Vato Shade Structure

Engaging local building forms with the help of a local Master Builder.

As part of the on-going sustainable housing initiative, an ASU student codesigned this vato shade structure with GRIC community members. Four structures were built in Spring 2018 at the GRIC fair grounds in Sacaton. During the yearly fair, 4,000 community members per day, will have access to the shade structures, offering a place to meet and socialize.

Engagement with Traditional Building
Aaron Sobori is from the GRIC community and has ample experience building local cultural building structures. Sobori was a vital collaborator in this project, assisting the ASU team in understanding local priorities and sourcing local materials.

Utility and Reciprocity in Research
The Placekeeping framework supports early alignment of institutional and community priorities. In this case, while ASU faculty/students were engaged in learning about traditional form, we were also finding ways to be useful through this research, including creating a place for GRIC members to gather at the yearly fair and training local GRIC members in adobe brick laying.

Re-centering Design Thinking
Bi-lateral design learning occurs when you move architecture into community. ASU students learn about local building, while GRIC members have access to ASU resources. In this case, ASU was able to find a local adobe builder who trained GRIC members in laying adobe brick, a skill that has fallen out of popularity, but which the leadership expressed interest in reviving.