

Pakhtoon Schools Project



Pakhtoon Schools Project

Delivered by the Pakhtoon Schools Foundation

In partnership with;

Ramon Mohamed - Founder of the Pakhtoon Schools Foundation

Bureau - Design + Research, University of Sheffield

Abdul Wali Kahn University, Mardan, Pakistan



Project Background

The Pakhtoon Schools Project is a collaboration between Ramon Mohamed, A School Teacher from Sheffield [UK], The University of Sheffield [UK], and Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan [Pakistan].

The aim of the project is to develop innovative new schools for communities in the Pakhtoon regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. The schools will aim to provide free facilities and education opportunities for children and their families who would previously not have the opportunity or means to access

education. In particular the schools will aim to accommodate internally displaced people [IDP's], refugees, nomadic children and their families. An emphasis will be placed on enabling girls to attend school.

The project is built on a collaboration with a shared vision, to create inspirational schools both in terms of architecture and education. The two universities involved aim to provide an ongoing research basis for the project, ensuring that the schools and their buildings can sustain a modern curriculum and contemporary teaching and learning techniques.

Ramon meeting a community school in
Laghman Province in Afghanistan



Ramon's Dream

The Pakhtoon Schools Project is the brainchild of Ramon Mohamed, who visited Pakistan and neighbouring Afghanistan to explore his family roots in 2009, which led to the unique idea.

After observing several outdoor schools, Ramon became passionate about building a new school on the border of Afghanistan in the Jalalabad area of the country. The community-based schools in Afghanistan have a teaching day of only three hours. The children who attend will have been working all day in the fields or their

homes and many children don't even attend school at all. On a second visit to the Khyber Pakhtoon khwa region in 2010 Ramon visited schools locally and realised that the conditions there were not much better, particularly in rural areas and for the thousands of refugees and displaced people that currently live there.

After establishing the project, Ramon approached Sheffield University's School of Architecture to collaborate with him. The Bureau - Design+ Research (BDR) within the School,

Engaging Schools in the UK

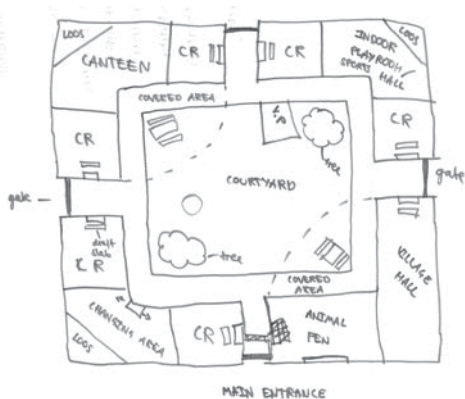
has previous experience of working on a range of educational projects, from researching some of the best designed schools around the world to working with school pupils in the UK developing innovative new learning environments.

In Spring 2010, Ramon along with Prue Chiles and Leo Care from the BDR helped engage young people and teachers in the UK through a series of workshops with Year 5 pupils at Ecclesfield School [Sheffield] and Thetford School [Norfolk].

The sessions involved providing a background to the project and encouraging young people to consider their own schools and learning experience as compared with children in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Young people were then encouraged to develop ideas for making a school in the Pakhtoon region.

At Ecclesfield Primary School the workshop started with the children surveying their own school and looking at specific parts, what they are used for and how they are constructed. Ramon talked about a

“As I gazed at the final creation, I noticed the red clay walls intertwined with wooden slabs. The smell of fresh paint upon the door, leading into the wondrous classroom, furnished with dainty desks and brilliant books enthralled me. This was made for us. It is sat upon the rocky, barbaric foundations of our conflicting nation: Our hope.”



Pupils at Thetford School working on designs and narratives for a new Pakhtoon School.



School of Architecture Live Project

typical day in the life of a child [of Y5 age] in northern Pakistan which often involved spending the whole day working, usually herding animals or working in the fields.

Children then drew their ideas for part of a new school in the Pakhtoon region, thinking about how it may be built and powered as well as how children may learn and play within it.

At Thetford School Year 12 and 13 students developed narratives for a new school in the Pakhtoon region. What would it be like for children

arriving on their 1st day at a new school?

