

garbage. The informal city makes up 50 percent of the main urban areas in the global South but has hardly garnered architectural and urbanistic attention. It demands and produces another kind of urban design: first occupation of land, then building, then planning, then attainment of ownership rights.

UTT has translated the phenomenology of the informal city, which it has mapped and analyzed extensively, with Caracas as *pars pro toto*, into an urban practice that is showing its first results. One of their projects is the Vertical Gym, where there used to be a soccer field in the dense Barrio La Cruz. Extending and exploiting a proven need, UTT used the existing sports field to construct a community building with spaces for the city health department, a road, basketball courts, a dance studio, a weight-lifting area, the office of the municipal sports director, a running track, a rock-climbing wall, and a rooftop soccer field. The complex, interwoven structure can be used for cultural and entertainment events at any time. The project was designed and built by UTT workers, some of it with their own hands, using a sophisticated and cheap construction technique. Afterwards it was simply given to the community, which started to plan its usage, acquire its ownership, and so on. With this and other small projects, UTT is knitting the fragments of Caracas into one megacity, equipped with architectural gadgets like community meeting houses and a rainwater retention basin and connectors like pedestrian bridges and steps that will make it work better. Theirs is an urban vision of maximum ambition that is being implemented slowly but surely in total separation from the official master plans for Caracas. Just like the urban master plans of the 1950s and 1960s, it is also based on a thorough survey of what makes this city tick, but it has the assumption that its solutions and conclusions can be repeated elsewhere. The difference in scale of design and investment of public power between a project like the Vertical Gym and a Modernist master planning scheme by, say, José Luis Sert, for a South American metropolis is staggering. On a conceptual level, however, the approaches share the scale of the metropolis as a single organism. According to UTT, the seemingly unplannable megacity can be steered and influenced by the smart deployment of spatial tools, spread out strategically over the city and thereby knitting it together. The Vertical Gym proves a point about the urban performance of barrios, favelas, and slums, of which there are tens of thousands over the globe. This small project can therefore