

AL-MIZAN CHILDREN'S ECO VILLAGE



islamichelp.org.uk
UK Registered Charity N° 1160490



INTRODUCTION



The Children's Eco Village is Islamic Help's pioneering sustainability project in Mkuranga, Tanzania.

Key features of the project:

- Family oriented orphan care for 50 of Mkuranga's most vulnerable girls
- Pioneering building designs working in harmony with the natural world, not against it
- Regenerative farming in the lush landscape of the East African coastal zone, providing community employment and spreading climate-change resilient farming methods



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ABOUT ISLAMIC HELP



Islamic Help is a UK-registered charity delivering sustainable solutions around the world that empower people in need.

Since 2003, we have provided urgent aid and sustainable relief to hundreds of thousands of disadvantaged people across the globe. Our projects focus on emergency relief, food, water, education, orphan care and seasonal aid, such as winter emergency response and Qurbani donations. Some of our long-term projects include supporting people to develop businesses through our livelihood projects; delivering comprehensive care programmes for orphans and their families; and school and hospital constructions. We serve some of the most vulnerable people in the world; those affected - through no fault of their own - by conflict, poverty, natural disasters, and climate change. We work in countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Tanzania, Cameroon, Gaza and Yemen.

In 2025, Islamic Help committed to widening our environmental projects, improving the environmental impact of our existing projects, and developing climate mitigation and adaptation projects in our focus countries. Using Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth as a guiding document, we will be led by Islamic environmental ethics.

Find out more about Islamic Help at islamichelp.org.uk



ABOUT THE ECO VILLAGE PROJECT



In 2012, Islamic Help set up the Children's Eco Village in the Mkuranga District of Tanzania, 40km south of Dar es Salaam. The village is a ground-breaking initiative designed to promote environmental sustainability and provide a stable and loving home for orphaned and vulnerable girls.

It provides a safe, supportive, and healing natural environment for the girls who live there, whilst modelling a sustainable way of living through the on-site permaculture farm, eco-mosque, and specialised eco home design.

Tanzania has almost 2.6 million orphans, the majority of which are due to HIV/AIDS. Over 40% of Tanzanians live below the poverty line, the vast majority of these in rural and semi-rural areas like Kisemvule. With the average family struggling to meet their basic needs, widows and extended families often struggle to care for orphaned children. Opportunities for women and girls are still relatively restricted, with barriers to education a major problem. On top of this, vulnerability to natural disasters is high in this part of Africa, and climate change is already having significant impacts.



OUR VISION



To create a family orientated village for orphan children, promoting a professional and learning ethos inspired by environmental and sustainability practices, and to become a centre of innovation and renewable technology, all based on the principles of the Quran & Sunnah.

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?

PROFESSIONAL 'FAMILY ORIENTATED' CARE FOR ORPHANS & VULNERABLE CHILDREN

Inspired by a vision of creating a family-life, this is at the heart of the Children's Eco Village. Here, nurtured children are protected and enjoy a sense of belonging in an environment that replicates everyday communities and family life. Our empathetic family-oriented approach supports the children's growth and provides a solid foundation to fulfil their potential. Children receive high quality healthcare, a good education, and extensive opportunities for skill development.

Our five key principles underlie this approach:

1. Each child has a 'mother'
2. Each child grows up naturally with 'sisters'
3. Each child has a place they can call home
4. Each child grows up in a supportive community
5. Each child is supported into adulthood

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

The Eco Village aims to provide a continuous learning environment both for its residents, students, and the local community. The village provides an environment for innovation that is influenced by best practise, whilst developing a supportive team culture that encourages challenging accepted norms. Development is strategic and measurable, allowing ongoing evaluation of experimental practices.

