

## Molino Blanco South in Rosario, Argentina

The panel addresses the basic issues surrounding Urban Upgrading. Our goal was to identify the main issues that need to be addressed and then propose how these issues could be addressed specifically in Molino Blanco South. This involves analyzing the physical, social and political aspects of the community.

As an overview, the objectives of Urban Upgrading are: to provide a package of basic services; clean water supply and adequate sewage disposal to improve the wellbeing of the community; to legalize and regulate properties; physical improvement: streets, footpaths, solid waste disposal, etc. and to improve health and education.

Keeping these main objectives in mind, we analyzed the existing physical and social structures in order to identify what were the most important things to consider throughout the upgrading process. The major issues we identified in order to make the upgrading work were;

- to encourage commitment and a sense of partnership between the City, the community and families is the most important element for success.
- the necessity for the upgrading must meet a real need in the community.
- the importance of institutional arrangements: how do we give incentives for agencies to work with the community?
- issue of sustainability: how do we ensure financial and ecological sustainability?

After broadly identifying what was needed to make an upgrading project work, we applied these guidelines to our specific site. First and foremost, local participation is critical. The project needs to be designed from the bottom up. In order to do this we need to ask as many questions as possible. What is the existing situation in the community? What types of community activities and/or services exist? How do the existing co-operatives function? What are the positive and negative aspects of these cooperatives? What types of small scale (home based) entrepreneurial activities exist? To what extent do they exist?

Keeping all of the above in mind, we identified that the two most important things to consider in the upgrading are *affordability* and *sustainability*. With respect to affordability, we encourage use of local building materials, reuse of materials, and use of local labour. To encourage and promote sustainability, our design was driven by the desire to encourage the perpetuation of local cooperatives as a means of promoting small-scale enterprise. Our design is intended to encourage the residents to share information and resources and local small-scale enterprise, while also promoting enterprise that extends beyond the edges of Molino Blanco. In order to encourage these small scale enterprises, we promote the removal of regulatory framework and other obstacles to the growth of the informal sector.

In order to encourage both formal and informal interaction, learning and commercial activities, we identified different levels of nodes in the community. Within each level of the "Hierarchy of Nodes", there may include varying degrees of elements including gardens, educational activities, medical services, veterinary services, cooperative initiatives, commercial activities (formal or informal), daycare services and other social services or facilities.

The formal node shown contains a municipally funded community center located at a major junction which serves to link other parts of the community. The center is intended to connect to the informal farming land at the east end of the site, with the rest of the community gardens that are integrated into the urban fabric. This is meant as an opportunity to share knowledge and resources. The center is designed as an "earth sheltered" building. It contains a rooftop garden, which also serves as an educational tool. The community center itself has the potential to host any of the community services listed above.

One example of what could be contained in the various informal and formal nodes is an educational kitchen (denoted in orange, as part of an educational house/garden) which may serve to: teach people in the community about nutrition; encourage new ways of preparing food to include more balanced meals.; increase nutrition for children; encourage development of home based industry and small scale enterprises thereby strengthening the economy of the community and provide jobs for people who may not be able to find employment in the formal job market.

As we have identified the nodes, and made some suggestions, we recommend that the specific use of each nodes be identified by the local residents, to respond to the immediate needs of the local people.