Challenge

"To provide a new type of affordable housing, and stimulate political, economic and social transformation"

Site / Physical context
Abandoned and undeveloped suburban parcel in San Ysidro - A community in San Diego, California, less than a mile from Mexico

Socio-economic conditions
Overpopulated, poverty stricken, shanty town

Materiality / technical performance
All units will be made up of a series of minimalist, geometric parcels. Roofs will be made of metal and will have an alternating rhythm to their shape in order to supply ventilation and natural light. Interlocking housing units will be made of poured concrete and wood framing. Inside each unit will be an open 12-foot cube-shaped space centered around a kitchen or bathroom which can be subdivided with prefab wooden or sheer walls. The senior housing portion of the project will be a repetitive series of masonry concrete walls and wood framing with the lobby walls made of a system of stackable aluminum windows. The existing church space will become a “building within a building” with steel-frame reinforcement inside the wooden structure.

Programming
“Living Rooms at the Border” - A mixed-use high-density 14,000-square-foot housing project plan designed around an old church. To be transformed into a community center-including a cultural space, black box theatre, central market, and a UCSD Commuity Station.

Abuellitos - senior housing and child care facility “A 12 low-cost housing units for seniors with an adjacent childcare facility for grandchildren, connected by an alleyway and includes a semi-public lobby, a restau-rant counter, and small private living spaces.

Solution
The project proposes densification strategies typical of Mexican urban settings. For example, spaces that can be alternately closed off for private use and opened to the community, it aims to weave internal circulation paths with existing city transportation lines such as trolleys. By bringing children and elders together, the scheme also suggests an integrated role for seniors in the broad social context. The development is designed to be built in layers as waves of funding become available, starting with pathways, communal green space, and electricity-bearing service walls that can be shared by neighbouring residents.
Emergent design methodologies

Connected by alleyways, the two projects integrates affordable apartments with community centers and highly flexible multiuse indoor and outdoor spaces.

“Living Rooms at the Border” Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman weave 12 affordable housing units across a con-crete framework. The open space underneath will function as a marketplace, among other uses.

“Casa Familiar” The development gardens and alley pathways are connected by a promenade and the traditional Mexican plaza in the center is meant to be the focus of public life. The senior center’s food counter, built into its front façade, will allow seniors to sell food to locals to earn extra income. Its child center will cater to the many children who are cared for by their grand-parents.