

Book announcement

Tsoga Environmental Center: improving quality of life – through architecture

New publication profiles a sustainable community center in Cape Town, South Africa

Zurich, Switzerland – November 2008: The Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction has published “Tsoga Environmental Center – Community center in South Africa” – a further volume in its international series of monographs showcasing outstanding examples of sustainable construction in practice. The book explains how the Tsoga Environmental Center respects the Rio Agenda of balanced social, environmental, and economic performance, and at the same time defines a new vernacular architectural language and also provides a model of sustainable building in low-income communities.

Tsoga Environmental Center is a community-service and recycling facility situated in a poverty-stricken informal settlement of Cape Town where the need for a normal community center pales in comparison to widespread socioeconomic despair. The design team led by Alastair Rendall of ARG Design, Cape Town applied a formal methodology for sustainable construction to achieve far more than just the creation of a new building. They shaped the project to employ local people, teach them trade skills, show them a way to build using environmentally responsible materials, establish local sources of affordable building materials, stimulate the local economy, and give the neighborhood hope and dignity – improving quality of life in surprising ways.

In 2005 Tsoga Environmental Center won the Holcim Awards Bronze for the region Africa Middle East in the first competition for sustainable construction projects initiated by the Holcim Foundation. By the following year, Tsoga Environmental Center had become a standard stop on Cape Town tour itineraries of many overseas universities and international cultural and educational organizations. In 2007 the building received a CIA Award for Architecture from the Cape Institute for Architecture, South Africa.

The new book can be downloaded (PDF) or ordered (hardcopy) at:

www.holcimfoundation.org/publications.

Tsoga Environmental Center – Community center in South Africa / Daniel Wentz
Published by Holcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction, 2008
80 pages, 101 illustrations, 15 x 21 cm, in English
ISBN 978-3-7266-0082-2