Community Center in India

Creating a better future

Architecture Competition

organized by

ARCHSTORMING

in partnership with

VicenteFerrer
Transforma la sociedad en humanidad

ARCHSTORMING

Archstorming

Archstorming is an international platform that aims to improve the well-being of people in need through innovative and sustainable architecture. Our mission is to **create positive change through architecture** and foster a new generation of socially conscious architects.

Our humanitarian architecture competitions showcase **real projects that address critical issues** such as disaster relief, poverty, conflicts and diseases, while serving the fundamental needs of shelter, warmth, access to clean water, education, and community building.

Sustainability is the core of our competitions, both in terms of design and construction, challenging our participants to find innovative construction methods, use locally sourced materials, and adopt collaborative easy-to-build techniques, among others, that can be understood and applied by local communities.

introduction

In the rural regions of India, particularly in states like **Andhra Pradesh** and **Telangana**, daily life is often a test of endurance. Earnings are scarce, with a significant number living on less than $1.90 per day, and the semi-arid climate exacerbates water scarcity and agricultural challenges. **Unsafe drinking water, insufficient sanitation, and persistent caste discrimination further complicate the lives of these communities.**

Archstorming, working together with Fundación Vicente Ferrer (FVF) and its local partner, Rural Development Trust (RDT), is ready to bring about change. These NGOs are directly addressing these issues, leading projects that involve constructing homes, latrines, and community centers — all critical to better living conditions and social equality. Their efforts focus on empowering women, educating children, and helping marginalized groups.

This competition presents the challenge of **designing a flexible Community Center prototype tailored to meet the distinct needs of each rural community**. It will serve as a central hub for community activities, education, and health services, embodying unity, learning, and collective empowerment.

The successful design will utilize cost-effective, reliable construction techniques and materials that local builders are familiar with, ensuring the centers are not only affordable but also sustainable.

Join us in this transformative architectural competition to make a lasting impact on the lives of those in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Your design has the power to be the catalyst for change, fostering a community's growth, learning, and empowerment. Are you ready to be a part of this change?

VicenteFerrer

Vicente Ferrer Foundation

Fundación Vicente Ferrer (FVF), together with its counterpart in India, Rural Development Trust (RDT), has been a non-profit organization committed since 1969 to transforming the most impoverished areas of southern India, in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Kids playing in the Inclusive Primary School built by Vicente Ferrer

Their comprehensive approach involves empowering women by granting them property rights to housing, thus promoting gender equality and independence.

FVF-RDT also strengthens communities by creating groups for greater collective participation and decision-making. Health initiatives have been crucial, notably in eradicating open defecation through the construction of latrines and hygiene education. They involve beneficiaries directly in their projects, fostering a sense of ownership and community commitment. Additionally, their work is culturally respectful and incorporates the identities of those they serve.

They approach this monumental task through multiple impactful actions:

1. Housing Colonies: In the past year alone, FVF-RDT has built 2,458 houses, focusing on empowering women by assigning the houses' ownership to them, fostering gender equality.

2. Anganwadis: They have set up numerous care and early learning centers for children under six years old and provided support to pregnant women, laying a foundation for a healthier community.

3. Inclusive Schools: They've founded schools that specifically cater to children with disabilities, integrating inclusivity right into the infrastructure and curriculum. A prominent example is the center in Srisailam, designed for children with intellectual disabilities, ensuring they too have an educational space tailored to their needs.

4. Community Centers: multipurpose spaces to foster community engagement.

the Community Centers

This competition focuses on a key part of FVF-RDT's mission: the construction of community centers. Since the 1980s, these centers have been instrumental in strengthening community ties in Andhra Pradesh.

Serving as flexible spaces, they accommodate numerous vital functions:

- They provide meeting spaces for community gatherings and decision-making.

- They act as educational venues for children's after-school programs and adult literacy classes, contributing to higher literacy rates. The 'tuition school' is a widely implemented education program in the area, offering additional instruction after regular school hours to deepen and broaden students' understanding of the subjects taught.

- They function as health clinics offering check-ups, vaccinations, and essential medical care, improving healthcare access.

- They run nutritional programs that address food security and dietary education, linking communities to resources aimed at eliminating poverty.

- They host sanitation and hygiene workshops, which contribute to better health within the community.

- They are centers for cultural and social events that celebrate and preserve local traditions.

Each center is equipped with the necessary facilities to meet the specific needs and goals of its community.

location: Kodidoddi

The first Community Center designed through this competition will be built in Kodidoddi, a remote village on the edge of Andhra Pradesh, near the Karnataka state border.

