

unfuse

NO MAN'S LAND

Respite centre for asylum seekers

<https://competitions.uni.xyz>



Img_1: Wall between Mexico and USA

Basis

Violence, war and persecution besides causing damage to the artificial and natural landscape, uproots livelihood. Further with climate disasters and poor governance, there has been a 200% increase in people seeking asylum.

The refugee crisis is paramount. Camps are usually planned, built and designed for only a short time but fail to accommodate everyone. According to the UN, only 189,300 refugees of 65.6 million were resettled in 2016. Alongside, the society has to habitat asylum seekers and deporters, which further crumbles down the system.

People prefer to find refuge in a country where they can get better opportunities. But when institutions and countries start rejecting humanitarian efforts for self-preservation, it leads to increased burden and hostile conditions. Same is happening along the **borders of the US and Mexico**.



Img2: Map of North America highlighting migration route across the border of US Mexico. Density population in migration cities and different reasons

Background

A humanitarian crisis has taken place along the borders of US-Mexico. In May 2019, around **19000 people** were waiting in Mexico to seek asylum in States. Many of them living in detention centres, crowded shelters and makeshift camps.

From only men crossing over to the US for employment in 2000 to families seeking refuge in 2014 for a better livelihood, there has been a tectonic shift along the borders of US-Mexico. This led to American Immigration Crisis in 2014, following which a crackdown implemented by the Trump government. With 'Zero Tolerance Policy' in 2018 and 'Metering' in 2019, the total border crossings have been constant but the no. of people seeking asylum has increased. This has led to **thousands of asylum seekers waiting for refugee status** along the US-Mexico border.

With US administration seeking for "safe third country" to absorb asylum seekers, organizations in Mexico have **struggled** to keep up with the **influx of migrants**. Once a country of transit, Mexico is buckling under the demands of its new reality. (Source)



Img 3: A Tijuana sports complex has been turned into a temporary shelter. As of January 6,000 migrants occupy the place, compared to it's possible occupancy of 1000 [Source](#)

Issues

New laws have effectively delayed the asylum process, with the backlog increasing by 10000 cases in Mexico in one year. Over that, the inhumane living conditions in migrant camps have made people restless for a response from the Centre of Border and Protection (CBP). [\(Source\)](#) This has led to them **occupying streets, spaces near border walkways and bridges.**

Due to an increased number and changing society fabric, immigrants are seen as a burden on city tourism and the city's safety. They are considered to be intruders and **face racism, xenophobia and discrimination** on a daily basis. Immigrants aren't safe themselves, often falling victim to the increased crime rate.

With growing tensions between local communities in Mexico and a delayed immigration process in the USA, asylum seekers are **slowly being rejected by both countries.**



Img 4: Bridge in El Paso, have turned into temporary encampments for waiting asylum seekers. [Source](#)

Brief

As asylum seekers occupy border walkways and bridges, it's function expands from a transit medium to space for rehabilitation. These bridges connect Mexico and USA not only physically, but also culturally and emotionally. It's a gateway for asylum seekers - for their dreams, freedom and security.

Border bridges essentially are shared spaces, belonging to no one country. With migrant facilities limiting total intake and asylum seekers refusing to leave bridges, idea is to expand it to become a temporary habitat. **Challenge is to design an immigrant respite centre.** It will function as a temporary accommodation facility for 1500 asylum seekers - over a pedestrian vehicular border bridge.

Objectives



Function

Project must retain its primary function of pedestrians and vehicles crossing the border



Robust

Design should be robust to ensure low maintenance and less hassle.



Inclusivity

To create a safe, inclusive environment where people can access fundamental rights and live with dignity



Safety

Creating safe boundaries around, so that immigrants don't cross the border illegally.

The following objectives can be a point of beginning to conceive this design.

The main objective is to ***design a facility over a border bridge for 1500 asylum seekers. They will stay there temporarily basis for 1-2 months until their case is heard by CBP. This space will act as a respite centre where they can rehabilitate, interact and plan their future.***

The project must be conceived as a solution to growing immigrant crisis, wherein asylum seekers are being refuted by countries. Between climate change and the chaos of global politics, **humanitarian crisis over the next decades will remain paramount.** Thoughtful design cannot prevent that inevitability, but it can alleviate some of the sufferings that our fellow humans will endure.

Participants can assume data wherever necessary. The bridge can be reimagined.



