Beyond a renovated centre: a centro vivo

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Key messages

• Everyday risk in Barrios Altos is characterised not only by physical and infrastructural hazards, but also social and cultural vulnerability.

• Urban regeneration in Barrios Altos requires a common vision, and collective action towards a 'Centro Vivo' (a living city centre) between different actors from civil society, governmental and non-governmental institutions.

• Planning for transformative change in Barrios Altos requires strategic action planning that harnesses synergy among different actors in society, thereby amplifying the actions of individual actors.

• The existing memorandum of understanding supporting the Urban Observatory of the Historic Centre of Lima, is a mechanism that civil society, the public and private sectors can mobilise around. Its expansion through clearly-defined roles and strategies will enable actors to share knowledge, build capacity, and collaborate towards creating a Centro Vivo.

• Knowledge generated by the Observatory, through institutional and civil society participation, may be used in formulating policy.

Introduccion

Barrios Altos is located in the Historic Centre of Lima in the district of Cercado de Lima (CDL). CDL is known for its Criolla music and rich cultural history. However, Barrios Altos is frequently been painted as a "red" area full of risks by both the authorities and by people. Official maps show that physical risks are concentrated in Barrios Altos (Figure 1), and crime and delinquency are also frequently associated with the area. This has not always been the case in Barrios Altos, which used to be a vibrant and safe neighbourhood with a strong cultural identity. Since the 1970s, the expansion of Metropolitan Lima and the decline of public and private investment in CDL caused the more affluent population to move to other areas. The migration of low income groups into Barrios Altos combined with ambiguous property ownership and neglect by original land owners have contributed to tugurización, i.e. the physical and social deterioration of Barrios Altos.

Barrios Altos is part of the area declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991. This prompted a renewed interest in urban renewal in the area, and in response the Municipal Programme for the Recovery of the Historic Centre of Lima (PROLIMA) was launched within the Metropolitan Municipality of Lima (MML). However, this has proved challenging, as with the regeneration of historic centres in other developing cities. Until now, Barrios Altos is a place many Limeños avoid, and where residents struggle to gain secure tenure and eradicate physical risks. A socially just urban regeneration of Barrios Altos is not impossible, as proven by a few successful projects, such as that of the Casa de las Columnas. However, there needs to be a strategy to ensure that the sum of all these efforts is greater than their separate parts.

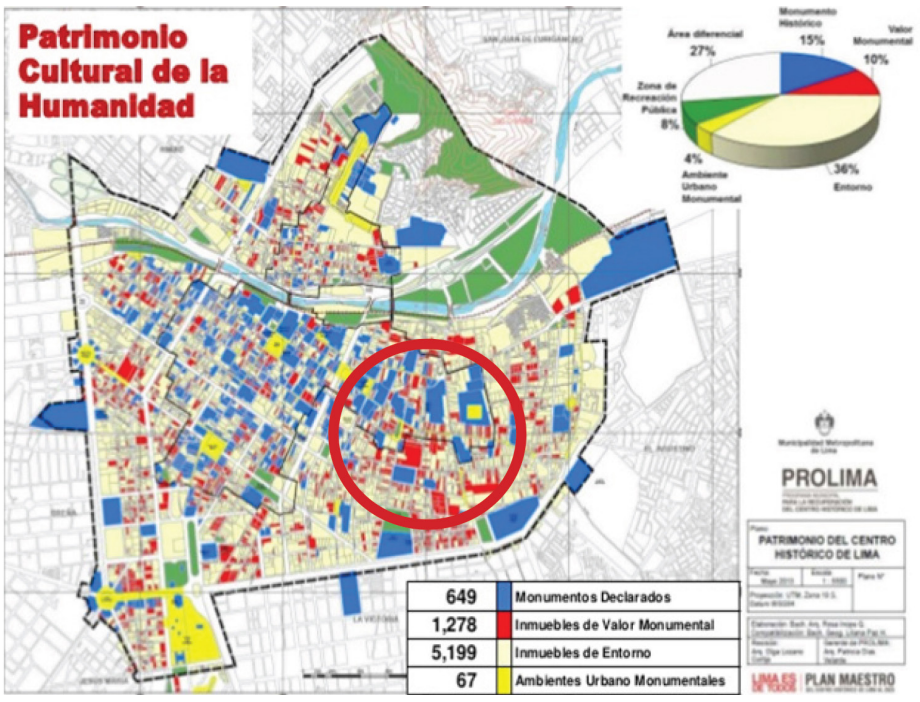
Every day risk

Risk is understood to mean the interaction between vulnerability and hazards. In Barrios Altos, there are many simultaneous processes that give rise to hazards and the increased vulnerability of residents due to their socio-economic status or living conditions.

