



## ROSS LANGDON HEALTH EDUCATION CENTRE

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The Ross Langdon Health Education Centre is a small community hall located in the village of Mannyia in Rakai, South-western Uganda. It provides space for about 150 people, sitting on simple clay tile steps, and for a speaker, standing on a small elevated platform. Adjacent to the hall is a room for private meetings and a store. At the front is a walkway covered by a pergola providing shade for informal gatherings and relaxation.







The building was designed by Ross Langdon, a young Australian Architect who, together with his wife and unborn child, was amongst the victims of the Westgate attacks in Nairobi. In his short career spanning across Australia, the UK and East Africa, Ross left behind a multitude of designs, including the award-winning Kyambura Lodge, all imaginatively tailored to location, climate, materials and users, and all driven by an inexhaustible passion for '[Chameleon Architecture](#)'.



As good as we can tell in his absence, Ross envisioned the Health Education Centre as a small pavilion, entirely inward-looking and made of the most basic of building materials available in Southern Uganda: eucalyptus poles as the main structure with clay brick infills and clay tile floors. There are no windows, and instead the building envelop filters light in various ways; perforations in the brickwork, a gap between walls and roof, a high-level roof vent with skylight and 'Liters of Light' illuminating the stage area. The roof cover is made of zinc-al roof sheets supported by Eucalyptus trusses, and the ceiling is made of purpose-designed handmade 'Mukeka' reed mats.



Following Ross' death, the client, the [Cotton On Foundation](#) from Australia, approached Uganda-based [Studio FH Architects](#) with the request to complete the design and help implementing it as close as possible to the intentions of the originator. Felix Holland, principal architect at Studio FH and personal friend of Ross, took on the challenge and assembled a team of dedicated designers and builders who went on a detective mission deciphering Ross' design intentions, guessing at times and disagreeing at others, and finally realizing a building that we hope does justice to the ideas and visions of the architect.



