SA to the Power 3: Khomotso Crèche, South Africa

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The University of Nottingham Department of Architecture and Built Environment has been building pre-school facilities in South Africa since 2009. This year student architects designed and built the final phase of the Khomotso Creche in Calais Village, in rural South Africa. This facility provides a vital step-up for the children of the village aged from babies up to seven years, when they attend primary school. They learn numeracy, language and play skills. With these live projects we are also helping the women who teach, feed, sing and play with them. It is a huge boost for the children greatly enhancing their chances of progressing further through the education system, perhaps to higher education. The project gives undergraduates an “experience of a lifetime” in a very different culture from the one they experience in Nottingham. They also for the first time see their designs turn into functioning buildings, created with their own hands – a rare experience in UK architectural education. A community uses these buildings on a daily basis, and a social agenda is at the core of the project philosophy. Undergraduates on these projects have a demonstrably higher than average performance in their degree year, and in seeking post-graduate employment.