‘METI-school’ Rudrapur

Anna Heringer

A symbiosis of traditional building techniques and architecture
Rudrapur lies in the north of the most densely populated country in the world, Bangladesh. Poverty, inadequate infrastructure, minimal provisions, etc drive many people from rural areas into the cities. The local NGO Dipshikha has tried to move in new directions in this area with its development programme: the rural population should be given prospects and re-learn the value of the village. This also involves the concept of its own school to educate children. Self-confidence, independence and a sense of identity is central in this project.

Anna Heringer took up this challenge with her Meti school project. After carrying out a study of the village together with three follow students from Linz in 2002, she devoted her doctorate project to a design for a school building in Rudrapur. The design was completed in 2005. The villagers, pupils and teachers were closely involved in the project. Traditional building techniques were used and developed further. Loam and bamboo are locally available, cheap building materials which also have valuable properties in this subtropical climate. Indigenous workers were used for the building work, but the pupils and teachers also contributed to the construction themselves. Therefore the project had a great deal of support in the village. The techniques for loam and bamboo construction, improved by specialists, were passed onto the local population as the building progressed.

According to Anna Heringer, progress is not a matter of a different use of materials, but of architecture. The design of a rectangular school building is extremely simple, but intelligent. The ground floor is made of heavy loam. The thick loam walls produce a pleasant indoor climate. The classrooms are plain rectangular rooms. Every classroom has an annex, consisting of playful hollows made of loam where small groups of children can retreat. There is an open bay between the classrooms where a staircase leads up to the floor. The top floor has a light bamboo structure. One room is the size of a double classroom. The large extended green roof provides shade and a cool area and protects the loam walls from the rain. The ventilation is regulated by shutters in the rectangular windows. This extremely plain, but at the same time sophisticated building has already won a number of architectural prizes.
key
1. terrace
2. classroom
3. loam recesses
4. staircases
5. space or circulation

Grundrisse (Ausführung)

level 0

level 1