In October 2010 a group of 12 Masters students in the University's School of Architecture worked for two intensive months on the project. They have taken the work of the pupils, undertaken more research on the area and developed proposals for a prototype school. The body of work created so far has been collated and Ramon will take materials out to Pakistan to exchange information and ideas with young people and teachers there.



Pakhtoon Schools exhibition and symposium at the University of Sheffield.

The Creation of a Partnership

Whilst in Pakistan, Ramon approached Professor Ihsan Ali, The Vice Chancellor of Mardan University about the project. Professor Ali has since visited Sheffield to see the ideas developed by students and to establish a relationship. The creation of a new university campus near Mardan has presented the opportunity for a site for a school to be developed as a prototype.

“To me the setting up of the Pakhtoon Schools Project will help those individuals who are unable or unwilling to go to school due to

economic or family restrictions... This project will lead us in a direction where we are able to train teachers and allow us to develop the existing schools in the region to bring awareness among schools so that they are on a par with the developed countries of the world.”

Professor Ali, Vice Chancellor of Mardan



12 A school located on a hillside next to the Khyber pass, provides easy access for pupils, but was destroyed by a landslide shortly after this photo was taken.



Pupils sit outside for lessons at a school in rural Pakistan. This is one of a few institutions where girls attend lessons.

The Current State of Schools in the Region

In Pakistan 34% of children never go to school and 50% of the population are illiterate. 66% percent of the population are based in rural locations and children often have to travel large distances to get to school. Subsistence agricultural jobs often take precedence, meaning children struggle to attend school.

In Afghanistan many schools are open air or located in a make-shift shelters. This is particularly difficult in a climate where summer temperatures soar to 40+ Celsius whilst winter temperatures regularly plummet

to below zero. Heavy rain and monsoon conditions have recently caused flooding and landslides often destroy any temporary school buildings. Urban schools are often oversubscribed and utilise buildings that are not fit for purpose. Teaching is based on rote learning to classes regularly over 50 children.

Girls have traditionally missed-out on education altogether and where they attend school it is often at an early age and rarely extends into adulthood.



60% children finish Primary School / 34% children never go to school

5 out of 10 people cannot read and write

energy demand exceeds supply 'powersharing'

electricity for only a few hours a day
Pakistan imports 90% of its energy
What is the potential for renewable sources of energy?

Pakhtoon region

Southwestern part of Afghanistan and Pakistan

Afghan/Pakistan Border "Closed List"

all sites for oil and gas are in the region
the region is a source of cultural and religious diversity

in general it is an unstable region that suffers from conflict and violence
the region is a source of cultural and religious diversity
the local tribes are not fully under the control of either Afghanistan or Pakistan

Industry

the region is a source of cultural and religious diversity
the local tribes are not fully under the control of either Afghanistan or Pakistan

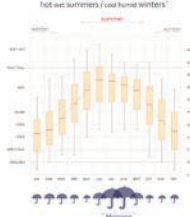


agriculture 4.2% of GDP
but only accounts for 21% of GDP



172 million people
urban 34%
66% rural

climate large temperature variation across the year
high winter temperatures / local thermal variations



Mardan

Southwestern part of Pakistan
the region is a source of cultural and religious diversity



terrain the region is a source of cultural and religious diversity
the local tribes are not fully under the control of either Afghanistan or Pakistan



the region is a source of cultural and religious diversity
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Research into the social, political and agricultural context of the Pakhtoon Region.

What is the Pakhtoon Schools Project?

A research project

- Designing & building schools in a challenging sociopolitical context
- Educating children and communities in the Pakhtoon region for the 21st century

A humanitarian project

- Aimed at ameliorating school attendance and the quality of education in the Pakhtoon region and at providing education for displaced people and refugees

An education project

- Developing a curriculum appropriate to the lives of local people
- Using up-to-date resources and teaching and learning approaches

An architecture project

- Mixing construction techniques with local crafts and skills
- Creating school buildings that are adaptable to different geographic situations



Accommodating

spaces for communal **eating** at mealtimes,
and travelling teachers **sleeping** space.



