

Press release

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Foster + Partners reveals designs for Sierra Leone school in Royal Academy Summer Exhibition

Foster + Partners has unveiled a model for the design of a school in Sierra Leone at the Royal Academys Summer Exhibition in London. Working together with Article 25, Save the Children and Buro Happold, this unique project to establish a design prototype was the result of close collaboration with the local community to create a series of highly flexible buildings with larger classrooms, effective ventilation and natural light.

The design draws parallels with a number of early social projects. Its modular system embraces floor, walls and roof on a flexible plan and can be easily assembled and reconfigured to meet the different demands of communities in Sierra Leone. The response to climatic and economic restraints has produced something close to a new vernacular: an architecture without architects. Visually, the scheme resonates with existing schools, yet functionally it is a dramatic departure. This has ensured widespread acceptance of the design, enabling teachers for the first time to circulate in classrooms that are light and naturally ventilated and offering better security and supervision.

The design is being jointly funded by Foster + Partners, Article 25 and Buro Happold and construction will be financed by the Foster family.

Norman Foster said:

The project to design a school for Sierra Leone has been both an exciting design challenge, as well as an ambitious undertaking to help improve education in one of the worlds poorest countries. Our approach seeks to achieve the most with the least, using indigenous techniques and materials to create a prototype for a modern, flexible school building that is uplifting and inspiring to use.

Notes for editors:

Article 25 is a construction charity working in International Development.

The school is easily assembled using locally sourced bush-sticks, standard-sized timber planks and generic modules of sheet metal for the roof.

Louvered apertures in the walls admit natural light and reduce contrast with the daylight outside.

The pitch of the roof is at an angle of 30 degrees to minimise solar gain and encourage cross-ventilation. The top hat of an additional roof increases air flow through the spaces and adds more natural light.

The roof can be extended to create a generous overhang at either end of the building, creating shaded external areas for informal teaching or play.

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For further information

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