

taifa letu tujenge

BUILD OUR NATION

DESIGN PACK

ONE DAY ESQUISSE // 1st APRIL

DESIGNING A WOMEN'S COMMUNITY PROJECT IN THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
SIMULTANEOUS WORKSHOPS IN
AMSTERDAM//MILAN//BARCELONA

Introduction

Tesseract is a collective of architecture students from RGU in Aberdeen, who came together under the common ambition of using our creativity for humanity. Starting with a humanitarian design project for Anusaran in India, a small charity who have a fantastic vision to expand their work and build a new hostel in west Delhi, our project has expanded to encompass engaging fellow students and beyond in humanitarian design issues. We are currently holding lectures, running a design competition series, hosting exhibitions, and forming further teams of students to participate in humanitarian design projects around the world.

This Esquisse

This project has evolved out of conversations with Pascal Nshombo Kataraka from the Universite Catholique de Bukavu Bukavu in the Democratic Republic of Congo, who has a vision for a women's community centre for his area. Discussion began with how we could kick-start the project with a competition, and the idea of running an esquisse emerged.

This esquisse is designed as an intense day of thinking and exploring the problem of the women's community centre, and the outcomes from the workshops will be offered to Pascal and may well be developed into workable solutions as the project develops on the ground in the DRC. At tesseract we have spent time thinking what it can mean for us to make a valuable contribution to very real humanitarian needs around the world, even while we are still students who are dealing daily with theoretical projects. This is a chance to be involved in something very real, and to use your design skills to make a tangible impact on a struggling community.

There will be no outright "winners" announced on the day- the focus is on collaboration and an open sharing of ideas, which will be facilitated throughout the day by everyone contributing to a blog, and live conferencing between the universities involved. Hopefully this attitude will allow our ideas and discussion to develop and mature very quickly throughout the day. Although we will be sharing our research, development, and outcomes openly, the hope is that this can be interpreted and challenged differently within each group, and we will achieve very diverse and original concepts from all the groups at the end of the day.

These final presentations should act as discussion within the following weeks, and the blog can continue to be used to comment and evaluate our concepts. Within the following weeks separate committees in the respective universities will meet and decide on the strongest schemes, and the students from these groups will be invited to participate in future discussions and workshops that will continue the project.

Schedule

In each institution separate meetings/presentations will be organised, but below are the core aspects of the day that will be held simultaneously in each University. All times are GMT, so please adjust to CEST if necessary.

- 9.00-10.00** **Introduction presentation. This will outline the day, the project information, and the cultural context/significance of the Democratic Republic of Congo.**
- Design Packs will be issued to each team, and the schedule for the day will be confirmed.**
- 10.00-12.00** **Research, brainstorming and identifying key ideas/concepts within teams**
All findings will be constantly blogged by each team
- 11.00 Barcelona: "Gender as urban parameter: Women resource zone in India" PhD prof. Zaida Muxí
 Aberdeen: "Empowerment through participation: Tesseract's project in Delhi" Tesseract
- 13.00-15.30** **Resolving ideas, design, production of 3 A2 sheets per unit (in digital format) within teams**
All development will be constantly blogged by each team
- 14.00 Barcelona: cooperation project in Marroc (TBC)
 Aberdeen: "Reactive Thinking: humanitarian competition entries" David Fleck
- 15.30-16.30** **Pin-up and discussion**
Projects will be either printed (as economically as possible) and pinned up to allow discussion, or presented quickly as slides digitally.
- Depending on the numbers taking part in each university, this discussion may take different forms, but the main objective is to identify a couple of key concepts/ideas to share with the other universities.**
- 16.30-17.30** **Live Link between Universities**
Each university will present their key ideas live, and reflect on the main thoughts from the day.
- Each university will individually summarise the day when everyone has finished presenting and discussing.**

The Background

The Location

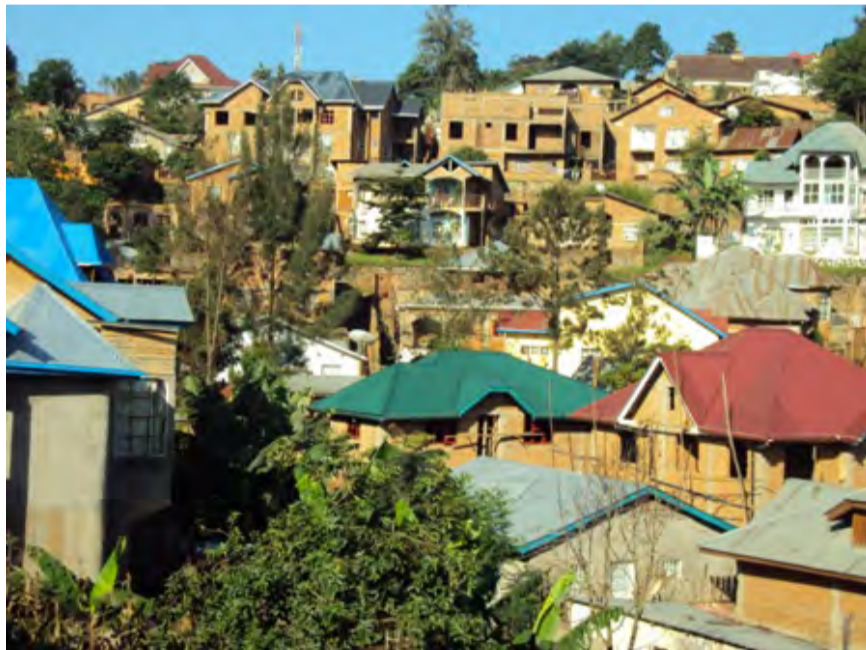
The province of South Kivu is located in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The province is defined on the east by the bordering countries Republic of Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. Three provinces surround South Kivu: Katanga (to the South-East), Maniema (to the West and North West) and North Kivu (to the north). The country has an area of 69,130 km² and its population is currently estimated at 3,500,000 inhabitants, an average density of 50.6 inhabitants per km². The terrain of the province is very diverse, with mountains to the east and lowland plains to the west.