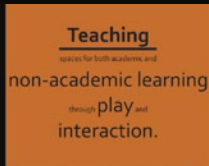
Safe

places for **counselling** and **advice**.
Provision for **privacy** and
confidentiality.



Informative

spaces which use the building as a
teaching aid
for sustainable practices such as
rainwater harvesting
solar power and
recycling.



Teaching

spaces for both academics and

non-academic learning

through **play** and
interaction.



Play

spaces which are **safe**
and can accommodate
energetic games
as well as provide additional
teaching space.



Why is the Pakhtoon Schools Project Unique?

This research and humanitarian project combines the design and the construction of a series of cutting-edge educational facilities with the creation of an educational organization that can run those schools. It is in this context of the collaboration between international Universities, education specialists and local people that makes the project unique.

“This is not just about building a school. This is an ongoing international research project”.

Prue Chiles, Director of the BDR,
University of Sheffield

“It is fantastic seeing the work of the students. Their work is inspiring and innovative and hopefully we can build a school from it in the near future. The work that the students have put in to developing research and ideas for a school has been amazing. I am proud of what the students have developed and really pleased that my relationship with the University of Sheffield has flourished.”

Ramon Mohamed



Prue Chiles, Professor Ihsan Ali, Ramon Mohamed and Leo Care at the Pakhtoon Schools Exhibition

The Foundation

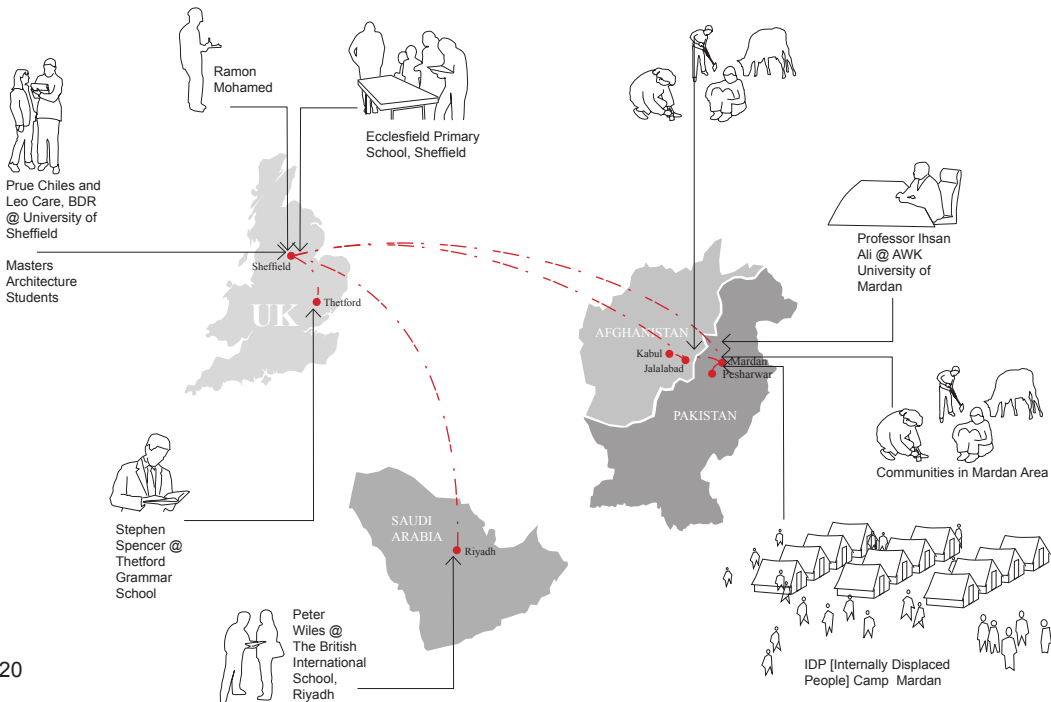
It is proposed that a Pakhtoon Schools Charitable Foundation be established to oversee and manage the project, representing the different interests and expertise and to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project.

