The project utilizes available space effectively to retain community functions and strengthen social fabric.

**Comment of the Holcim Awards jury Latin America**

Aiming at an integrated approach to low-cost housing in urban areas, the project proposes a redistribution of space to reflect a “neighborhood” typology favoring urban and community relationships. The strategy is to compress the buildings to a minimum footprint and align them in order to free up some land area. Four blocks of medium-density buildings are linked to each other by a collective stair. The line of blocks divides the lot into public and private portions, composed by the street with a sidewalk leading to a small public square. A community building on the square has a flexible ground floor for different uses such as a small market, health care and educational facilities. On the upper level there is ample space for horticultural activities and rain water collection. The outstanding strength of this project is its focus on community building and social equity, integrating the street and squares as dynamic elements of daily life.

**Project description by author**

The Eutropia low-cost and space-efficient social housing project begins with the initiative of a 40-family community. The project was presented at the seminar of popular housing by the architect Carlos González. The project is in his hands now to continue the process with the community. Mexico has 30 million poor, of which more than 10 million are impoverished. The top 10% of incomes are twenty times that of the poorest 10%. Government-funded public housing does not supply basic needs: creating an unsustainable development with a high consumption of natural resources and inadequate levels of social inclusion and environmental quality.

The site is an interstitial and tight space 130m long, of variable width, and bounded by several country houses. The model of occupation responds to the “vecindad” (neighborhood) architectural typology: one important corridor that feeds several smaller ones to access the houses. Each house is progressively added to and completed over the years. The inhabitation of the dwellings varies between the forty families that occupy the site. There are no common places to play or to meet with neighbors.

This project tries to be a mediator between particular needs, the community and the creation of a quality environment. Inclusion and social equity are starting points in our proposal: equal access to houses, same placement benefits, environmental comfort, etc. The project should create an income for the families through the production of further dwellings, and enhance the community’s social cohesion. The strategy for this purpose is to compress the housing, coupling and aligning them in order to free-up some land areas. The complete development is composed of four blocks of medium-density dwellings, linked to each other by collective stairs. The line of buildings divides the lot in three portions: one public and two private. It is composed of the street, the new sidewalk, a small public square at the end of the sidewalk, and the ground floor of the community building.

This building has a flexible ground floor for different uses depending on the needs; it could be used to host an informal market, or neighbors’ meeting, etc. The next floor is a multifunctional space with the possibility to lodge cultural, medical care or training activities. The upper level is a space for horticulture activities to produce food. Organic waste is composted and used in the common building functions like a common orchard. Rainwater is collected on the roof of the dwelling. The roof feeds several smaller ones to access the houses. Each house is progressively added to and completed over the years. The inhabitation of the dwellings varies between the forty families that occupy the site. There are no common places to play or to meet with neighbors.

**Relevance to target issues by author**

Quantum change and transferability
A large quantity of benefits from a small quantity of space. The proposal provides a 3-bedroom dwelling on 53 m² compared to the government housing of 2-bedroom dwellings on 60m². Innovative buildings can be obtained using traditional techniques and popular knowledge.

Ethical standards and social equality
A repeatable model which could be broadly applied: providing social and environmental benefits. Since housing is medium density, it frees spaces for making a community building and one small square. It could change the perception of neighbors positively because it provides different services, through interchange and meeting spaces.

Better quality and quantity of construction in the same neighborhood. The project has an efficient living space yield (in m²) against useful m². Housing with good conditions of ventilation, lighting, adaptability to changes in family requirements, and productivity. The formal results are not too low to look like a finished work. We believe in a continuous process of alteration and expansion.

Ecological quality and energy conservation
Rainwater is collected on the roof of the dwelling. The roof of the common building functions like a common orchard to produce food. Organic waste is composted and used in the orchard and vegetable gardens. Hinged windows control the flow of the air. The stairwell functions as air flow. The water is heated on the roofs using black tanks. Low maintenance and human energy.

Economic performance and compatibility
Based on the ideas of inclusion and equity. In our proposal the development can be considered instead of housing as a functional lodging, housing as a large social and productive mechanism. It could generate some profitability in the purchase of some products. It has also profitability for the rent of retail shops in the ground floor to be earned for the community.

Contextual and aesthetic impact
Integration of the street and sidewalk to be used for circulation, courtyard or parking. A small square with benches, tables and a platform. A community building adapted to house markets, multipurpose communal and cultural activities, and a roof garden for horticulture. Two bedroom layout: one long bedroom with three beds, or two bedrooms, one with two assembled beds. The main bedroom has the possibility of different functions. It could be used as bedroom, or shop of any kind, or may be rented. The bathroom can be used by three residents at the same time. The created image is related with an informal, coloring, and ordinary architectural aesthetic. This is a direct expression of every individual’s needs in contributing to the community’s image.