EXPLORING INCREMENTAL HOUSING PROCESS
COMPARING A FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNITY
IN QUITO

Hola Quito!!

EXPLORACIÓN DEL PROCESO de vivienda incremental
COMPARCIÓN DE UNA COMUNIDAD formal e informal
EN QUITO
In the beginning
A simple visit to Quito before Habitat III conference, with a look at housing.
Our goal: VISIT HOUSING - EXHIBIT AT HABITAT III CONFERENCE

We undertook background research, and came across report on an innovative DIY incremental multi-story housing development by USAID and which included reference to a parallel former squatter settlement started around the same time 1980.

NOTED THAT BOTH FORMAL AND INFORMAL HOUSING KEY PROVIDERS
THE NEW GOAL= COMPARISON TO SEE DIFFERENCE TODAY

We expanded goal to include a range of perspectives
Students were sent to Quito to survey, compare and see what happened.
But housing is not in isolation! Housing is the community, and community is the housing!
Undertook multi-pronged capture of local perspective of both settlements:
- solicited children’s views in both settlement schools with individual camera for students - had mini ‘show and tell’ explaining their photos
- used drones to comprehend larger scale differences
- undertook detailed family interviews
- prepared photo essays - ’

DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES CONTASTED FORMAL AND INFORMAL
HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE AFTER 37 YEARS?
= ASKED EXHIBIT VIEWERS FROM QUITO TO HELP

Concluded that both formal formal and informal housing a success today!
WHAT CAN WE CONCLUDE? $20 MILLION LOAN vs INFORMAL SQUATTER?
= REFLECT: SO WHAT IS OUR PROFESSIONAL ROLE?

Prepared strategy with settler strengths + professional input - A partnership of strength
A 5-pronged strategy was developed drawn from past work and Quito realities.
1: Provide Preplanned Growth Frame: ‘Supermanzanas’ with varied degrees of participation
2: Welcome all Groups in Co-op Family Custers as planning and living frame
3: Assist development in Community Action Planning
4: Provide resilient design and construction support. “There is an APP for that’
5: Provide self-assessment guide for earthquake risk
TWO COMMUNITIES BUILT BY THEIR OWN EFFORTS

Looking back, learning for the future!
Two communities in Quito were targeted; one started as a squatter invasion and the other a formal govt/USAID; both started in the 1980s, both incrementally self-help built, both today successful.
Can you tell the difference? Full services, legal, both expanded to multi-story housing providing needed affordable units.
What does this suggest for policy initiatives?

How did the communities achieve this standard? What was the process?
Students went to find out during the summer of 2016. Partnering with local Quito Universities and with the assistance of the communities, a multi-pronged methodology for understanding was used:
• House-to-house survey, using a diagrammatic graphing summary to capture and clarify the process. Not ‘just a survey’ but a celebration of the success of the community. Included interviews of original stakeholders from the 1980s!
• Innovative children’s perspective in each community: they were given cameras and asked to photograph things that are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ about their community. A way to capture their valuable unique views.
• High-tech drone flyover, with manipulation of the images with software into a 3D rendering. Experimentation with determining degree/quantity of buildout (height mainly) and other aspects which this approach offers.
• Extensive photographic documentation, with collection of historical images to capture the development process.

The energy, power, and creativity found in both the informal community and the formal community was clear. We should congratulate and celebrate with the communities in their success! What can we learn from this incremental process in housing initiatives? Perhaps the incremental approach could equally be a key actor in the reconstruction after the earthquake?
In short: should we Partner with the incremental process as a demonstrated successful means for addressing housing and reconstruction?
Panel 1 – CONTEXT
INTRODUCTION
WHAT WAS DONE
EXPLORING FORMAL AND INFORMAL HOUSING

Panel 2 – CASE STUDIES TWO COMMUNITIES
Comparison of former squatter, and the other a govt/USAID funded innovative incremental project.
Both started in 1980.
The challenge to the viewer:
“Determine which photograph is the squatter, which is the formally planned??

Panel 3 – APPLYING FINDINGS FORM THE COMPARISON OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL
A 5-step strategy for housing intervention was proposed. “Partners not Projects” viewers were challenged to add their ‘informal’ home.
How did the communities achieve this standard? What was the process?

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- **House-to-house traditional survey**, using a diagrammatic graphing summary to capture and clarify the process.
- **Innovative children’s perspective in each community**. They were given cameras and asked to photograph things that are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ about their community.
- **High-tech drone fly-over**, with manipulation of the images with software into a 3D rendering. Experimentation with determining degree/quantity of buildout (height mainly) and other aspects which this approach offers.
- **Extensive photographic documentation**, with collection of historical images to capture the development process. ‘Photo Voice’ videos and camera images.
- **Amplia documentación fotográfica**, con una colección de imágenes históricas para capturar el proceso de desarrollo. Video de “Photo voice” e imágenes de cámaras.

