TunaHAKI integrated theater and orphanage, Moshi, Tanzania

The program for the TunaHAKI Center located in Moshi, Tanzania, is at the same time both ordinary and spectacular, an orphanage and a public theatre. As opposed to the conventional approach of accommodating orphaned children in facilities isolated from the rest of the community, the orphanage is conceptualized as a communal focal point anchoring other community activities. This creates the opportunity for orphans to become integrated into their social environment in a manner approaching that which a typical community may offer.

Rural site with a view of Mt. Kilimanjaro has been purchased for the compound. The design responsibility is divided: Armstrong + Cohen Architecture is responsible for the theater, strong + Cohen Architecture for the orphanage. The design of the orphanage part: yet the whole is designed in intense collaboration. At the orphanage, familiar activities occur in new ways which avoid environmental degradation. The courtyard spaces are familiar and comfortable, the design of volcanic rock avoids baked bricks. Fresh air ventilation and insulated. Bamboo is used for its durability and fast growth. Materials are local and recycled whenever possible. The architects are dedicated to the necessity of acting locally in their village, city, and the world. The program is at once ordinary and spectacular: an orphanage and a public theatre; a private compound connected to a festive gathering place.

The architects are dedicated to the necessity of acting locally, understanding traditional building types and the availability of local natural and manufactured materials, and working together with local leaders on the design. A rural site with a view of Mt. Kilimanjaro has been purchased for the compound. The design responsibility is divided: Armstrong + Cohen Architecture is responsible for the theater design and Hollmén Reuter Sandman Architects for the orphanage part: yet the whole is composed in intense collaboration. At the orphanage, familiar activities occur in new ways which avoid environmental degradation. Bamboo is composted and contained rather than burned, solar cookers replace wood fire stoves to prevent deforestation and smoke, rainwater is collected, grey water is used for garden irrigation, solar water heaters and solar electric panels and wind turbines generate light and heat, a sustainable system will treat sewage.

The visionary Tanzanian artist and TunaHAKI founder imagines an orphanage supported by a public theater supported by Cirque du Soleil, TunaHAKI children participate in cultural events at the theater, learn circus arts, and form a family. The program raises the status of orphan children, involves them in the building process, and with commitment from the Cirque du Soleil, trains them for circus, a trade, or profession. TunaHAKI Foundation is committed to improving living conditions through innovative and sustainable design, www.openarchitecturenetwork.org sponsored by Architecture for Humanity.

Six orphans in Africa and its convincing commitment to sustainable construction.

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