Workshop 09 – Housing and Urban Issues in Developing Countries

UPGRADING SUBURBS IN LATIN AMERICAN CONTEXT
A MANAGEMENT AND TRANSFORMATION REVIEW OF
THE SLUMS

Oscar Carracedo García-Villalba
NUS, National University of Singapore, Department of Architecture, e-mail: oscar_carracedo@nus.edu.sg

Núria Noguer Pujadas
ETSALS-URL, La Salle Architecture Technical School, Ramón Llull University
e-mail: noguer.nuria@gmail.com

Abstract
This research goes through different upgrading proposals for informal settlements in developing countries, analyzing both, on the one hand their plans and on the other hand, their management, feasibility and financing.

This paper covers three Latin American experiences in three different countries, Argentina, Colombia and Brazil where, as a result of the attraction dynamics generated by cities, this kind of neighborhoods have emerged in critical conditions on their peripheries.

The intervention initiatives in these neighborhoods arise from the urgent need to improve living conditions, assuring, as far as possible, equal access to the services offered by the city. The plans and the intervention proposed are strategies to improve these conditions, promoting social inclusion and reducing the gap between the different sectors of the city.

Public and private investment are essential to work in urban poor and conflicting, this paper analyzes how they have done and how they can serve as a basis for future interventions.

Keywords: Informal settlements, urban renewal & regeneration, management, social politics

The suburbs, one main issue in developing countries

Over the years, cities are becoming more attractive to live because of their economic, social, cultural and educational offer. Due to the migration from rural areas to city centers, informal settlements are a growing phenomenon in some urban centers, especially in developing countries.

According to the estimates of the United Nations (UN-HABITAT), one-sixth of the world’s population, nearly one billion people, now live in slums, and with no action the number will be doubled by 2030.

Moreover, reports from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), estates that Latin America is the most unequal region in the world, since 31% of the population lived below the poverty line in 2011. This situation highlights the need to work efficiently in this context.

Many Latin American cities have been facing for decades the urban phenomenon of poverty growing. The crisis of the "welfare states" generated by this situation requires the development of new policies that are able to redirect and enhance the efforts of our societies to overcome inequalities.
Figure 1: Comuna 13, Medellín (Colombia), Manguinhos, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and Barrio 31, Buenos Aires (Argentina). The three neighborhoods show similar densities and where developed during similar periods.
This research is developed through the analysis of a series of study cases and their proposed strategies to reverse the phenomenon of informality in the occupation, use and land profit through the development of plans and urban projects. In this case we will focus on three of the studied neighborhoods: Comuna 13 in Medellín (Colombia), Manguinhos Complex in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and Barrio 31 in Buenos Aires (Argentina) (figure 1) that can be compared in terms of density and especially in terms of community impact.

These three informal residential neighborhoods in extreme poverty urban contexts are characterized by the large amount of squatters, originated between 1930 and 1950 due to economic, social and political crisis; the deterioration of living standards; job insecurity; the high land value or the forced migration from rural areas. As we will see, all three projects aim to correct the urban imbalances and the excessive private space occupancy, through the consolidation of structural systems of public space.

**Plans: From the eradication and forced eviction, to the settlement and sense of belonging to the neighborhood**

It is important to note how, in the three cases, there has been a big change in the urban policies since the 70's and 80's. This change has shifted policies from the eradication, eviction and housing demolition, to the recognition of the existing reality and its consolidation. That is the case of Manguinhos or Barrio 31, where the failure of alternative relocation programs has derived to the acceptance of the sense of belonging to the place of their inhabitants. In the case of Comuna 13, the proposed plan deals with the difficult task of preventing migration, abandonment of usual homes and social fracture due to confrontations and armed gangs disputes.

With the objective of regenerating these neighborhoods, different planning figures with comprehensive approaches are proposed in the three cases.

**PUI - Proyecto Urbano Integral Comuna 13**

The PUI Comuna 13 (Integral Urban Project Comuna 13) is a planning tool that covers physical, social and institutional aspects. Its aim is to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants, incorporating all the development and planning elements simultaneously, and adding citizen and community participation to ensure sustainability.

