A fragmented and semi-abandoned space between residential units is transformed into a common area through this project. The verticality of fences and partitions is replaced by the horizontality of architectural elements able to integrate the community into a common—and also horizontal—process of design, using a strategy that could well be replicated in all those spaces left by the modern utopia and fragmented by the postmodern pragmatism.

Building common-unity is a project for rehabilitating the public space in the San Pablo Xalpa housing unit in Azcapotzalco. The unit was divided by walls, fences, and barriers placed by the residents themselves and impeded the use of the available public space. The goal was to transform a partitioned housing complex into a common-unity designed by the neighbors and not just for them.

The project strategy was to work with the barriers created by the inhabitants: permeate them, democratize them, and redefine them to generate unity within the unit.

Previously, the residents of different sectors implemented temporary coverings in the public area for events and meetings, thus achieving an extension of the private areas. Working with them, we reutilized the idea of covering certain spaces to create recreational and cohabitation spaces. Roofed modules were installed that are more than just a covering, because their facades are equipped for different activities (blackboards, climbing walls, railings, and nets). Also, a multipurpose room was built that the children use as a library.

Thus, the recovered public space became an extension of each apartment. The strategy was effective: the people united to contribute in the redesign of their unit, and such a change was achieved in the perception of the public space that the neighbors themselves requested the removal of the fences. The space spoke for itself, and the inhabitants of the unit made the decision to eliminate the barriers and take advantage of the exterior spaces, filling them with public and common life.
Espacio público rehabilitado / Public space after the intervention
© Sandra Perez Nieto
Planta de conjunto / Plan of the complex
E. / S. 1:5,000

LEYENDA / LEGEND
1. Patio intervenido / Courtyard after the intervention
2. Espacio entre edificios / Space in-between buildings
3. Salón de usos múltiples / Multipurpose meeting room

Estado previo del espacio público / Public space before the intervention
© Sandra Perez Nieto
Corte fugado / Perspective section
S. e. / N. s.

Paneles de fachada / Facade boards
S. e. / N. s.

LEGENA / LEGEND
1. Pasamanos / Handrails
2. Red de escalada / Climbing net
3. Muro de escalada / Climbing wall
4. Pizarra / Blackboard
5. Cuerda y aros / Rope and hoops
6. Barras paralelas / Parallel bars

Planta áreas rehabilitadas / Plan of the intervened areas
E. / S. 1:1,000

Esquema de intervención de patios / Scheme with the intervention of the courtyards
S. e. / N. s.
Espacio público rehabilitado / Public space after the intervention
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Salón de usos múltiples / Multipurpose meeting room
© Sandra Pereznieto
ROZANA MONTEIL
<rozanamontiel@rozanamontiel.com>


ALIN V. WALLACH
<wallach@awarquitectura.com>


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