Urban development, while essential to address the physical risk of losing cultural buildings and harm to residents, may also be a driver of everyday risk for Barrios Altos residents. Institutions like the Municipality and the Ministry of Culture focus on the risk of losing the material aspect of Barrios Altos. Their renovation plans seem to prioritise the aesthetic aspect of buildings over the rights of their residents.

Barrios Altos is strategically located close to commercial areas such as the Mercado

Figure 1. Barrios Altos at risk of physical collapse, as is officially recognised (Source: INDECI 2011)



Central and Barrio Chino. This has attracted significant commercial interest, which acts as a dynamic force amplifying the interaction between vulnerability and hazards. Uncertain land ownership and the lack of regulation has led to increased land trafficking and changes in land use in Barrios Altos. For example, previously residential buildings have been converted to carparks or storage units with flammable material, affecting other residents' living conditions and sometimes leading to a higher risk of fires. Land traffickers have also deliberately acted to divide neighbours, by weakening the social fabric within communities, thus making land trafficking easier.

Risk is also produced and reproduced by residents' own efforts to cope with less than satisfactory living conditions. Insecurity of tenure may also prevent some residents from investing in long term risk-mitigation measures. For example, residents resort to using cement to patch up crumbling adobe walls, and the resulting difference in building materials weakens the whole structure and may also increase physical risks for their neighbours. The result is an uneven distribution of risk within Barrios Altos prone to small-scale disasters, such as burst pipes and fires, as well as more serious disasters like the collapse of houses, which may result in loss of life.

The regeneration of the historic centre is happening in tandem with rapid urban development in Lima, and care needs to be taken not to build in ways that exacerbate social and physical risk through market-driven development. A long term transformative strategy needs to bring about social change. Therefore, we propose the adoption of a valuable existing mechanism, namely the Urban Observatory of the Historic Centre (simply referred to hereafter as the 'Observatory'), which is supported by a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between UNESCO, the Ministry of Culture (MINCU), CIDAP and UCL, resulting from extensive work by cLIMAsinRiesgo to bring actors together. The Observatory is a platform capable of fostering cooperation between relevant actors by using the common vision of Centro Vivo as a rallying point.

Strategic action planning

We propose the use of a Strategic Action Planning (SAP) framework, developed by Caren Levy (2007) in the context of contemporary urban conditions, for transformative change in Barrios Altos (Levy, 2007). The three indicators of strategic action planning are (i) expansion of the room for manoeuvre for socially just urban regeneration of Barrios Altos, (ii) synergy among societal, public and private sector actors, and (iii) a multiplier effect in changing the material and institutional conditions of the marginalised. Strategic action planning is shaped and strengthened by the construction of a clear vision or collective intent. The Centro Vivo vision, which has been championed locally in Lima by the NGO CIDAP since 2008, is a strategic endeavour that actors can mobilise around. Centro Vivo embodies the idea that the historic centre of Lima is not just a place, but is shaped by its people. It calls for inclusive urban regeneration that prioritises the rights of residents of Barrios Altos to live free of risks, regardless of their socio-economic status, as much as the urgent need to address the physical risks of building collapse in the historic centre.

Equally important is a diagnosis that allows the problems to be viewed from a different perspective. The reframing of problems may give rise to strategies that will set precedents for alternative means of urban regeneration in Barrios Altos, while stimulating organisational and institutional capacity, dialogue and advocacy, as well as public learning for strengthened strategic action in challenging social injustice (Levy, 2007).

There are several shortfalls in the current processes by which civil society and institutional actors may achieve Centro Vivo (DPU, 2015; cLIMAsinRiesgo, 2015). Although there are institutional programmes in place to address everyday risk, these may not target the roots of the problem, be limited in scale or may not be coordinated with other initiatives. This diagnosis helps reframe the problem of Barrios Altos as that of a lack of collective intent and action, thus setting the stage for the development of strategic lines of action for the socially just urban regeneration of Barrios Altos.

