

## EAST AFRICA HOSPITAL

East Africa Hospital is a project delivered for a competition for a paediatric hospital meant for a generic location in Eastern Africa. The brief asked for a small-scale building meant to be used in the poor rural areas of Eastern Africa. The programme consists of two phases, with the second one bigger than the first one. The hospital would be serving a vast area, so people would be travelling far to get to it. Besides the medical facilities it is supposed to educate and give guidance on prevention of various deceases.

The hospital is organised in a necklace-like structure, each element of which is a freestanding pavilion. Every function described in the brief gets its own pavilion. Arranging all the pavilions in a ring structure, turning their backs to the outside and joining them with a wall creates the required security area. Such an arrangement around a court stimulates the feeling of organisational unity and thus makes the project easily recognisable. Even more importantly the circular arrangement creates a social space in the middle, appropriate to be used for various, interchangeable functions: sleeping, waiting, teaching, meeting. The compound's organisation even recalls traditional for this part of Africa village compositions. In that way the hospital becomes much more comprehensible and intimate to its users.

Each part of the pavilion arrangement could function separately: it could be rebuild, cleansed, closed or even sloped without hindering the functioning of the other pavilions or the compound as a whole. Each pavilion is made of two shells. The external one is made of wattle skeleton, daubed with mud. A chicken wire with a thin layer of cement could be applied to the outside to improve durability. The external shell is open on the side of the pavilion that faces the court. On that side are placed columns. These columns, together with the thick mud wall hold the external roof. It is made out of wooden beams and could be covered either with hay or with iron sheets (which makes water collection possible). Inside this shell and at a distance from it is placed the internal shell. Made out of lighter materials it allows air to circulate between the two shells, providing cooling. The people of East Africa are very much used to the described above building techniques. In that sense repair or even the construction of the compound could be almost entirely done by a local, not particularly skilled force.

For hygienic and aesthetical reasons the kitchen and the toilets are accessible via small secondary courts, attached to the main one. An extra pavilion is added: a space for burning used medical equipment. In the middle of the main court, half carved in the ground is placed the water reservoir, a concrete box. Methods for cleaning the water (chemicals, UV light, etc.) could be integrated in that box too. It could be filled in using a pump or by collecting rainwater from the roofs of the pavilions. The concrete box is covered with wood and is the place where people could meet, talk, and sleep at night. This central podium is covered by a steel construction holding solar panels. They are the ones providing electricity to the hospital. Batteries charged by the panels or a gas-run generator would be used for back up. The steel construction holding the panels could be used for spanning tent-like structures for protection against rain or sun.

This project proposes an easy to comprehend and socially responsible spatial organisation. It is based on using construction techniques known and practiced by the locals thus facilitating the building and the maintenance of the hospital.

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### facts

location:	East Africa
status:	ideas competition 2009
site:	-
program:	paediatric hospital for a generic location
client:	Fight for the children, Architecture for humanity
budget:	-
collaborators:	-