



AVASARA ACADEMY

Written and Contributed by

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Avasara Academy is a first-of-its-kind secondary school and leadership academy that aims to cultivate India's next generation of women leaders.

What is the project about?

When the project began, it started with aspirations literally to just get the bones of a building up and to have some girls in some rooms and try to prove the idea that if you have girls in front of really strong teachers, pushed to think about how they can change the world, you will be able to produce leaders.

We wanted to create an environment that espoused all our values, excellence and integrity. But more than anything, have this feeling of space, a sanctuary to be able to develop who you are as a person."

– Roopa Purushothaman, Founder

Settled into the valley slope above the village of Lavale, the 4.3-acre campus is located 10 km west of Pune and roughly 145 km southeast of Mumbai. As a part of the growing township of Knowledge City, the school is uniquely positioned to take advantage of locally shared resources while establishing its own identity as a leader in the education and development of young women in India.

Growing out of the agrarian hillside, the campus is a collection of simple structures arranged around an informal series of walkways, courtyards, gardens and terraces. Culled from local and universal examples of academic, domestic, public and sacred spaces, the architecture responds to site, program and climate, addressing the needs of the community to provide a sanctuary for learning.

We have created moments of hospitality, social interaction, reflection, play, ritual, seclusion, performance, and comfort. Intended for a variety of uses, these public and private spaces aspire to give a sense of familiarity and intimacy to the young women living and studying on campus. We have very carefully designed the exterior bamboo shading and a setback from the dormitory rooms to create these semi-outdoor verandahs to avoid exposure to direct sun. Mosaic floor from quarry waste, charpai furniture, the coloured ceilings, reclaimed timber doors, exposed concrete work, local stonework, solar chimneys and panels provides for a year-round comfortable learning and living environment.

What is the impact?

One of the things we have really focused on is the careful use of resources, from money, energy, time, effort, materials like stone waste, reclaimed wood, bamboo, concrete. From the local farmers we learned the use and management of water which is an important element of our design.

Avasara's partners include some of the world's leading academic institutions, such as Yale University, which provides developmental resources and unique learning opportunities to the students.

Avasara Academy is rooted in holistic learning: while its residential campus is being built, it has used an extended school day to maximize time with its students. Ultimately, Avasara Academy's boarding school model will provide a rich environment for continuous learning and growth, both academic and personal.

Project Funded by

Avasara

Stakeholders Involved

Collaboration amongst a diverse group of builders, designers, farmers, artists, craftsmen, and engineers who share the belief that collaboration and empathy lie at the core of all good work.

We worked with Pratik Raval, a climate control engineer from New York and Malene Bach, a visual artist from Copenhagen for colour.

Hemali Swant and local farmers were a critical part of our landscape design interventions.

Some of the other collaborators were Punamchand Suthar, Carpenter; Rameshwar Bhadhwa, civil contractor; Malekar Pandurang Gharat and Jayesh Pandurang Gharat, builders.

About Case Design:

Based in Mumbai with projects in India, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, Case Design is an architecture and design practice committed to exploring the design process through acts of making.

We believe that objects and spaces deeply impact our relationship with the world around us and seek to create moments of quality inspired by observations from our daily lives. These experiences, both spatial and formal, are situationally grounded, considerate to human interaction, and are inherently imbued with content and meaning.

As a collection of people with diverse backgrounds, we also believe that collaboration lies at the core of all good work. Regardless of method or medium, the greatest form of sustainability is to produce work of lasting value. In that spirit, we aspire to create things that are simple, beautiful and functional.

Links to read more:

[A school in making](#)