



Social Housing for the most vulnerable groups

- CITY
Thessaloniki, Greece
- POPULATION
1 006 112
- BUDGET
EUR 1.105.711,56 (vat included)
- TYPE OF FINANCING OF THE FUNDING SCHEME
RRF

MDAT, in collaboration with the Municipality of Thessaloniki, is implementing a pilot social housing program for the most vulnerable groups, which includes the renovation and energy upgrade of 40 long-term vacant apartments owned by the public sector in order to make them available for long-term social rental. Lack of legislative framework, of streamlined funding and of a broad housing policy to facilitate housing generation and delivery are the main challenges of. Despite limitations, a Social Rental Agency was established in order to socialise vacant housing stock, through renovation, management and allocation of these properties. The intervention built its strategy on evidence generated by two studies in collaboration with the university of Thessaloniki, as a mapping and guidance tool which was included in the Municipal Housing Strategy. So far, efforts are made in order to expand available housing stock, activate additional financial resources and collaborate with multiple stakeholders in order to achieve upscaling of the program at the national level.

ABOUT

This initiative brings multiple benefits to the city as it adopts an approach to combat urban shrinkage and urban sprawl, tackle climate change, strengthen the local economy, foster just urban regeneration and urban mix and through prototyping multi-stakeholder participation provide a holistic system which takes into account not merely buildings but also social cohesion and social impact.

CITY STRATEGY

- 4 Municipalities (Thessaloniki, Ampelokipon-Menemenis, Pavlou-Mela, Sidikis)
- 5 Public and Private legal entities

STAKEHOLDERS

- gradual political and institutional support
- constant search for funding opportunities and mobilizing key funding instruments (e.g. upscaling to ESF+ and ERDF)
- networking with other European cities and European institutions
- advocacy efforts to the relevant ministry for establishing legal framework and attaining legal changes to facilitate social housing delivery

ENABLING CONDITIONS

The SRA Thessaloniki demonstrates how a small-scale, evidence-driven, non-profit mechanism can confront housing exclusion in a country with a zero public housing. And how is that? By focusing on reusing instead of building, on aiming at long-term affordability that considers income and people rather than market rates, and finally on viewing public, social housing as a social infrastructure which includes the provision of social services under public management, through public investment and aiming at all population groups. As a conclusion, SRA tries to reclaim a tiny part of a heavily market-dominated arena by prototyping a replicable model at small scale and thus by building gradually the foundation for a new social housing ecosystem in Greece — starting locally but targeting to a systemic change.

TRANSFER TIPS

RRF

FUNCTIONING OF THE FINANCIAL SCHEME

- Long-term affordability
- Housing as a social infrastructure
- Non-profit, non-speculative approach
- Prototyping a replicable model

STRONG POINTS

- lack of legal framework
- limited funding and few personnel
- complex preliminary legal & technical actions due to long-term vacancy of properties
- lack of multi-level governance framework among national, regional and local stakeholders
- lack of public awareness for non-market housing solutions
- national policies that focus on market-based solutions

CHALLENGES

- Advocacy for establishment of legal framework at national and municipal levels
- Establishment of a complete operational system for housing management and allocation
- Establishment of a replicable model
- Expected to be mainstreamed at the national level through ESF+ and ERDF that can render the intervention more long-hauled

RESULTS AND IMPACTS

Rock the Block: Integrated Participatory Roadmaps for Affordable Co-Living



CITY
Egaleo, Greece

POPULATION
65 831

BUDGET
EUR 4,101,150.00

TYPE OF FINANCING OF THE FUNDING SCHEME
EUI Call for Proposals in support to the New European Bauhaus demonstrators.
Co-funded by the European Union and the European Urban Initiative - Innovative Actions. ERDF and own funds.



The overarching challenge to be tackled is the vicious circle created between low housing quality, unsatisfied housing needs, and weak community bonds. The proposed solution addresses these challenges through three pillars: technical (green / digital / aesthetic / functional / circular / inclusive) transformations; neighbourhood-community building and upskilling; and institutional interventions for care and support. Rock the Block is conceptually, methodologically, and institutionally innovative. Rather than relying on fragmented interventions, the project uses the 'Polykatoikia'—typical mixed-use residential blocks in Athens—as the focal point for transformation. These familiar structures are reimagined as sites of sustainable, inclusive, and affordable urban living. The project establishes a new transferable urban policy and funding tool (public call/assessment/consultation/contracting /funding scheme) and two new municipal structures, the Co-living Hub and the Housing Office. The goal is to offer multilevel affordability solutions secured through technical transformation, community care, and institutional protection.

ABOUT

Rock the Block aligns with the city's vision for inclusive, sustainable, and resilient neighbourhoods by enhancing housing quality, energy performance, and social cohesion. Through collective block-level action and community empowerment, it advances the city's goal of creating affordable, green living environments that foster care, participation, and long-term urban resilience.