In the case of Comuna 13, the PUI is developed by the Medellin City Council, and takes form in a total of 22 specific improvement projects that target different aspects of the neighborhood urban fabric (promenades, urban walkways, parks, skywalks, facilities, etc).

**PAC - Programa de Aceleración de Crecimiento Manguinhos**

The PAC Program (Accelerated Development Program), are a group of policies for stimulating economic growth, infrastructure development and improvements in the whole country.

Launched by President Lula, this program was conceived in 2007 by the Federal Government, in cooperation with state and local governments for the construction of hydroelectric plants, highways, ports, airports and the regeneration of marginal areas. The Program consists in the investment of 190 billion Euros in four years seeking to achieve an economic growth target of 5% of GDP between 2007 and 2010. Specifically in social and urban infrastructure is allocated 65 billion, and more than 60% goes to housing.
**Proyecto Urbano Barrio 31**

The approach for Barrio 31 is different, since it is not an specific plan. The proposal consists in a Urban Project which will then be implemented through specific legislation\(^1\)

The Urban Project for Barrio 31 arises as a result of a research work started in 2002\(^2\). The research team was formed by members of the Institute of Human Spatiality of the Faculty of Architecture, Design and Urbanism (FADU) of the University of Buenos Aires, in collaboration with the Department of Sociology and Politics (PUC) of Rio do Janeiro. The preliminary draft was declared of interest by the members of the Legislature of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires by the resolution 279/05.

The document has been the basis for numerous presentations made by the residents of Barrio 31 to stakeholders. As an example, it has been used to achieve one of their demands, the creation of a consultation board formed by the ONABE, the City Council, FADU and the residents to discuss how to implement the different proposals of the project.

**Projects: Urban design strategies that promote regeneration**

Some trigger factors of the informal development and social exclusion are poverty, differences in the conditions of access to public services and mobility, poor conditions and low standards of public space and facilities, and poor quality and housing deficits.

As mentioned before, intervention initiatives in these neighborhoods arise from the urgent need to improve these living conditions, ensuring, as far as possible, equal access to services offered by the city. In order to achieve these objectives, the studied plans work on the eradication of poverty through access to education, strengthening the sense of belonging to the place, individual responsibility, community involvement and improving environmental sustainability.

Since the three case studies have the same goals, although in different scenarios, their approach and strategies can be compared under the following urban design strategies for regeneration: infrastructure, public space, facilities, housing and environmental sustainability.

**Infrastructures. Connecting neighbors and neighborhoods**

With the aim of improving and strengthening the relationship between neighborhoods and communities, and in order to integrate them into the rest of the city, the three plans consider infrastructure and mobility one of the key issues to be proposed. Working on mobility as a system that combines balanced flows of vehicles and pedestrians, and public transport which plays a fundamental role, as the structuring axis of mobility in the neighborhoods, moreover this is a trigger factor for other urban and social transformations.

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1 “Proyecto de Ley. Plan de Urbanización de las Villas 31 y 31 bis: Convenios entre ciudad y nación”; “Creación de la Mesas de gestión y planeamiento multidisciplinaria y participativa para la urbanización de las Villas 31 y 31 Bis.”

2 “Las Articulaciones Ciudad Formal / Ciudad Informal. Una metodología de abordaje válida para la región” (The Articulation City Formal / Informal City. A valid approach methodology for the region)
In one hand, the strategy of connection promotes projects that links different spaces, while reducing commuting times, improving social inclusion, and blurs the boundaries between different neighborhoods. On the other hand, enhancing urban connectivity implies the continuity of the urban structure; discouraging the perpetuation of the fragmentation of the city and the characteristic lack urbanity in poor areas.

Regarding the proposed infrastructure interventions, two different types are clearly detected depending on the range of their scale. In the one hand we find those infrastructure interventions that integrate the neighborhoods in the city and, on the other hand, those of smaller-scale that are developed inside the neighborhood as important as the first ones.