FAITH BASED

The Eco Village is governed by Muslim values and beliefs, embodying the principle that humans should be khalifahs (guardians or stewards) of the Earth, and that protection of our only planet is a key tenet of Islam. Our Eco Mosque and imam provide religious and spiritual guidance to the village community.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

Our vision at the Eco Village is to model a sustainable society where humans live in harmony and balance with nature. We value the natural resources of the land and embrace creativity and diversity in our approach to stewardship. The village aims to become financially self-sustaining and already provides well paid professional jobs to members of the local community. Training and development schemes are delivered which reduce environmental degradation, teach new sustainable skills, boost the local economy, and change attitudes, encouraging the adoption of green practises. By foregrounding the rights of nature and the importance of adaptation to climate change, we are developing a pioneering new approach to safeguarding, believing that you cannot safeguard children without also safeguarding their future.



OUR VALUES

These are the core beliefs and attitudes on which the Children's Eco Village has been built, and they are the cornerstone of our success. These enduring values guide our actions, decisions and relationships as we work towards fulfilling our mission.

RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS OUR ENVIRONMENT

We are guided by the complimentary values of Earth care, People care & Future care, to uphold the Rights of Nature to exist in harmony with humanity. We are committed to the development of a climate resilient community that can become a model for others in Tanzania and East Africa. We are guided by Al Mizan - A Covenant for the Earth to exemplify a radical faith-based approach to environmentalism and sustainability.

RESPECT TOWARDS OUR COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERS

We respect people for who they are: for their perspectives, skills and experience; to broaden our knowledge; to help develop communities; and to create strong relationships. We value diversity of experience and opinions as key to strong and resilient communities

INSPIRING CONFIDENCE AND INDEPENDENCE

We are committed to empowering our residents, students, and local community to become more independent and confident, through skills development, taking on responsibilities, and reducing barriers to participation and success.

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

We are committed to continuous learning and development through integrating learning within our organisational culture, systems, processes and procedures. We will not rest on our laurels, seeking ongoing improvement in the impacts of the Eco Village. We prioritise ongoing training opportunities and sharing our learnings with both the local and wider community.

THE ISLAMIC BASIS OF THE CHILDREN'S ECO VILLAGE



“THE SERVANTS OF THE ALL-MERCIFUL ARE THOSE WHO WALK GENTLY ON THE EARTH...” (25:63)

Families are at the heart of every Muslim community. Family life was created by Allah to keep society together and to provide a secure, healthy and nurturing environment for parents as well as children. Our principle of establishing a family-based culture throughout the Village aims to strengthen families and respond to the abandonment of children, while promoting a sense of togetherness.

Islamic environmental teachings stress that both humans and the environment are to exist in harmony and balance (tawhid). We are khilafah (stewards) who should act to care for the nature/life balance. We establish processes and procedures which encourage ecological preservation practices to ensure responsibility and respect for nature and to create an environmentally friendly environment. The Qu’ran states “There is no animal that moves on the Earth nor any bird that wings its flight, but is a community like yourselves...” (6:38). Nature is given as much, if not more, importance than humans in the Quran, and yet humanity is destroying nature on a scale never before seen, driving us to our own downfall.

The Children’s Eco Village provides an alternative to this destructive direction. By offering an alternative way of living we are spearheading the adoption of farming methods that will be more resilient to climate change. We employ local farmers, and train local adults & children in the development of these techniques.

Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth is the guiding document for the work of the Children’s Eco Village. You can find out more about it at almizan.earth

EXPLORE THE VILLAGE

HEAR FROM THE VILLAGERS

TUNU ALLY (18 YEARS)

“I have lived all my entire life at the Ecovillage since was 7years. I have experienced growth, exposure and mostly integrated with the environment. The workers are loving and take good care of me. I Thank all the donors and Islamic Help, for launching a home that takes good care of children in need and vulnerable ones. May ALLAH bless you all.”