A. Expanding the room for manoeuvre

As explained by a representative from MINCU, relevant actors face a number of barriers in achieving more inclusive urban regeneration, which may arise from a combination of the following factors: limited legal framework, lacking technical support, funding or administrative boundaries, political discontinuity, lack of coordination between decision makers, deficient monitoring and oversight, etc. Many properties in Barrios Altos have received historical heritage status. Therefore, in order to restore or make changes to the property and reduce risks for residents and neighbours, an owner must obtain certain permits from MML and from MINCU. A bottleneck may occur if MINCU approves the restoration/building permits but works are delayed due to limitations within the Ministry, such as limited numbers of trained professionals to supervise the restoration or building works (MINCU, 2016). Such stumbling blocks could limit the room for manoeuvre for actions to attain their full potential in addressing social justice issues and urban regeneration.

The Observatory of the Historic Centre of Lima is an existing mechanism that may be leveraged to expand the room for manoeuvre. The Observatory's margin for action may be expanded in 4 interrelated dimensions: (i) technical/behavioural; (ii) institutional/inter-organisational; (iii) social relations/mobilisation; and (iv) strategic dimensions (Safier, 2002). The Observatory would serve as a means to address themes in working towards Centro Vivo. We identified the themes that need to be addressed and the involvement of actors (Figure 2) through an extensive analysis of various local and international case studies dealing with urban renewal through collective action. For example, the FUCVAM model of cooperative housing (Uruguay) and the successful case of inclusive regeneration of La Casa de las Columnas in the historic centre revealed that government commitment, a robust legal framework supporting government policies and social empowerment were needed to complement resource availability. We interviewed a local community leader who championed her community's claim to relocation rights when their residential space was appropriated for a rail project. This emphasised that advocacy is of utmost importance if citizens are expected to play a part in realising their rights.

B. Synergies

Due to the complexity of risk and coordination challenges among multiple of actors, efforts to reduce risk are limited. Collective action shares out responsibility between civil society and institutions, and promotes strategic action planning. Through this research and the collaboration and guidance of our local partner CIDAP, we were able to identify the network of actors and the many points of synergy that may be explored and scaled up through the Observatory to ensure continuity.

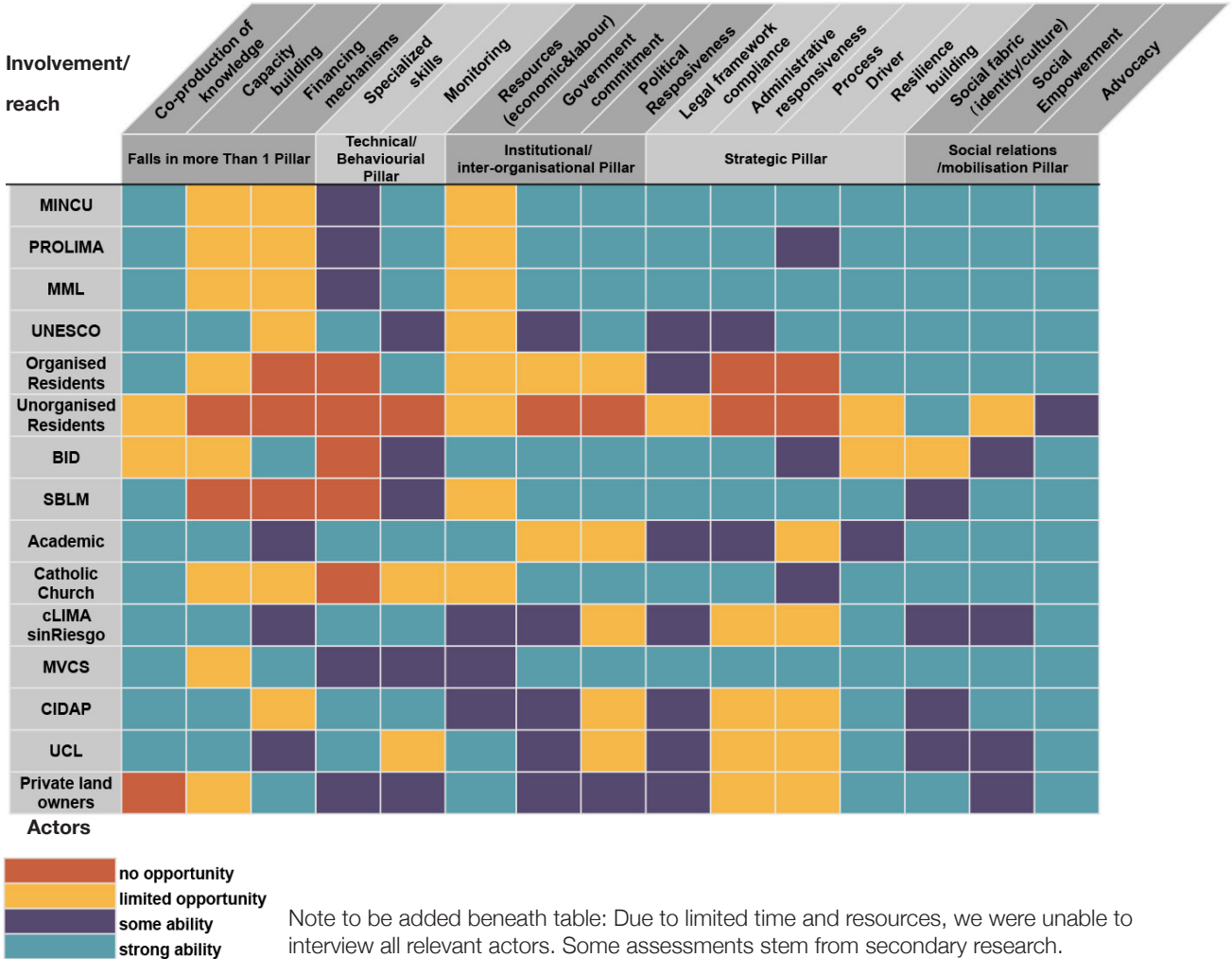
Some points of synergy could be achieved between private land owners and residents. Residents could play a crucial role in gathering data, monitoring initiatives and maintaining the identity of Barrios Altos. Private land-owners, especially the Catholic Church and the local charity association Sociedad de Beneficencia de Lima Metropolitana (SBLM), who own large amounts of empty land, could add value to these plots. A possible project would be to coordinate with groups leading community mapping exercises to identify the best uses for these plots. UCL has already conducted similar exercises to identify risks within the framework of cLIMAsinRiesgo. Making use of these empty plots does more than add value to the land by introducing facilities, it also adds social value as a potentially self-sustaining force against crime and delinquency which spread in the absence of social activity.

