



PONZANO CHILDREN

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Ponzano, September 7th, 2007



PONZANO CHILDREN OPENS – A CHILDREN'S CENTRE CREATED BY BENETTON GROUP IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE TOWN OF PONZANO

Ponzano Children, the children's centre created by Benetton Group in partnership with the town of Ponzano, opened its doors on September 10. The nursery school takes pre-school children from 1 to 6 years old, while the toddler center is for infants from 9 to 12 months. Up to 100 babies and infants, the children of residents of Ponzano and those of Benetton employees, will attend the school.

In a community like Ponzano, with a rapidly growing population, it was necessary to adapt and increase the educational facilities. *"Years of population growth have created a town with insufficient public services. We're now moving in the right direction, we're correcting the imbalance between growth and facilities to upgrade the town in general, although this is a difficult task if we have only the council's resources to rely on. This common-purpose agreement between Ponzano Veneto town council and Benetton Group, to provide facilities for children, makes a substantial, concrete contribution to improving town services. It will bring relief to the pressing demands of families and other citizens for more services. It's an excellent example of co-operation between business and local authorities; I hope it will be replicated in other towns,"* said Ponzano's mayor, Claudio Niero.

Benetton has always held strong links with its town of origin and was keen to offer its help in creating the school. *"To us, it's the most tangible way of providing an essential service which will improve the quality of life and work,"* remarked Luciano Benetton, *"and, at the same time, it emphasises our ties to our local area and the community in which our Group was born, grew up and prospered. Furthermore, there is no better investment, in any community, than the investments made in children and their education; in other words, in a future we build together".*

In planning an educational facility aimed at excellence, and conscious of the ethic and social role of its corporate culture, Benetton Group placed great importance on social interaction, research and the wellbeing of the community and therefore appointed Reggio Children as the pedagogic consultant for the new school.

Reggio Children is an international centre for the defence and promotion of children's rights and potential. Reggio Children works with nursery and junior schools to foster a culture centred around children and their rights, potential and resources, providing a teaching experience based on groundbreaking theories, constant commitment to experimentation and research, and a unique organisational approach. All this in a project which enhances each child's uniqueness, just as it recognizes the importance of all languages of expression, the value of diversity and the participation of the family and that of other citizens.

The centre was designed by Alberto Campo Baeza, an internationally renowned Spanish architect, in co-operation with architect Massimo Benetton. Commenting on his work, Campo Baeza says, *"Our aim was to create a nursery school that not only functions impeccably, but is also able to offer a series of diverse spaces; a living building where children can dream and be happy"*.

The new centre is located behind Benetton's Ponzano headquarters. It was built on a 9,500 sq m green area, part of Ponzano's municipal territory. The school occupies about 1,900 sq m, while 5,000 sq m are laid out as parkland. The remaining area is occupied by paths and a car park. The building work started in September 2006 and was finished about a year later.

For further information:

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www.benettonpress.mobi



PONZANO CHILDREN – PONZANO VENETO – DESIGNED BY ARCHITECT ALBERTO CAMPO BAEZA

The *Ponzano Children* school is built on an area of some 9,500 square metres next to Benetton Group's headquarters in Ponzano Veneto. It will accept a total of about 100 children for the nursery school and crèche sections.

The architectural project concerned three separate areas:

- the school's main, square building, occupying a covered surface of some 1,030 square metres, with a central, square "tower" which is taller than the main building.
- on the four sides of the school, the areas between the circular perimeter wall and the main building are in part covered and in part open to the sky. The four, open-air teaching and recreational areas, each of about 155 square metres, are outside the classrooms and the dining room. Each area is paved with a different material: sand, wood, stone or grass. The circular "crown" around the school not only forms the outer wall but also provides a covered, continuous 2m-wide space with storerooms, play areas and toilet blocks to be used during the warmer months.
- the external green space of some 4,710 square metres is divided into two areas: the *orchard*, with fruit trees planted in tidy rows; and the *wood* with different kinds of forest trees planted in a random pattern.

The salient feature of Campo Baeza's design for the building is the tower, which will be a central transit area throughout the day. The architect provided it with an appropriate level of natural light by setting circular skylights in the roof and circular windows in the walls. He also studied the materials for the floors and walls so they would be both attractive and practical in an environment for pre-school children.

The school rooms (nursery school, toddlers, infants) and the dining room are on the four outer sides of the main building so they receive natural light. Other rooms and amenities, such as toilets and changing rooms, etc., are located around the core of the building and are lit by the circular skylights in the roof.