The construction of the Metrocable in Comuna 13 (figure 3), an aerial cable car system, constitutes one of the city scale projects and it is one of the most strategic actions conceived for the neighborhood. Although it was developed externally to the PUI of Comuna 13, both public institutions, Metro of Medellín and the Empresa de Desarrollo Urbano (EDU) (Urban Development Company) worked hand in hand to achieve the result that we can see today.
The Metrocable aims to create the right mobility conditions to integrate the neighborhood within the rest of the city. Moreover, as we will see, the opportunity of the Metrocable encourages the development of new public spaces and new centralities around the new stations.

Similarly, a very important infrastructural proposal is done for Manguinhos (Figure 4). In this case an elevated railway track that articulates the whole urban project. The railway line currently divides the neighborhood creating ghettos and violence and crime focus.

The construction of the railway track at a higher level, allows the generation of new public spaces underneath, making possible a new avenue with a multi modal transportation interchanger (Figure 5). A civic axis filled with activities and housing that configures a new urban façade.

This new integrated public space eliminates the existing barriers and divisions, and transforms the most problematic sector in the area into a connector and the main public space.

In Barrio 31 two different actions are implemented. The first one is the link between the neighborhood and the city through the location of a new bus station and two new subway stations. These stations, located at both ends of the neighborhood, give access to four subway lines (figure 6).
The second action works on the hierarchy and the qualification of the road network with the distinction of pedestrian and vehicular structural axis. The main proposal consists in enhancing two street axis. On the one hand, Ninth Street, neighborhood’s main south-east, north-west connection (Figure 7). On the other hand Edge Street, a street that starting from the junction with the motorway creates a new access to the bus terminal. This street also formalizes the end of the neighborhood towards the railway, limiting the possible future potential development areas of the district.

Concerning the small-scale interventions and internal links for the neighborhood, we can find also some specific actions for sustainable mobility and in relation to the idea of connectivity. With the aim of bringing people together, the three projects propose numerous tactical and acupuncture interventions in relation with road and pedestrian connections, like pedestrian skywalks, ramps, escalators, new streets or street upgrading. Although these connections are much smaller scale than the previous ones, their articulation and relationship capacity is not of less importance, and they constitute real spaces for mobility and for neighborhood interrelation.

Public places and spaces - Streets, parks and plazas as community spaces

The three proposals consider public space as the essence of the city, recognizing that city quality is measured by the quality of its public space. Public space plays a fundamental role as it has the quality to unite the community and provides places for recreation, culture and education. In the three studied examples, public space has the ability to generate new dynamics of transformation for the neighborhoods.

Priority is given to the work on the improvement of the qualities of existing public spaces, as these are the main places for social interaction and exchange. For this reason, projects tend to work with regeneration, consolidation, improvement and social appropriation of public space.

At the same time, some new urban public spaces are also proposed. These new reference areas for recreation are mainly located in relation with mobility systems and facilities, giving priority to pedestrians and public transport. The articulation between new public spaces and new public facilities such as libraries, business development centers, and sports facilities as well as with the improvement of schools, medical centers and other existing services, contributes to social benefit, to alleviate poverty as well as to the use of public spaces.
It is important to emphasize that many of the proposed parks work with the natural rehabilitation and restoration, recovering open spaces that correspond to forest areas, rivers or streams. This type of work creates not only public spaces but also contributes to the preservation and sustainability of the environment reducing the risk of natural disasters.

The interventions in Comuna 13 in relation to public spaces (Figures 9 and 10), as the Linear Park "El Salado", the promenade streets 49A, 109 and 99, new pedestrian skywalks, the Kids Park or the Carla Cristina foundation Park, succeed in creating new connections and internal mobility systems. These systems link and relate facilities and new neighborhood centralities around metrocable stations, generating a structural pattern for the community civic activities.

In Manguinhos (figure 11), the proposed public space wants to have the role of social hub, attracting favela residents as well as neighbors from surrounding areas.
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Figure 11: Public space under the railway track (1) conceived as a social hub that has to attract the favela residents and neighbors from surrounding areas.

