

# **MPUMULO: Investigation of Culturally Embedded Abuse in the Design of a Self-Sustaining Shelter for Women and Girls in Blantyre, Malawi**

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## **Abstract**

The work of this project is to develop a physical model for social change with international applications. Centered on the issues pertaining to cultures of abuse of women, a prototype Health Center and Shelter that can also accommodate fair trade manufacturing will be researched and developed for a community in Malawi. This prototype will advance knowledge in the programming of health delivery systems, community development, environmental sustainability, indigenous knowledge, and its supporting architectural context for East African nations. The Principal Researchers have established contact with a Malawi-based NGO, and raised initial funds that resulted in the purchase of land for the project. A multi-disciplinary team consisting of architects, engineers from Engineers Without Borders, and public health nurses is already in the preliminary stages of architectural design work with a group of Malawian women on this project. Intensive research of indigenous knowledge, that is knowledge embedded in community practices, institutions, relationships, and rituals, about building techniques, materials and land use practice is the focus of the specific proposal to the BSA. The project proposal has broad applicability, especially in developing countries.

Description of the research method: The research method involves mapping, research of historic texts, ethnographies and 19th century travel diaries, as well as research with local architects, oral interviews with builders. This will take place in both the United States and Malawi. The research will also entail the design of a facility derived from the background research that is coupled with the systematic investigation of the physical and cultural contexts currently in operation at the site in Malawi.