This village is unique, being homogeneously composed of a single backward caste, which creates a cohesive but isolated community of 785 individuals. Distant from larger towns and often missed by essential services, Kodidoddi lacks adequate housing and fundamental facilities, such as toilets. Their current gathering spot is simply the shade of a tree. Moreover, the village lacks a proper venue for the tuition program—a crucial complement to the children's education—with 84 school-aged children currently without this support. Similarly, the youngest members of the community, including 91 toddlers, and their mothers do not have a suitable space for their early basic needs (Anganwadi).

The construction of a community center, the focus of this competition, is a vital step toward bridging these gaps and connecting Kodidoddi to the wider world, providing a hub for learning, assembly, and community empowerment.

The plot

The site, granted by the government, spans 1,082.54 m² in the heart of the village and is easily accessible from the main road. Temporary structures currently on the plot must be removed. The only elements that must be preserved are a neem tree, which offers natural shade and should be integrated into the design, and a vital water tank that is central to daily life in the village. This tank draws residents to the site and enhances its role as a community hub.

Click on the coordinates to access the location on Google Maps:

Coordinates:
15.930442, 77.148580

the challenge

The objective of this competition is to **create a prototype for a Community Center that can be consistently replicated across various villages while also allowing for customization to meet local needs.**

The design must incorporate a **core structure** that remains always the same, featuring spaces fundamental to the heart of community life, while allowing **optional elements** to be included or omitted based on each village's unique needs and priorities.

Furthermore, the design should embrace **modularity**, allowing optional elements to be constructed and integrated into the original project as needs arise or as funding becomes available.

Our goals include:

- Offering a **shared public space** for the entire village to meet.

- Strengthening **unity and equality** among all villagers, regardless of religion, caste, gender, or age.

- Recognizing the **individual and collective needs**, desires, and ambitions.

- Encouraging **interaction and self-organization** through the construction process and subsequent activities.

- Raising **community awareness** on various issues pertinent to the local context, such as sanitation, environmental education, leadership, horticulture, and maintenance.

▼ Vicente Ferrer Foundation has been serving the community for more than 50 years

the competition

objective:

The new Community Center prototype has to meet the needs of the communities and ensure the use and proper maintenance of it through a durable design that fits the habits of the people.

program:

CORE ELEMENTS to be included in every Community Center:

1. MULTIPURPOSE ROOM: The main use of this room is to conduct the tuition school in the evenings. Children after school will have supplementary classes here, so it is important that the space includes blackboards. Shelves and cupboards are also required to store materials. These can preferably be a fixed part of the construction to facilitate maintenance. Depending on the case, this room can also host anganwadis if the community requires it. Additionally, this room can be used for the different sanghams or self-help groups of people part of a minority (women and people with disabilities) to conduct their meetings, usually once or twice per month each, and for the various committees as a meeting hall.
This room can be 35-50 m².

2. STORAGE ROOM: This is a space to store different materials used in the center, like furniture, and it can also be used by the villagers to store common materials for different uses, for example, construction materials for maintenance work.
The storeroom will be 8-10 m².

3. TOILETS: Normally the Community Centers do not include toilets, due to the difficulty in maintaining it and organizing the cleaning tasks. However, as promoters of good hygiene habits, we consider it important to provide a washroom in the center. It should have two separate toilets with a latrine and a tap, one for men and one for women. It should also include one or two hand washes that can be shared, located at the entrance of the toilets.
The area can be around 8 m².

4. VERANDA: The veranda is a very important space in local buildings. If possible, every construction will have a veranda before entering the building where people can sit and rest, meet, and spend time. It is an intermediate space between the exterior and interior. It may be covered and well protected from the sun and rain.
The veranda will have a minimum of 40 m², and it can be as large as the design requires.

5. PERIMETER COMPOUND WALL: Designed to restrict access and visibility as necessary, ensuring safety and defining the boundaries of the Community Center.

the competition

program:

ADDITIONAL FACILITIES to include in the design (all of them will be built for the Kodidoddi Community Center but will be optional spaces in other centers):

1. OFFICE: This is a secondary room that can be used in a more private way, for example, as a room for the teacher. It can also be used for doctor consultations that normally take place once per month in the communities.
This room can be 15-20 m².