Campo Baeza chose white as the dominant colour inside the school and on the perimeter wall: from the plastering of inside and outside walls to the Trani Biancone stone floors, the inside doors, the outside windows' iron frames, the central tower's linoleum floor and the glazed stoneware floor and wall tiles in the toilets and changing rooms.

The only exception is the pale yellow linoleum floor in the school rooms and dining room.

Utility systems were chosen with an eye on eco-friendliness:

- roof-mounted, 6kW-capacity photovoltaic panels produce electricity for the school.
- solar panels on the roof produce hot water for the school's washbasins.
- the air-conditioning system offers two clear benefits. Firstly, it uses water drawn from a specially-drilled deep well for air-conditioning in the summer and heating in the winter. Therefore the school does not have a traditional boiler room which could release harmful fumes during the winter. Secondly, during the summer, the air-conditioning system exploits the low-temperature well water, thereby enabling significant power savings.

Furthermore, the school's interior features underfloor heating and a ventilation plant which controls indoor humidity and statutory air renewal levels to ensure the best results. By guaranteeing a minimum air movement inside the school, these solutions abate potentially harmful elements such as dust mites and ambient particulates.



A BOX OPEN TO THE SKY

In one of Borges's fascinating stories, the Yellow Emperor shows the poet around his palace, accompanying him along straight avenues which, as the writer so beautifully says, "bend in a gentle curve and are secretly circular". We wanted to ensure that, in a more simple way, Benetton's nursery school could offer children something of the spirit Borges expressed so well.

We propose a round box inserted in green space and open to the sky, like a secret garden, which draws in and circulates the air throughout its interior. We placed a square building at the centre of the round box. It houses the school rooms and various facilities. The two geometric shapes create a very striking contrast, while the curving wall gives a sense of spatial continuity.

The central building is composed of a grid of nine 11x11m squares. The central square, the school's main foyer, receives natural light from several skylights in the ceiling, which is much higher than those in the other rooms. Four corridors lead into this central space; the widest is the one leading from the main entrance. The ceilings of the four corridors are low, so that as you enter the central square you get a strong impression of expanding space. The classrooms and other rooms look out onto the circular courtyard through glass walls.

A hollow wall, three metres high and two metres wide, borders the courtyard. The wall hides the children as they play their secret games and houses the toilets. The space between the square and the round buildings will be partially covered over, creating arcades for shelter from the sun or rain.

Our aim was to create a nursery school that not only functions impeccably, but is also able to offer a series of diverse spaces; a living building where children can dream and be happy.

Alberto Campo Baeza



ALBERTO CAMPO BAEZA

Alberto CAMPO BAEZA was born in Valladolid (1946), first saw the light in CADIZ (Spain) and the Architecture in MADRID (Degree 1971) P.H.D. in 1982. He became Chairman and Professor of Design in MADRID in 1986. He has taught in E.T.H. Zurich as a gastdozent in 1989-1990. He has also been teaching in Dublin (1992), Naples (1993), Virginia Tech.- Blacksburg and Copenhagen (1996). He has moreover taught in EPFL Lausanne as a p. invité in 1997, in University of Pennsylvania (1986 and 1999), BAUHAUS in Weimar (2002), IIT Chicago (2003). He has been Visiting Scholar in Columbia University (2003), lecturer in Harvard (2002), Miami (2002), Columbia U. New York (2002), IIT Chicago (2003), Palladian Basilica in Vicenza (2004) and Kansas S.U. (2005).

He has built a selected number of very precise buildings: Fene Town Hall (1980), S.Fermin Public School in Madrid (1985), Drago Public School in Cadiz (1992), Center BIT in Mallorca (1998), the Cathedral's Square and Offices in Almería (2001) and SM Editorial Offices in Madrid (2003), the very well known houses Turégano, García Marcos, and De Blas, all of them in Madrid, and Gaspar and Guerrero houses in Cádiz, only to name a few. He has also a tower project, the tallest in Spain, for the "Telefonica's Communications' city" in Madrid. His most representative building is the Headquarters of the Caja de Granada, finished in 2001. Also in 2007 it will begin the construction of a building for offices in Zamora. In 2008 it will be opened the Museum of the Memory of Andalucía in Granada.

