

Built Work with Proposals for the Future: Tanzania and Morocco

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This year we completed our work for the village of Ntulya, Tanzania (Mwanza region). In response to an initial request from the village of Nytula, the Africa Schoolhouse Project, including the Ntulya School complex and the Health Post (Kituo cha Afya), opened in 2011 and is now in session for 600 children.

All buildings were constructed with a local crew and sustainable materials. The crew trained on-the-job while constructing the 12 school buildings and the Health Post. Bricks were formed and baked on site in low fire kilns fueled by rice husks. As the complex progressed over several years, critical material details and construction techniques were refined. With the project finished, the local crew has gained valuable building skills for future projects.

Our proposed design for the Health Post attempted to introduce vaulted “Guastavino” technology for the roof. Thatch roofs had been common in the area until recently, but

are now usually replaced with imported corrugated metal. A vaulted roof would keep all materials local, vary the forms of the buildings, and advance the skills of the crew. Instead, over the course of the project, the decision was made to roof building in the more usual manner. We continue our design explorations and expect to apply them in the area, to both new and existing structures. Our proposal for “Basket-Roofs of Misungwi” - new roofs designed for the renovation of secondary schools in Mwanza region - is one example of the adaptation.

We also designed a proposal for a neighborhood in the city of Fez, Morocco, which had requested ideas from architects for a series of new buildings to serve both resident artisans and tourists. This proposal centered around the historic Place Lalla Yedouna and included the sensitive renovation of several existing buildings, to answer the request for a major catalyst for artisan development, with spaces for educational

programs, residences, artisan production, shops, restaurants, cafés, and other services.

The Fez proposal led us to further research into the possibility of earth building at a large scale. In August we presented a paper “Rare Earth: MidRise Mud” at the Alvar Aalto Academy in Finland. The paper looks at the possibilities for expanding the use of this sustainable and beautiful building material, and presents the large scale building in Fez.

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