Adaptive Re-Use
Women’s center and playground, Beit Iksa, Palestine

Main authors
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Summary by the jury
Part of a larger scheme to revive the historic center of Beit Iksa, a small Palestinian village of 1,600 people near Jerusalem, the project offers a response to the village’s isolation and limited resources. In a first step, two abandoned buildings will be adapted for reuse as working spaces with an eco-kitchen for the local women’s association, followed by the rehabilitation of surrounding spaces. The new facilities will include interactive educational playgrounds for children, winter and summer seating areas, and a protected bird habitat. It is an effort to bring life back to this abandoned site by combining design, planning, restoration, landscaping, and infrastructure, thus improving local living conditions and biodiversity, while adding to the aesthetic quality of Beit Iksa.

Appraisal by the jury
The jury greatly appreciates the project’s social and spatial initiatives to strengthen communities and their environment in a politically troubled region of the world. Specifically valued is the intention to rehabilitate a historic site with minimal means and to revitalize a community through the provision of facilities for important daily activities – cooking, playing, gardening, etc. At the core of the project is the buildup of social and physical infrastructure – understood as a conduit to empower local stakeholders and, most importantly, families and women of all ages.

Project data
Context: Architecture, building and civil engineering
Client: Women Association of Beit Iksa
Background: Public commission
Planned start: January 2014

Further authors
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More at www.holcimawards.org/projects/adaptive-re-use