Harvesting Agriculture
Community center for water harvesting and agriculture, Matacos, Argentina

Main authors
Joaquin Trillo, architect and Damian Ariel Fernandez, biologist, Red Comunidades Rurales, Tilcara, Argentina

Summary by the jury
The province of Formosa in northern Argentina is one of the most bio-diverse regions of Latin America. While forests are abundant in resources, its people live immersed in scarcity, among other reasons, due to the advance of the agro-industrial frontier. The project Harvesting Agriculture aims to build a center for water harvesting and agricultural production based on a system for retaining water during periods of summer rainfall for later agricultural use during the dry season in the winter. The construction will be managed by the Lote 8 community in Departamento Matacos itself, as a form of empowerment, reassessing traditional building techniques and enabling knowledge transfer to future generations.

Appraisal by the jury
The project’s vision to restore the balance of rural communities in regions marked by rural-to-urban migration and steadily proliferating poverty is commended by the jury. In this context, the design offers a series of strategies to strengthen local agriculture in order alleviate predominant deficiencies – with the management of scarcity, whether pertaining to water, labor or food, being at the core of the proposed interventions. Greatly appreciated is the idea to combine forestry with agriculture, and to propose water retention basins in close proximity to both farming fields and settlements. The project makes an important contribution to the field of resource management for regions marked by shortages, though rich in yet untapped assets.

Project data
Context: Architecture, building and civil engineering
Client: Lote 8 community
Background: Research project
Planned start: April 2015

Further authors
Vicky Gonzalez, academic, Manos de Hermanos, Lote 8, Formosa, Argentina
Image 3: Typologies.

Image 4: Water harvesting overview.

Image 5: Plan.

Image 6: Water management system.

Image 7: Rooftop for rainwater harvesting.

Image 8: Construction system.

Image 9: Participatory management; Training and transfer; Financing.

More at www.holcimawards.org/projects/harvesting-agriculture