

OASIS: WOMEN'S WELFARE AND WELLNESS CENTER

Zehra Ali¹, Mohamed Shokry²

^{1,2}College of Architecture and Design, Effat University, Qasr Khuzam St., Kilo. 2, Old Mecca Road. P.O.BOX 34689, Jeddah 21478, Saudi Arabia

E-mail: ¹eali@effatuniversity.edu.sa, ²mshokry@effatuniversity.edu.sa

Received: 12.04.2020

Revised: 11.05.2020

Accepted: 08.06.2020

Abstract

Saudi Arabia has a social issue regarding treatment of women and a lack of support system for them. This study analyses the current situation of women in Saudi Arabia and the facilities available for them. The project proposed is a comprehensive support facility for women offering services from psychological therapy to legal help, shelter, as well as physical wellness. There are five case studies were considered in this study based on their design and functions. Drawing upon some case studies of welfare centers, wellness centers and domestic abuse shelters along with standards related to all three, a final program is concluded. The site evaluation criteria are surroundings, security, accessibility, good views, demographics, visibility and noise levels. The selected site is located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in Al Hamra district. The design of the site project building is inspired by the flow of water in a river, thus the building is combination of curve and straight shape.

Keywords--Women, Welfare Center, Wellness Center, Domestic Abuse Shelters

© 2020 by Advance Scientific Research. This is an open-access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.31838/jcr.07.08.54>

INTRODUCTION

Women in Saudi Arabia are in desperate need for a support system [1, 2]. Saudi Arabia is a male dominated and also very private society. Due to this, the subject of women and their personal issues is often not addressed. In the past, the mental health awareness in Saudi Arabia is very low and therefore women with depression and other mental illnesses are not given the support and treatment as they need [3-5]. Additionally, issues such as domestic abuse and sexual violence, despite their prevalence, have no awareness or support system. A combination of lack of facilities and apprehension leads women to internalize their problems and their struggles are left unresolved. For this reason, it is imperative to create a network with legal, psychological, medical support as well as refuge and financial support.

In 2005, the Social Protection House was founded as the first battered women's home in Abha. However, its situation was far from adequate. One of the women seeking asylum, Falwa al-Kahtani took asylum there after being beaten by her father for refusing to marry a man thirty years older than her [6]. She ended up fleeing the shelter as well due to the mistreatment of the women. They were not allowed to leave for any reason—to work or to study and were not even allowed to use mobile phones, even though according to the Ministry of Social Affairs they should have been allowed to do so. Some have taken to describe the shelters as “elegant prisons”. Another asylum seeker claims that they were not given basic personal hygiene supplies and the environment was so closed and restricting it disallowed them from living a normal life and pursuing independence [6]. These are basic human rights that they were being denied and even if a shelter is in the name of safety if it does not provide them with these functions. Therefore, the aim of this project is to be an all-inclusive welfare center for women and their children to encompass all their needs—ranging from psychological counselling to shelter from life or death situations. This project, titled Oasis: Women's Welfare and Wellness Center is a mixed use campus designed to make women feel safe.

CASE STUDIES

This study considered five case studies that are similar elements

to the proposed idea. The selected case studies are carefully design for specific functions. The case studies are organised as:

- A. Welfare Center:
 - a. Welfare Center for Children and Teenagers, France
 - b. Seongdong Cultural & Welfare Center, South Korea
- B. Domestic Abuse Shelter:
 - a. Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence, Israel
 - b. Women's Shelter and Clinic, Dubai
- C. Community Center:
 - a. Abu Dhabi Ladies Club

Welfare Center for Children and Teenagers, France

This facility is an emergency shelter catered towards children and youth (Figure 1). The aim is to give them shelter from their abusive household and give them psychological support as well as rekindling the families. They want to create a healthy protected environment where children feel safe instead of imprisoned and help them grow both psychologically and academically. Each floor is dedicated to a certain age group and has specific functions and activities dedicated to that age group in particular. The concept is to create a nurturing environment where children feel safe and their education and healing are prioritized, not like typical facilities where they feel outcast and institutionalized. Their main objectives are practical, educational, and psychological support [7].

Seongdong Cultural & Welfare Center, South Korea

This project is a combination of a governmental administration center, a welfare center and a cultural center (Figure 2). It is situated in one of the poorest factory districts in Korea, and its modern exterior offers a sharp contrast from its context. The main reasoning for this was urban regeneration. There are a variety of functions within the facility. The governmental portion acts as an administrative branch and oversees the development of the area and offers legal support if needed. The welfare center is in place to improve the lives of the people living in the district. The idea of adding the cultural and welfare center is to give the idea of making government more accessible, so people are not intimidated to get help. In doing so, the facility has almost become a central plaza for the whole district. There are three main concepts of the project which is urban regeneration of the abandoned and polluted slum through both the futuristic

architecture and the green elements, accessibility of government and welfare facilities and also turning architecture into a public plaza to enhance the community [8].



