Lilongwe, Malawi and its surrounding villages

2/3 of the world’s population of those infected with HIV/AIDS live in sub-Saharan Africa. This is a huge disaster that happens every day, and it is not due to terrorism or natural forces—it is instead due to the neglect of these people by their own governments. Much has been done recently to try and combat this epidemic, however it is almost impossible to administer costly, regimented medicine to everyone in need. The solutions that people are commonly turning to are more about long term prevention, which happens through spread of awareness. So how can education be spread throughout these rural villages?

I believe that my project will consist of a production plant in Lilongwe, the capital city of Malawi; and this facility will serve to employ local craftsmen to produce small, prefabricated HIV education schools. These will then be transported throughout the smaller villages as needed. In this way, the building will help to not only employ craftsmen, but also serve as a place to train and teach about trades, as well as HIV awareness.

Adaptable Learning

When designing learning environments for a place where demographics are vast, and learning styles of individuals vary greatly; create space that is flexible. Allow the potential to have large group discussions, teacher-class settings, individual counseling, hands-on learning experiences, and the ability to adapt for multiple age groups and subject matters.

Mobile Architecture

Create a different kind of building than we are currently used to and design it so that it can be easily moved from place to place and easily assembled using a sort of kit of standardized parts and tools on site—any site. This building could then be used for people that are otherwise relatively cut off from its type of services and then move on to the next town, and return in a couple of weeks.

Space That Comforts

Even when using limited materials and resources, one must be considerate towards the situations and interactions that will happen within a space. Design places that have potential to not only meet the functional needs of users, but also comfort them and provide them with configurations necessary to facilitate their emotional needs so they are able to be productive and reach the end goal of the space’s primary function.

Educational Diversities

Skilled learning environments should be created where students are not just being educated about how to execute a task, but are also taught the importance of that task and the end product it contributes to and how it affects the society as a whole. This creates an interesting way for students to learn more than one thing at once and how broader social issues play into their trade and vice versa.

Infinite Futures

Buildings should be designed to have the potential to accommodate future uses that may not pertain or to the initial function. They should easily adapted to house new spaces that make different products, teach different subjects, or sell different goods than they were ever intended to—while still maintaining a quality of space that does in fact completely pertain to the initial use.

Respect Without Imitating

When designing for a place with an existing culture that is rich with its own history and tradition, one must not merely copy the details and styles that have already been used there, but instead respect them and “pay homage” to them in a manner that is considerate to the culture’s present needs as well as its future goals.