also creating hubs of design-and-politics thinking on resiliency. These roundtables will be organized lean and mean, piggybacking on ongoing conferences and meetings around the world. The group will also seek opportunities for network members to serve in advisory roles to resiliency projects and initiatives worldwide.

Thus we continuously seek opportunities to meet in person and to connect with existing conversations and initiatives. We intend to connect through our network not only knowledge and insights from diverse global standpoints, but from a range of concrete places. We are especially committed to traveling outside the United States to sites around the world, in particular where members are institutionally based.

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The Network:

Chairs: Eric Klinenberg and Henk Ovink, Rebuild by Design

Europe: [Ricky Burdett](#) Professor of Urban Studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), deputy head of the Department of Sociology and director of LSE Cities and the Urban Age programme, London, UK (also jury member, RBD).

China and Netherlands: [Ole Bouman](#) and Chinese partner - Creative Director at the Shenzhen Biennale for Architecture and Urbanism and founding Dean of the Value Factory Academy. Netherlands (also jury member, RBD). Bouman is also seeking a Chinese collaborator to join this part of the project.

Africa: [Edgar Pieterse](#). South African Research Chair in Urban Policy and Director of the African Center for Cities, South Africa

Japan: [Hitoshi Abe](#), professor and chair of the UCLA Department of Architecture and Urban Design, Los Angeles, CA

Southeast Asia: [Marilyn Taylor](#), Dean and Paley Professor, UPenn School of Design; Partner in Charge of the Urban Design and Planning Practice at Skidmore Owings & Merrill LLP. With co-writer

Brazil/Latin America: [Fernando de Mello Franco](#). De Mello Franco is São Paulo's Secretary for Urban Development, and an architect and curator.

United States: [Mindy Thompson Fullilove](#) - Professor of Clinical Sociomedical Sciences and Professor of Clinical of Psychiatry, College of Physicians and Surgeons.

India: [Rahul Mehrotra](#) - Professor of Urban Design and Planning and Chair of the Department of Urban Planning and Design at Harvard, and a practicing architect, urban designer, and educator, active in Mumbai. Mehrotra will be joining the network in January 2015.

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