The Foundation will be lead by a Board of Directors chaired by Ramon Mohamed, including representatives from the major institutions involved and invited specialists. The delivery of the project will be split in to four groups;

- Architecture design, construction
- Education, pedagogy and training
- School management and admissions
- Fund raising and finance

It is anticipated that each group will be steered by one of the directors. There will also be an additional delivery team for each group made up of students, academics, practitioners and local people to create a balanced approach and to underline the research-based participatory nature of the project.

Diagram of project partners



Project Partners

The following partners have pledged their support to the project. This is a preliminary group of partners and additional members will be identified and incorporated as required.

Ramon Mohamed as project initiator is committed to project and aims to work in the UK, Pakistan and Riyadh to develop the Pakhtoon Schools Project. Ramon will lead the project with support from;

The Abdul Wali Khan University in Mardan will provide support for the

construction of the first school by donating a plot of land in its future main campus in Sheikh Maltoon, on the southern edge of Mardan. Also, the Department of Engineering of that University could offer its expertise about the local building techniques. As well, the Department of Education could collaborate in the inaugural and subsequent schools by offering an insight into education in the Pakhtoon region and by employing some of his students as teachers in the new schools.



Masters Architecture students introducing their work



Thetford School Workshop



Ecclesfield Primary School Workshop



The British International School, Riyadh

Project Partners

Prue Chiles and Leo Care from the bureau - design+research (bdr) at the Sheffield School of Architecture will lead the design project, contributing with their expertise in the field of research and consultancy in designing learning environments.

The British International School in Riyadh will provide support in fundraising and educational consultancy. Peter Wiles, the current headteacher and international education consultant is providing expert advice.

Thetford School in Norfolk are fundraising for the project along with Ecclesfield Primary School in Sheffield, who have been involved from the outset.




Core Principles of the Project

Creating a truly collaborative project

The project is based on a collaborative understanding, with the exchange of knowledge and skills at its centre. The project should not be seen as an aid project or one that sees knowledge transfer one-way but rather a reciprocal learning process.

Establishing a research prerogative – The project is driven by a need to act, but action should be underpinned by innovative and creative responses, backed-up by research.



A class of girls learn in the open air in Northern Pakistan

The school as a centre of the community

These new buildings should be designed to allow use out of school hours, as a service for the community and as a centre for training teachers. This means that space should be flexible enough to host different activities during the day and become centres of lifelong learning.