JITIHADA HASSANI (9 YEARS)

“I Jitihada love participating in proper conservation of the environment at the Ecovillage. Because Ecovillage is my home, it takes good care of me mentally, physical and emotionally. Thanks to all who are making my stay at the Ecovillage smooth”



ZUENA ATHUMANI (7 YEARS)

“I Zuena Athumani love staying at the Eco Village, because the environment is good, clean and fresh air. I eat good food cooked by Mama Sauda. I Enjoy my stay at the eco village a lot. I thank all the donors for their daily support and taking good care of me”

SAUDA .J.ABEID (MAMA SAUDA) CARE GIVER

Assalam Aleykum,” I am mother who works at the Ecovillage, I am happy taking good care of the children and working under a good environment and proper management of the staff at large. May ALLAH bless ECOVILLAGE. Thank you.



MARWA MOHABE - CHILDREN'S ECO VILLAGE MANAGER

“Al Mizan Children's Eco Village has taught me that we are all interconnected. When the soil is healthy, the child is healthy; when the child is empowered, the community is transformed. Building a village that honors the earth and the creator, we are telling every child that she deserves more than just survival; she deserves a world that is whole, innovative, and healthy. I value working here because we are addressing the root of the problems. Climate change and poverty are two sides of the same coin, and the children always pay the highest price. Our role is to hold a space where the science of a seed and the dreams of a child can both take root, proving that when we heal the land, we empower the next generation to become the very heart of the world’s renewal.”

ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION & REGENERATION

Agriculture in Tanzania has a long and rich history, but moves towards monoculture plantations, particularly of trees, have had a destabilising influence on food resilience here.

The eco-village aims to provide a model of how we can reverse that shift, aiming to restore balance and improve the area ecologically, whilst feeding the local population and providing a safe home and education for the girls who live here.

There are many elements to our interlinked practices of conservation and regenerative agriculture, including:

- Permaculture inspired farming practices, producing crops including bananas, taro, amaranth, pumpkins, cowpeas, cucumbers, tomatoes, aubergines, peppers, okra, chinese cabbage and kale
- Using a wide variety of fertilisers made on site, from chicken and cow dung to organic pesticides and fertiliser
- Water conservation systems including water harvesting, fishponds and swales
- Nature reserve, or hima areas where nature is left to its own devices
- A tree nursery, currently growing 5000 seedlings to be planted in the eco village itself, and in surrounding towns and villages
- Trench-arch composting sewage systems, to turn human waste into compost



ECOSYSTEM CONSERVATION & REGENERATION



Our ethos of conservation and regeneration is driven by strong Islamic teachings that human beings and nature form one whole that humans must preserve:

ALLAH CREATED THE EARTH AND ALL THAT IS IN IT, INCLUDING ANIMALS AND ITS RESOURCES- IT IS PEOPLE'S HERITAGE. (6:165)

As Muslims we that each individual should act as a khalifah (guardian) of the earth. The Children's Eco Village champions giving back more than we consume and living within our planet's means.



THE PERMACULTURE FARM

Permaculture farming, or regenerative agriculture, has been a part of the vision for the Children’s Eco Village since it was first founded. Despite some early setbacks, the site is now a flourishing green oasis, producing food for the children and staff on site, with excess sold to local residents.

Conventional farming damages soil health, mostly through the use of synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, and due to continuing to plant every year, instead of letting land rest and regenerate through fallow periods. By using composting, homemade organic fertilisers, companion planting, forest gardening, and reduced tillage, the Eco Village farm is improving soil health, biodiversity, and we are seeing increased yields in our plants.

As well as fruit and vegetable growing, the Eco Village is home to rabbits, chickens and goats. These animals play a key part in the farm, as their manure is an important natural fertiliser and the eggs, milk and meat they produce is an important food source for the girls and staff. The variety of food grown at the Eco Village means that only bulk staples such as rice, flour and oil need to be bought, allowing the girls to have a rich and balanced diet comprising mostly of hyper-locally grown organic food.



THE PERMACULTURE FARM



We also have a large onsite tree nursery, currently home to over 5000 seedlings. Over the years the Children’s Eco Village has been running, the land has been extensively reforested, and over 30,000 trees have been planted in the surrounding area. We continue to provide trees for local tree planting initiatives in schools and communities in Mkuranga.

