

TG23 - Culture in Construction



As we noted in the previous issue of Information, the inaugural meeting of a new Group is an important occasion and indeed its outcome can be critical for the viability of the Group.

Dick Fellows and Dave Seymour (below), Joint Coordinators of TG23 led the way in small group sessions at the inaugural meeting of TG23 in Cambridge, United Kingdom on 18th September 1997.





Earlier discussions on the concept of culture brought out the following interesting progression:

Beliefs --> Values --> Behaviour --> Performance

Dr. Richard Fellows, University of Bath and Dr. David E. Seymour, University of Birmingham, the Joint Coordinators of TG23 (introduced in Information Issue 2/97), needed to have no qualms about this Group which held its first meeting at Selwyn College, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom, on 18th September last.

This had been scheduled for the date immediately following the 13th Annual Conference of the Association of Researchers in Construction Management - ARCOM, also in Cambridge.

Not surprisingly this first meeting attracted a preponderance of participants from the United Kingdom who were also attending the ARCOM Conference although there were two representatives from the University of Hong Kong as well as Dr. Li Shirong from China, currently at the University of Reading.

What is it?

Opening the meeting, Richard Fellows pointed to the initial difficulty which many people, particularly students, encountered in explaining with a degree of precision, what they understood by the concept of Culture in Construction.

There was agreement for the suggestion on the part of the Joint Coordinators that following an introductory explanation by CIB Deputy Secretary General Chris Pollington of CIB and the role of its Working Commissions and Task Groups, discussions at the meeting should be free-flowing while addressing the following aspects in broad terms:

- What is Culture in Construction?
- Current Research
- Towards a Research Agenda
- Identification of Tasks for the Group
- Future Events

As these discussions proceeded there was an emerging consensus that culture in construction or in anything for that matter was an "invisible force field" when you hit against it you certainly know it is there!

Dr. Seymour's suggestion to spend the second half of the meeting in small groups with role playing as appropriate was enthusiastically taken up.

These groups took the morning's discussions further by seeking to refine the definition of culture and to analyse what empirical evidence there was for its existence.

Such issues were examined as whether it was really feasible to compare different cultures or to evaluate them. Could they be influenced and if so by what measures?

These and other aspects received careful consideration within the groups. At the close of the session each reported back to the meeting on their findings.

If this inaugural meeting did nothing else it served to confirm that a programme of constructive and rewarding activities awaits TG23 and the Joint Coordinators will now be formulating substantive expanded Scope and Terms of Reference.

Invitation to join

Meanwhile any CIB Member who wishes to nominate a representative to TG23 should inform one of the Joint Coordinators whose addresses etc. are given below. Please let the General Secretariat know.

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