¿Cómo lograron las comunidades alcanzar este estándar? ¿Cuál fue el proceso? Estudiantes fueron a averiguar estas preguntas durante el verano del 2016. Aso ciándose con universidades locales de Quito y con la ayuda de las comunidades, se utilizó una metodología multidimensional:

- **Una encuesta tradicional casa por casa**, con un resumen gráfico que capta y aclara el proceso de expansión.
- **Una perspectiva innovadora de los niños en cada comunidad**. Cámaras fueron entregados a niños y se pidió de ellos fotografiar cosas que son ‘buenas’ y ‘malas’ en su comunidad.
- **Un sobrevuelo con la alta tecnología de un drone**, con la manipulación de las imágenes con el software para convertirlo en un dibujo de 3D. Experimentación con la determinación de construcción (altura principalmente) y otros aspectos que este enfoque ofrece.

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VIEWERS WERE CHALLENGED TO EXPERIENCE INFORMAL DYNAMICS!
Two Quito Communities Built by their own efforts

“Both Different yet the same”

FORMAL
Govt/International Agency Support
Government project in 1980 to respond to rapid urbanization with innovative policies, procedures and institutional capacity components. 5746 basic core shelters were developed on lots ranging from 60 to 122m² and starter cores of 20 to 78m², with full services and broad community support.

INFORMAL
Former squatter
Now member of Quito community
Formed by invasion of Hacienda Santa Ana in 1983, approximately 5,000 people on 123 hectares. 180m² lots were sold in a cooperative structure with families initially building single room starter cores. Formerly rural migrants who previously lived in center city rental housing. Today about 20,000 population.

From 1-Room/1-Story Starter Core to this!
Can you find the original starter core? How did they do this?
Should we partner with this energy, creativity and power?
What policies would HELP?
What policies may HINDER?

CONGRATULATE THEIR EFFORTS!

INFORMAL?

PARTNER in Rebuilding and Housing Programs?

The incremental self-build character could be enlisted in the reconstruction after the earthquake on the coast. Particularly appropriate for houses, as demonstrated in other earthquake and disaster situations internationally.

CELEBRATE THEIR SUCCESS!

Earthquake!
**FORMAL – Government w/Int’l Agency Support**

Government project in 1980 to respond to rapid urbanization with innovative policies, procedures and institutional capacity components. 5746 basic core shelters were on lots ranging from 60 to 122m2 and starter cores of 20 to 78m2, with full services and broad community support.

**TYPICAL PROFILES – PERFIL TIPICOS**

**1-Story House**

Katherine Granja came to Solanda from the neighborhood of La Mexico, near the center of Quito. She remembers her mother had built her of the new government affordable housing project. She also never had a room to sleep. Although she’s now retired, Cristina worked as a domestic employee to her house, so that when family or friends visit they can have a place to stay. Cristina never married or had a family, thus, she says, there was no need to be. There were no cars, no markets, and no parks or green areas. Cristina has no plans of moving out, and her only addition was a small covered laundry space in the back. She would like to add a room for her to expand her house like everyone else did.

**5-Story House**

Cristina's house was constructed on a small plot of land in front of the main entrance of the neighborhood. She says that her neighbors have completely changed in the last 30 years. When she first arrived, all houses were on plots of 200m2 or more in size, and there were no cars, no markets, and no green areas.

**CASE STUDY**

**INFORMAL – Former Squatter Settlement**

Formed by invasion in 1983, approximately 5,000 people on 123 hectares. 180m2 lots were sold in a cooperative structure with families initially building single room starter cores. Formerly rural migrants who previously lived in center city rental housing. Today about 20,000 population in a fully serviced community.

**TYPICAL PROFILES – PERFIL TIPICOS**

**1-Story House**

Hugo is from the city of Latacunga in Ecuador. In 1981, Hugo was a married man and he used to work in a juice company. One day, while reading the newspaper, he found out about an invasion of land that was happening in the outskirts of the city of Quito. Hugo, who is a man and he used to work at a juice company, decided to take the opportunity to buy a piece of land and build a house for himself. He currently lives in one floor of his house, has become good at savings and is a proud entrepreneur.

**5-Story House**

Oscar has been living in the house 20 years. His wife and he have been living in the house since 1983. Oscar is quite active in the neighborhood. He heads one of the most important social spaces for small businesses and community activities in the neighborhood. Oscar is currently working in a store in the first floor of his house, which is owned by his family. He says that he has something new coming up in the near future, and that he will be in charge of the new project. He and his family are in the process of building a new store in the neighborhood.

**CASE STUDY**

**FORMAL vs INFORMAL**

Which is which? Solanda or Lucha?

The communities look too similar for us to tell the difference. Can you guess which sets of pictures correspond to Lucha? Pat a star on the pictures you think are from Lucha.

Ponga una estrella en las fotos de Lucha.
Proud to Partner with Success!