Img 5:: Overview of US-Mexico border near cities of Piedra Negras in Mexico and Eagle Pass in USA by [Vanguardia](#)

Place - Eagle Pass–Piedras Negras International Bridge

Piedras Negras, one of the border cities of Mexico with a **62% crime rate** is a dangerous place for immigrants seeking stability. Further, the city saw it's main shelter housing immigrants shut down due to a lack of funds. This led to people setting up makeshift tents near bridges, on roads with many moving to neighbouring migrant cities. Having no designated space of their own, they are left to be exploited. It hence becomes important to activate rehabilitation spaces that could distribute immigrant populations and create a safe environment.

Built in 1927, the **Eagle Pass-Piedras Negras International Bridge** is a pedestrian and vehicular border bridge (no commercial use) which crosses the Rio Grande connecting the United States-Mexico border cities of Eagle Pass, Texas and Piedras Negras, Coahuila. The bridge was reconstructed in 1954 after it got destroyed by flood

No. of Asylum Seekers - 1500 (May, 2019)

Waiting Time - 1.5 to 2 months

Length - 565m

Width - 20m (2 lanes with pedestrian sidewalks of 1.8m)

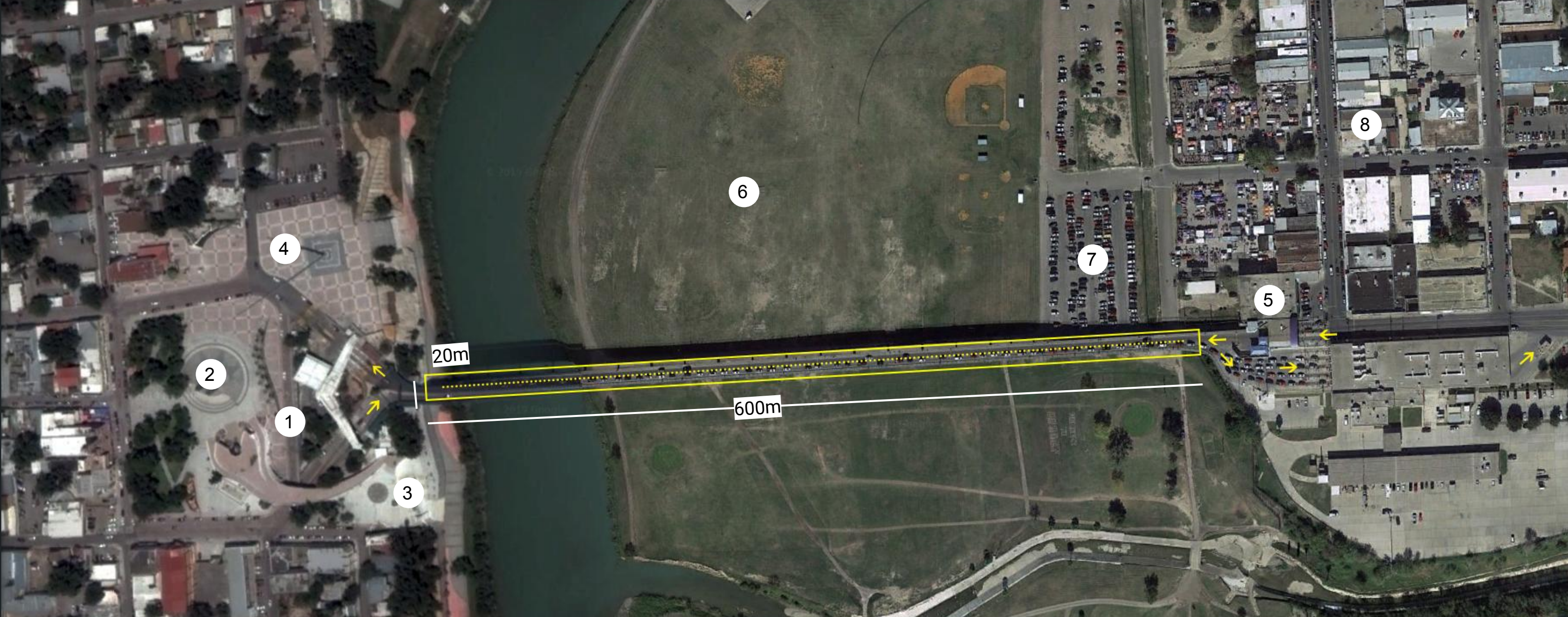
Depth of Water - 15m

Coordinates - 28°42'19.9"N 100°30'42.5"W

Hours - 7am to 11pm

Climate - Semi arid and hot

Height Restriction - 15m (from surface of the bridge)



