

## +TIBA... A PLACE WHERE MANY PEOPLE MEET

...a place where you meet with yourself  
...a place where you realize realities behind the screens  
...a place where you see that way of living can be a bit different.



*In Tupi, an indigenous language in Brazil, "tibá" means: " A PLACE WHERE MANY PEOPLE MEET ". TIBA has been built 25 years ago by Rose and Johan van Lengen to impart a deeper awareness of how we perceive our environment. Through the integration of art and science, intuition and logic, reason and feeling, communication will be enriched. Each individual is given a possibility to share his own experience, which then becomes a part of a true collective, using group communication and creativity.*

At TIBA while you are meeting with many people, many different cultures and experiences; you will meet with yourself as well. TIBA tells us 'open your eyes' and see the different dimension of reality which is behind the screens of letters, words, concepts and not to forget, judgments.

So, when you arrive to TIBA, first thing you meet are some animal's sculptures, which take kindly you to this amazing place. A path way will take you to a great square, where the people meet with each other for breakfast, lunch, 5 o'clock tea, dinner and of course many unscheduled meetings. But, before reaching to square on the right side of pathway you will meet with a cute dome house! You can assume that hobbits live there.

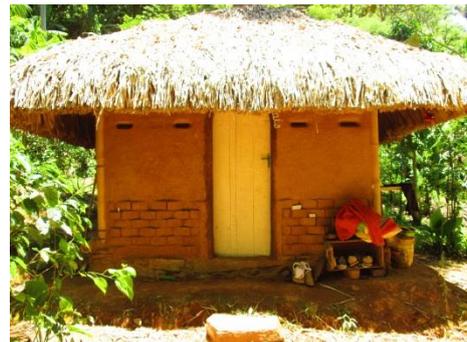


From the square other path way invites you into the forest. While you are walking on the soft ground, suddenly hidden stone benches and table invite you to have a seat and enjoy the nature or some other sculptures say to you 'hi, welcome' ...



And you will be surrounded by many different kind of plants, colorful flowers and strange fruits. Just by discovering the plants you will realize that in TIBA life moves in a different way.

Keep walking around the TIBA and there will be infinite number of surprises. Suddenly you will come across mosaics on the ground out of nowhere! Or some stone stairways camouflaged by plants. If you follow it, you will reach place full of flowers with fantastic smells. Please keep walking, still you haven't meet with many kind of mud-adobe houses, Brazilian Indian's houses, vegetable garden etc. All these shelters are made using clay, sand, water, cow\horse\donkey manure, bamboo leaves, whey (cheese water), linseed oil and more of the same natural materials that TIBA already has.



These buildings are such an excellent way of realizing that nature has amazing diversity and creativity! Actually nature always gives to us whatever we need... as Johan says just need to "open your eyes and discover the life."

So let's listen to dear Johan van Lengen and get inspired by his words...

#### ❖ How you started to being interested with natural buildings?

*-Actually it's a combination of many things. I was invited for a housing competition in Bahia-Brazil for favelas(slums). I made a design and I won, after which I visited the community to realize that reality was so different. My plan was just a castle in the air, nothing to do with the reality. So I decided to stay there for a couple of days then I discovered two things.*

*-First the only building material they have is garbage and they built houses, I discovered that 'this is real creativity in a community'*

*-Secondly they were not well versed about basic structural systems. So, I thought with a little more knowledge they can improve their buildings! That is how I started to write the book "Manual for the Barefoot Architect". They don't need anyone from outside, people are creative and they just need opportunity to express themselves .*

*This also lead me later on in creating a center: "Alternative ways of design and building" where I started to discover and experiment with different kind of natural and industrial materials.*

**❖ The techniques of building with natural materials which are being used and taught in TIBA, have they been invented by you?**

*-No. I got invitation from Mexico to work. There I meet with people who work on field and live inside the adobe buildings. So I learnt everything about adobe construction, plastering, natural sources from the people of Mexico.*

**❖ So after witnessing many alternative technologies, was your dream to create a center for the same?**

*-No, I never dreamt about creating a center. I came to visit a friend who lives near to TIBA. While walking, I got the idea to create a center. That's all. I was not dreaming like "oh I want to create a center!" it was simple, a sudden voice saying "Hey you! You have to make a center." And the only thing I can offer is alternative techniques of building so I started doing just that.*

**❖ How do you see, your way of architecture?**

*-Many people don't know the possibilities about how to build. They force themselves to buy concrete, bricks, stones etc. and transport these from far away. They are not aware that they can do better job with other materials which are around them. It should be an eye opener for them, that has been the purpose of my way of architecture for last 20-30 years. It's possible, so many thing are possible...*

