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Squire and Partners recycles shipping container into youth centre

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Squire and Partners has converted a shipping container into youth education centre in Bogota, Colombia

ARCHITECT'S VIEW • PROJECT DATA

Nicknamed the Zubabox, the education centre was built as part of a collaboration between the practice and charity [Computer Aid International](#).

The scheme is the first Dell Solar Learning Lab to be built and aims to provide a safe environment where local children can develop social and digital skills.

The practice began working with the charity in 2014 when it was asked to design a prototype Solar Learning Lab as part of a series of mobile units providing internet connectivity in remote areas.

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This basic unit, which is now used in ten rural communities across Africa, was constructed from a recycled shipping container with solar panels on the roof.

This youth education centre, develops these initial designs to allow connectivity between units, a shaded external deck, a larger roof and landscaping.

Tim Gledstone, partner at Squire and Partners, said: 'We have worked with Computer Aid over several years researching the Zubabox prototype system, so it was immensely rewarding to see our first of the new generation projects delivered to Tiempo de Juego. Engaging with Bogota-based manufacturers, furniture makers and artists to embed the Zubabox into Cazuca was key to the success of the project.'

He added: 'The design is deliberately extroverted to encourage inclusion and interaction by maximising openings, which in turn offer stunning views across the city.'



Architect's view

The practice explored connectivity between units, extending the external deck to increase available learning and social spaces, and landscaping designed to connect the box to its location.

Squire and Partners' final design presented a simple modular system which can operate individually or as part of a group. Maximising the possible amount of openings – working within the limits of structural integrity – increases cross ventilation and natural light, and creates a shaded deck which expands the usable area and facilitates integration with the existing community. A larger roof size additionally allows for an increased number of solar panels.

Internally, a skin of plywood softens the working space and can be easily personalised by the users. Computer stations can be orientated either around the box perimeter for individual working, or facing inwards to a central bench creating a social and inclusive atmosphere. Areas have been designed specifically for potential sponsors of the programme alongside corporate social responsibility commitments, a key part of Zubabox's future.



Project data

Location Cazuca, Soacha, Cundinamarca, Colombia

Client Charity Partner - Computer Aid, Charity recipient - Tiempo de Juego, Computer partner – Dell Giving

Architect Squire and Partners

Landscape architect Squire and Partners

Structural engineer AKTII (plinth done with Green Construction group)

Lighting consultant Atrium

Services Hoare Lea

Container conversion All Plast SAS

Local furniture fabricator Saint George

Graffiti artists Delix, Zhed 1 and Mauricio Hernandez

Tender date August 2015

Start on site date February 2016

Completion date May 2016

Contract duration 1 year renewable

Gross internal floor area 12m²

Form of contract and/or procurement Charitable Grant agreement between CAI-Dell

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