



Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

Camino de la Villa

Region	Latin America and the Caribbean
Award Scheme	Dubai International Award
Sustainable Development Goals	Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Summary

"Camino de la Villa" is an online platform whose main objective is to give visibility to fundamentally housing complaints in Buenos Aires slums. The platform is structured around three axes: public policies monitoring, complaints about problems in the provision of public services and requests for public information.

Background and Objective

Situation Before the Initiative Began: In the maps of the City of Buenos Aires, the towns and settlements were gray spaces, which implied the symbolic and material invisibility of 10% of the population. The habitat of Buenos Aires informal settlements daily suffer the violation of their most fundamental rights. Establishment of Priorities: - To promote the integration of the socio-spatially segregated communities of the City of Buenos Aires - To empower the community to guarantee their right to access a decent habitat. - Monitoring of public works developed in slums to improve access to public information and budgetary transparency. Formulation of Objectives And Strategies: Develop a virtual application that allows the neighbors of Buenos Aires slums to know relevant information about public works, and to monitor them. Improve access to budget information and execution of infrastructure works in slums and dissemination of this information in the communities. Generate a comprehensive diagnosis of the governmental management in the area of infrastructure in informal settlements, which will allow advocacy actions to improve the execution of works, accountability, and access to rights. Encourage the civic participation of communities typically excluded from the deliberative process. Mobilisation of Resources: The platform was developed by the Civil Association for Equality and Justice (ACIJ) and WINGU. In addition, various actors who worked in these neighborhoods (such as CSOs, General Tribunal Counsel, General Ombudsman's Office,) participated. Also participated the neighbors of the mapped villages. To develop the platform a team was conform consisting of 2 developers, 4 workshop facilitators, 1 coordinator, 2 program assistants). In addition, there were incurred in office expenses (Services and Hardware), as well as transfers to the slums, graphic materials for workshops and diffusion of the platform, as well as computers for workshops. The total value of the platform in its initial format was USD 150,000. In a second phase, the platform was funded by the New Zealand Embassy to scale up the project, which included the mapping of social sites for the neighborhood. From public announcements of slums urbanization, the platform will be adapted to monitor these processes from agreed quality indicators. This new stage will be funded by ALTEC.

Actions and Implementation

The problems that we face in the development of the platform can be classified into three categories: Technical problems: the use of new technologies was not always easy and we have had problems to save the images with the GPS and to transfer the images in the formats needed. Consultation with experts in the field is always fruitful. Our team was composed of web programmers, geographers, sociologists, political scientists and lawyers. Each of the disciplines provided a technical knowledge to overcome the various unknowns that were raised. We have also had to overcome the digital gap that exists in the slums. In these spaces, the Internet connection and the access to the computer technologies is not usually common at home. However, we were able to exploit the available resources to bridge the gap. In the first instance, the project relied on the distribution of computers for students in public primary and secondary schools through the "Conectar Igualdad" program. On the other hand, schools provide free Wi-Fi in the immediate of the establishments. In some specific cases, such as the 21-24 villa, they have La Casa de la Cultura which has a multimedia space equipped with computers and internet connection. In addition, attendance at cyber cafés continues to be a common practice in the neighborhoods. Problems in articulated work: relations with local government agencies were fundamental for the development of the platform. These allies are responsible to providing us with the necessary information so that the slums residents can monitor public works. They are also responsible for the reception of the complaints uploaded by the users. This was key to being able to generate an alternative channel of problem resolution in villas. This problem remains unsolved. We have advanced strategic alliances with the local government to load the maps in their official cartographies and the slums problems have been put in the agenda. Particularly in the territorial work with neighbors, the problem was focused on being able to articulate groups with different political and social backgrounds. To achieve this, we had to generate multiple instances of dialogue to work harmoniously with all sectors of the neighborhood.

Outcomes and Impacts



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Caminos de la Villa focused on addressing the violated rights related to access to adequate housing and a quality environment. The processes initiated from the development of the platform implied, on the one hand, that the state recognized the violation of rights that happened in those neighborhoods from which a historic milestone occurred: the announcement of urbanization of 4 slums. Unlike the actions that were being carried out so far, which were small scattered works, the novelty of the announcement is its sustainability. On the other hand, the platform was an input to empower the neighbors and work for their access to justice. This process left installed capabilities. Likewise, the new urbanization code that is being discussed by the City of Buenos Aires Government takes into account quality standards for the realization of public works and the integration of these neighborhoods to the rest of the city.

Gender and Social Inclusivity

Caminos de la Villa was inspired by two initiatives carried out in Latin America and Africa: Ta no map and Map Kibera. Both had the same spirit of our project: to generate accurate maps on places invisibilized by the State and to allow through a digital tools the geolocalization of information. On the other hand, the Inter-American Development Bank took the initiative as an example to initiate a policy with neighborhoods of the interior of the country. To facilitate the replication of Caminos de la Villa, a Replicability Manual was written, which is loaded on the web. The site API is also available for download.

Innovative Initiative

Caminos de la Villa involved a strategic alliance between two NGOs from very different spheres of work. The initiative of the project generated a union that had not been achieved previously and, therefore, it meant a very important instance of learning. The participation of professionals from different disciplines such as geographers, political scientists, sociologists, web developers and graphic designers, as well as specialists in communication was fundamental to generate a civic application that has a real impact on society. The use of a new technological tool to address issues of access to rights was a challenge that resulted in success. In relation to working with neighbors, it was necessary to learn that the project should contemplate their working times, which could be different from those we had projected. Although it took us important delays in the launching of the platform and in the load of the new maps, it was very important to respect the internal processes of deliberation. In relation to government entities, the links with the secretariats and ministries that work on the housing conditions of the slums inhabitants grew slowly. From the outset, we learned about the importance of establishing ties and intervening in these spaces although it was not always easy to find the right strategy to do so. The most tangible result of these relationships was the publication of the slums maps of in the official cartographies.

Resources devoted to delivery

No.	Title	Source	Author	Publication Title	Volume	Number	Date	Page	Number
1	Caminos de la Villa	Putting BA's Impoverished Neighborhoods on the Map	Argentina Independent	Carla McKirdy	The Argentina Independent	20/11/2015	Edit 2	Buenos Aires: bringing public services to the 'invisible' slums	
2	The Guardian	Carla McKirdy	The Guardian	2/12/2015	Edit 3	Subidos al mapa	Agencia de Noticias. Ciencias de la Comunicación	María Fernanda Rezzano	Cobelo

Conclusion

The agenda of housing and settlement issues in the City of Buenos Aires also encouraged the local government to change its position regarding the public policies carried out in slums. In just nine years, the political party in charge of the Government of the City of Buenos Aires went from discursively maintaining the need to eradicate slums to promote socio-urban integration processes in these spaces. To this end, 4 urbanization laws were enacted which oblige the construction of new housing, the provision of quality public services, improvement of existing housing, construction of community spaces and green spaces as well as the opening of streets to facilitate transportation and mobility within the slums, thus giving a permanent housing solution to all residents who live there.