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Title:

Education in sustainable earth building – Experiences of the Dachverband Lehm e.V. (DVL), Germany

Abstract:

From the end of the 1950s to the 1980s earth building materials were scarcely used in Germany. During this period, technical developments in earth building were non-existent and professional as well as theoretical knowledge had all but disappeared. Consequently, there were no activities in professional training or academic teaching in the field of earth architecture for a whole generation.

A gradual shift in the criteria for selecting building materials in the 1990s resulted in increased awareness of earth as an ecological, sustainable building material. It was “rediscovered” as a very suitable material for the restoration of historical earth structures. It soon became necessary to revitalise the practical skills and theoretical knowledge in earth construction by developing programmes for professional training and academic teaching.

This paper analyses current activities in the field of education in earth building in Germany, in particular those of the Dachverband Lehm e.V. (DVL), the German national association of earth builders. This paper begins by identifying the various target groups and the different kinds of information they require. For each of these target groups, possible models for courses and training are described. Finally, the paper outlines the priority areas of activity in the development of education programmes for earth building.