

unfuse™

# RESILE

Rebuilding the lives of the widows of a perpetual war.

<https://competitions.uni.xyz>





[Img 1](#): Smoke rises as Kabul residents set fire to part of the Green Village compound. [Source](#)

# Premise

On the heels of its yet unannounced presidential election results held in September this year, Afghanistan continues to be among the most hostile places for its population to thrive in. Most of all, the hostility has been faced by its female population. The country became a flagrant breeding ground for discrimination, gender apartheid, and oppression under the fascist regime of the Taliban.

Now, even after two decades of Taliban's fall, the militant group still seeks to strengthen its hold on the landlocked country. Conditions seem to have hardly improved despite a now incumbent democratically elected government. The brunt of that too has been borne the most by its women. Principal among them are the widows of Afghanistan, left in the wake of a perpetual war that has been tearing the country apart for more than two decades now.





Img 2: A group of widows walking through the militarized by-lanes of Kabul, Afghanistan. [Source](#)

# Widows Of War

The lives of Afghan widows, a number currently estimated to be near [70,000 in Kabul](#) alone and nearly 1.5 Million in all of Afghanistan, are found to be at an inertial roadblock. The lack of any formal education, work opportunities and even proper healthcare as decreed by the Taliban owing to archaic laws, prevents them from acquiring the necessary means to earn a respectable livelihood or lead dignified lives.

As many as [91%](#) of the women in Afghanistan have been reported to have only a primary education or less as of 2018. [67%](#) of Afghan women find themselves unemployed despite immediately willing to work, owing to either societal pressure or the lack of requisite skills, trapping them within a vicious cycle of dependency. The onus of survival is only added on to them, being the sole bread earners of the family, more often than not comprising of infants and kids. Worse, they are often plunged into repeated remarriages with the husband's close male relatives.





Img 3: Zanabad, a sparse informal settlement of widows on the hilly outskirts of Kandahar, Afghanistan. [Source](#)

# Zanabad

## ‘City of Women’

Nearly 500 Afghan widows that have survived despite all odds cocooned in an informal settlement on the hills to the southeast of Kabul since the 90s. The settlement came to be called [‘Zanabad’](#), roughly translating to city of/by the women. They have continued to face discrimination and interference from even the police, who would often demand bribes or demolish their modestly self-constructed homes.

Over the years, the widows of Zanabad have mobilised to weave a mutual system of co-dependence: standing up for each other. Widows settled here include those as far back as the 80s war, to as recent as the uprooting of the Al Qaeda in the region. The average age of widows in the settlement is 35 years, and about 90% of them have children, four on average. To survive, many Afghan widows in Zanabad have begun weaving carpets, do tailoring, preparing food to be sold in Afghan markets, teaching in primary girls’ schools in the area and even working with the government on relief projects.

None of the widows or authorities in the area recall when exactly Zanabad came into being or the women who established it.





Img 4: An ageing widow in Kabul in front of the camp of the UN support programme. [Source](#)

# Issue

Since early 2014, the government has been providing electricity and water to the settlement, thereby acknowledging the widows’ right to live in Zanabad. It has also taken responsibility of the girls’ school. However, the widows still do not possess legal documents for the land they live on, and Zanabad is not yet part of Kabul’s official city plan. War widows who are registered by the government receive some meagre annual help from the home ministry, but that does not meet the need of the victims. A number of NGOs including CARE and Beyond 9/11 have extended help, but there remains to be a permanent solution to alleviate the widows’ suffering. Some of them from Zanabad still beg or have to engage in prostitution for supporting their families.

As a result of the oppression and a deplorably patriarchal society that wouldn’t treat them as human, leave alone equals, it is no surprise that a vast majority among Afghan women ([47%](#) at current) wish to flee the country in search of asylum and better living conditions, if given the chance. This includes both young women and aged widows who have to rely upon the help of their community to survive.





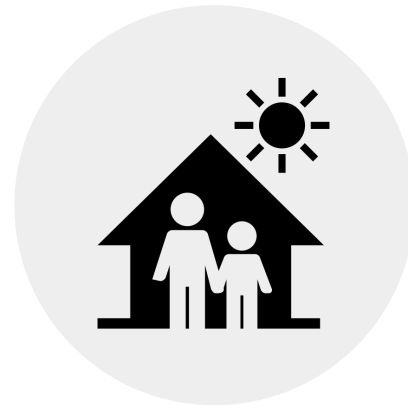
[Img 5](#): A widow with her infant baby inside her modest accommodation in Zanabad. [Source](#)

# Brief

**The Challenge is to design a Resilience Centre in Qandahar for the widows of Zanabad and Afghanistan, providing them and their families with residence, educational and work opportunities under an umbrella facility.**

Under such inhuman precedents, the rehabilitation of Afghanistan’s widows in a cordial, secure environment is a warranted intervention, necessitating the [involvement of the government](#) too. The challenge here would be to design a facility that would cater to their residential needs, livelihood and education for themselves and their children, along with providing them requisite training for becoming self sufficient and train future residents. It is to be a building that can be seen as a symbol of strength, solidarity, embrace and hope in a country historically notorious for being unjust and hostile to its women.

# Objectives



## Residence

A safe haven for the widows who have undergone years of trauma and war



## Education

A means to enable them and their children to rebuild their lives



## Training & Skill Development

To enable these women to acquire better work opportunities in cities



## Maintainability

Application of simple construction techniques to enable easy upkeep by residents

The following objectives can be a point of beginning to conceive this design. The user group for the conception of the design may be designed to be housed in **~100 residential quarters**, with roughly **one residential quarter per family** (a widow and her children). The other facilities may be designed in accordance with the same user group in mind, under a single building or in separate zones.





