



**Location:** *Chiphamba, Malawi*

**Project year:** *2014*

**Design team:** *Anton Bouwer, Dirk Coetser, John Saaiman*

The design explores the possibility of the school as a covered canopy. It offers a larger covered area that provides shade, is open, is well-lit and has well-ventilated spaces. The structure becomes very efficient in terms of material versus covered square meterage. It becomes a visual icon. Shade netting, lightweight steel, local masonry, and corrugated iron form the architectural language of the building.

Local masonry is used to create vertical louvres outside the classrooms to act as shading devices and to provide structural support for the roof. The roofs have a slight fall to drain water into the gutters which feed the water tanks. Furthermore, the school includes the use of refurbished shipping containers as these are structurally sound elements that have duality of function: firstly, as a transportable element, and secondly, as a shell and anchor for the new structure.

By utilizing locally manufactured materials, it provides the people with a sense of ownership and softens the container as a foreign contextual element.

The overall feel of the building is light, yet permanent, and with the outer facade being adjustable it provides the user with freedom in terms of spatial layout and climatic comfort.

This school acts as a beacon within the community, providing hope through learning, shelter through built infrastructure, and nourishment through harvested rainwater to sustain subsistence farming initiatives.



# Legson Kayira Primary School Architecture for a Change

<http://www.a4ac.net/malawi-school>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3EV8xYNtDZg>





School expansions



Church



Clinic



Playground

**Promote the facilitation of transnational dialogues and long-term partnerships with and within the less affluent countries.**

Before Legson Kayira Primary School could become a reality, Youth of Malawi (a USA-based NPO), Architecture for a Change (a South African architecture firm), and Chimphamba Village in Malawi had to prearrange aspects to ensure a successful outcome. Using location and abilities as strengths, each partner could be responsible for one of these elements: manufacturing, placement of the school, and funding.

Local labour and resources were used in the construction of the school to exchange skills, provide locals with basic construction techniques, and create a sense of ownership. Because the villagers provided willing hands and materials, they could feel like they made a worthy contribution to their school and take pride in their accomplishments.

Values of cultural interaction were established when the three countries united to build the school. Economically, various aspects of the project were performed in one location to benefit the execution of the process in another location. Socially, individuals expand past their own knowledge and learn what is beyond their culture – enriching each other's philosophies and awareness.

By working with autonomous and indigenous groups of people, when skills are transferred, the delivered resources are kept local and accountable, thus giving the people responsibility, ownership, and confidence.

The on-going projects (school expansions, clinic, church, and playground) are a confirmation of the pride and abilities of the villagers.

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*Cooperate for fair and sustainable development initiatives in active collaboration with disadvantaged people or communities. This process shall follow principles of human solidarity, non-discrimination, and will be aimed at promoting their self-sufficiency.*

Although Chimpamba Village is in a remote location with scarce resources, one thing is prevalent: the culture. Culture shapes the identities of the people of Chimpamba Village. The school has been designed so that traditional activities can be performed in and around the building. Using the village's vernacular building materials in the design embeds their culture into the school.

The construction of the school has assisted the daily social, educational and cultural activities of the villagers. The school building provides climatic comfort to make learning and teaching easier. Youth of Malawi and Architecture for a Change have not forced ideologies on the villagers, but have rather given them the tools to move forward and progress on their own accord using their traditional influences.