The farm also provides work and training for local people, teaching alternatives to the current farming techniques that are increasingly being used in Tanzania, such as synthetic fertiliser and pesticide use. We aim to spread the learnings of the Children’s Eco Village to as many members of the local community as we can, and increased adult education is a key part of our project to build a school on site.



CHILDREN'S HOME / HOUSE 5



Although the Children's Eco Village offers care for orphans, we strive to be nothing like a traditional 'orphanage'. Children live in small groups with 'mothers' who care for them, developing familial relationships within their houses.

At the moment, 12 girls live at the Eco Village, and this will increase to 48 within the next 2 years, as older homes are retrofitted.

Their home is light, cool & spacious, designed by our partners at Simmonds Mills architects. Demonstrating sustainable practices that can be replicated throughout similar climates, the house is strongly influenced by traditional 'tropical design' techniques and as far as possible aims to avoid any future need to move towards energy-intensive air conditioning. Buildings are a major contributor to carbon emissions, accountable for 35% of total global energy consumption. Changes to building practices are therefore an essential element of reducing emissions and transitioning to societies that live within the Earth's planetary boundaries.

Innovative features of the house include optimised:

- Natural ventilation with beautiful screen windows, good air flow through the house, and a split roof design
- Maximised shading
- A raised base reduces mosquito access
- Construction with locally made sandcrete blocks

The girls love their new home, with one resident saying "When I grow up, I hope I can continue to live in a house like this!". By asking them how they feel about the house in several different temperatures and humidities, we're ensuring that we continue to improve the design



RETROFIT OF HOUSES

Houses 1-4 at the Eco Village were built in around 2013 but have not lasted well due to quality issues and lack of environmentally sensitive design. They were built to provide housing for 10 girls and a mother per house, but are currently not able to be used due to health and safety concerns.

With the success of House 5, we will be retrofitting the existing houses to bring them up to an equal standard of comfort and safety. This will involve:

- Window bay installation- full height, insect protected screen windows providing ventilation through the building
- Internal ventilation to increase air flow through the building
- New roof, optimised to be shading, heat shedding, and ventilating
- New robust ceilings
- Solar panels for electricity generation
- Shading screens to cool external walls
- Trench arch composting sewage systems
- Change of building layout to add a shaded walled garden and covered area

With these changes in place, the Eco Village will once more provide homes for up to 50 orphaned or vulnerable children, who will then be enrolled into the pioneering Eco-School that will be built concurrently with this project. We will also convert one of the houses to provide an office and work-space for our staff, and accommodation for visitors.



BEYOND THE VILLAGE



TREE PLANTING FROM OUR NURSERY

The tree and herb nursery at the Children’s Eco Village is currently home to around 5000 seedlings and is rapidly growing. Over the years that the village has been developed, we have planted over 30,000 trees in the local community, improving soil health, reducing the risks of flooding, providing a food source for humans and a habitat for animals, and providing shade from the heat of the sun. We regularly work with local schools and community centres to provide trees for their sites and training on the keeping them healthy

ORPHAN SPONSORSHIPS

Islamic Help supports thousands of orphans around the world, and as of January 2025, we support over 200 orphans in Tanzania, including some close to the Eco Village itself. These children have lost one or both parents, and generally live with extended family members, or their mothers. As fathers remain the major breadwinners in Tanzania, financial support is key to these families.

WATER WELLS AND BORE HOLES

A major part of Islamic Help’s work is the construction of water wells and bore holes, as access to clean water is one of the most effective and efficient ways to change people’s lives. It reduces the risk of disease, frees up valuable time previously spent walking miles to collect water, and reduces the risk to women and girls of assault and violence.