Collective action renewal projects may be better-positioned to qualify for and access funding. Furthermore, MML has submitted a two-part loan proposal to the Inter-American Development Bank (BID) for approval, in order to develop the historic centre. This includes the residential renewal of Barrios Altos and capacity building for MML employees to improve efficiencies in the renewal processes. This initiative should include community participation to ensure the Centro Vivo vision is achieved. Both PROLIMA and UNESCO expressed the need to work with residents, but their advisory role for MML limits their action. A common vision would allow them to work together to ensure greater influence over the MML's actions towards a Centro Vivo.

C. A multiplier effect

Interviews showed that some institutional representatives were not aware of the Observatory or its role, despite their institution's signing of the MOU, meaning that they have not defined their role or contribution to the Observatory (CIDAP representative, 2016). Therefore, based on our understanding actors' roles and their capacity to act, we identified strategic lines of action to leverage the Observatory as a platform for actors to work together with a common intent. As established by cLIMAsinRiesgo, the Observatory consists of three mutually reinforcing axes of action: Reframed Diagnosis, Emergency Response and Prevention, and Proposal and Implementation, which would address the working themes for socially just urban renewal.

Figure 2. Actor synergies: Identifying contributions to the Observatory. Source: Gathered weakness and strength data from interviews and research



Note to be added beneath table: Due to limited time and resources, we were unable to interview all relevant actors. Some assessments stem from secondary research.

Axis I. Reframed diagnosis

The Observatory's first axis of strategic action, Reframed Diagnosis, may be expanded through participatory research by addressing the following themes: Co-production of Knowledge and Empowerment of Civil Society.

Civil society is well-positioned to produce knowledge contributing to actions affecting it. This capacity for knowledge production allows a community to participate in diagnosis together with institutions, thereby ensuring government responses are better targeted and empowering civil society to use information to support their demands. Moreover, co-production of knowledge is not a novel practice, and is already being used as a strategy by some government institutions. In 2011, for instance, the Peru's National Institute of Civil Defence (INDECI) conducted a risk and vulnerability study in partnership with the municipality of Lima and resident associations, focusing on the impact of seismic activity in the historic centre (INDECI, 2011). Participants at the civil society level reported feeling empowered through collective activities to address problems. The Observatory would offer the platform for such actions to be showcased and used in complementarity to institutionally produced maps (Collado, E., 2016).