Figure 1. Welfare Center for Children and Teenagers [7]



Figure 2. Seongdong Cultural and Welfare Center [8]

Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence, Israel

This project is a shelter combined with administrative headquarters and other facilities aimed at providing safety for a diverse range of backgrounds, including Arab, Israeli, Ethiopian, and Russian. There are twelve individual housing units for women and their children and the facility in its entirety can house around 24 people—women with their children. The courtyard not only serves a social purpose but also a functional, acting as a "street" connecting the two branches together into a free flowing space, and also appropriately placed at a line of sight from which mothers can keep an eye on their children. The main concept is to create a homely, peaceful haven where women can heal and also regain independence. Social interaction is highly emphasized, hence the central courtyard as a gathering space and all of the other activities and group therapy. There is greenery on all sides in order to provide a "tangible sense of calm and security." To enhance the sense of homeliness, the architect designed the facility to resemble a small village rather than one building as shown in Figure 3 [9].

Women's Shelter and Clinic, Dubai

Due to the privacy of the culture in UAE, this shelter is disguised within a clinic to keep the women safe and hidden (Figure 4). The clinic operates normally as a women's medical facility and in the case where a woman needs refuge, she is taken to a hidden branch of the building where she can get her needed counselling or shelter. By keeping the shelter hidden, the women's whereabouts are hidden and therefore they are considerably safer. The concept of the project is a "burka," with the idea of concealing the shelter from the public eye by keeping it veiled around a clinic [10].



Figure 3. Shelter for Victims of Domestic Violence [9]

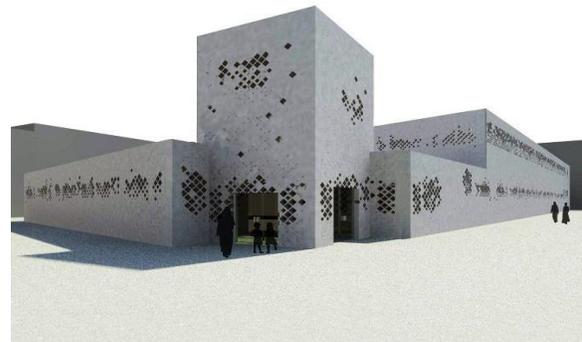


Figure 4. Women's Clinic and Shelter [10]

Abu Dhabi Ladies Club

This project is designed specifically for women with the objectives to provide them with health, education, child care, and fitness facilities and even business opportunities. It is divided into cultural, recreational, and educational branches. The main clubhouse contains physical activities, education, entertainment, recreation, a spa, lounge and restaurant. The compound itself has an outdoor swimming pool and other outdoor activities along the beachfront property. The secondary branch of the facility has an entire sports academy, a shooting range, art and music academy, along with administration and services. There are plans for future expansion to include an outdoor festival area, water park, and private beach with its own lagoon. The original concept for the plan and roof's shape comes from flower petals. The concept for the facade treatment is inspired by the folding of traditional Islamic fabric and patterns. To give this airy, delicate effect of a flower petal, the structure is covered with architectural PVC fabric – one solid and one lace. The cladding on the wall is inspired by the patterns of leaves (Figure 5) [11].



Figure 5. Construction images showing the concept of the leaf in the facade and windows [11]

SPACE PROGRAM

The main program is divided into four separate departments namely welfare center, wellness center, shared facilities and shelter. They are all interconnected and related to one another. Figure 6 shows the relationship between each department. The welfare and community center are connected overall in one general community hall, with specific functions branching from the designated departments. The community hall serves as a central node. The domestic shelter is hidden within the welfare center situated away from all of the public recreational zones. Users in the domestic shelter have automatic access to all other zones, but their own zone is private to all other users. Due to the interconnected nature of the project, many facilities are shared between the welfare and community center, not solely those in the shared facilities department. The “shared facilities” refers to the functions accessible from the main community hall with no specific correlation to a particular department. Table 1 tabulates the area distribution of the project.