As the Eco Village site is on the wetland where locals previously collected their water, we have built wells throughout the surrounding villages to bring the water directly to them. Our conservation of the site has also improved the flow of its stream and resulted in the raising of the depleted water table locally



FRIDAY ECO CLUB



Each week, up to 220 children come to the Eco Village for our Friday Eco Club, held after Jumma prayers on Friday afternoons. Children learn about different environment-related topics each week, including tree planting, waste management, water conservation, and skills in sustainable farming. Children have a light meal after their class and play at the Eco Village playground.

The club continues to grow, and regularly connects with local schools for whole classes to attend. Monthly elders sessions complement the children's club by providing a 2 way learning opportunity between Children's Eco Village staff and local community elders, and preserving traditional knowledge that is increasingly being lost.

Local examples and indigenous knowledge are part of the sessions, meaning that children always relate their learning to their previous experiences and the places they live. This makes it more likely they will use their new skills outside of the Eco Club.



ECO-SCHOOL

This project aims to build a primary school on the Eco-Village site that will educate the 50 girls resident in the village, as well as 150 additional children from the local community. The school will deliver a groundbreaking environmental curriculum which will build on the well-rounded Tanzanian National Curriculum to embed a deep connection with nature and the environment; and will teach age-appropriate practical sustainability skills. The curriculum will be supported by Muslim teachings around environmental stewardship of the Earth.

The school building will build on experience from House 5, which uses exciting new design to provide a naturally cool, secure, and attractive environment without the use of air-conditioning. The school will be made up of 3 blocks around a central courtyard, consisting of 7 classrooms, lunch/break out areas, outdoor learning space, kitchen, storage, reception space, office, workshop, staff room, and 3 toilet blocks. There will also be outdoor classrooms and a forest school area set up in an adjoining area of the eco-village site.

The ecologically responsible building will be a learning tool in and of itself, and the potential for growth of the school and development of the site will provide extensive training opportunities for students and members of the local community (including during its construction). Outside of school times, the building will provide learning spaces for the local community, providing comfortable spaces for adult education. An on-site campsite will facilitate residential visits from other schools, spreading sustainability education quickly through existing educational networks.

Education will take place both in classrooms and around the Eco Village site. Natural learning environments develop a connection with nature that lasts throughout life and improve outcomes for the child. Teaching will be child-centred and influenced by Forest School and Outdoor Education approaches.

By bringing education to the forefront of the goals of the Eco-Village, we will empower students to go on to develop and implement adaptations that will mitigate the impacts of climate change in Tanzania.