[Img 6:](#) The rooftops of a peri urban development near Kandahar, Afghanistan. [Source](#)

# Qandahar, Afghanistan

Renowned as the capital city of a number of regimes since as far as the 4th Century BC, Qandahar is the second largest city in Afghanistan and the closest formal settlement to Zaranj, which is located towards its North East. Being in the floodplains of the Arghandab River, it is among the very few arable cities in the mountainous landlocked country of Afghanistan. Qandahar is also one of the most culturally significant cities of the country and a major trading center for sheep, wool, cotton, silk, felt, food grains, dried fruit, fine fruits and tobacco. It is often regarded as the heart of the Pashtun civilisation in the country and has been a seat of the Taliban in the past, as well as its current democratic government under President Hamid Karzai.





Img 7: Aerial View of the Site.

# Site Plan

The site for the resilience centre is located on the outskirts of the city of Qandahar, on the foot of the hills housing Zanabad. It lies 3.5 km (2.2 mi) to the East of *Aino Mina*, a mega housing project meant to accommodate roughly 20,000 families and is suitably connected via the Aino road branching from the Qandahar highway. The topography of the site is mostly flat and there are no major neighbouring structures except an underground water storage tank for the area sharing an edge, and some private residences to the South. The site's primary access branches from the main road keeping in mind the relatively peaceful environs, albeit accessible, envisioned for the development.

**Site Area:** 23508 sq. m.  
**Site Coordinates:** 31°37'16.8"N 65°49'58.6"E

**FAR:** 1  
**Ground Coverage:** 30%  
**Height Restriction:** 10m



# Submission

You have to deliver **an architectural outcome** on the given site, based on the given outlines.

- Recommended number of boards/sheets - 6 boards or sheets. – [ **2362px x 3544px** ] or [ **400mm x 600mm in 150 dpi** ] in portrait digital format (JPEG). Minimum 3 boards or sheets & no maximum boards/sheet limit.
- Each image should be less than **15MB**

**This additional resources folder contains:** FAQ Questions, High Res maps, and CAD file of the site plan.

Minimum requisites are sheets/boards + Cover image containing:

This is the link for new file sizes, [here](#).

- Site plan (Compulsory)
- Key conceptual sections x 1 (Minimum)
- 3D views x 4
- Cover image/Thumbnail of size 2000 x 1000 px or larger in aspect ratio 2:1.
- Floor plans, images, sketches (if any) can be added to support the entry in the form of additional images.
- Answer 6 FAQ questions in the discussion section as given on the 'additional resources folder'.

- 
- + The team limit for this competition is 4 members maximum.
  - + Use exploded views to discuss multi levelled conceptual models better.
  - + Ensure that the final sheets which are submitted do not include your name or any other mark of identification.
  - + Mention sheet number on corner of every sheet.
  - + This is a design ideas challenge only. There is no built commission/realization is associated with the problem
  - + Plagiarism of any idea / form / design / image will be disqualified with a notice.

**Registration page here:** <https://competitions.uni.xyz/resile/info/about>

**Discover the competition schedule and deadlines here:** [Schedule](#)



# Rewards

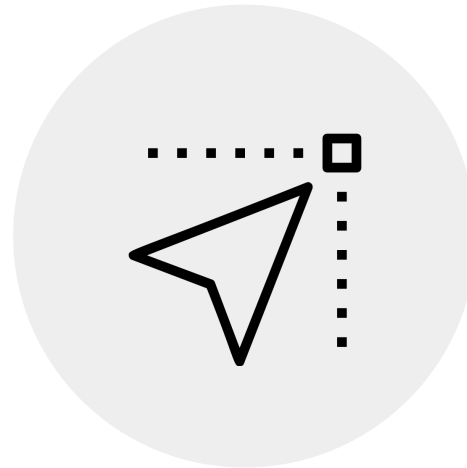


Grants of up to a total of **20,000\$** can be won on this challenge. Learn more about the full conditions on the competition page [here](#).



# Judging Criteria

The entries will be judged by an international jury of the competition on the following criteria:



## Presentation

The fundamental to a good entry is a good presentation.



## Concept/Idea

Quality of thought and intent in pre-design phase.



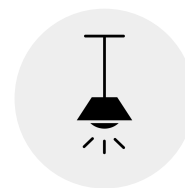
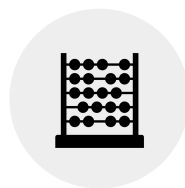
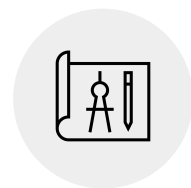
## Spaces/Programme

How the spaces are calculated and ordered.



## Design Output

The final architectural outcome of the solution.



The judging panel can also add other criteria based on their internal discussions - which will be in line with the problem statement. Participants are advised to fulfil above given criteria first in their design.

(Ad) Institutional access:

## We believe in a world more collaborative.

**And we think academia is where it can begin.**

Institutional Access™ is world's only cross institution competition programme. You can make this challenge more meaningful by bringing it to your classmates and professors working together. There are a lot of perks by entering this challenge with your institution. Follow the link to learn more.

Institutional Access™





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**Unfuse** serves as a unit for **Uni** in the field of Architecture. It intends to break the fusion of traditional design barriers and methodologies by making it a platform for experimentation and conceptual exchange of ideas in architecture, urbanism, society, culture and ecology. It is a research initiative dedicated to providing opportunities for designers from all domains to explore ideas that go beyond the boundaries of architectural discipline and enrich our built environment; thereby opening up possibilities for promotion of architectural thought at a global level.

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