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Habitability: Cooperación Comunitaria

In the early twenty-first century, rural Mexico is still subject to continuous blows that have limited the capacity of its communities to adequately manage the social, cultural, economic, and environmental aspects of the territories they inhabit. Poverty, environmental damage, cultural alienation, loss of productive capacities, and depopulation are some of the conditions in which millions of people build their lives. As a response to the ravages caused in rural Mexico by the political and economic model implemented over the past few decades, **Cooperación Comunitaria** works to improve the habitability of marginalized rural and indigenous communities through projects that foster economic autonomy, social organization, and the self-production of sustainable and dignified living spaces. These efforts to better the living conditions are based on the recovery of traditional knowledge geared toward reconciling local populations with their own territory.

Cooperación Comunitaria's working methodology is based on fostering sustainable development by using appropriate techniques, technologies, and construction materials according to each specific area and culture. The purpose of **Habitability** is to stimulate an array of self-management techniques that promote development, dignified housing, and cultural diversity. **Cooperación Comunitaria** has worked in marginalized communities in different states throughout Mexico (Veracruz, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Oaxaca, and Chiapas), focusing on the recovery of local materials, the reassessment of traditional construction techniques, and the training



Housing project based on local cultural uses and techniques.
Not yet conducted

of people to build their own community modules with the “super-adobe” technique pioneered by **Cooperación Comunitaria**. This technique, although it uses industrial materials (raffia and barbed wire), primarily employs earth, a material used ancestrally throughout the Mexican territory. Earth contributes to a regulated thermal environment, and it distinguishes itself from other construction materials by not producing CO₂, allowing for the buildings to be more sustainable. It is also a building technique that is easy for anyone to learn.

The goal of **Cooperación Comunitaria** is to revalue and encourage local self-construction techniques and technologies. By providing training and accompaniment, **Cooperación Comunitaria** enables communities to enhance their building capacities, contributing to their self-sufficiency and enhancing the quality of people's homes. For instance, a community model designed for the Masehual and Totonaco peoples living in the Sierra de Puebla, Northwest of the State of Veracruz, was developed in part from an analysis of the cultural uses of space, in order to understand how social relationships are shaped by their built environment. Adapting traditional forms as well as local materials and techniques, community modules are built by the users themselves, who are given training and super-vision, and who assign the buildings a use—either private or communitarian. Ultimately, these architectural solutions respond to the climatic, environmental, and cultural needs of the inhabitants, strengthening their relationship to the territory in which they live.



Housing project developed in Guanajuato using the “Superadobe” technique.
[Mineral de Pozos, Gto.]



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Project realized in three communities in Jalisco (Cocula, Tala, and Ameca), where the inhabitants were trained and supervised during the first stage of the construction.

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