



DESIGNED OUTSIDE THE BOX

The Design Indaba 10x10 Low-Cost Housing project's aim is aligned with the organisation's fundamental mission to 'create a better future, by design'. The project seeks to stimulate wider debate and creative thought around the delivery of low-cost housing, a very pressing issue internationally, while at the same time directly benefiting some of Cape Town's most impoverished families.



Ten architectural teams, composed of handpicked South Africans paired with international alumni of previous Design Indaba Conferences, were challenged to provide dynamic design solutions for the low-cost housing sector on a completely pro bono basis. The objective was to come up with affordable, attractive, innovative responses to the urgent need for housing for the urban poor. Sustainable design, construction and operation principles were essential criteria.

The first qualifying solution to the project's challenge was the design by Luyanda Mpahlwa, of MMA Architects, for a single-family home, which leveraged the extremely tight budget by borrowing elements from indigenous mud-and-wattle building techniques. Forgoing traditional brick-and-mortar foundations in favour of a two-storey frame of timber and sandbag infill construction, the house is both energy-efficient and requires little to no electricity or skilled labour to construct. In September 2008, the design won the international Curry Stone Design Prize, an award recognising breakthrough design solutions with the power and potential to improve our lives and the world we live in.

Design Indaba is currently overseeing the completion of 10 such houses in Freedom Park, a township in the Cape Town metropolis. Beneficiaries were workshopped during the design phase to determine their needs and preferences, and have been involved hands-on in every stage of the building process. The project has provided local people, mostly women, with employment as well as experience in working with a sustainable building system. Experiences and outputs will be compiled and presented to the Minister of Housing in an open source manual. The information will also be made available online, thus contributing to the global commons of knowledge regarding design and construction of low-cost housing. **SG**

Find out more about the Design Indaba 10x10 Low-Cost Housing Project online at www.designindaba.com/10x10/ or Blog designindaba10x10.blogspot.com/