

## **Evaluating Cross-Cultural Courtyard Housing for Social Well-Being in Manhattan, New York**

My childhood in Bangladesh inspired me to create a housing community. People avoided community spaces and lived alone in my neighborhood. Housing impacts urban life's material and immaterial components, hence it is crucial to the quality of life. My project site is East Harlem River Houses in Manhattan, New York from the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA). The project's main intention was to design an urban platform inside the existing housing masterplan to involve the public in many activities with the community facilities and make life inside the housing. The community facilities provide for a connection between the projected urban platform and the Wards Island Bridge on the Harlem River. Additionally, integrating the courtyard areas and urban platforms with the community facilities will help modernist blocks be retrofitted with extended balcony areas to make them more livable for future generations. A case for sustainability is made here in order to maintain some of the complex's current buildings with the least amount of interruption to daily life. The concept of retrofitting can serve as a model and be applied to other NYCHA locations. Another innovation was to incorporate multilevel courtyard spaces into the design of new dwelling blocks on the east side of the property to encourage occupants to use those outdoor areas. A hierarchy of different size levels is created by the expansive courtyard. The urban spaces create place-making in different ways such as- basketball courts, evolution plazas, cultural event spaces, sculpture gardens, libraries, and art galleries. The new housing block includes different sizes of dwelling units, which resemble the previous housing units. In order to encourage people to venture outside of their homes and interact in public places, the housing concept was created with an urban grid, open spaces, roadways, and connectivity with the internal common spaces.