The premises for the landscape design took as reference the Flamengo Park, in the city of Rio de Janeiro by Roberto Burle Marx, which was conceived as a place for leisure, sport and culture with the values of a modern democratic space.

The program for the public space and its facilities was carefully defined in order to satisfy different necessities from different age and income ranges. However, within this framework, an emphasis was made in providing children and teenagers with alternative attractions that would integrate them to the community and prevent them from being seduced by the drug dealing activity, a typical key job generator in the economy of the low-income areas.

Figure 12: Linear Park in Manguinhos, defined in order to satisfy different necessities from different age and income ranges.

In Barrio 31 (Figure 13) the proposal concentrates on two main existing public spaces and centralities. The urban project recognizes the Entrance Plaza (Feria Square) as the district façade, located at the east boundary next to the bus terminal. The project for this plaza provides a unitary space in which new activities and uses (shops, fair, etc) to activate the neighborhood may appear. These activities will come up due to the opportunity and accessibility provided by the interchange between the public transport and the new bus terminal.

Figure 13: Public space interventions in Barrio 31, working on existing spaces (2 & 3) providing them with activities and facilities. The Immigrants Parks a new linear and buffer Park (1).
The Central Park is located underneath the highway of La Plata (Figure 14). This strategic site articulates the two main communication axis, Ninth Street and Edge Avenue. As we will see the proposal for this public space provides also activities and facilities.

Besides the previous spaces, a new linear public park is proposed. Immigrants Park is located in the northeastern boundary of the neighborhood, between the highway of La Plata and the new residential units. The purpose of this open space is to be the end and the north façade of the neighborhood as well as a buffer zone between the housing and the infrastructure. This space is conceived as a connector between all neighborhood centralities, the Entrance Plaza (Feria Square), the Central Park, the Father Múgica memorial and all the new facilities that complement these public spaces.

**Facilities - diversity, complexity and community identity**

Facilities are essential for the urban regeneration of the three cases studied. The three proposals give facilities and public buildings the role of providing public places and spaces with the activities that allow the construction of a diverse society.
In all the three cases, the proposed model for facilities responds to the same principle, generating centralities, complex urban spaces and social reference sites in relation with public spaces, pedestrian networks and public transport systems. Always located in strategic points, these facilities aim to be identity elements of the urban environment and nodes of deeper urban transformations, in order to strengthen neighbors coexistence, improve their quality of life and foster the sense of belonging to the neighborhood.

In Comuna 13 facilities around the centrality areas of "Indepencias" or "Nuevos Conquistadores" (figure 15) consist in new buildings for the community as business development centers, public libraries or police stations, and the improvement of schools, health centers or sports units. It is remarkable the "Library Park" policy proposed by the Medellin City Council for the whole city. This strategy, that goes far beyond the traditional function of a library, consist in placing cultural, recreational and educational buildings and spaces in strategic positions inside the neighborhoods in order to regenerate them from the inside.

The urban role given to these places aim to enhance the livability of neighborhoods and provide them with content and community activities that help to strengthen coexistence, identity and environmental wealth. That is the successful case of the San Javier "Library Park" at the San Javier station (figure 15).

For Manguinhos there are two major strategies. The first one is the creation of a new large-scale area with facilities and new identity places for the neighborhood (figure 17). This new centrality incorporates a civic center, a working development center, a school, a library, a health center, a cultural center, a gymnasium and a swimming pool complex. It is remarkable to note that this centrality is located in a former industrial building complex; the existing buildings and spaces are restored to host some of the new facilities.
The second strategy is to use the railway track park as a linear centrality equipped with activities and uses for all age ranges (Figure 17). As in the previous case, it is important to emphasize how in this linear centrality both new buildings and restored buildings come about to be urban reference elements for neighbors since they have a positive incidence in the memory and identity of the neighborhood.

It is not so different the case of Barrio 31, where new facilities are also located within new centralities. As an example, in the Central Park we can find a Center for the generation of employment and income, where neighbors can locate their own business and small companies (Figure 20). Due to the great space left by the elevated highway, a school and social, cultural and sports facilities are also located in this space.

