

Global Holcim Awards Jury Meeting 2009

Project appraisal

Global Holcim Awards “Innovation” prize 2009

Self-contained day labor station, San Francisco, USA

This is a minimal physical urbanistic intervention with maximum social equity and neighborhood enhancement effects. The project is a small structure that functions as a labor market and service delivery platform for day laborers who wait for casual work every morning at customary gathering points. As this picking up of day workers takes place in cities across the United States, and in other countries, it is also a project that is worth replicating. It is low cost, and could be sponsored by the contractors of the day laborers.

The structure provides rest rooms, kitchen and office space for day workers. It is a first step in providing healthcare and the building of social networks for workers that are among the most vulnerable, poor and often denigrated. It is also a solution to what the surrounding neighborhoods often experience as social disorder and what local police forces find difficult to handle. Thus the benefits extend to a larger social context than that of the workers themselves. This larger positive social effect is further enhanced by the addition of community gardens to be maintained by the day workers themselves, particularly on those days when they are not picked up for work.