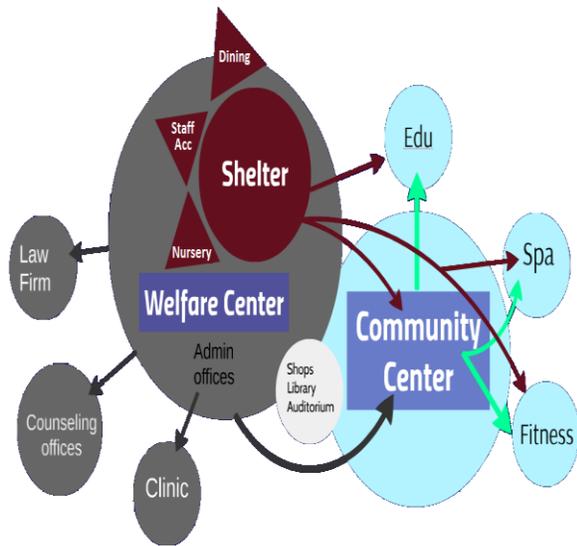


Figure 6.Basic initial zones and relationships

Table 1. Area distribution

| Zone | Percentage (%) | Gross Area (m ²) | Net Area (m ²) |
|-------------------|----------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Welfare Center | 27 | 4536 | 3780 |
| Wellness Center | 24 | 4165 | 3204 |
| Shared Facilities | 23 | 3952 | 3162 |
| Shelter | 26 | 4925.25 | 3940.2 |
| Total | 100 | 17578.25 | 14086.2 |

SITE SELECTION AND ANALYSIS

There are seven site criteria were considered in this study. The site criteria are surroundings, security, accessibility, good views, demographics, visibility and noise levels. The chosen site is located in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in Al Hamra district (Figure 7). It is located at the intersection of Al Ashjar/Al Misk Street and Yusuf Naseef Street, which are secondary roads to Andalus Road and Falasteen Street. It is at walking distance to Jamjoom Commercial Center which provides nearby amenities and services as well as job opportunities. It will also help attract more users to the retail and recreational facilities inside. Most importantly, it is in a secure and quiet residential area. There are two empty lots on the north and west sides of the site which can be used as parking areas or a small park. Table 2 demonstrates the site evaluation result of the selected site.

Table 2. Site evaluation

| Criteria | Points Possible | Point Given |
|---------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Surroundings | 5 | 5 |
| Security | 4 | 4 |
| Accessibility | 3 | 3 |
| Good Views | 2 | 1.5 |
| Demographics | 3 | 2.5 |
| Visibility | 1 | 0.5 |
| Noise Levels | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 21 | 19.5/21 = 93% |

Regarding the accessibility, Al Andalus Road is the main access to the project, connecting to Falasteen Street. From Andalus, there is a direct connection to al Ashjar Street to access the site. Falasteen Street connects to Yusuf Nasif Street which leads straight to a staff and service entrance and also connects to Abdul Hamid Al Khamid Street which is the other main drop off. There is also a pedestrian option from Jamjoom Center.

The surrounding land use is almost completely residential. There are schools within a one mile distance, as well as governmental buildings. Jamjoom Center and the Corniche offer the proximity of commercial and recreational facilities.

Building upon the land use study one can analyse the surrounding landmarks. The closest landmark is Jamjoom Commercial Center which is at walking distance and there has Hyper Panda and other retail facilities inside. Additionally, there is a Bin Dawood less than a mile away so there are multiple supermarket options. The Falasteen street Starbucks square is also less than a mile away. Other landmarks in the area are the US Consulate, Dr. Soliman Fakeeh Hospital, the King Faisal Royal Guest house and Haifaa Mall. The site is also only a short drive away from the Corniche. The proximity of the Corniche makes it an ideal location for the wellness community portion of the project because this area is already a popular commercial node in Jeddah.

Figure 8 shows the climatic analysis and site zoning of the selected site. The northwest façade faces the cooling wind, making it the ideal location for the green park. The shelter will be hidden within the welfare center but still face outwards to the greenery. Shared facilities will be placed in between the wellness and welfare zones to add a clear linkage between the two functions so the project can remain interconnected. The site is proposed to be surrounded by walls to give an extra level of privacy and security.



Figure 7. Site map [12]



Figure 8. Climatic analysis and zoning



Figure 11. Main perspective of the project

PROJECT DESIGN

Figure 9 demonstrates the final composite relationship diagram of the project. The concept of this project is translated into both the aesthetic and functions. The first concern regarding the form was to create internal private courtyards to have views to greenery while maintaining privacy concerns.

The form of the building is related to the functions. The overall form is inspired by the flow of water in a river. The river travels through rough waters and then tames into calm waters. Likewise, the side of the project with the welfare center and shelter, the "conflict" zone, are curved and dramatic to represent these rough waters. The wellness center transitions into straighter lines, reflecting the calm waters. Figure 10 and Figure 11 show the site plan and the main perspective of the project respectively.