In the same way, as we mentioned before, the Entrance Plaza accommodates the fair and some commercial activities that take advantage of public transport connectivity and the new access to the bus terminal. On the opposite side of the neighborhood, the Father's Mujica Memorial and other social facilities constitute another centrality that balances the general structure of the proposal.
Housing - Regenerating the existing urban fabric through selective urban repair

The major problems of housing units in contexts of poverty are their precarious conditions and their location in natural hazard zones.

The urban conservation strategy works selectively with urban housing problems solving, on the one hand, their qualitative deficits through the amenities improvement, and on the other hand, resolving the quantitative aspects with the provision of new housing generating correct urban development. It is important to note that all the proposals work with settlement consolidation in contrast to previous eradication policies.

The three neighborhoods follow two basic strategies:

Selective Housing Repair - This strategy is the best accepted by the residents, as it is based on consolidating, regulating and improving the existing housing. Keeping existing housing facilitates the maintenance of the character of the neighborhood and the sense of belonging to the place, in addition to showing a clear commitment to economic and environmental sustainability.

Housing repair actions allows the improvement of living conditions as well as quality of life. In this sense, all the improvement are directed primarily to overcome structural weaknesses and deficiencies, to improve health, sanitation and living conditions, and to control the size and density of housing units.

Selective Housing Relocation - When houses are built on natural risk zones or their physical and architectural conditions are too precarious, the strategy consists in the relocation and resettlement of families. New resettlement housing respond to two main situations, those that will be located in the areas of centrality, which tend to be higher density and high-rise housing and, and those punctual renewal interventions of the urban fabric that, with an integrated model with the existing fabric, will be developed as lower density housing.

In the case of Comuna 13 specific housing programs are promoted for the regularization, legalization, improvement and construction of mixed-use buildings. In order to improve the neighborhood life and the environmental quality, these programs give an special emphasis to the relocation of housing units located in areas of high hydrological risk.
The location of housing in the Manguinhos plan follows two strategic lines. The first strategy consists on placing the new housing relocation units along the linear park under the rail track, setting a new façade for this urban space.

On the other hand, the PAC Manguinhos develops an integral reform project for the favelas. In this case the "Leopoldo Bulhões" area, one of the most conflictive parts of the neighborhood (Figure 23 and Figure 24), is the one selected for the definition of a new environmental quality landscape, defined by new public spaces, urbanization, vegetation, facilities and new relocation housing units.
Although in Barrio 31 housing interventions are more generic for the whole neighborhood, the proposal works on several specific solutions depending if they deal with existing housing or new residential units.

In the case of the interventions on the pre-existing urban fabric, solutions change depending on the consolidation of the urban tissues. The range of solutions goes from those on big blocks, where new pedestrian pathways are necessary to improve the walkability, to those punctual and minimal interventions in the blocks that are not so consolidated. The necessity to open new pedestrian paths requires the execution of a limited but significant number of new housing units. However, it has to be said that, in order to integrate them with the existing urban fabric, new housing units are based on the analysis of the existing typologies. Moreover, it is important to note that this strategy it is also used as a catalyst for neighborhood regeneration, since the presence of new housing encourages the rest of neighbors to improve their homes.

The incorporation inside the plan of vacant sites at the north of the neighborhood provides the necessary space for the implementation of new housing for resettlement. In this case the proposed high-rise building typology allows to release community and open space (Immigrants Park) on the ground floor while generating a new façade to them.
With these selective interventions for Barrio 31 the plan achieves to maintain and preserve most of the existing urban fabric. In these cases the interventions focus on the improvement of services and amenities, taking advantage of previous management experiences carried out by the National Neighborhood Improvement Program.

![Figure 26: New housing units in Barrio 31. High-rise housing next to Immigrants Park, new low-density relocation housing and selective interventions for the existing urban fabric.](image)

**Urban and environmental sustainability. Improving green and nature**

The three proposals include urban and environmental sustainability concepts that go hand in hand with the above strategies.

