

**Media release –
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Scottish award discovers a special schoolbag which makes learning possible

While many children here in Scotland are happy to leave school behind at the end of the day, for young people in Mali, the opposite is true. With access to education being far from easy for children in the West African country, a revolutionary ‘Transportable Classroom’, complete with a wooden board to write on, a seat, table and storage for pens and books, has revolutionised learning. All that is needed is a teacher, and schooling can take place anywhere.

This innovative creation is among the shortlisted entries for Children in Scotland’s ‘Making Space 2010’ international architecture award, which will reward a building or space for children and young people which is well-designed, multi-functional and, most importantly, which works for children – and families – in the local community.

Other finalists for the prestigious award, which saw entries coming from 25 countries worldwide, include ‘The Puckelball Pitch’, an interactive art project from Sweden, which features an uneven playing surface, and pitch-halves and goals of different sizes, to represent the ‘playground of life’ which is frequently unfair and unequal, and a modernised German elementary school, which consulted with its pupils to create an inspiring learning environment.

With the shortlist chosen by a team which included international design experts, the final ‘Grand Prix’ winner will now be selected by the panel on 8 September, along with the best entry from Scotland, a winner selected by a panel of children, and six entries specially commended by the judges. The final results, however, will be kept under wraps for another month, until the awards are presented by Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Mike Russell at a ceremony on 7 October, as part of the ‘Making Space’ international conference.

The award judges admitted that the selection process was tough, with so many innovative and unique examples of buildings and spaces which fulfilled the criteria of:

- engaging the five senses of the users
- incorporating the natural world, sustainability, and relating to the local environment
- allowing for participation and stakeholder involvement, from children, their families and the community
- being part of the community and offering facilities for community members, and
- demonstrating an integrative approach to children’s services.

Alan Blackie, Chief Executive of East Lothian Council, and a member of the award panel said: “Being one of the judges of this prestigious international competition has been really interesting,

with each of the 75 varied entries from around the world demonstrating, in their own way, the value of having great spaces for young people and the community.”

Fellow judge, and Director with RMJM architects, Paul Stallan, agreed: “The shortlist demonstrates that even projects delivered on minimum budget can be life-enhancing when a determination exists to simply make a difference.”

Children in Scotland Chief Executive, Bronwen Cohen, who was also on the judging panel expressed her delight in the breadth of creativity shown in the entries: “The need to create flexible, practical, and ‘personalised’ spaces is evident. From the mobile school in Mali, to examples of schools in Scotland which were developed with the requirements of the Scottish curriculum at their heart, the award finalists all demonstrate unique qualities.”

Notes for Editors –

Children in Scotland is the longstanding national agency for the whole of the children’s sector, reaching over 250,000 individuals through our extensive membership of more than 450 statutory agencies, voluntary sector organisations, professional associations and community groups. For further information visit www.childreninscotland.org.uk

‘Making Space 2010’ is a one year programme, led by Children in Scotland, which includes an international award and conference promoting innovation, creativity and sustainability in design for children and young people aged 0-18.

The conference will take place from 7-8 October, in Edinburgh. Chaired by Seona Reid, Director, Glasgow School of Art, it will include presentations from architects and design specialists from Scotland, the UK, and internationally.

For further information visit www.childreninscotland.org.uk/makingspace or contact Hannah Goodrum, hgoodrum@childreninscotland.org.uk

For more information, images of award entries, or press space at the conference, please contact Lynn Gilmour, lgilmour@childreninscotland.org.uk, 0131 222 2443.