Children’s House
Pedagogically-aligned school, San Andrés Payuca, Mexico

Summary and appraisal by the jury

Children’s House is a project that is founded on an alternative educational model, offering activities that find solutions to the real problems of the population in San Andrés Payuca rural community, north-east of Puebla, Mexico. Correspondingly, the school’s education is built upon instruction in agriculture, farming and building construction, in addition to normal course work. The design for the school – arranged by Fundación la Concepción and self-built by the community – proposes the use of cement-reinforced compacted blocks using readily-accessible local earth. The design of the block with tapered corners permits assembly in a variation of curves based on organic principles. The school will double as a cultural center for the community, offering access to a library the Internet and the school’s sports fields.

People: The school aims to change the paradigm of education in Mexico’s rural communities, and seeks the participation of all parties involved – from the federal government, to the people in the community. It focuses on the profile of the school, offering activities that find solutions to the real problems of the area. In this school we will be built by the community, students will learn about agriculture, farming and building techniques – in addition to the official curriculum.

Prospects: Kokokali will be financed through donations, in addition to support from the government. The school will be economically sustainable. A proportion of the students’ activities in agriculture, livestock management, hydroponics and construction will generate profits ensuring financial viability.

Place: By using the curved block, Kokokali becomes a dynamic non-hierarchical space, which allows flexibility in the program. It responds to the need for a space of equality and trust, this virtue is magnified by classrooms that connect either to indoor gardens or the main square.

Sustainability concept

The contemporary model of education is teaching people to relinquish their creative capacities at an early age. The project aspires to evolve from what is essentially an industrial model of education to a model that is based on organic principles. When a child starts school, they work with many colors and materials, by their last year of school, they work with only one color and a pen. When did the line break? That line, the simplest form of expression is the line in time which represents an individual’s life and each step ahead of them. This school is a line that shall be a life story for each child. Children shall follow this line, which will transform dimensions and become a wall, after it has traveled a certain way, it will in a sense become space to travel through life that will never restrain you, but will protect you and show you the way.

Progress: Kokokali is a compound word derived from the Nahuatl kokone (children) and kali (house). The project proposes the use of a block especially designed for this school. This block is a systematic module that is very easy to elaborate. The center blocks are fabricated using a mix of concrete, sand and readily-accessible local earth. The design of the block consists of making a minimum saturation in curves with different angles for its use on different locations and spatial conditions.

Further authors

Ariel Rojo Design Studio, Drew Studio, Entorno Taller de Paisaje, ROW Studio, ships up to 90% and pay only 10%.

The produce of the harvest will be used to feed the students and pay only 10%.

Donations and government support.

The school will be self-built by the community and financed through donations and government support.

Donations and government support.

Image 5: The round geometry of the school favors dynamism and promotes equality between students and teachers.

Image 3: The school is a project to dignify the school and perceptions of it from all stakeholders. The objective is to positively affect the quality of education by involving the community. Kokokali is not only a school, it becomes a space where the community can get together.

Bronze Award