

Genesis Architects: Projects and Future Endeavours

Ar. Rudy Taslim, founder of Genesis Architects, shares his motivation for his projects in Africa, his architectural experiences in Mozambique, The Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda, as well as his future ambitions for Genesis Architects.



Under Rudy's leadership, Genesis Architects has become a versatile and multi-disciplinary practice with a diverse portfolio in Singapore and overseas. Founded in 2013, the practice spans master-planning in architecture and interior design, branding and general design consultancy. As founder and managing director of Genesis Architects, Rudy leads project teams for both architectural and interior design projects, in Singapore and beyond.

He has handled architectural and interior design projects of various scales and complexity in a wide spectrum of typologies, ranging from integrated developments, masterplans, commercial, residential and institutional projects in Singapore, Asia Pacific and Africa. Rudy's designs are versatile and unique as he believes in fulfilling the aspirations of the clients, however diverse each project brief may be.

How did Genesis Architects come about having projects in Africa?

I (Rudy) studied Architecture in Singapore and Australia, graduated top of my cohort and was conferred valedictorian in 2008 by the University of Melbourne. I also hold ASEAN registration, which allows me to practice in the region.

With almost a decade of experience in the top ten architectural firms in Singapore, I worked on multi-billion dollar commercial and institutional projects. With mounting thoughts that there is transformational power in architecture, I wanted to make a difference. I quit my job and went to Mozambique to live with the poorest of the poor for a season. It was there in the mud huts and dusty streets of Mozambique that I found what I was looking for – a greater sense of clarity about my life purpose. I became convinced that architecture could be a transformational tool to deliver better life outcomes for the poor around the world, and that I could pioneer a new way to practice architecture.

When I returned to Singapore in 2013, I decided to start my own practice. The vision was to create a practice that would be excellent in its craft and be commercially successful, while at the same time, committed to pro-bono building projects in developing countries to see lives and communities transformed in a tangible way. Thus, Genesis Architects was birthed. It is a unique expression of one man's quest to pursue architectural excellence and play its part as a caring and responsible global citizen.

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Iris University master planning, Mozambique (Source: genesis-architects.com)

Could you tell us more about some of the projects you have done in Africa?

Working in harmony with nature and local conditions is a strength of Genesis Architects designs.

The same care is seen in the building of Iris University in Mozambique. We didn't want to parachute a foreign design. We wanted the design to arise from the ground, drawing reference from the local culture. The 25-hectare lot faces the Indian Ocean, and slopes towards the oceanfront.

To lead the eye gently to the waterfront, taller buildings are positioned inland, while single-storey blocks are on lower elevation.

To celebrate local culture, I drew inspiration from the geometric shapes common in the traditional fabric capulana. The central pedestrian spine is laid out in a geometric shape. The design of the capulana is also projected onto the façade of the buildings. It is a clever metaphor for a university, as we see the next generation of university students as comprising the fabric of society.

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Écoles Modulaires in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Source: genesis-architects.com)

Genesis Architects also stands out in its passion and commitment to pro-bono social and humanitarian projects around the world. We have built schools in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the jungles of Borneo, and run much-needed training for teachers and students on healthcare and hygiene.

My wife, Bao Yan, recalls a time when we called upon three students in a school in the Democratic Republic of Congo to demonstrate how to brush their teeth. The gums of all three children bled. They were malnourished and their gums were rotting. It was also their first time brushing their teeth.



We travel extensively in developing nations, using our professional skills to make a tangible difference in needy communities. When the poor come to us, we can't just turn them away when we have what they need in our hands.



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Our team is also pursuing projects in Rwanda, including partnering with Bishop John Rucyahana, a well-respected leader who played a pivotal role in the movement of reconciliation during the genocide. Together, we are building a vocational school for the historically-marginalised people, to equip them with practical skills so as to lift up the community.

To keep community ownership high, I train local masons in building techniques and empower the local people, using largely local materials and improvising local technologies throughout the entire process. My pro-bono building projects are executed with close attention to detail and consideration for the needs of the end user.

What do you hope to achieve with Genesis Architects?

I envision Genesis Architects becoming a key thought leader and frontrunner in reimagining the architectural industry in Singapore and beyond. I see Genesis Architects setting new standards of excellence in the industry and becoming known for its positive impact on the built environment. I hope to inspire many more professionals in the building and design industry to harness their skills to create a positive social impact.



I also desire to engage with professionals in other sectors like business, education and healthcare, to bring about holistic transformation in societies around the world.

I hope to increase our professional involvement in both African and SEA regions and work with governments and industry partners to make an even greater difference and impact, and to influence the next generation to pursue the greater good and build a more caring and equitable society.

WRITTEN BY:

GILLIA BERNADOU AND YUEN MAY

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

RUDY TASLIM. LAM BAO YAN