2. ANGANWADI: This is the space that provides care to children from 0 to 6 years old. It is involved in a nutritional program, growth control, and education program of the Indian Government, and the attendees are children, pregnant women, and women with small babies. The center is run by a teacher and a caretaker. It should have a classroom and a room for mother feeding. It operates as a kindergarten which also involves nutritional monitoring of the children. The government provides different food items for the children to have their lunch. Therefore, this facility needs to include a kitchen for cooking the meals. The kitchen is a room with a counter, a sink, and shelves to store food. It can also have a storeroom next to it as a separate room. Finally, it will have a toilet for the children.
Surface: classroom 22 m² / mothers' feeding room 6.5 m² / kitchen & storeroom 9 m².

3. KITCHEN GARDEN: A small space to plant vegetables as a provision for the Anganwadi center.

4. PLAYGROUND: A space in the courtyard of the center with some playing equipment. It will help the children enjoy their free time with some activity. The surface can be decided depending on the design.

5. BORE WELL: It can be drilled on the site to provide water to the infrastructure and avoid dependency on the government supply.

The challenge lies not only in the architectural design but also in ensuring these spaces are flexible, modular, and can be expanded or altered as the community grows and evolves.

general building requirements:

- **High roofs** at least 3m for ventilation, with high openings at the top of the walls and/or ventilators to dissipate heat, since temperatures can be very high during summer (reaching 48 degrees).

- **Windows** designed to promote continuous air flow while ensuring protection from strong, horizontal rain.

- **Verandas** should be covered and protected from the weather conditions, while remaining open to the exterior.

- **Raised building basements**: the soils have a very poor absorption capacity and when it rains, the water tends to get stagnated. Rising the basement some centimeters will also prevent common local wildlife, such as snakes and scorpions, to access the building.

- **Rainwater harvesting system**: Utilizing the roof for rainwater collection to support gardening or cleaning tasks.

▲ The plot has a beautiful neem tree that must be preserved

the competition

building techniques and materials:

Prioritizing ease of maintenance and easy-to-build techniques is essential. Buildings are commonly constructed by local workers, employing well-established techniques and materials to guarantee project success. Nevertheless, continuous exploration and evaluation of innovative construction approaches are welcome to improve building sustainability and features.

The most used building technique in the area involves a reinforced cement concrete (RCC) structure consisting of pillars, beams, and ceilings, resting on granite foundations. Basements are constructed with granite stones or cement bricks, filled with soil. The walls are usually made of concrete blocks, though alternative materials are open for consideration.

The most used materials are:

- **Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC)** for the structure and ceilings: required for the stability of the building on the various soil types in this area.

- **Granite stone**: it is easy to find and very strong but difficult to mold. It is normally used for basements and foundations.

- **Concrete blocks for the walls**: made on-site by the laborers, they are the most durable material, very economical, and do not require specialized labor. The laying does not require too much care because they will be plastered afterward.

- **Kadapa stone**: it is a sedimentary black stone very common in this area. It is durable, easy to install, and economical. It can be used in its rough version, normally for flooring because it is not slippery, or for compound walls, or in a polished version, more used in benches, tables, and as interior shelves to store material.

- **Bethamcherla**: it is a metamorphic stone similar to marble, very common in this area and economical. It is white and the finish is polished. It is mostly used for interior floorings.

- **Metallic roof**: used to cover the veranda or as a double roof above the RCC ceiling to protect buildings from overheating.

- **Ceramic brick**: the ceramic brick available here is normally a filling material because it is not strong enough. It can also be used for brick jaalis (lattices) or walls that do not need to bear weight.

- **Iron**: it is used for elements such as carpentry, railings, grills, and exterior pillars. It ensures better durability and easier maintenance than wood.

other materials:

- **Thatched roof**: it is a traditional technique that helps keep the building's temperature but needs to be replaced every five years.

- **Mangalore tiles**: used mostly on verandas. It helps keep the temperature. Maintenance is not easy since the model of the tiles changes often, making it difficult to find replacements, and they break easily.

- **Compressed Earth Block (CSB):** it is one of the most sustainable solutions for walls, but it is very difficult to execute. In the past, the NGO used it in some small projects with on-site manufacturing, but obtaining the proper soil was difficult and very expensive, and specialized labor is required, which makes its execution very challenging. There is a company that manufactures CSB in the city of Bangalore, so procuring them would be another option, although transportation should be considered.

- **Wood**: it is not very recommendable due to the high maintenance required, as well as issues with termites and humidity.

budget:

The expected range is between **35,000 to 40,000 euros**, with an upper limit of **50,000 euros**, aligning with the project's commitment to economic feasibility and long-term viability. Upon registration, participants will receive an indicative list of local prices for some of the main building materials.

the competition
awards:

We are offering a total of 10,000€ in cash prizes, distributed as follows:

1st PRIZE
6,000 € + Construction

2nd PRIZE
2,000 €

3rd PRIZE
1,000 €

SPECIAL HONORABLE MENTIONS
2 × 500 €

10 HONORABLE MENTIONS

50 FINALISTS

All winning projects and finalists will be published in various architecture magazines, blogs, social networks, and our website. All participants will receive a digital certificate of participation.