Buffalo dung collected and dried out for use as building materials in Pakistan

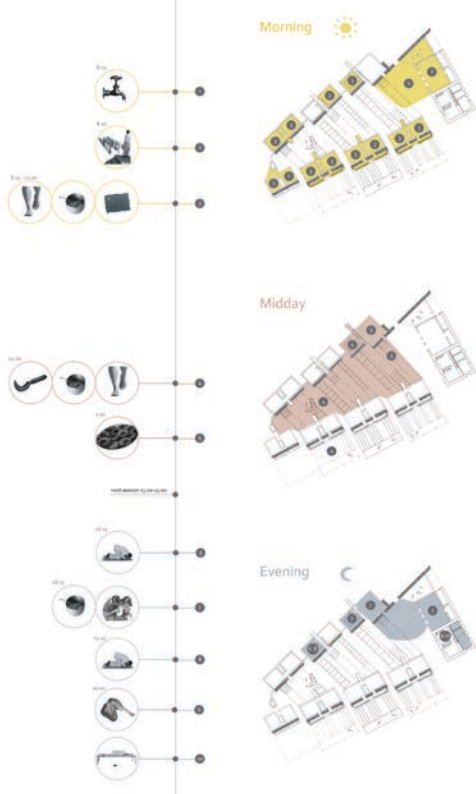
Revisited local technologies

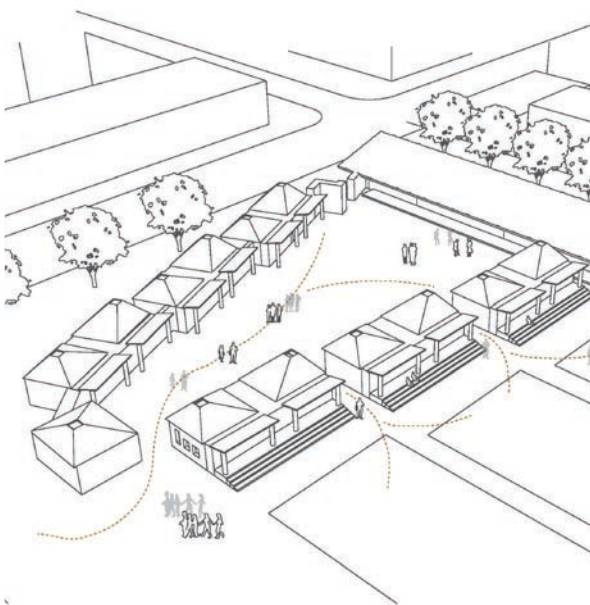
In order to respond effectively to the local climatic conditions, the new schools should be constructed with local materials and building patterns. However, those technologies should be revisited in order to maximise the energy performance and the durability of the building.

Flexible

In order to maximise the number of children that can attend educational activities, the school should have a flexible timetable, with regular lessons in the morning but also in the afternoon for the children that work, or open 24hrs a day, seven days a week to increase use and accessibility for communities.

Exploration of the flexible use of the prototype school during the day





An adaptable architectural design

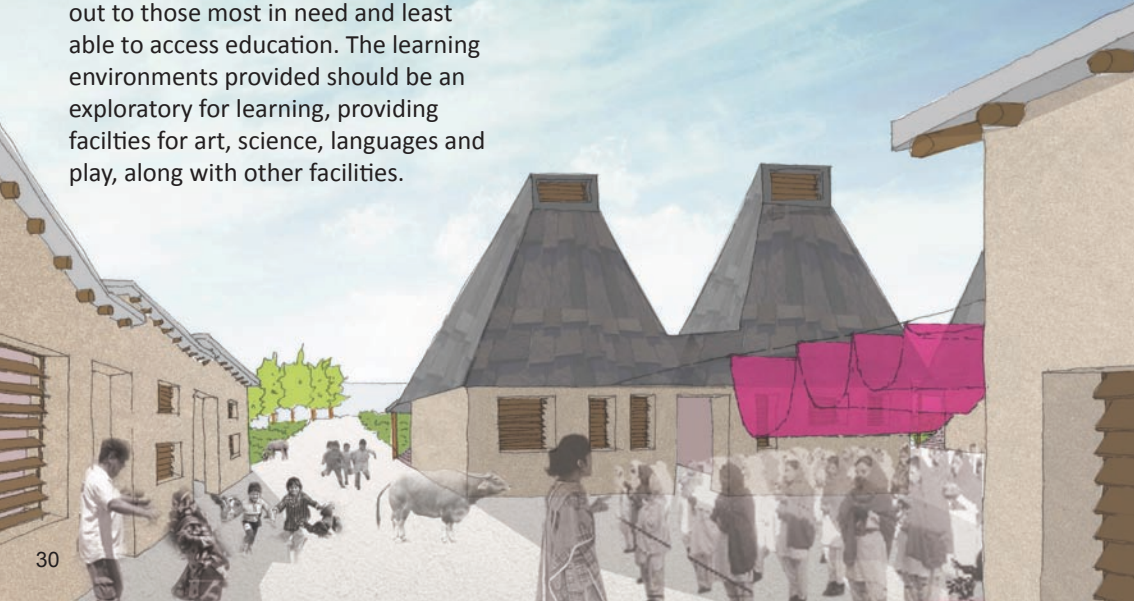
Rather than designing a specific building for a site, this project aims to propose a modular prototype that can be combined in different arrangements to build primary schools in different contexts (urban, rural, remote). This approach allows for future expansion of the schools. Those modules should be flexible enough to offer opportunities for customisation – to meet different needs.