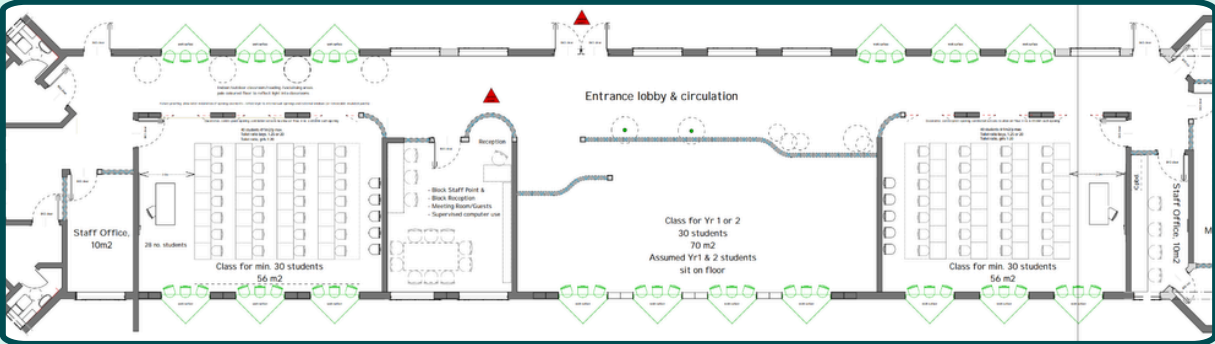
ECO-SCHOOL BLOCK DESIGNS



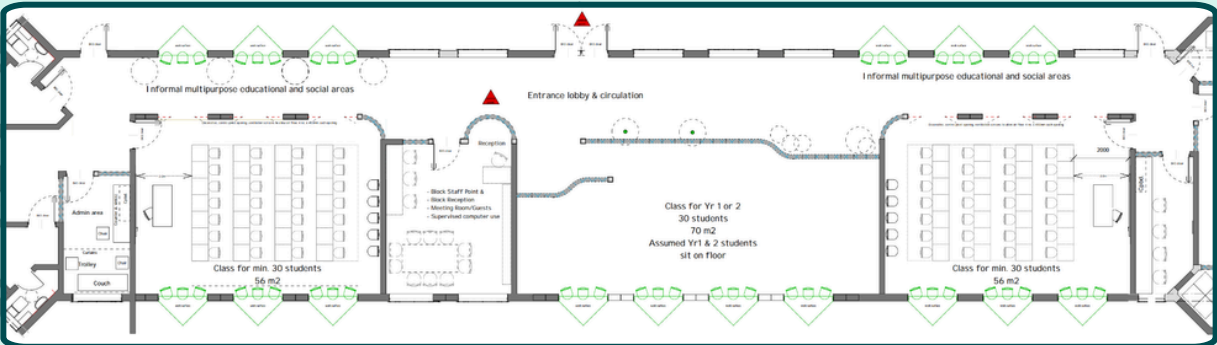
ECO-SCHOOL BLOCK FLOORPLANS



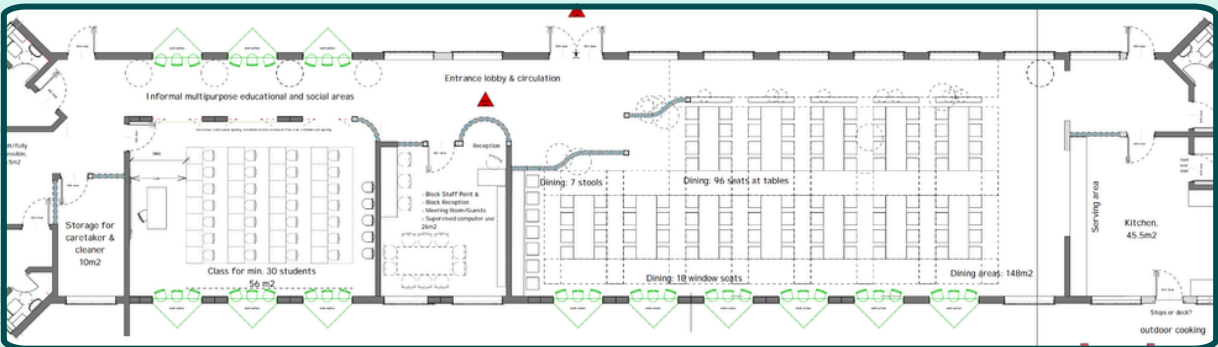
Block A floorplan



Block B floorplan



Block C floorplan



ECO MOSQUE



Kisemvule, the area in which the Eco Village is situated, has a large Muslim population, so the village Eco Mosque is widely used by the local population, accommodating up to 160 worshippers. It was one of the first parts of the Eco Village to be developed, in

The mosque is the epicentre of some of the most important day-to-day activities, ranging from religious services and educational counselling to social and cultural interaction, discussions and debates. The surrounding gardens are inspired by the description of Jannah in the Qur'an, and are a place where children from in and outside the village will often come to just sit with their friends, do homework or play.

The Eco Mosque has been designed, like other buildings in the village, to be both naturally comfortable, and have minimal environmental impact. Some of its features include:

- Reduced noise pollution through acoustic design
- Natural air flow and ventilation
- Solar Power
- Rainwater collection and water recycling



PRODUCING ENERGY



The energy at the Children's Eco Village comes from a range of different sources.