His work has been extensively awarded. In the last years, the First Award for the Spanish Pavillion in the Biennale of Venice (2000), the Award of the Bienal de Miami (2000) and the COAM Award (2002) for the Blas House, the COAB Award (2003) for the Centre BIT in Mallorca, the COAAO Award (2003) and EDUARDO TORROJA Award (2003) for the Headquarters of the Caja de Granada. This year he has been awarded the Award Architecture in Stone, in Verona, for the Almeria Offices.

A book of his collected writings "THE BUILT IDEA" has become the 4th edition and some monographs on his work have been published: in Spain ("CAMPO BAEZA 1971-1996", Ed. Munilla Lería. Madrid, 1996), in USA ("CAMPO BAEZA", Rockport Ed. Massachusetts, 1997) in Japan ("CAMPO BAEZA", Graphic-Sha Ed. Tokyo, 1997). And it has been published too the English edition of the last monography ("ALBERTO CAMPO BAEZA", Gustavo Gili Ed. Barcelona 1999), wich has been updated in its italian version ("ALBERTO CAMPO BAEZA", Electa Ed. Milano, 2004).

His work has been published in most major architectural magazines in the world and he has been exhibited in many major cities. In 2003 there was a great exhibition of his work in the Crown Hall at the IIT in Chicago, later it was shown in the Urban Center in New York. In 2004, a selective exhibition was shown in the Palladio's Basilica in Vicenza (Italy). In 2005, this exhibition was shown in Sta. Irene Basilica, coinciding with AIA in Istambul. His MA Memory of Andalusia Museum in Granada, just

under construction, has been exhibited in MOMA NY in 2006, and in Madrid in 2007, in the Real Jardín Botánico.

In 2007 a Nursery for Benetton in Treviso-Venice-Italy is just completed, and the Olnick Spanu House in Garrison-New York is about to be finished.



REGGIO CHILDREN AND EDUCATION IN REGGIO EMILIA

*"a nursery or a school are special kinds of spaces
where people are encouraged to develop their minds,
their emotions and their sense of belonging to a wider
community"*

Jerome Bruner

Reggio Emilia's municipal-run infant-toddler centres and preschools have always stood out for their modern approach to teaching and their deep-rooted commitment to **research** and experimentation, sustained by their staff's continual training. Other distinguishing traits include a collegial, relational approach to work organisation; the importance given to the school environment, the presence of the atelier, where children may try different expressive mediums such as music, clay or painting; intense family participation; interaction with local culture; and the most significant experiences deriving from Italian and international studies.

This comprehensive educational programme for children of 0-6 years is centred around children, they are its protagonists. Children are seen as people who have rights and potential; the programme promotes their education through the development of their *languages*: expressive, symbolic, cognitive and relational. For many years, this experience has provided a dynamic model which has been studied and discussed by teachers, researchers and administrators from across Italy and around the world.

Reggio Children – International Center for the Defense and Promotion of the Rights and Potential of All Children – was established by the Municipality of Reggio Emilia in 1994 in order to satisfy the innumerable requests for study visits or exchange projects.

Through its national and international networks, Reggio Children:

- organises training courses;
- promotes research in co-operation with universities, foundations and ministries and with companies in various business sectors;
- provides educational consulting;
- produces publications translated so far into 14 languages;
- promotes the "Hundred Languages of Children" exhibition which has travelled the world over the past 25 years in response to invitations from governments, museums, universities and art galleries.

Under its charter, Reggio Children's profits are re-invested in school development and educational research.

The **Loris Malaguzzi International Centre** of Reggio Emilia is part of this ongoing promotion and optimisation of a new educational culture. The Centre, which opened in February 2006, is a meeting place for children, young people, teachers and academics. It is an educational innovation and research workshop, a place for seminars, training and dialogue. A centre that is open and on-going, so that its potential may be fully appreciated: open to ideas and different cultures, to hope and imagination.

www.reggiochildren.it



CREDITS

Client	Benetton Group SpA
Location	Ponzano Veneto, Treviso, Italy
Design	Alberto Campo Baeza
Site Manager	Massimo Benetton
Co-ordination	Michele Zanella (Property Management Benetton)
Structures	Andrea Rigato
Utility systems	Studio ESA
Chronology	March-July 2006 (project) September 2006-July 2007 (construction)
Materials	Reinforced concrete
Total surface	9,503 sq m
Overall useful surface	1,868 sq m
Builders	CEV SpA Eurogroup SpA Angelo Saran & C. snc La Quercia ISAFF Srl