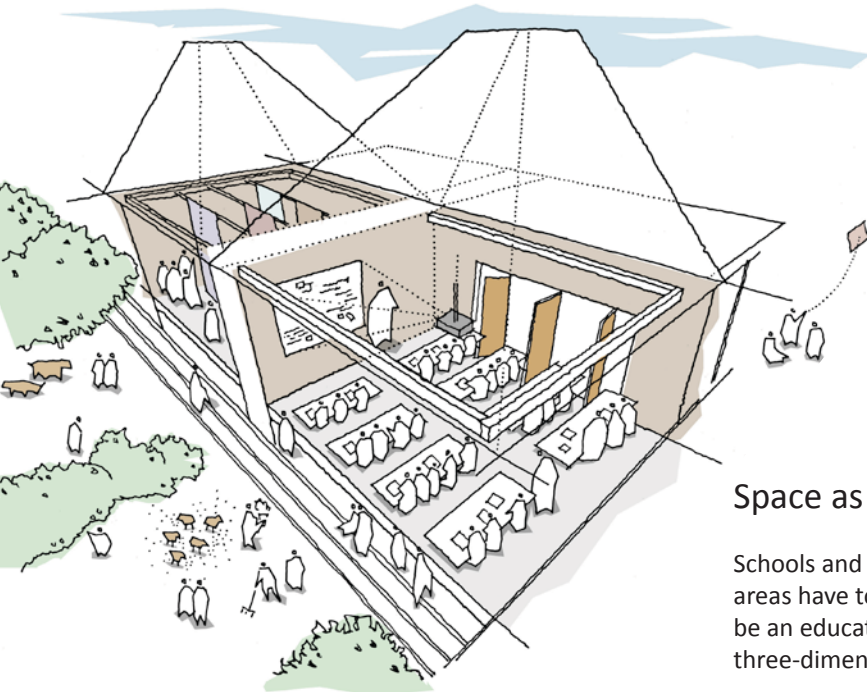
Initial idea for a prototype school in Mardan, made of modules that could be employed in other places.

School exploratory

The schools created through the Pakhtoon Schools Project should reach out to those most in need and least able to access education. The learning environments provided should be an exploratory for learning, providing facilities for art, science, languages and play, along with other facilities.

Visualisation of the outside learning environment for a prototype school.





