

**Project:** Kočevje Kindergarten

**Team:** SVET VMES

**Size:** 5025 m<sup>2</sup>

**Location:** Kočevje, SLOVENIA



**Feature:**

**Project** - Nestled in the Slovenian town of Kočevje, the Bee Unit kindergarten by local firm SVET VMES brings a sensitive and playful architectural approach to early education. Consolidating several outdated facilities into one new building, the design places emphasis on children's spatial experiences and sustainable construction. An irregular façade with inviting wooden shutters forms nooks for kids to playfully peek outside. Inside, the cross-laminated timber structure remains exposed, contrasting brightly colored furniture and fixtures. Two internal courtyards pump daylight into the plan, while allowing age groups to access separate outdoor play areas. Thick walls conceal built-in storage and create cozy upholstered seating. Whimsical details like a tunnel slide and lookout portals encourage exploration and imagination. With nearly all-wood construction and passive house performance, the building strives for environmental sensitivity. It activates a once-vacant brownfield site to regenerate the area with a lively community asset. As both a sustainable and stimulating environment, the Bee Unit thoughtfully caters to childhood wonder and development.

**Design Team** - Founded in 2010, Slovenian practice SVET VMES brings a critical eye to public architecture, exploring the potential of in-between spaces. Led by partners Jure Hrovat and Ana Kreč, the Ljubljana-based firm analyzes and reimagines overlooked areas as interactive typologies loaded with possibility. SVET VMES transforms dilapidated interiors and edges into vibrant places for gathering, learning, and repose. Their observant, experimental approach shines in educational projects, where interventions invite new behaviors and spatial awareness. Recipient of awards and international publications, SVET VMES continues to challenge conventions as a research-driven studio. They lecture globally while advancing inventive local projects, including the playful Bee Unit kindergarten

which consolidates outdated facilities into a new sustainable wooden structure. Blurring lines between theory and practice, SVET VMES exposes architectural potential within the overlooked.