The Situation

Democratic Republic of Congo is in its first years of practice as a democratic regime, after 32 years of dictatorship and autocracy under Mobutu (1965 -1997), the universal suffrage elections were held for the first time in 2006. There are however residual problems surrounding distributive justice after a long period of corrupt practices, tax evasion and financial mismanagement. Justice, human rights, and general development remain major issues for this state, but now the media are beginning to support movements by women against sexual violence caused by armed gangs bringing it to the political foreground.

For in depth information, see <http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congo.html>





The Women

The positive efforts of these women have been shattered throughout armed conflicts and many have lost everything, forced into absolute poverty and sometimes living in appalling conditions. Some are also widows with no support system or welfare benefits. In traditional society, women occupied a prominent place in Africa in general and the Congo in particular, however this balance has broken down over time. Nowadays, women are forced to socialise in households with small informal activities. During this period of armed conflict women and children lived in fear that they would become a victim of sexual and violence attacks that plagued the country.



The Vision

Creating a multipurpose centre "Taifa letu Tujenge" ("Build our Nation" in Swahili) with the aim of promoting interaction and activities for local women, from different backgrounds (rural, urban, peripheral, etc.) as well as reducing the difficulty of inequalities in income and employment opportunities. This multipurpose centre is a catalyst for social change and should be a participatory and innovative action for the province in the new democratic period. Approximately 5,000 women and girls are the direct potential beneficiaries of the project but it could potentially be open to all women in the province of South Kivu and Congo in general.



The challenge

We challenge you to conceptualise an environment where women of every age, background and social standing are welcome to come for training sessions, workshops, seminars, and to socialise. It must provide a safe haven for women to congregate, creating a sense of community where they can begin to rely on the support of each other. Spaces could be versatile areas in order to meet all necessary requirements as they may even be used by other institutions in aid to self-finance the project. You might want to consider public and private spaces such as:

- Meeting and Lecture halls
- Activity Rooms
- Sleeping Accommodation
- Medical Rooms
- Any other type of space you feel is beneficial to the overall concept

Build Our Nation is a project for the community and by the community, and reflecting on appropriate building material and construction process is crucial. Traditional building materials are locally available from the market and hardware stores in town, and within the community there are many skilled workers who are readily available. Women would be available to participate in the workflow: moving light materials, masonry etc. establishing a greater sense of ownership and responsibility for the project.

We ask you...

- What spaces should this project include?
- How do we create a welcoming and open atmosphere?
- How will each space affect the social activity and interaction of the local women?
- How will the centre be designed to make it viable in poorer communities?
- Can the construction methods and concepts be passed on to other communities?

However, these are just questions aiming to inspire, not to limit so please use your imagination to dig even deeper, to create an ingenious solution. Remember, we are not looking for an iconic building. This project is not about leaving an “architectural stamp”, we are asking you to design with a strong sensitivity to the local culture and specific needs.

The Outcome

By the end of the workshop we ask that you conclude the team’s ideas on three A2 sheets to provide a concise presentation of the concept. The sheets should be set out as follows:

The Social Aspect

This should include the social implications and aspirations of the concept from the microcosm to the macrocosm.

- How the project may achieve social integration of all classes and backgrounds.
- How the centre lies within an existing community.
- How the project will change the lives of every woman.
- The cultural aspects within the design.
- The economical impact.
- The sustainability concepts.

The Hyper Graphic

This single A2 sized graphic should instantly portray the concept. An image of a space, activity, idea or what ever you feel illustrates the overall ambition.

This should include no text, making the graphic as effective as possible. There are no limitations to what media you use for this sheet. It could be:

- A physical model photographed
- A computer render
- A sketch
- A photo-shopped image
- A collage
- Anything you feel will express the idea as interestingly and clearly as possible.

The Technical Aspect

Here we ask that you explain the technical side of the project. This may include:

- Plans
- Sections
- Construction details
- Construction process
- Materiality

Recording Progress

Throughout the entire day your team will blog your progress at the esquisse blog. This will act as a large record of the progress of the day once the event is complete for people to look back on and discuss, but also be a live resource for everyone to use during the day.

Your team must make a blog post at least once every hour. It may be best to designate one team member to be responsible for this task. Your posts can consist of links to useful research you have found, a short piece of text explaining an idea you are developing, a useful quote, a photograph, sketch, model.... Anything that represents your team's progress, and which might be useful to the other teams.

Through this constant sharing, you will find that you are able to develop your ideas much more quickly, and the results of the day will be far more advanced and mature than if your group had been working in isolation.

Step 1

Go to the web address **Tumblr.com** , and log in using

email- admin@tesseract.org.uk

password- **buildournation**



Step 2

You will be taken to the blog dashboard, where you can click any of the icons along the top (text, photo, quote etc) to make a post.

Make sure you tag each post you make with - your city (ie. Milan) your team number/name



Step 3

The blog should be shown live in your studio, or you can keep it open on your own computer, in order to watch the progress of the other teams and use the information they provide throughout the day. The blog can be viewed at -

buildournation.tumblr.com





CREDITS

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