As we have seen, public transport systems and the continuity of public spaces encourage alternative, sustainable and efficient mobility solutions reducing private mobility and energy consumption. The housing relocation strategy permits the densification and intensification with reasonable densities at specific points, especially in central areas where accessibility has been improved. Moreover, these proposals aim to reverse the process of extensive occupation of the neighborhoods that has led to the deterioration of the natural environment. This reversion allows the recovery of natural areas, habitats, ecosystems and ecological and environmental corridors with a clear commitment with environmental sustainability.

![Figure 28: Comuna 13. Improving public space continuity and promoting pedestrian mobility](image)

![Figure 29: Recovery of natural areas and ecological corridors in Manguinhos.](image)

Finally it should be noted that the typological variety proposed encourages the integration, inclusion and diversity of the profiles of the population living in the neighborhood, which helps to social sustainability.
Management, bottom-up policies and land tenure. How to make projects possible.

Despite the fact that the recovery of informal neighborhoods is often tackled through generic answers, these three proposals suggest that renewal can be achieved through principles such as mobility, public spaces, facilities, housing recovery and sustainability; the essential elements that configure urban structure.

Although we have seen how such principles are developed through plans and projects, this third part of the research wants to focus on the management as an essential part to implement those plans and projects. In this sense, management has to be also designed and considered as an inseparable part of the plan and the project.

In these case studies the first step to be considered is that public investment is essential, since we are working in poor contexts. Because of that, it is important to analyze the role of the different agents involved in the management process, such as citizens, politicians, public and private companies, land owners, etc. with the aim of understanding of a comprehensive methodology for other contexts.

Public agents, community participation and urban management. Three inseparable aspects

Comuna 13

As we have mentioned before, the PUI Comuna 13 was developed by the Empresa de Desarrollo Urbano (EDU) (Urban Development Company), a local, administrative and self-governing public agency that controls the management of the project through all the different phases: design and planning, organization and management of resources and information and execution of works and their contracts. The work that EDU carries out integrates the knowledge of the territory, community relations, project implementation process, financial issues and planning.

The PUI Comuna 13, with a budget of 65,000 million pesos for the 22 planned projects, has found its financing through public-private collaborations, as well as from NGOs and national, international and community organizations.

As mentioned previously, some of the most remarkable aspects of the plan are the social issues, in this case in form of community participation.
In the case of Comuna 13, the community participates actively in all the phases of the plan and the project, going from the identification of problems and opportunities, to the formulation and final approval of the projects. This participation is done through participative design practices as imaginary workshops, charrettes, discussion spaces, interchange, communication and, furthermore, working with the Juntas de Acción Comunal (JAC) (Communal Action Boards) and the Juntas Administradoras Locales (JAL) (Local Administrative Boards). It's relevant to notice that the community also participates actively in the development and implementation of the works, which helps to reactivate the neighborhood economy. As a reference, 150 people work in the strategic projects for Comuna 13, and 80 of them belong to the community.

In terms of methodology, the development of the PUI is done in 4 steps:

- **Planning:** Analysis of the city and definition of the precise area of the plan. In this phase the required municipal actions, the management model and the development of inter-administrative agreements are defined.
- **Diagnosis and Formulation:** Identification of the specific situations and the main reasons that affect the community. At the same time opportunities and potentialities of the neighborhood are detected. In this phase agreements, programs and projects are identified and articulated.
- **Project development:** Urban and architectural design is developed. Management, socialization and implementation of the projects are the main issues discussed with the community.
- **PUI Presentation:** This phase corresponds to the hand over of the different projects developed by the PUI to the different agencies and entities that will be responsible of their management.

**Manguinhos**

As mentioned before, the regeneration of Manguinhos neighborhood arises from the PAC Program (Accelerated Development Program), promoted by President Lula. The projects included in the program mostly get their financing from International Financial Institutions (IFIS), World Bank (WB), and Iberoamerican Development Bank (IDB) and the Andean Development Cooperation (CAF).

