

THE STRUGGLES

For millions of people around the world, it became clear in the 1970s that neither the state nor the market was able— or willing— to address their increasingly urgent housing needs. Exhausted by the lack of official response, the world's unhoused began to take matters into their own hands by exercising their right to housing, land, and essential services through various processes of direct action, self-help, and mutual aid. Six out of ten Mexicans built their homes without any support from government or financial institutions, according to research from the 1970s. In many cases, groups of architects were called upon to propose solutions in developing countries, such as PREVI, an experimental social housing project of the Peruvian government which, together with the United Nations, brought together “radical” architects in the late 1960s to propose affordable housing for the Latin American reality—an initiative in which Christopher Alexander participated. In other cases, inhabitants and architects came together to create movements autonomous from the state, such as the Movimiento Urbano Popular (MUP) in Mexico, which was dedicated to finding, restoring, and building affordable housing for the people in cities, aligned with a workers' struggle that spread throughout the country.