(Is all this informal? What is informal? ??)
Partners Not Projects
Harness the vitality, energy, power, and creativity of the demonstrated INFORMAL SUCCESS

1 PROVIDE PREPLANNED GROWTH FRAME
Lay out “Supermanzanas”

2 WELCOME ALL GROUPS IN CO-OP CLUSTERS
Offer tenure, provide plans and support

3 ASSIST IN COMMUNITY ACTION PLANNING

4 PROVIDE RESILIENT DESIGN/CONSTRUCTION SUPPORT
“There’s an APP for that”

5 PROVIDE SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE FOR EARTHQUAKE RISK
Identify, Evaluate, Rebuild
“Tu vida, Tu vivienda, Tu decision”
PARTNERS NOT PROJECTS!!!
Harness the vitality, energy, power, creativity of the DEMONSTRATED INFORMAL SUCCESS

Proposed is a synergy of coordinated programs. No one intervention approach is sufficient: a range of programs provides a comprehensive, effective and sustainable way forward. We do not propose a specific plan to be repeatedly duplicated endlessly and blindly, but we offer a service-oriented strategy, building on the inherent strengths in the Ecuadorian culture, and providing support when needed. Three principles drive our proposal: confidence in the demonstrated success of the informal builders, self-organization of small groups to initiate intervention and action, and accessing ‘high-tech’ communications for outreach support.

Typical’ housing projects are not sustainable, and have too often failed and continue to fail to meet the key challenges of speed and scale for rapidly growing urban areas. Formal projects siphon off considerable resources and energy to develop and execute, and the involvement of foreign support often results in a ‘hard currency’ debt, an unsustainable intervention.

Why impose projects, when one sees vast successful areas of housing built informally by families, fitting their needs and resources? How can we mesh the energy and success of the informal incremental builders and the demands of the city? How does a city become a ‘Smart City’ which builds on its inherent strengths?

The proposal is for the design of a fundamental strategy – not a typical design of a house and layout, but the design of TOOLS and TECHNIQUES for housing and community development, bringing in spatial and design knowledge as a support mechanism.

We base our proposal on observations and recent surveys of two communities in Quito: one built independently by former squatters and another in an officially supported formal project. Overtime, they appear to be identical, and both the formal and informal are developed incrementally by the families and became fully functioning and contributing to society. The success of this informal incremental process has been recognized globally. We strongly judge that keying off real-life experiences offers better solutions then abstract impositions.

We also have learned from the tremendous experiences worldwide, and bring in experiences that have proven to be successful. We have combined the local experience, our previous research and the international successes into a coordinated, reinforcing package for widespread application.

Three levels of support are envisioned: (i) the urban scale, providing a frame around which orderly, cost sensitive development can growth, (ii) the community support level, which offers the initiative to the communities to self-form, organizing themselves through ‘community action planning’ in setting their own agenda, and (iii) the family level, where guidance is provided for the design and construction of their incrementally self-built homes, and for existing housing a self-assessment guide for identifying, evaluating and taking action to address earthquake risk.
At the urban scale, a large ordering grid is envisioned, drawing on experimentation with ‘supermanzanas’ in Latin America in the 70s. Cost-effective infrastructure grids parallel community neighborhood principles. Different variations would be offered, all within the large ordering grid of streets as frame.

The interior development of the supermanzanas is encouraged through self-selected ‘co-op’ clusters of 15-25 families, an effective way of reinforcing communities, encouraging mutual help in construction, allowing phased infrastructure levels – from low-cost shared facilities to eventually individual servicing - and supported by legal tenure forms. The cluster form minimizes streets and infrastructure, lowering the burden on governments. Families are encouraged to form ‘cluster groups’ which take the initiative and contact the authorities, eliminating a tremendous amount of upfront vetting and selection – the decisions are made by the communities, with considerable benefit to the government. Governments provide the frame for development to occur and the protocol for development.

The cluster groups would be encouraged in their own decision making initiatives. ‘Community Action Planning’ would be encouraged to strengthen communities, and to cooperatively decide and initiate actions.

At the family level, particularly focused on the informal incremental self-builders, technology becomes the mechanism to provide assistance. The saying: “Everyone has a cell phone, but not everyone has a house.” Would be expanded to: “…..but with this they can learn good practices.” Designing a phone ‘app’ or texting service for use by families provides a ready way to pass on information offering inherent credibility.

The recurring earthquakes undoubtedly cause much concern from the many families that have informally built their homes. “Will our houses collapse? Did we build them strong enough?” Professional engineer review would be too expensive and a self-assessment approach is advocated with a rapid test for vulnerability.

“Tu vida, Tu vivienda, Tu decision”
The informal has power, and is a vital partner for successful action in housing and urban development.
Could we partner to rebuild after earthquakes?

¿Podriamos asociarnos para la reconstrucción después de terremotos?
The vitality, energy, power, and creativity found in both informal and formal communities is clear.

We *Congratulate*

We *Celebrate*

We *Partner*

with the incremental process as a demonstrated successful means for addressing housing and reconstruction.