The case of Manguinhos PAC is slightly different since the 43% of the financing comes from state companies (mostly Petrobras, the main gas company of the country), another 43% from the private sector through public-private agreements and the 14% comes from the State budget.

Not only for the financial issues Manguinhos is a unique case in Rio, but also because for the first time in history, state, federal and municipal governments worked together and spent an unprecedented amount of money and resources for the favelas upgrading.

If the previous development program, known as Favela-Bairro, addressed these issues at a neighborhood scale level, the case of the PAC Program represents a similar development process, but at a significantly larger scale, working widely throughout the city with federal support. Due to this great investment and comprehensive approach, social, physical and ecological strategies can be addressed and planned simultaneously and coherently. It is important to note that the PAC Program gives a special emphasis to the land tenure and ownership, trying to regularize the neighbors situation in terms of property while solving specific architecture and urbanization improvements.

![Figure 32: Community planning in Manguinhos. The PAC Program gives a special emphasis to the land tenure and ownership, trying to regularize to neighbors situation in terms of property while solving specific architecture and urbanization improvements.](image-url)
Moreover, a special attention is given to the systems of community participation, stimulating active organization processes. In the specific case of Manguinhos, due to the sensible situation of its inhabitants, this aspect is extremely delicate and receives a permanent, careful and special approach from all participants (public authorities and agencies, community, developers, architects, public prosecutors, district attorneys and mass media). The aim of this special deal tries to generate total transparency and social justice in all phases creating a friendly environment between the different parties involved.

Participation of local residents is organized in 4 stages:

- Meetings on site with the agents of the project team at the beginning of the process.
- Local knowledge exchange with community agents, at the first phases of project design.
- Community is involved during the construction process.
- Assigning to them the role of representatives of the community interests in the POUSO (Center for Urban and Social Orientation) created by the city government to address potential conflicts after the completion of the project.

**Barrio 31**

As we have previously stated, this urban project is the result of an urban design research started on 2002 by the FADU. The final proposal comes out from a collective debate where the neighbors demands and needs were transformed and interpreted by architects and professionals into a technical document.

Due to this collaboration and implication from all parts, the project was declared of public interest by the 279/05 resolution, and has been the base for the "Plan for the urbanization of Villa 31 and 31bis" promoted by the Housing Commission.

However, as stated by the journalist Maria Laura González³ "Barrio 31 today remains the same and probably even worse, the neighborhood is still growing, both in height and occupation, and houses and buildings are even built up under the freeway. Indeed, some precarious buildings under construction already exceed four floors".

This problem, mainly due to the lack of understanding between neighbors and the city council members, became apparent when several confrontations against the government intention of evicting some neighbors where held.

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³ González, María Laura, “La villa “cinco estrellas”” on the digital newspaper “el mirador” 22nd may 2009
http://www.periodicoelmirador.com.ar
The Barrio 31 urban project, seeks to reconcile the conflict between the government (ONABE) and the inhabitants who claim for the neighborhood consolidation and for a set of minimum housing conditions. With this objective, on March 29th 2010, the Executive Board for the urbanization of Villa 31 and 31 bis was created. The Board is leaded by the Deputy Mayor of the City, and it is formed by members of the parliament, representatives of local and national executive agencies, deputies representing the Chamber of Deputies of the Nation, neighbors and a representative of the team of the University of Buenos Aires (UBA) that developed the proposal. With this conciliatory gesture the urbanization and regeneration of Barrio 31 did the first step towards a Law for the Urbanization of Barrio 31 as a State policy.

In November 2012 the Planning and Management Executive Board for the Multidisciplinar and Participative Urbanization of Barrio 31 announced and agreed to approve the Development and Urbanization Plan for the neighborhood.

Keeping people's home. Land Tenure and ownership security

None of the previous plans, projects and management is possible if land tenure is not taken into account. Tenure and its security are important since people get involved in the invest improvement of their housing. Nonetheless improvement can only be done if there is tenure security and there is no fear of eviction. The challenge is to reconcile the individual interests and rights of the residents in informal settlements with the public interests and obligations of all.