Institutions such as MML, MINCU and SBLM expressed interest in co-operating with this type of co-production of knowledge, as they viewed these studies as valuable and beneficial for their planning processes (MML, MINCU and SBLM representatives, 2016). As such, the risk maps produced by INDECI may offer richer and more updated information if used together with community-produced maps that reflect land use changes.

In order to systematise the process of knowledge co-production, an independent agent, such as the local NGO, CIDAP, may help anchor the process and establish norms concerning alliances between institutions and civil society for knowledge production and its use. This would afford greater legitimacy to co-produced knowledge.

Axis II. Emergency response & prevention

The second axis of strategic action of the Observatory, Emergency Response & Prevention, needs to address the following themes: Monitoring, capacity building, and inter-institutional data exchange.

Figure 3. Actor Synergies: Identifying Contributions to the Observatorio

ACTOR*	CURRENT ROLE IN RENOVATION	LIMITATION	POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO OBSERVATORIO URBANO
Municipalidad de Lima Metropolitana	Tourism & Commercial Development	Technical and economic capability	Facilitate legal action and processes, improve administrative responsivenes
Organised Residents	Skeptical to Public and Private ideas; don't trust anymore	Capabilities (tech skills, econ, labor), political power, motivation, sensibilization	Mobilise residents, generate trust in communities, data, supervision of continuity, social fabric
PROLIMA	Leading advisor to MML on works	Limited number of available skilled labor and economic capability	Political responsiveness, technical advice
MVCS	Financing and projects aimed at targeting the middle class, no housing policy	Economic, vision, coordination with other institutions, political responsiveness	Housing policy, political responsiveness, incentives, social fabric
CIDAP	Mapping as a building block for moving forward	Dconomic	Technical skills

*Non Exhaustive List of Actors

Figure 4. Collapsed house in El Buque, Barrios Altos, April 2016

The complexity of Barrios Altos contributes to the unclear responsibilities of groups of actors when faced with an emergency, like a collapsed building. To improve institutional responsiveness to civil society alerts, a central office comprising institutions and NGO(s) can be set up. Its role would be to ensure the follow-through of actions by the appropriate institution and to circulate knowledge generated by civil society and institutions, such as the existence of an emergency fund offered by the Ministry of Housing.

In order to build capacity, citizens and civil associations need to be aware of opportunities available to them. Through fieldwork, we learned of one such successful example, in which a quinta association secured relocation rights from the Autonomous Mass Transport Authority [AATE (Autoridad autónoma del sistema eléctrico de transporte masivo de Lima y Callao)] (Margarita M., 2016). As a result, the AATE built a housing complex, Condominio Metro de Lima, to rehouse residents displaced due to the construction of a train line through their quinta. This process was driven by a community leader and supported by CIDAP. The leader in question became aware of tenants' rights after participating in a UN- Habitat housing forum in Brazil.

In order to fill the institutional capacity gap, programmes should further be developed in a systematic way to leverage student volunteers in return for practical experience. This can be enhanced by a warning system that identifies areas most in need. A pilot example of this strategy is the Resilient Barrios Altos (BAR) summer workshop, organised by the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the National University of Engineering of Peru in 2016 (BAR representatives, 2016). Students and practising architects worked with the communities of five quintas in Barrios Altos, uniting them around physical infrastructural risk as a focal point.

Given that knowledge is an impactful tool, creating a communication network

that makes use of social media platforms may serve as an effective strategy, e.g. a community radio or Facebook group. A recently formed youth group, Movimiento Autonomo Popular, is already leveraging online social media to mobilise civil society. For instance, they organised a mural painting event together with BAR El Jaime and el Colectivo Wayna Runas, and took this opportunity to open up dialogue about residents' right to the city (Antenor G., 2016). The power of communication networks can be seen here, by enabling spontaneous collaborations between civil society groups towards a common intent, and hence greater critical mass to engage with institutions.

Axis III. Proposal and implementation

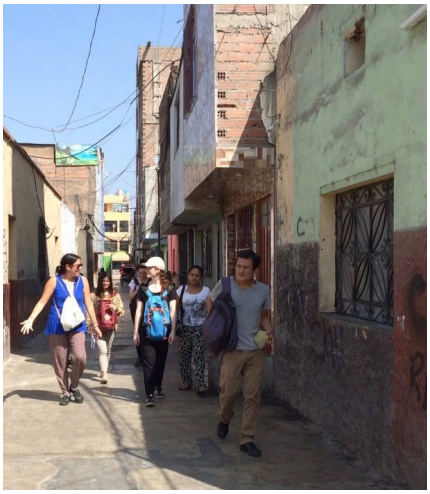
Lastly, the third axis of strategic action, Proposal and Implementation, may build upon the other pillars of the Observatory, in order to address processes, legal frameworks, and resources.

