

Meti 2.0 | ZRS's new generation handmade school



As both Francis Kéré and Anna Heringer readily acknowledge German architect Christoph Ziegert and engineer Eike Roswag were significant contributors to the realisation of their respective Gando and the Meti-Handmade school. They first met in Mexico's Sierra Nevada, working on a student community centre project. After further studies at Berlin TU, the two were joined in 2003 by Uwe Seiler, forming an engineering-architecture practice, ZRS Ingenieure, with a focus on bio-materials, particularly rammed earth. Splitting work between European (primarily German) and non-Western projects the practice has built up an striking portfolio which includes renovation of the Jahili Fort in Abu Dhabi, a string of earthen houses within striking distance of Berlin, and recently an award-winning engineered timber headquarters for an engineering company in the capital city. There is also the enticing news that the practice are involved in a Bamboo building materials production plan in Ethiopia, which obviously enough is to be constructed from local sourced bamboo and earth.

For those interested in that early history, though, it's the ongoing Tipi Sultan Merkez school that will be the draw. The school and project building is in the Punjab, Western Pakistan, was designed over the winter of



summer. As part of the overall Tipi Sultan Merkez school campus, with a 270 pupil intake, it is located in one of the poorest parts of the country attempting to counter an illiteracy rate of over 50%. Since this a school within the Indian sub-continent and earth and bamboo are again the key materials for the eight class-roomed, two storey building, some are calling it Meti 2.0, a next generation Rudrapur. Up to thirty local craftsman were trained and have been working on the school which like the Meti Handmade school is also meant to demonstrate both bio materials as modern low energy alternatives to

Anna's cousin Emmanuel Heringer has been bamboo consultant. An additional aim, once completed is the campus also providing ongoing training courses for the immediate area, including the neighbouring village of Jar Maulwi.

The jury of the *2012 Holcim Award for Sustainable Construction* were certainly impressed, as the school was presented the gold prize in the awards Asian category. The ironies go deep, given Holcim are one of the top three of the world's concrete producers. Ziegert and Roswag are surely smiling – not least given Ziegert has written a well regarded textbook on rammed earth – at how things can turn out, while brushing up on their diplomacy skills as they make their way around the concrete dominated middle European architectural industry. *OL*

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