

POTTERS HAVEN: The Brief Scenario

The Potter's Haven is set on the northern periphery of Mukono town, situated about 10km north of the shores of Lake Victoria and along the Kampala-Mombasa highway, the major trade route connecting Uganda to the seaport of Mombasa. While the highway has contributed to the rapid growth of Mukono, It has also exposed concerns about the lack of facilities and programmes dedicated to meeting the needs of the elderly.

The situation of the elderly in Mukono has been made worse by war, pronounced illness and death (predominantly from HIV/AIDS) of the energetic young population. These have robbed families of the support of the extended family network of relations, in-laws and close friends. The result is a large number of orphans. After losing their children, who in Africa are their 'insurance', older persons are left to care for their orphaned grandchildren under conditions of extreme poverty, poor nutrition, poor health, and general physical disability.

The Potter's Haven is our architectural response to this situation. Inspired by the local tradition of pottery, clusters of buildings, informed by the locations of the elderly within the community are arranged around a unifying space, the Community Hub, which fosters multigenerational and multicultural interaction. It addresses issues such as food security incorporating Permaculture and Vertical gardens, and accessible clean water. The Potters Haven seeks to promote indigenous building techniques but modified to respond to contemporary construction requirements and to emphasise sustainability. This will create a self-sustaining community for all who live, work, study, and play there.

The result is a multigenerational precinct which coexists and grows together with the Mukono community as an attempt to empower older persons and their dependants; ensuring that they live dignified and fulfilled lives amidst rapid urbanisation.