(1) Law 29415 is a legal framework allowing community associations in tugurios to access funds for the upgrading of housing and gain secure tenure. Nonetheless, as previous research shows, the legal mechanism is prohibitive; as a result, it does not serve residents well (DPU, 2015). There needs to be more guidance and support regarding the legal process. This problem cuts across many institutions, including the Ministry of Housing, MINCU, and the Municipality, which are in a capacity to pool resources to finance the provision of community legal advisers.

(2) Also, property owners like the local charity association SBLM and the Catholic Church can contribute to improving the housing situation in Barrios Altos. SBLM currently generates its own income from its extensive residential rental units to fund and support its work, which includes subsidised health care, nursing homes and orphanages. Its economic and technical capabilities are consequently limited. We see potential for SBLM and the Church to become key actors, as they are less limited to act and are better positioned than residents in terms of political responsiveness and government commitment, as the owners of a large part of the area's residential property, which is in great need of repair (SBLM representative, 2016). SBLM's vision is to provide social protection for the poor through better management of its real estate assets. Coming on board the Centro Vivo mission, in view of its capacity to strategically use its property, would be aligned with its own vision. As mentioned earlier, collective action enables renewal projects to be better positioned to qualify for and access funding, thus addressing some of the current limitations faced by SBLM and the Church and motivating their participation in the Observatory.

Quintas were designed for communal living and a collective property model could be envisaged. The Ministry of Housing could formulate a policy that creates incentives for the use of property for social purposes, such as housing for low income groups. These could be modelled on collective property models like that of the Federación Uruguaya de Cooperativas de Vivienda por Ayuda Mutua (FUCVAM), originating in Uruguay and now widely used all over Latin America. This model is based on key principles of solidarity, democratic participation, self-management, mutual aid and collective property ownership (Building and Social-Housing Foundation, 2015).

Figure 5. Members of the youth group Movimiento Autonomo Popular with DPU students



Policy-makers could provide funds to improve infrastructure for property owners, on the condition that these funds are also used to improve housing and protection is given to current residents. Benefits for property owners include increased property values and the ability to include commercial use through mixed-use development. The Observatory's knowledge, co-produced by institutions and civil society, may be used in developing policy, which also needs to be supported by a legal framework specifying the roles and commitments of each party.

Considerations

Certain considerations need to be made when proposing strategies. Firstly, the political climate needs to be fully understood, something our group was unable to undertake in such a short space of time. For this reason, we emphasise that our contribution to the project of socially just urban renewal in Barrios Altos does not amount to prescribing solutions, but rather offering a starting point for actors to take up the suggested courses of action.

Secondly, the various projects have been presented as a bundle of strategies, but if implemented, need to be fitted within a timeframe to ensure efficient rollout. This prevents projects from competing for resources or being implemented when actors are unprepared.

Contributing to a common vision

The discourse surrounding Barrios Altos has a significant effect on actors' intent. As one of our institutional interviews revealed, actors acknowledge that institutions and organisations tend to mobilise easily around disasters (for example, large fires and building collapse). While the impact of large-scale severe disasters needs attention, continuous lack of action regarding small-scale unreported everyday risks in Barrios Altos accumulates to produce a 'disaster-like' effect (Dodman et. al., 2013). The Observatory is a platform where not only collective action among actor groups may be facilitated, but where dialogue can be opened up and the struggle for change maintained. The multiple entry points to the Observatory enable citi-

zens to participate and have a say in how their living environment is shaped.

We believe that the Observatory is capable of strengthening the link between actors in risk management and urban development, and benefits from significant potential as a tool for long-term participative regeneration in bringing the Centro Vivo vision to fruition. Our analysis is founded on the principle of one's right to the city, a city where one can live with dignity, be recognised as its citizen, and where different resources may be equally distributed; in terms of education, health, employment and housing, as well as symbolic resources like participation, access to information etc. Our hope is therefore to achieve a common vision through collective action and commitment, strategically connecting community efforts with policy.

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