

# Habitat Initiative Cabo Delgado, Mozambique

a project of the **Aga Khan Foundation (Mozambique)**



*Completed ecologically-constructed community learning centre*

The Habitat Initiative in Cabo Delgado province, Mozambique, was initiated to enhance people's quality of life through facilitating communities' ability to undertake significant improvements to their built environment.

The Initiative operates primarily inside Quirimbas National Park; home to 95,000 people as well as many plant and animal species. Those living in the project area are dependent on natural resources such as timber, crops and fuel for their livelihoods and for economic growth.

Housing in the project area is largely of poor quality, lacking sufficient light, ventilation and vulnerable to environmental elements. Typically, houses here have an average lifespan of only five years, often deteriorating rapidly because of failing roofs.

By working with rural community organisations to build 15 ecologically-constructed learning centres, the initiative is:

- Building on traditional techniques and developing innovative skills that improve the use and encourage the sustainability of naturally available materials
- Creating community skills in ecological building through participatory design and construction of community learning centres
- Supporting the creation of local enterprises to undertake this work.

The Initiative will benefit communities in the region by empowering them to sustainably construct affordable and enduring structures, and by creating new income opportunities centred on ecological construction.

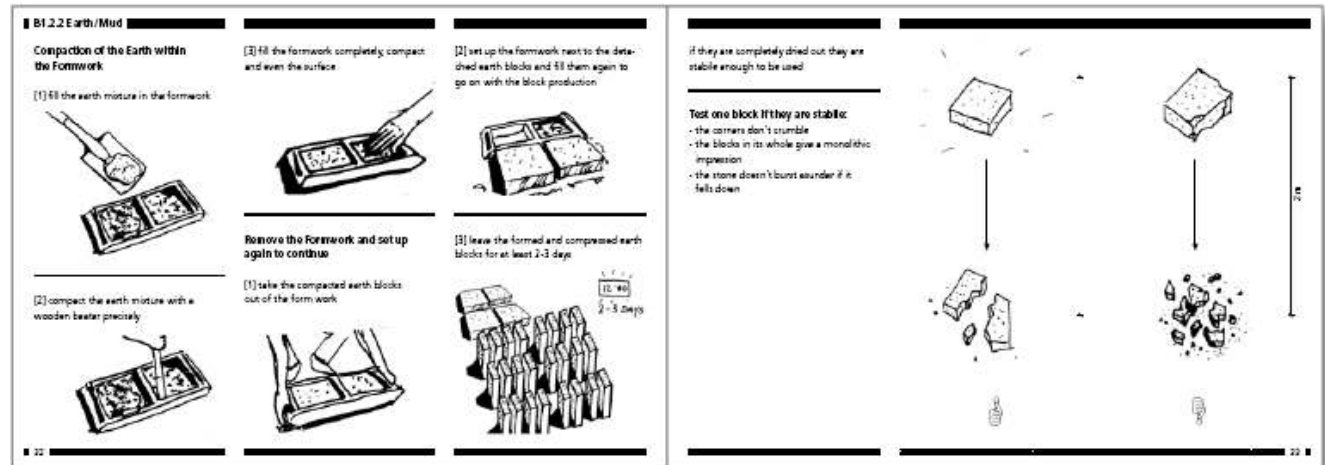
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Local group producing mud blocks for habitat projects

Emphasis on improved use of natural materials includes naturally treated and reinforced bamboo for building and production of improved mud blocks through quality control. By extending the life cycle of the entire structure, the Initiative is reducing harvesting of natural materials and hence demand on the environment.

Community volunteers assist in collection of natural materials. Importantly, the Initiative is also providing on-site training to selected local youth apprentices, who are being formed into construction associations. Through increased demand for improved habitats from individuals, the private sector government, the associations will have opportunities for income generation.



Manual used for training youth apprentices in methods of improved ecological construction



Youth apprentices learning how to develop improved bamboo framing systems, which utilise natural materials, such as cashew oil, to prevent pest attacks, and are formed into beams for additional strength

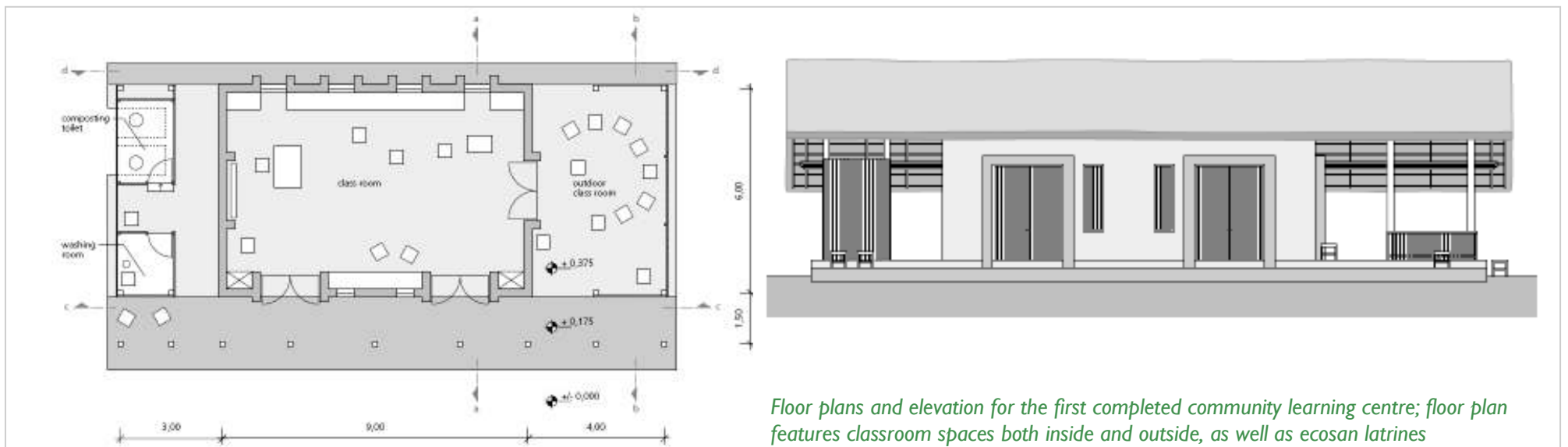
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The Initiative is highly inclusive and involves community participation in the design, construction and functional use planning (for the completed learning centres). Such a process is supporting innovation through learning.

Design innovations are introduced to communities through 'Innovation Workshops' that bring together elected community groups and community interest groups, where site designs are discussed and developed and volunteers are organised to assist with construction. The Initiative is also investing in local professionals to design habitats utilising natural materials.



*The structures feature foundations, thick mud blocks walls, and large roofing spans to accommodate bigger floor plans, all constructed sustainably with locally available materials*



*Floor plans and elevation for the first completed community learning centre; floor plan features classroom spaces both inside and outside, as well as ecosan latrines*

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*Artisan workshop held at village of first completed community learning centre; local crafts used for the interior of the structure*

An important benefit of the Initiative are the vastly improved 15 community learning centres that accommodate Early Childhood Development and youth and adult literacy training; in essence, the centres are actual examples, starting with the very young, of significantly improved habitats and physical environment. As local villages in Mozambique are responsible for planning and managing pre-school and adult literacy programmes, the structures completed under the Habitat Initiative will be a showcase of developing highly functional learning centres that promote individual learning and creativity.



*Multi-functional sitting boards for school children crafted from local materials*