To ensure legal regularization and tenure security, maintaining people and communities in their original locations and homes, it has to be guaranteed that residents are not evicted or pressured by public authorities or landowners.

Upgrading not always follows legalization. Sometimes providing tenure security isolated, without considering other issues at the same time, creates new urban, environmental, and financial problems. In this sense, sometimes the legalization of some properties without previous planning strategies has complicated the construction of infrastructure and the widening of streets, which has raised the project cost due to necessary expropriations. In other cases regularization policies has increased land prices, and physical improvements has attracted more people to live in these areas, increasing their density and making new infrastructure, services and facilities capacity insufficient. In some other cases, improvements have stimulated the process of informal development, and new informal settlements next to the existing ones have been formed in the expectation that they will be legalized in the future. Regularization can also cause gentrification due to the pressure that developers and promoters may put on residents to sell their parcels, especially if they are located in central areas where prices will raise rapidly.

Accordingly, the issue of land tenure is still essential for the sense of community and for the improvement of informal settlements. For the analyzed projects, the work on land tenure has been a part of specific programs for the regularization of properties or through specific legislation.

Since the 80’s Argentina has been working through programs like the Program for the Integral Solution and Settlement of Temporary Villas and Hosing Cores (NHT) (1984); the Program for the Settlement of Villas and Neighborhoods with Deficits of Federal Capital (1991); the Settlement, Integration and Transformation Program for Villas and Housing Cores (2001) or the Program for the Regularization and Urban Land Planning (PROSUR Hábitat – 2008). In the case of Brasil, the “Favela-Bairro” and “Minha Casa Minha Vida” (PMCMV) programs. Finally, the Colombian experience has developed, the Integrated Slum Upgrading Program of Medellín (PRIMED) (Programa Integral de Mejoramiento de Barrios Subnormales en Medellín).

A much wider time perspective is needed to evaluate the incidence and specific success of all these recent programs and regularization systems.
5 conclusions for making urbanism

PEOPLE VALUE AND SENSE OF BELONGING TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD
The improvement of these neighborhoods and the recycling of the existing urban fabric, requires a new approach from urbanism rather than from eradication, promoting local identity.

URBAN STRUCTURE AND SPACE APPROPRIATION
Despite the fact that the recovery of informal neighborhoods is often tackled through generic answers, urban renewal and social inclusion can be achieved through mobility, public spaces, facilities and sustainability, the essential elements of the urban structure.

THE QUESTION OF LAND TENURE
The change in the modus operandi, shifting from eradication to settlement, gives citizens a greater sense of belonging to the community and involves them as an active part in the planning process.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION - BOTTOM UP PLANNING PROCESSES
The concept of urbanism and urbanity has to be implemented not only in the form of plans and urban projects, it has to be done through active citizen participation processes. It is important to involve the neighbors in the participative design without giving too much emphasis to the technical concepts. Through participative design residents get involved in the whole process that goes from the diagnostic phase to the execution of the works.

PLANNING FOR NO IMPROVISING
The involvement of citizens in determining centralities, opportunity areas, strategies, identification of problems, and different actions to be implemented, make them become aware of the need to anticipate and plan the projects and actions to be implemented without improvising them, a way of preventing the informal development of neighborhoods.

In order to develop these projects successfully, and for their coherent and feasible management, it is necessary that each one of the private and public agents get involved.

- Community and Inhabitants, as the main beneficiaries of the transformations, participating actively in the control, coordination and the project decision.
- Landowners, as providers of the land where the projects should be developed.
- Local Governments, responsible for the specific interventions and plans and as driving force of projects and to finance them.
- Architects and technicians, who should be responsible of understanding neighbors needs and should promote the citizen participation to develop the specific interventions of the project.
- And finally developers, in charge of the implementation of the projects

We can conclude that the urban upgrading of informal settlements should include both the physical aspects and the social and institutional ones, incorporating all the planning elements simultaneously and in both directions, from the bottom-up and from top to bottom.
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