



“KICHOCH RI KI ALANIK” MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH PROJECT

ASF International Member Organization:
Arquitectura Sin Fronteras España (ASF)
Names and Roles of Client(s) & Partners):
Asociación Médicos Descalzos, Guatemala
Total Cost: 310.000,00 euros
Main Sources of Funding: Xunta de Galicia
Project Start Date: 2013
Project End Date: 2013

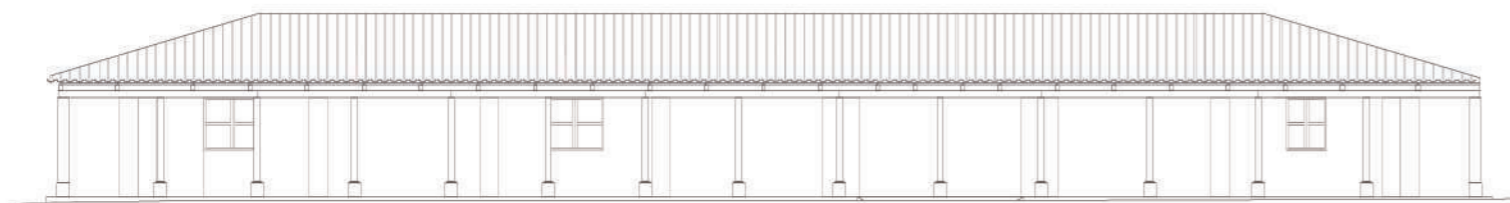
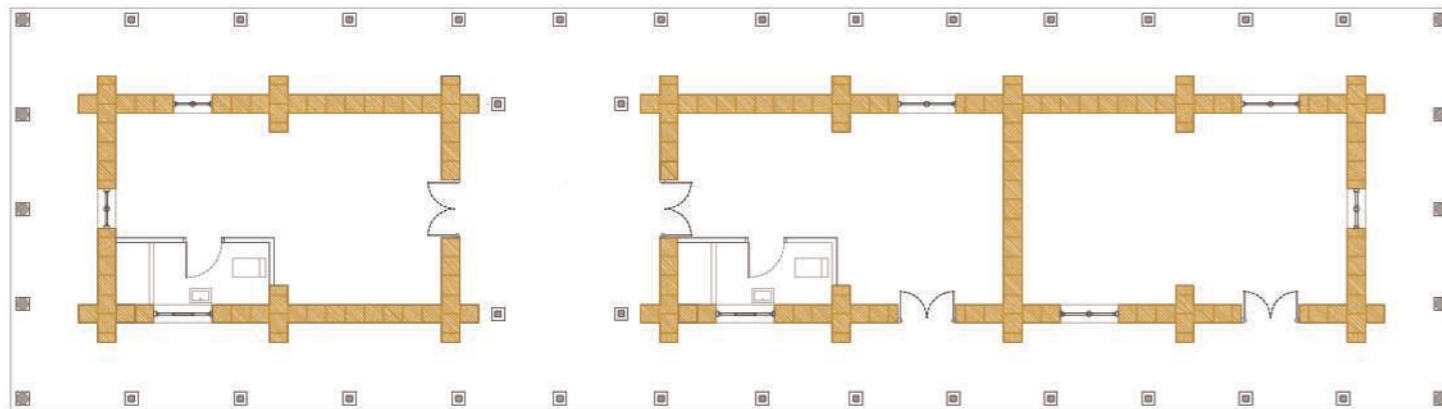
The project aims at improving access to sexual and reproductive health of rural people in 15 health districts in El Quiché Department, ensuring prevention services and appropriate care according to cultural relevance criteria.

The project is conceived as a partnership among Arquitectura Sin Fronteras España, Spanish organizations Médicos del Mundo and Farmamundi, and local associations ASECSA and Médicos Descalzos Chinique, trying to leverage the capacities and specialties of each of them.

Through the project the following results were obtained:

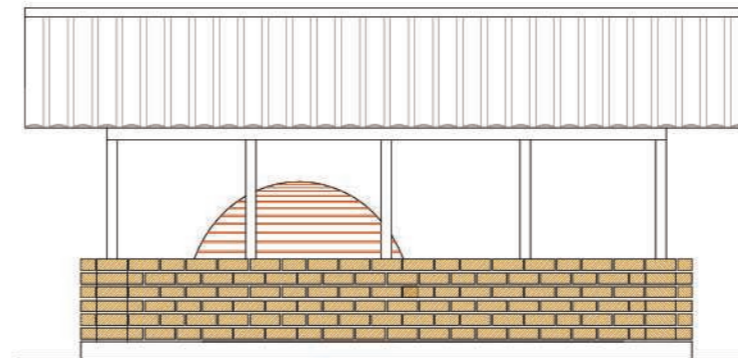
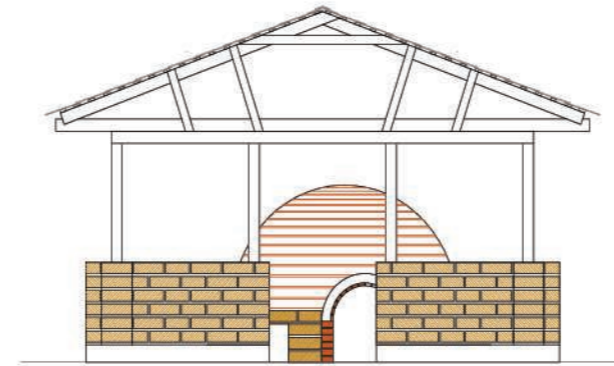
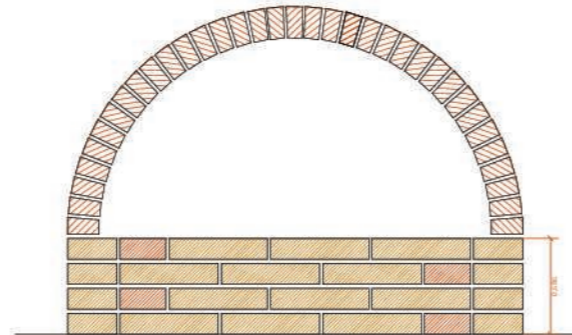
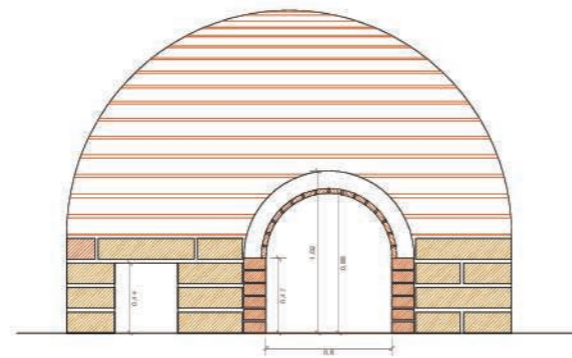
- (1) Improvement of the Guatemalan health system capacity to provide culturally appropriate care to the indigenous population.
- (2) Strengthen the capacities of the group of traditional midwives.
- (3) Ensuring access to essential medicines
- (4) Enable culturally appropriate and relevant facilities for local population attention.

Specifically ASF's work focuses on improving Traditional Midwives Board of Quiché facilities, by building a maternal home for patients care, improving the community hall, the construction of a bathhouse (traditional steam bath used by midwives to care for patients) and the construction of a medicinal plants processing Laboratory.



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Point 10 of Hasselt Charter: Defend, promote and enable access to adequate and dignified habitat for all as a 'Fundamental Human Right'.

The project aims to facilitate access to dignified habitat for rural and mainly indigenous population of this area of the Guatemalan highlands, providing health facilities where they can be cared properly.

The ethnic Kiché indigenous population, find difficulty to access formal health services for several reasons: living in very remote areas, not finding medical staff able to communicate in their language at the health center, as well as the lack of spaces in health centers which respond to traditional care processes they are accustomed to.

The project, in terms of health, tries to gather, organize and apply traditional knowledge to provide adequate and culturally appropriate care to this population. Similarly, the construction reflects this process: it provides a space where the ideal conditions for care are guaranteed and, moreover, includes respectful attention spaces according to the local culture.

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Point 5 of Hasselt Charter: Facilitate the use of appropriate technologies, materials and labour adequate to local values, to the cultural specificity and responsive to the natural environment

For the building construction a traditional adobe system was recovered, reinforced with a cane framework to improve its earthquake resistance. This technology was developed by the Taishin Project at the University of El Salvador, which collaborated with the project.

This type of construction is environmentally friendly as it hardly produces any waste, using local resources and low energy consumption throughout all the life cycle. Moreover, the thermic behaviour of the adobe in this context is highly suitable.

Those environmental and sustainability factors do not make that technology appropriate by itself. However, there are other factors to be considered:

- Building with adobe is a technology traditionally used in the region.
- The population itself demanded the use of this construction system.
- It is an easily replicable technology.
- It is economical.
- Do not generate external dependence neither for construction nor for maintenance.
- It can be adapted to the local climatic conditions.

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Point 6 of Hasselt Charter: Share knowledge, promote discussion, reflection and awareness, and collaborate in the advancement of the 'social production of habitat';

As part of project implementation, it was developed a dissemination and training strategy for local people on adobe earthquake resistant construction. Training for bricklayers, construction process videos and an implementation manual were performed.

The purpose of these actions is to strengthen the capacity of local builders and to value this type of construction, as it can be a very interesting tool for social production of habitat in this particular area, due to its appropriate characteristics as constructive system:

- Economical construction system.
- Easily replicable.
- "Low tech" technology suitable for self-construction.
- Accessible materials in the region.

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