

PRESS RELEASE

Denise Bennetts to Chair Humanitarian Architecture Charity, Article 25

Article 25, the UK's leading humanitarian architecture charity, has today (7 October 2020) announced that Denise Bennetts, co-founder of Bennetts Associates, will become the charity's next Chair of Trustees.

Taking on the role from Sunand Prasad, Past President of the RIBA and co-founder of architectural practice Penoyre & Prasad, Bennetts commented:

"It is a real honour to take on this role from such an accomplished and much-admired architect in Sunand, who has served the charity so well. It gives me the opportunity to further fulfil a career-long goal that both my husband Rab and I hold close to our hearts – to use architecture for greater social and environmental good where it is needed most."

Named after the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights and its statement for the equality of access to shelter, Article 25 designs and builds schools, hospitals and homes in vulnerable communities worldwide. Since its foundation in 2006, the charity has worked on over ninety projects in thirty-four countries. By engaging local beneficiaries in community participation workshops, communities are able to take ownership of their project right from the start. The charity also connects a local workforce of skilled and unskilled workers to encourage skills sharing; in doing so Article 25 not only leaves behind excellent buildings, but also a society that has the ability to build for itself and create a positive future for generations to come.



(Lycée Amadou Hampaté Bâ Niamey. Credit: Nicolas Réméné)

Prasad, who has chaired Article 25's board of trustees since 2015, will continue on the board until its next AGM in spring 2021, having recently been appointed chair of the UK Green Building Council.

Of Bennetts' appointment, Prasad said: "Denise is a long-standing supporter of Article 25, and is a great addition to the board of trustees. We aim to equip our board with leading lights in architecture, engineering and construction, as well as seeking people with shared values of a socially just and sustainable world. Denise fits the bill to a tee! I wish her and the charity every success in delivering such an important mission."

Bennetts is taking up the leadership post at an exciting time for the charity, as it embarks on its biggest project yet – the reconstruction of 676 homes that were devastated in Hurricane Maria on the island of Dominica. Working in partnership with engineering firm Clarkebond and funded by the World Bank the Housing Recovery Project, Article 25's design team made its first site visit in late September.

Much like the wider charity sector, Article 25 is trying to tackle the latest fundraising challenges head on, as various income-generating events have been cancelled since lockdown. In addition to its annual art auction, 10x10 (which this year will be hosted virtually on the Give Fundraising [<https://www.givefundraising.co.uk/>] platform from 31st October to 12th November), the charity is supported by a growing number of companies in the construction industry through long-term sponsorship as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes, the charity invites others to sign up too.

Bennetts continued: “It’s not right that where you are born determines whether you have a sufficiently safe place to live, access to healthcare support, or indeed be able to get to school to enjoy the opportunities made possible through learning. I’m keen to help shape Article 25’s role as a catalyst for thriving and resilient communities right across the globe.”

Jack Pringle – a founding trustee of Article 25 and Past President of the RIBA – added: “Sunand has led Article 25 to become the charity it is today – a highly professional, proactive organisation that has mastered how to approach design and construction in some of the world’s most challenging settings, improving the life chances of some of the world’s poorest.”

Bennetts concluded “To illustrate just how powerful a relatively small company donation is to our work, if every architectural practice listed in the AJ100 were to donate just £1,000, this level of funding is equivalent to Article 25 creating a six-classrooms-strong school block, in communities where literacy rates are shockingly low.”

ENDS

Notes to editor:



Denise Bennetts

Founder (Bennetts Associates)
BArch (Hons) DipArch RIBA FRIAS

Denise co-founded Bennetts Associates in 1987, with her partner Rab Bennetts, and played a strategic role in the overall design direction of the practice. She has been involved across the practice’s wide range of award-winning and highly sustainable projects including major headquarters and City office developments, theatres and hotels. She is a respected architectural critic, is an assessor for several awards schemes and is currently a member of the RIBA National and International Awards Group. She also serves as an external examiner at all stages of education at architecture schools across the UK, is a member of the British School at Rome’s Faculty of the Fine Arts and chairs the RIAS Nominations Committee, was the chair of Usable Buildings Trust and became a trustee of Article 25 in 2019. Denise took lead responsibility for the practice’s financial and legal affairs and undertook the key role in transferring ownership of the practice to an Employee Ownership Trust in 2016.

Contact: Sunand Prasad

Past President of the RIBA and co-founder of architectural practice Penoyre & Prasad

Tel: 020 7466 1000