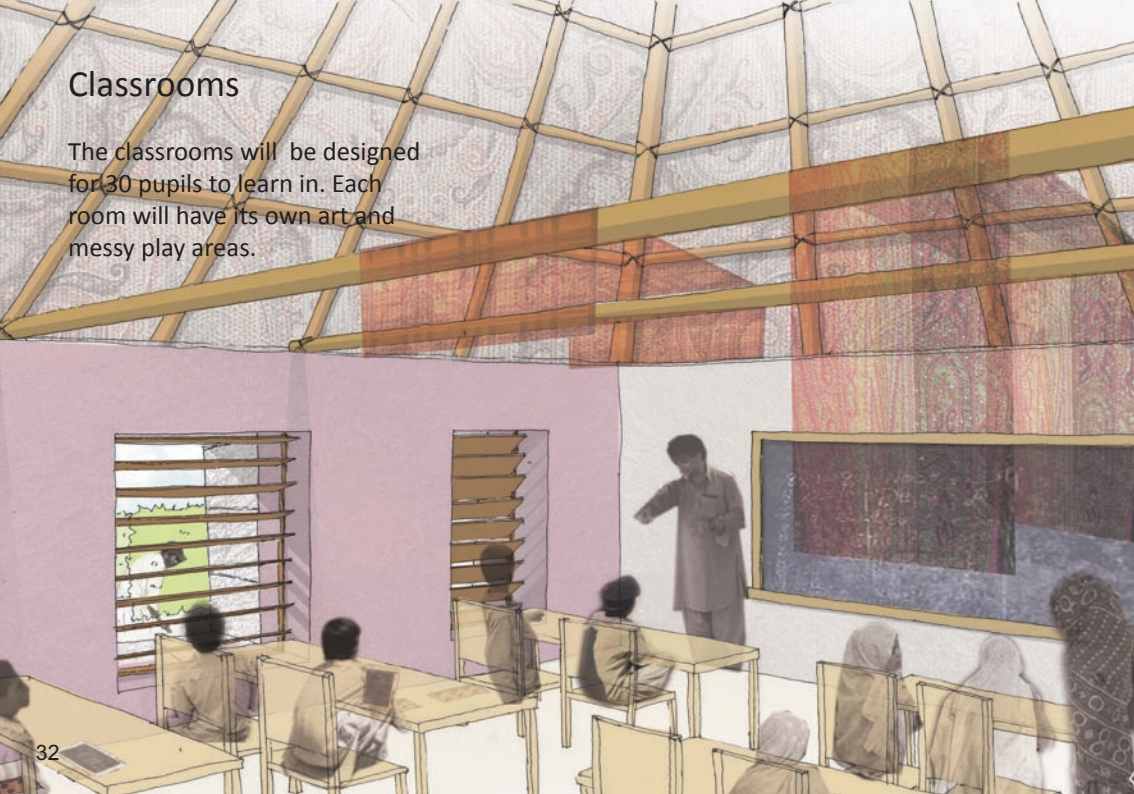
Space as a learning tool

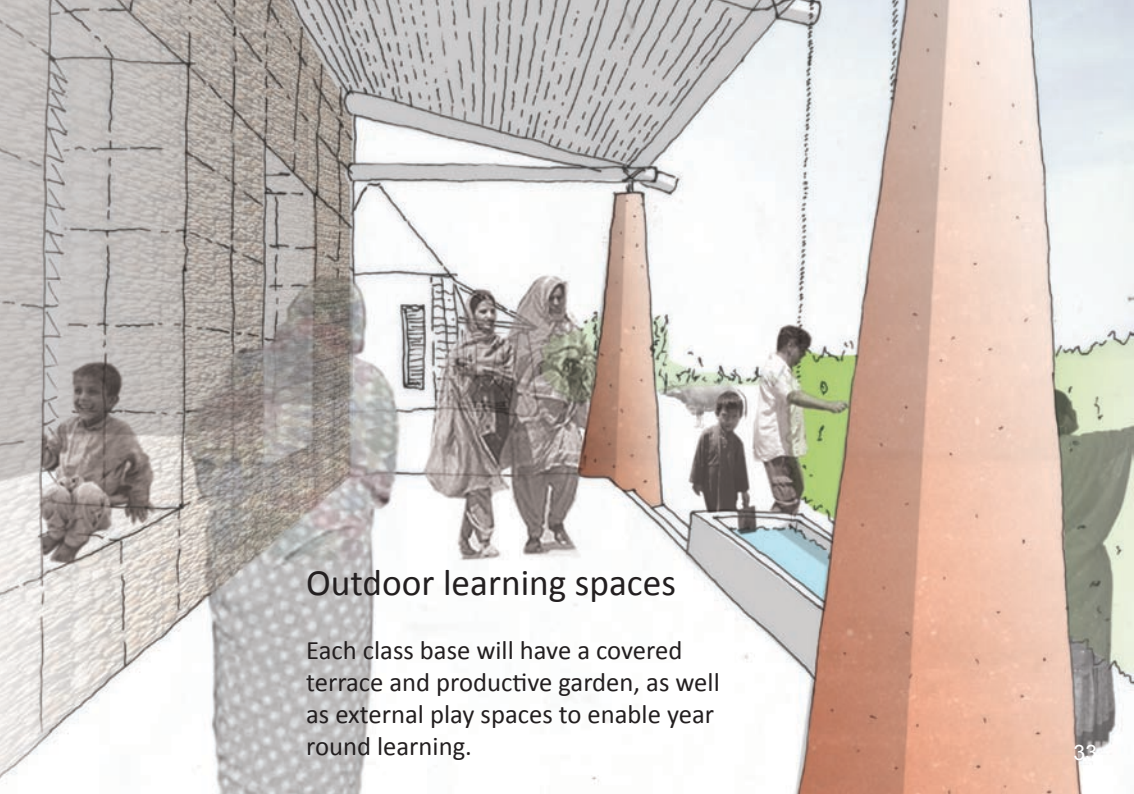
Schools and their landscaped areas have to be designed to be an educational aid, a sort of three-dimensional textbook.