Most energy supplied to the national grid in the Pwani region comes from Hydroelectricity, so the Children's Eco Village is connected to the grid in order to take advantage of this.



All power for the mosque comes from rooftop solar, and we have built a wind turbine from recycled materials on the site, as a demonstration model to local communities.

The Children's Eco Village has 2 water towers which store water for drinking, washing, cooking, and watering the plants. We also have a wind-powered water pump, which brings water up from the well on-site in a closed loop energy system.

ENTRANCE RE-DEVELOPMENT

We are currently working on creating a welcome entrance and eco-friendly pathways around the village, to showcase our environmental practices to visitors, and create a more beautiful and peaceful environment for our residents and staff.

We are installing signs identifying and explaining the zones within the eco-village, building shaded walkways using climbing plants, renovating our children's play area, and planting hedges to better separate the different zones of the village.

Finally, the redevelopment will incorporate art and sculptures created by the children on site, showcasing their creativity and skills and further improving the community feel of the village.

ZERO WASTE



This year, one of our goals is to reduce waste at the Eco Village as much as possible and work towards a closed loop circular economy system. We're embracing the principle that 'there's no such thing as waste, only stuff in the wrong place' to improve our 'waste' systems.

As well as standard composting, we are experimenting with worm and maggot farms and practicing upcycling and repairing with the materials we already have.



OUR PARTNERS



SIMMONDS MILLS- ARCHITECTS

Simmonds Mills are a UK-based architectural firm specialising in ecological building design and retrofit. They have extensive experience designing and building low-impact, low-energy, high-comfort buildings using both traditional and innovative building techniques.

Their work at the Children's Eco Village focuses on energy efficiency and renewable, local materials. At the Eco Village, they have so far constructed a test unit building to trial the use of their methods in a tropical setting, and have completed our 5th house on the site.

They are currently working on designs for our Eco School and Retrofitting projects.

Both Andrew Simmonds and Adele Mills have visited the Eco Village and take a hands-on approach to builds, providing training to local construction workers and getting their hands dirty! They also maintain regular contact with staff on site when they are back in the UK.

To find out more about Simmonds Mills, visit www.simmondsmills.com

The logo for Simmonds Mills, featuring the text "SimmondsMills" in a dark teal, sans-serif font, enclosed in a white rectangular box with a dark teal border.

HUDEFO

HUDEFO (Human Dignity and Environmental Care Foundation) coordinate our regenerative farming work and our Eco Club. A Tanzanian organisation with extensive experience in empowering diverse communities, their mission is

'A sustainable future for all communities in Tanzania in environmental conservation and dignity'

To find out more about HUDEFO, visit www.hudefo.or.tz



GET IN TOUCH



CONTACT US

- For all enquiries about the Children's Eco Village, email info@islamichelp.org.uk with 'Children's Eco Village' in the subject line
- We are always looking for volunteers (particularly local volunteers) to help with the regular work at the Children's Eco Village. If you would like to volunteer with us, please email info@islamichelp.org.uk letting us know which project(s) you are interested in and any relevant experience you could bring to your volunteering.
- islamichelp.org.uk
- [facebook.com/islamichelp](https://www.facebook.com/islamichelp)
- www.instagram.com/islamichelp/

DONATE

Our fundraising targets:

£800,000 to set up our Pioneering Eco School

£250,000 to retrofit our 4 houses

How can you contribute?

£3650 : Contribute to building our new Eco School - this amount covers the building costs for one student.

£250 : Livelihood project for a local mama - learning to upcycling waste into high quality products

£100 : Sponsor our Friday Eco Club for 1 week. Cover a meal and equipment costs for the 100+ children who come to learn about the environment every week. Weekly feedback available for long term donors

HOW TO DONATE

1. At islamichelp.org.uk/projects/environment/eco-village
2. By calling us directly on 0121 446 5682
3. If you would like to explore a partnership related to the Children's Eco Village, please email azeema.ali@islamichelp.org.uk