INTEGRATING THE INFORMAL
DEVELOPING AN INTEGRATIVE STRATEGY
FOR SLUM UPGRADE IN BUENOS AIRES
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Context Analysis

Modernisation of the informal sector

Hypothesis

Main upgrading needs to be considered in a framework of:
- integration into the formal city
- environmental interventions
- larger urban developments and
metropolitan dynamics
- providing local, regional and metropolitan
public space and physical access to
work, study, leisure and mobility

2050 Plan

vision

Potential framework: Rio Reconquista proposal
- The framework drawn for this project in the Rio Reconquista proposed by the provincial government of Buenos Aires for the improvement of the basin of this river, which includes environmental interventions, infrastructure improvements and urban development including informal settlement upgrading.

Project location: Barrio Independencia area
- The informal settlement used as a specific site to test out the potentials of the Rio Reconquista proposal is not on a carrier for upgrading and integration of informal settlements in Buenos Aires. For the purposes of the city, especially in flood plains or near landfill sites. They are often in poverty-'de jure' and 'de facto'.

Approach

1. What planning instruments are needed to allow top-down regional proposals to work with local initiatives in marginalized informal areas in order to improve the spatial conditions and integration of these areas into the city?

2. What institutional frameworks and collective spatial configurations would help the different elements of the stakeholders to work together towards a decision about the urban development of the settlement?

Problem statement

The Rio Reconquista project provides an interesting and promising framework for the upgrading and integration of the informal settlements located in river basins. However, the regional needs and potentials, and is therefore not yet able to cover an area for the upgrading and integration of the informal settlement.

Research questions

1. What planning instruments are needed to allow top-down regional proposals to work with local initiatives in marginalized informal areas in order to improve the spatial conditions and integration of these areas into the city?

2. What institutional frameworks and collective spatial configurations would help the different elements of the stakeholders to work together towards a decision about the urban development of the settlement?

Proposed Planning Framework

The following steps have been identified as being important in the participatory urban decision-making process. They are divided into three phases: Preparatory and Stakeholder Mobilisation phase, a Collective Vision Development and Stakeholder Commitment phase, a Strategy Formulation and Implementation phase, and finally a Monitoring, Evaluation and Consolidation phase. Each of the different steps of this process is designed to be applicable to different informal settlements.

Physical outputs

PHASE 1 DIAGNOSIS

Metropolitan New ring road

Reconquista river basin

Regional Landscape structure

PHASE 2 COLLECTIVE VISION + URBAN FACT

Current situation

Flood zone

Existing proposal

PROPOSED VISION

PHASE 3 STRATEGY

Detailed strategy (municipal scale)

Blue structure

PHASE 4 ELABORATION & DEMONSTRATION

Proposed local design

New urban space

Summary

The need for an integrative strategy to slum upgrading. According to United Nations estimates, nearly 3 billion people over the world live in informal settlements (UN, 2005). This number is expected to increase, especially in the river basin areas in Greater Buenos Aires, as the demographic development from 1990 to 2010 in Greater Buenos Aires, the metropolitan region of Buenos Aires and the capital of the graduation project, is estimated to be 11% of the total population living in unregistered situations or informal settlements. These settlements are predominantly located on marginal land in the periphery of the city, such as in flood plains or near landfill sites. They are often both physically and socially isolated, and generally inhabit poor conditions. In this project, it addresses the problems faced by these informal city dwellers, any informal settlement upgrading initiative should therefore be complementing in a broader framework of integration into the formal city, environmental interventions and larger urban processes.

The case of Barrio Independencia

For my MSc Urbanisation graduation project, I have developed an integrative approach to slum upgrading, with a particular focus on Barrio Independencia, an informal settlement. This settlement is located in the river basin of the Rio Reconquista in Greater Buenos Aires and has approximately 7,000 inhabitants. It suffers from regular flooding, a highly polluted creek, lack of public space, and social facilities and services from planning. This project has focused on developing a planning framework and physical interventions, both aimed at integrating the settlement into the formal city and reducing the vulnerability and risk of its residents. It is offered as an alternative to an existing proposal for the improvement of the Rio Reconquista basin currently being developed by the City Government of Buenos Aires. The project will be implemented in the next few years, but there are not sufficiently considered. Outside of this graduation project have been based on literature review, site visits, interviews, research by design and a study visit to Buenos Aires and in Barrio Independencia and several other informal settlements in the metropolitan region.

Participatory planning framework

The project is designed to enable the informal to actively take part in the decision-making process, a participatory planning framework has been developed, which consists of a series of steps and participatory planning. The UN-Habitat urban decision-making model (2000) has been taken as a starting point and has been elaborated for the specific situation of this project. This participatory framework has been structured to ensure that the development of strategies, including the required decision-making, will be taken place by the community and is based on the collaboration of stakeholders, residents and local government. The project will involve a participatory planning process and will be carried out in close cooperation with the local government and the informal settlement community.

Physical interventions

The project proposal is focused on the participatory urban decision-making process, a physical proposal for the upgrading and integration of Barrio Independencia, will be focused on the necessary interventions to improve the current conditions, especially in flood plains or near landfill sites. The proposal range to a regional strategy for the river basin areas in Greater Buenos Aires, and a municipal strategy for the informal settlement. Creating safe and inclusive spaces for the informal settlement community, a development of the informal settlement community in the context of the regional strategy, and a development of the local government in the context of the municipal strategy. Through the participatory process, the focus will be to identify and address the problems faced by the informal settlement residents, strengthening their assets and integrating the settlement into the formal city.

Although this integrative proposal is far from an academic exercise, it is the ambition of this proposal to discuss a comprehensive approach to informal settlement upgrading.

References