Diagram of how a classroom space can be used in the prototype school.

Classrooms

The classrooms will be designed for 30 pupils to learn in. Each room will have its own art and messy play areas.





Outdoor learning spaces

Each class base will have a covered terrace and productive garden, as well as external play spaces to enable year round learning.



Local materials and crafts used to create a welcoming access point to the prototype schools.

Inclusive

Schools should host students from very difficult situations, supporting those who have faced trauma and tragedy, like the ongoing conflicts and the recent floods. Thus the educational approaches used should take into account the environmental and social background of its students and adjust the curriculum accordingly.

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds will be integrated with pupils whose parents are at the university, to create an integrated school community with differentiated teaching strategies to ensure maximum progress and attainment by all its students.

The construction as a training opportunity for local people

Since the design team aims to use revisited local technologies, the construction of those schools could offer educational opportunities for local people and architecture students.

Construction of dwellings in Northern Pakistan



Postcards developed to explore a range of issues around schools in the Pakhtoon Region.



RURAL CLASSROOM CONDITIONS ARE:



OFTEN
CUT IN THE
OPEN

= COLD &
WET

= DIFFICULT FOR
CHILDREN TO
CONCENTRATE

= UNCOMFORTABLE
SITTING ON FLOOR



IN THE RURAL SCHOOLS ANIMALS ARE BROUGHT TO SCHOOL



SCHOOL CHILDREN'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

- LOOKING AFTER ANIMALS
- LOOKING AFTER YOUNGER BROTHER & SISTERS

ANIMALS TETHERED



ROTE LEARNING IS THE NORM

LEARNING BY REPETITION IS THE TECHNIQUE USED IN SCHOOLS



How could children in Pakhtoon be taught?



HOW LONG DO CHILDREN SPEND AT SCHOOL?



TIME CHILDREN SPEND IN SCHOOL IN PAKHTOON



TIME CHILDREN SPEND IN SCHOOL IN UK

IT FACILITIES - LINK WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MARDAN



OR



36



LINK WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF MARDAN - COMPUTER SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

SCHOOL COULD ALSO PROVIDE COMMUNITY FACILITIES



COMMUNITY COOKING



+ LIBRARY



+ PRAYER SPACE



+ ADULT EDUCATION



+ GROWING SPACE



+ ACCESS TO ADVICE



LOCKERS IN WALL



EVERY CHILD WHO ATTENDS SCHOOL COULD HAVE A LOCKERS BUILT INTO EARTH WALL



Next Steps

1. Formalise the Pakhtoon Schools Foundation and establish it as a charitable organisation.
2. Publicise the project in Pakistan: A series of postcards have been created from the design and research work undertaken by architecture students and pupils. The cards will be used by Ramon on his next visit to the region in Early 2011, to engage with local people in the development of a school prototype. The feedback from the cards will be used directly to influence the research and design.
3. Develop a detailed educational and pedagogical approach to the project, along with an outline curriculum.
4. Develop a feasibility study for the design of the prototype school for costing and discussion.
5. Develop a wider network of partners, particularly in the Pakhtoon region to help develop the project. The aim is to have partners with a range of skills to deliver the project.
6. Raise funds for the development and construction of the prototype school.

Postcards developed as a tool to engage people in the Pakhtoon Region



Outline Project Time Frame

2011

- Form Pakhtoon Schools Foundation
- Establish charitable status
- Undertake engagement programme for communities in Pakhtoon Region
- Develop and undertake fund raising strategy
- University of Sheffield Summer School
- Establish exact location of site and address building legislation and regulations
- Develop education strategy
- Feasibility and design development
- Develop admissions strategy

2012

- Build 4 classrooms with associated facilities, 4-5 months construction programme
- Prototype school opening
- Undertake post-occupancy study
- Undertake teacher training and exchange programme
- Prepare for the next phase of design and construction

2013

- Plan and deliver additional classroom and community facilities

Pakhtoon Schools Project

Delivered by the Pakhtoon Schools Foundation



Contacts

For more information, to get involved, become a partner, or if you would like to make a donation or help fund raise please contact:

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Links

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