Piedras Negras, Mexico 1. Aduana De Piedras Negras II - Border crossing (Toll Both) in Mexico | 2. Gran Public Plaza | 3. Melcon del Rio' Bravo - Playground | 4. Astra Batra Monumental
Eagle Pass, Texas, USA 5. US Border and Protection Center Eagle Pass (Toll Gate) | 6. Shelby Park 7. Parking Lot 8. Downton Shopping Centers



By Sergio Flores



Source



User

Reasons for migration



For people seeking immediate asylum in States. It takes 1.5-2 months till they get a response

For people fighting their case for deportation in States, temporary seeking refugee in Mexico

People who have been deported from US. They can't go back to States till **10-20 years**.

Migrant having travelled from other countries in search for a better livelihood and to get away from violence

An **asylum seeker** is essentially a person who has left their home country under extreme circumstances and is **seeking refuge in another**.

With new immigration laws making the process tough, there is constant uncertainty about their future. They live in an **overarching fear of deposition**. Since they aren't part of society, they are considered to be intruders and face racism, xenophobia and discrimination on a daily basis. They deserve an opportunity to rebuild their lives with dignity. They want a place to habitat, work while they figure out their future steps.

Programmatic Outline



Design should include spaces for registration, reunification and healing of new arrived asylum seekers. Project aims to accommodate **1500 asylum seekers** temporarily at any given time. The capacity and size of the areas will be decided by the participant. More programmatic facilities can be added depending on their design.

Submission

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

- A maximum of 4 boards / sheets. – [**2362px x 3544px**] or [**400mm x 600mm in 150 dpi**] in portrait digital format (JPEG).
- Each image should be less than **15MB**
- You can find the preset PSD, AI and INDD template files in the 'additional resources folder' and [here](#).

This additional resources folder contains: FAQ Questions, High Res maps, User profiles, Sketchup Model of the terrain and CAD file of the site plan.

Minimum requisites in the sheets are 3 sheets/boards + Cover image containing:

- 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'.

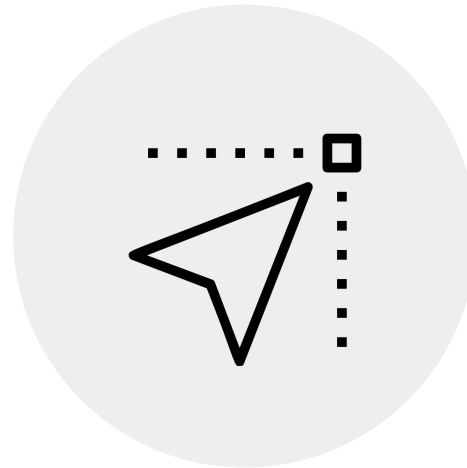
-
- + The team limit for this competition is 4 members maximum.
 - + Use exploded views to discuss multi levelled conceptual models better.
 - + Ensure that the final sheets which are submitted do not include your name or any other mark of identification.
 - + Mention sheet number on corner of every 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/no-mans-land>

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

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.



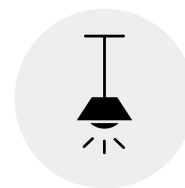
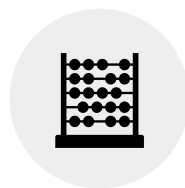
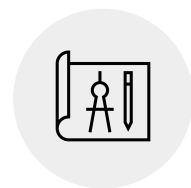
Spaces/Programme

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™



About unfuse



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](#).

Unfuse serves as a unit block 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.

Queries: support@uni.xyz

Discover other competitions: <http://competitions.uni.xyz>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/unidesigntogether/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/uni.xyz/>

Discover FAQ's about this competition on our help forum here: <http://help.uni.xyz/>

An aerial photograph showing a stark contrast between a highly organized urban grid in the lower half and a patchwork of agricultural fields in the upper half. A dark, winding line, likely a river or a border, separates the two areas. The text 'unfuse' is in small letters above 'NO', which is above 'MAN'S' and 'LAND' in large, bold, white letters.

unfuse NO MAN'S LAND

People on borders matter.

Available on:
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<https://competitions.uni.xyz>