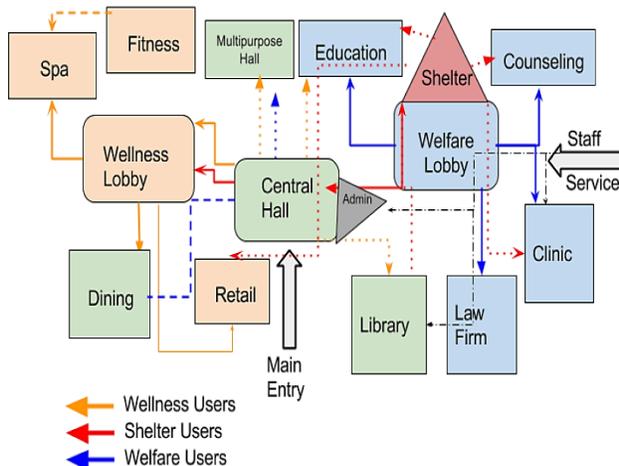


Figure 9. Final Composite relationship diagram



Figure 10. Site plan of the project

CONCLUSION

This project consists of three main branches namely welfare center, private domestic abuse shelter, also a community and wellness center which combines several benefits such as provides a better healing environment as it creates a social community. This project creates the opportunity for women to have jobs and regain a sense of independence within the community. An economic network is created where the welfare and community portions fund the non-profit shelter. The selected site for this project is located in in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in Al Hamra district, based on the evaluation criteria consists of surroundings, security, accessibility, good views, demographics, visibility and noise levels. The final project design is inspired by the flow of water in a river. Therefore, the overall form of the building is water wave shape.

REFERENCES

1. Español, L. (2019). Saudi Women, Tired of Restraints, Find Ways to Flee. [online] Nytimes.com. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/11/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-women-flee.html> [Accessed 27 May 2019].
2. Vincent, I. (2019). Why women are risking their lives to flee Saudi Arabia. [online] Nypost.com. Available at: <https://nypost.com/2019/01/26/why-women-are-so-desperate-to-escape-saudi-arabia/> [Accessed 27 May 2019].
3. Almutairi, A. (2015). Mental illness in Saudi Arabia: an overview. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, p.47.
4. Qureshi, N.A., Al-Habeeb, A.A. and Koenig, H.G. (2013) Mental Health System in Saudi Arabia: An Overview. *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment*, 9, pp.1121-1135.
5. Koenig, H., Al Zaben, F., Sehlo, M., Khalifa, D., Al Ahwal, M., Qureshi, N. and Al-Habeeb, A. (2014). Mental Health Care in Saudi Arabia: Past, Present and Future. *Open Journal of Psychiatry*, 04(02), pp.113-130.
6. al-Ghamidi, H. (2013). Safe Houses Fail to Protect Battered Saudi Women. [online] Al-Monitor. Available at: <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/culture/2013/06/saudi-women-in-battered-womens-shelters.html> [Accessed 27 May 2019].
7. ArchDaily. (2014). Welfare Centre for children and teenagers in Paris / Marjan Hessamfar & Joe Verons architectes associes. [online] Available at: <https://www.archdaily.com/512588/welfare-centre-for-children-and-teenagers-in-paris-marjan-hessamfar-and-joe-verons-architectes-associes> [Accessed 27 May 2019].
8. ArchDaily. (2014). Seongdong Cultural & Welfare Center / UnSangDong Architects. [online] Available at: <https://www.archdaily.com/551478/seongdong-cultural-and-welfare-center-unsangdong-architects> [Accessed 27 May 2019].
9. ArchDaily. (2018). Shelter For Victims Of Domestic Violence / Amos Goldreich Architecture + Jacobs Yaniv Architects.

- [online] Available at:
<https://www.archdaily.com/894042/shelter-for-victims-of-domestic-violence-amos-goldreich-architecture-plus-jacobs-yaniv-architects> [Accessed 27 May 2019].
10. Cargocollective.com. (n.d.). Women's Shelter & Clinic: Dubai, United Arab Emirates - Michelle Morehead. [online] Available at:
<https://cargocollective.com/michellemorehead/Women-s-Shelter-Clinic-Dubai-United-Arab-Emirates> [Accessed 27 May 2019].
11. Archello. (n.d.). ABU DHABI LADIES CLUB | Urbanism Planning Architecture | Archello. [online] Available at:
<https://archello.com/project/abu-dhabi-ladies-club> [Accessed 27 May 2019].
12. Google Maps. (2019). Google Maps. [online] Available at:
<https://www.google.com/maps/place/21%C2%B031'27.4%22N+39%C2%B009'32.7%22E/@21.5242766,39.1584048,218m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m14!1m7!3m6!1s0x15c3cff2a696cd17:0x3da8d0a206a6e0ff!2sAl-Hamra'a,+Jeddah+Saudi+Arabia!3b1!8m2!3d21.5332276!4d39.1717109!3m5!1s0x0:0x0!7e2!8m2!3d21.5242748!4d39.159093> [Accessed 27 May 2019].