The improvement of the maternal and child health area of the San Juan Ostuncalco Health Center is part of a complex and multi-sectoral program for the Reduction of Child Malnutrition, led by the health organization Formamundi and financed by the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID), in a region of Guatemala with great territorial dispersion, eminently rural, indigenous and in conditions of high vulnerability.

The project seeks to respond, on the one hand, to the need for an adequate and specific space for prenatal and pediatric health care and, on the other hand, to offer a training and exchange space for midwives and community health personnel, which are a key collective of the Guatemalan health system, as they are the first level of attention in most of the situations.

To solve these needs the team of ASF proposed a resilient construction, adapted to the bioclimatic conditions, using appropriate technologies and local workers.

About the design of the building, it try to offer a correct conditions of temperature and illumination, a pleasant space and try to respond adequately to the necessary privacy requirements of a health center.
 Issue 1: Cooperate for fair and sustainable development initiatives in active collaboration with disadvantaged people or communities. This process shall follow principles of human solidarity, non-discrimination and will be aimed at promoting their self-sufficiency.

The region of San Juan Ostuncalco is one of the Municipalities in Guatemala where infant mortality is highest. The socio-economic conditions of the communities, together with geographical dispersion and inadequate care in preventive and curative health, make the situation very severe. The objective of the program in which this intervention is integrated is to address this problem in a multi-sectoral way, trying to offer to the most vulnerable people adequate spaces for health, but also to reinforce and train the primary care system offered by midwives and community personnel, because, due to geographical dispersion, they are the ones who first attend medical emergencies and deliveries, and, therefore, those who must make the decision to attend directly or refer to the next level; the cases found in the communities. Many experiences have shown that it has been very positive and has given very good results the provision of areas for the meeting, exchange of experiences and training of midwives and community staff.

Issue 5: Facilitate the use of appropriate technologies, materials and labour adequate to local values, to the cultural specificity and responsive to the natural environment.

The construction carried out as part of the project has been proposed under the concept of appropriate technologies, understanding this idea from the three approaches to sustainability: social, economic and environmental. The constructive systems is adapted to local conditions, resistant to seismic events and well known in the area. The personnel hired were local and the most of the material were manufactured in the surroundings, allowing any repair easily if it is needed.

From the economic point of view, the costs have been moderate and any extension, improvement or repair can be carried out without excessive expenses. The cost-durability ratio has been very good.

From the environmental point of view, the local materials have been selected in order to fit the climatic conditions of the place, providing thermal inertia that allows a constant temperature stability over time. The position of the windows respond to a study of the solar chart. The objective is to collect the solar radiation in the morning hours, the time of day in which the center serves the public.

The result of the construction is a building with a singular character but that responds to local environmental and constructive criteria.

Issue 10: Defend, promote and enable access to adequate and dignified habitat for all as a ‘Fundamental Human Right’

The work presented here aims to provide a decent, adequate, safe and healthy health area for the population living in conditions of high vulnerability in this region, especially indigenous women in the rural area of the Guatemalan highlands.

IMPROVEMENT OF MATERNAL AND CHILD CARE IN SAN JUAN OS TUNCALCO, GUATEMALA

ARQUITECTURA SIN FRONTERAS ESPAÑA (DT GALICIA)