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Submitter Information

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Abstract Information

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How can Urban Planning Help Poverty Reduction?

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Abstract:

The paper presents a study in which evidence-based poverty maps are used to assess urban planning-related links between public interventions, land values and residential dynamics in the poor and centrally located neighbourhood of Las Cruces in Bogotá, Colombia. Geographic Information Systems were used for mapping the collected data, analysing the findings and conveying the conclusions. The analysis of local public interventions, cadastre land values, a survey of 244 parcels and a survey of 309 residents showed that there is a need to combine physical and social interventions, and find an optimal compromise between small fast interventions and substantial long-term interventions when the aim is to reduce poverty without displacing the problems to neighbouring areas. Particularly, the paper showed that land values in Las Cruces have been static over the past six years contrary to what is expected to happen following the investment of a significant volume of resources. The paper argued that this behaviour of land values is the result of a combination of at least five factors: -- The governmental response to the acute social problems in Las Cruces has been timid and its actions have focused on physical interventions. -- Interruptions and delays in the implementation of physical interventions have created expectations, which have not been delivered, generating a negative counter-effect on land values. -- The high territorial concentration of tenements in Las Cruces has contributed to residential polarisation: consolidating stronger negotiation power in landlords (partly due to the high rents they receive and the social capital they have built up), and creating a disarticulated and fairly powerless tenants group in respect of negotiating the cost and conditions of renting a tenement unit combined to their precarious circumstances. -- Limited reinforcement of rental regulations and a high demand for tenement units have led relatively high prices for letting out tenement units and low incentives to maintain and upgrade the tenement building or develop a new project within the land plots, which combined with small plot sizes, titling and legal restrictions have limited property prices, and private investments. -- The residents of Las Cruces have a negative perception of the neighbourhood in relation to its physical and social deterioration. This internal negative perception has crossed its boundaries and has affected the external potential demand for the neighbourhood. The paper was carried out with the support of a research grant from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, and within the framework of a doctoral study supported by a grant from Sida/SAREC.
