

VerSus International Student Competition

Poster 1: Analysis and Concepts

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Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso, also known by its short-form name Burkina, is a landlocked country in West Africa around 270,000 km² in size. It is surrounded by six countries: Mali to the north; Niger to the east; Benin to the southeast; Togo and Ghana to the south; and Ivory Coast to the southwest. Its capital is Ouagadougou. In 2010, its population was estimated at just under 15.75 million.

It is not strange to find the country of Burkina Fasso, Africa, at the last positions according to literacy level in the world. The United Nations Development Program Report ranks Burkina Faso as the country with the lowest level of literacy in the world, despite a concerted effort to double its literacy rate from 12.8% in 1990 to 25.3% in 2008.

In Burkina Faso it is difficult to acquire knowledge and education, because of that, all the efforts should be put to help them develop as a society without losing their local and cultural identity.



Baasneere, a small village in the north-central region, is looking forward to have a secondary school so that the children in the village will be able to have a place in which they can continue their learning process, and complete their secondary studies without having to move out of the village. This is a good chance to break the vicious circle of poverty and depression; the inhabitants see a chance through forming a strong social, educational and economic union.



Socio-cultural aspects

The construction of a new building is an event which gathers the whole community, even if some of them will not use it. This process promotes the transfer of construction cultures from the elder to the young people, and also encourages the social cohesion of the village.

With a few wells to get water, people of the village should walk a long distance, and they appear as a place to meet each other. For this reason, the wells become an important value in their cultural identity.

The project should try to show the recognition of cultural values and the reinforcement of social cohesion through a vernacular architecture.



Urban development

The town of Baasneere is located along the road that connects Kaya with Kongoussi, two important cities in Burkina. The village is widespread in different settlements all around a main centre formed by the central market and the local institutions. Closeby the road and the main centre, the two schools of Baasneere can be found.

These settlements are denominated quarters and each one is governed by a local chief, normally an old man highly respected by the locals. Every new construction has to be supervised and placed by them, because of that, they have a high influence in the urban development.

The quarters are normally integrated by several families, whose houses keep growing as the family grows. This eventual expansion can take place in any direction as an organic growing of the village, apparently without a previous planification.



Socio-economic

Local buildings are carried out by the village's people, and made with their own building materials: Bricks made of clay by hand, and millet they collect nearby. So the process is self-sufficient, and the village community don't need to buy any unusual material.

The project should use a Vernacular solution that encourages autonomy and local activity, optimizes construction efforts, and extends the lifetime of the building and save resources.



Principles and goals

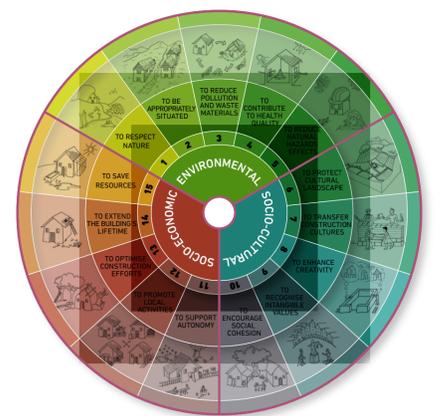
The analysis of vernacular heritage provides a set of useful lessons for the design of a habitat able to respond to the following sustainable principles:

The goal is to reach the concept of sustainability from a multidisciplinary perspective. The project aims to respect the environmental, socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects in its development.

For the specific task of designing a high school for the town of Baasneere, local knowledge is gathered regarding their social organisation, material availability, cultural identity, autonomy, technology.. in order to be them who construct their high school and not to be imposed by foreign institutions.

Concepts as building with the community, the sense of belonging, identity and personal development, protection of cultural landscapes and the transmission of construction cultures develop a Vernacular solution that encourages autonomy and local activity.

Moreover, the optimization of construction efforts along with a durable construction will definitely promote a truly sustainable high school for the town.



Environmental principles

Burkina Faso has a tropical climate and is located in an area where the transition of the two seasons is characterized by the transition of the month April, when the rainy season begins, and lasts until October.

In a place where temperatures often top 40°C (104°F), we were determined not to build the school with traditional construction methods, bunkers of concrete blocks with corrugated roofs, which turn into ovens in the summer heat. People usually try to find a shadow to get protection from sun, and it is a common view to find locals gathering under one of the few trees.

Western winds are fresh and healthy, while Eastern ones are hot. The lack of electricity imposes the use of passive ventilation system.

The intervention should be able to integrate and respect local nature, taking advantage of the site's bioclimatic features, collect the seasonal rainwater to use it, preserve inhabitant's health and prevent from natural hazards impacts.



Project Leader



Partners



With the support of the Culture Programme of the European Union