Calendar

Registering will give you access to both the course and the competition to you and your team (from 1 to 4 members). The registration periods, submission deadline and winners announcement are as follows:

Early Registration
March 7th - April 4th

Regular Registration
April 5th - May 1st

Advanced Registration
May 2nd - May 29th

Late Registration
May 30th - June 19th

Submission deadline
June 19th

Winners announcement
July 10th

Registration

To register for the competition, visit our official website and complete the registration form. Upon completion of the form, you will be redirected to the payment page where you need to complete the payment to finalize the registration process.

The registration fees are tiered based on the date of registration as follows:

  - Early Registration: €65 + VAT
  - Regular Registration: €85 + VAT
  - Advanced Registration: €105 + VAT
  - Late Registration: €125 + VAT
*VAT charged 21%.

We accept Visa, Mastercard, Discover, and American Express credit or debit cards. Payments can also be made through PayPal. Please note that we will not have access to your credit card details. Once the registration and payment process is completed, no refunds will be issued.

Immediately after registration and payment, you will receive a confirmation email to the address provided during payment. This email will include your unique registration number. When submitting your proposals, you will be required to provide this registration number for identification purposes, and it should be clearly displayed on your competition board, preferably in the lower right corner.

FAQs & eligibility

- For common queries, refer to the FAQ section on our website. During the competition, individual responses will be provided to questions sent via email.

- The competition is open to all, including architecture students, professional architects, and individuals from other disciplines such as engineering, philosophy, sociology, photography, etc. All nationalities are welcome, we appreciate as diverse participation as possible.

- Teams can consist of one to four members, all of whom must be at least 18 years old. The registration fee is per team, irrespective of team size.

- If a team or participant wishes to submit more than one proposal, they must register and pay the fee for each submission.

- Jurors, the organization, or anyone directly related to the jury are not allowed to participate in this competition.

Submission

For this competition, participants are required to submit **three digital files**: "two A1 Boards" and a "Project Description". Submissions should be made through the '**Submit' section on our website**.

2x A1 Board: Participants are required to present their project on **two A1 format boards** (594×841 mm or 23.4×33.1 inches), which can be either landscape or portrait oriented.

A1 Boards Content: The boards should contain a variety of visual aids that contribute to a clearer understanding of the project. The **registration number** must be clearly visible in the lower right corner of the boards.

A1 Boards File Details: The boards must be delivered in **JPEG or JPG** format with a **maximum size of 10 MB per file**. **The file name must be the registration number provided upon registration (eg 432465423-1.jpg and 432465423-2.jpg for the two boards).**

Project Description: A project description, of no more than 400 words, must be submitted along with the A1 Boards.

Project Description File Details: The description must be submitted in **PDF format**. **The file name must be the registration number provided upon registration (e.g., 432465423.pdf).**

Language: All texts, both on the A1 Board and in the Description, must be written in **English**.

Anonymity: The materials cannot contain any name or reference to participants or teams. Only the registration number should be included in the files' names to ensure anonymity.

Rules & Conditions

Intellectual Property: Participants maintain the rights over the intellectual property of their submissions. However, by participating, they grant our platform a global, free, and non-exclusive license to reproduce, publish, and distribute the project in any format and through any dissemination medium. Our platform will make sure to give proper attribution to the project authors.

Use of Copyright-Free Images: Participants are responsible for ensuring that any images or materials used in their submissions are copyright-free. Our platform is not responsible for any copyright infringements made by participants.

Changes to Competition Rules: Our platform reserves the right to change the competition rules at any time, in compliance with current legislation. Any modifications will be published on the website and will be binding for participants.

Right to Cancel the Competition: Our platform reserves the right to cancel the competition due to lack of enrollment or other justified reasons. In such cases, participants will be notified individually and the registration fees will be refunded within 15 days from the notification of the cancellation.

Adherence to Terms and Conditions: Participants are required to adhere to the terms and conditions of the competition as stated on our website. Failure to comply may result in disqualification.

No Responsibility for Third-Party Use: Our platform is not responsible for the use of participants' submissions by third parties, including content that has been shared by third parties or indexed by search engines.

Please note that these rules are a summary and participants should refer to the full terms and conditions on our website for complete information.

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