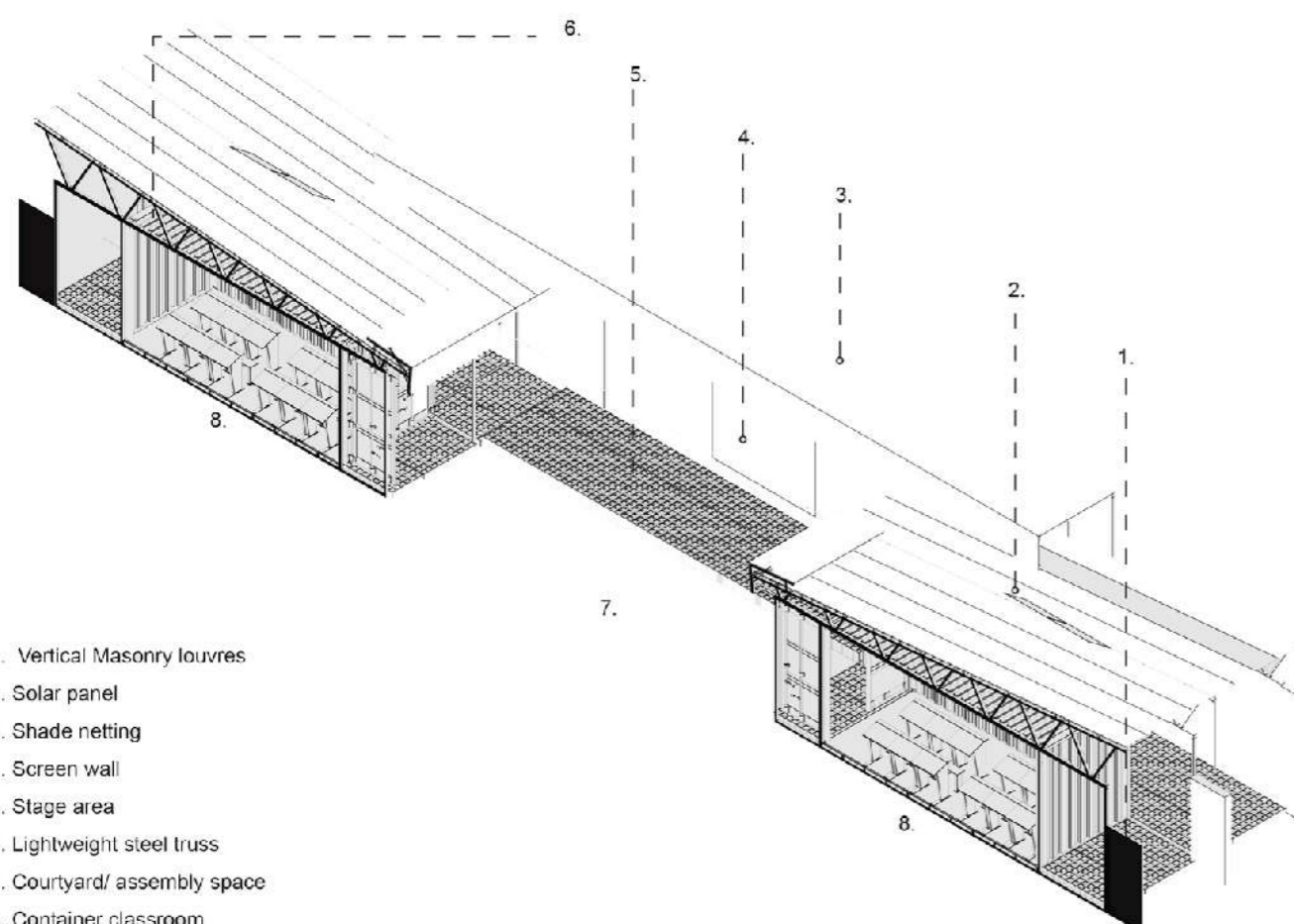
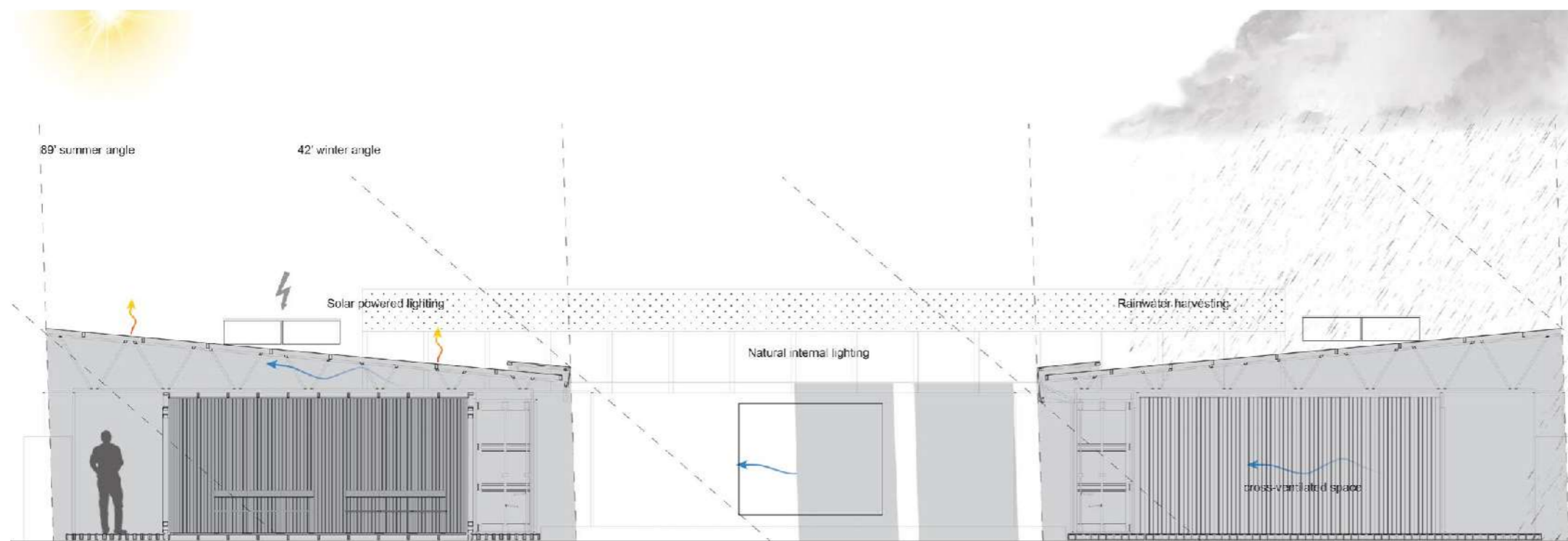
To use the school as an impetus to create a self-supporting community, these principles were followed:

- There will be no handouts; meet the people where the needs are. Dependencies are avoided this way.
- No efforts will be duplicated that can already be accomplished by the individuals.
- Enable the individuals of the community to teach others.

By sharing skills and knowledge during the construction of the school, the villagers are able to use their own initiative to recognise where their critical needs are. They are then driven to take leadership and develop their own workable solutions.

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1. Vertical Masonry louvres
2. Solar panel
3. Shade netting
4. Screen wall
5. Stage area
6. Lightweight steel truss
7. Courtyard/ assembly space
8. Container classroom



# Legson Kayira Primary School

## Architecture for a Change





*Share knowledge, promote discussion, reflection and awareness, and collaborate in the advancement of the 'social production habitat'.*

Youth of Malawi, Architecture for a Change and the people of Chimphamba Village have all experienced the community from different cultural perspectives. Everyone can express and discuss what might be needed to improve the quality of living. The interweaving bonds form an awareness to help individuals escape perceived judgements.

The interaction of receiving input from a variety of individuals helps the villagers, and children of the village, to not only concern themselves with basic biological and physiological needs, but to help grow in cognitive, self-actualisation and transcendent needs. These all attend to knowledge and understanding, curiosity, exploration, personal potential and growth, and helping others achieve a sense of realisation. From these arise ambition and enthusiasm to continue the efforts made in the village; a flourishing, self-sufficient system is created.

When people from strong, self-supported environments are placed in a weaker economically developed context, a sensitive awareness is born. The need to help provide for others overtakes self-centred ambitions.

This symbiotic relationship of people from polar contexts creates a cycle of emotional and mental consciousness. Emotional intelligence is broadened.



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