**❖ How did you feel when you had your first encounter with natural building? Why did you want to get into this field?**

*- It is right in front of us! You don't need to transfer or buy, You just need to experiment and find right proportion. By testing the materials you find out the best qualities of it. When I was living in the adobe house at Mexico four women tried to seduce me! And this never happened to me in concrete house and it is real. I don't know what earth does but it is good vibration .Its a healthier place.*

**❖ What are you offering people through TIBA? What should we take back ?**

*-TIBA started in September 1987 , in 25 years things have changed. Lot's of people come here to add something from their side. They offer whatever they know. This is a common practice in TIBA. Bamboo masters, yoga masters, meditation masters, adobe masters... So we have many kinds of information in TIBA, we share them all.*

*But one thing that TIBA can offer is specially is "opening their eyes..." that is the main idea. To see life in a much more pleasant, much more fun manner. People are struggling, working, fighting, different languages full of judgment, ugly or beautiful, small or big, poor or rich all the activities are full of judgments. And judgments keep you away from reality. When judgments comes in your way, instead of seeing the realty you just see the screens which the system has put. So our task is "open up the eyes"*

*Let's say architects or constructors in here can see things differently than what they studied, they can see behind these screens. TIBA offers this to people, to see the realty behind the screen,*

to see yourself, to see others. TĪBA means “place which many people meet” in the same time you meet with yourself! No matter where are you working; in the kitchen, in the garden, in the building doesn't matter... just being here and working together with the people from all over the world. This is most amazing detail about TĪBA.

You can have lots of different perspective about the realty through the medium of people from all over the world. What we are doing is not important, what is important is learning about life and how to solve problems together, how to seek the realty.

Shakespeare wrote “to be or not to be” that is the question, “tiba or not tiba” is the answer.

### ❖ What gives you joy in TĪBA?

-A young man was here from Afghanistan and said that in his culture they believe “the way of being happy is to make the others happy”

It is the same here, if I see other people having fun by doing the things and laughing, it makes me very happy. It shows that tiba is working, because it is important to laugh besides the learning. People laugh...It is beautiful!

Learning alternative technologies is a way to make change in our minds, it is a technique. That is the idea of being here, not to make adobe masters, bamboo masters. These are the techniques and tools to realize the reality. And at this moment my aim is spreading these things to the world.

So the people come here, they learn and they show to others what they discovered. Then maybe one day world will be a different place and it is coming along with the new generation. Even the nature around TĪBA gives me this feeling. In 25 years trees have grow up, many kind of plant cover the ground, monkeys, parrots have come closer. It is incredible, TĪBA is now surrounded by forest.

### ❖ You told it was a message to create a center. So are you getting any new message from your surrounding?

-Hmm, that is a good question. But no, not really. I am still busy with TĪBA. I have given it over to my sons to continue. And they are doing a good job. I don't see any need to listen to other voices. Now TĪBA is much more than I ever had imagined before. My son Peter is organizing big meetings and international events. TĪBA is like my library now. I will tell you story about my library.

When we started to build the library my Brazilian wife was told that I was making a mistake by putting all my best books in this place. She said “you don't know Brazilian people, if you put your books here soon this room will be empty”. The thing is Brazilians don't know how Brazilians are. After a few years I had many, many more books then before! That's how it is working. People are coming here, giving things and taking things. Just like nature, taking from somewhere and giving somewhere else. And growing everywhere.

So library is an example that TĪBA is opening the eyes to discover ourselves and others. Because of the lies around us, we are not able to see ourselves. Lie is everywhere, so easy to get some lie, be it newspaper or television or internet its everywhere. These are lies, but have been shown to us like truth. Fortunately young people are waking up. Young people have ability of questioning these things.

When we grow up studying in a traditional school, we are learning that we can just ask the questions which are on the direction of subject. In fact you should almost know the answer, you can't ask question which are out of syllabus. They have a linear teaching approach, you are not able to have broad outlook. But now kids and young people have courage to ask everything.

*Questions are the most beautiful part of humans. Once you ask good question to life, you can keep working on it.*

*Human brain works on questions. When we have an intuition (right hemisphere) our logic, that is (our left hemisphere) asks "WHY", this question creates stumbling block. But if you ask "WHY NOT" this question will give you energy. Just one more word "WHY+NOT" will make you much more creative.*

*And don't forget everything is possible, just by working together, things will start to happen. That's all. Humans are rich in cultures from all around the world. Humans definitely can create better world.*

So dear Johan Van Lengen and his sweet family are creating better world around of themselves and giving inspirations and opportunities to live in a different way to around of themselves. Gratitude to each particle of TIBA...



Author : Merve Tekin

Editors : Mukund Iyer and Johan Van Lengen