CITY STRATEGY

Delivery Partners:
Municipality of Egaleo
Symbolo GP
National Centre of Scientific Research (NCSR) "Demokritos"
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Regional Development Institute - Panteion University (RDI)
Urbana
InCommon (Innovative Communities Onwards)
Organization Earth
Ohi Pezoume Performing Arts NPO (OP)
AREA (Architecture Research Athens)
Transfer Partners:
Budapest Capital District VIII. Józsefváros Municipality, Hungary
The Municipality of Naples, Italy
City of Paris, France

STAKEHOLDERS

Inclusive and Transparent participation: Enabled active involvement of partners, experts, residents, and municipal authorities at all stages of the project, ensuring shared ownership, and strong local activation. Maintained open information channels through meetings, digital platforms, and consultation periods.
Strong partnerships: Combined expertise from local government, universities, NGOs, and private partners for technical and social innovation.
Strategic dissemination: Reached broad public awareness—over 1.5 million views across social media—enhancing visibility and participation citywide.
Decentralised Co-Creation Practices: In contrast to established governance cultures, the Managing Urban Authority (MUA) facilitated co-creation events directly within neighbourhood spaces, bringing the administration closer to the community rather than expecting citizens to come to municipal premises.

ENABLING CONDITIONS

1. Start with participation: Build trust early by involving residents, experts, and local actors in co-design and decision-making — collective ownership ensures long-term success.
 2. Create enabling structures: Establish dedicated municipal offices or hubs to manage housing, communication, and community engagement.
 3. Integrate social and technical perspectives: Combine architectural renovation with social inclusion, affordability, and environmental goals.
 4. Foster cross-sector partnerships: Bring together municipalities, academia, NGOs, and private partners to ensure diverse expertise and innovation.
- Invest in communication and transparency: Keep citizens informed through consistent outreach, digital presence, and open dialogue — visibility builds momentum and public support.

TRANSFER TIPS

- EUI Call for Proposals in support to the New European Bauhaus demonstrators.
Co-funded by the European Union and the European Urban Initiative - Innovative Actions. ERDF and own funds.

FUNCTIONING OF THE FINANCIAL SCHEME

- Integrated Approach
- Intervention Unit
- Participatory Governance
- Transferable Policy Tools

STRONG POINTS

- Administrative and Legal Framework Complexity
- Technical Priorities with Inclusive Dialogue
- Voices in Participation
- Outreach and Communication Strategies
- Conceptual and Strategic Alignment

CHALLENGES



RESULTS AND IMPACTS



SHARE Sustainable Housing Accommodation for a Regenerative Exchange

CITY Fuenlabrada, Spain	POPULATION 190 548
BUDGET EUR 6.150.000,00	
TYPE OF FINANCING OF THE FUNDING SCHEME ERDF	



SHARE's solution focuses on creating accessible, high quality living environments for seniors and young people since they are those who suffered the housing problem the most. The project is based on three principles: 1) Reuse, rehabilitation and activation of community resources for sustainable local development; 2) Affordable, quality housing suitable for people of different ages; 3) Protective environments for early prevention of dependency.

ABOUT

- Social:** to facilitate access of elderly to housing and care system that protects their autonomy to prevent dependency.
- Economic:** to facilitate access to housing for under 35 to foster stable life.
- Environmental:** to enable young population that settles in the city centre to contribute to social, cultural and economic revitalisation of the area.
- Environmental:** to explore housing strategies that consider sustainability and focus on the use of existing spaces, rather than the construction of new housing, to rehabilitate the city centre.

CITY STRATEGY

1. Fuenlabrada Municipality.
2. Municipal Housing Institute of Fuenlabrada PLC (IMVF)
3. Fuenlabrada Communication Media PLC (FUMECO)
4. Animajoven PLC
5. Matia Instituto Foundation
6. Khorá Urban Thinkers
7. National University of Distance Education
8. Living Together Board

STAKEHOLDERS

- Partnering with specialised entities to address the needs of target groups.
- Hiring a law firm to draft the terms and conditions of the calls for applications and rental contracts.
- Involving the city's social fabric in the process as an active participant.

ENABLING CONDITIONS

- Formation of a strong partnership involving all relevant areas and stakeholders of the project.
- Creation of a new housing exchange system.
- Participation of civil society in the co-creation process of the spaces and the participatory evaluation of the project.

STRONG POINTS

- Firstly, the project must be sufficiently developed to become a reality. It is essential to have an analysis of the situation, clear objectives and sufficient funding to be able to tackle it.. Additionally, all the necessary expertise and partners must be in place to achieve the objective set by the city.

If renovations are needed, set realistic deadlines that align with the rest of the project's implementation. For example, if a new mechanism involving citizen participation is to be created in relation to the new accommodation and their involvement is required prior to the move, coordinate these timelines so that all phases of the project converge.

Involve citizens from the outset so that they feel the project is theirs. This will encourage their participation in the initial decision-making process, as well as the development and maintenance of the initiative.

Finally, be brave. Although it is a cliché, nothing ventured, nothing gained.

TRANSFER TIPS

- ERDF
- FUNCTIONING OF THE FINANCIAL SCHEME

- Making the SHARE home exchange model affordable and scalable for the city.
- Integrating the social and commercial fabric into the local care ecosystem.
- Applying NEB criteria to the renovation of San Esteban School and other areas of the project.

CHALLENGES

- Creation of 20 lifetime homes for elderly people.
- Provision of 20 affordable rental homes for young people.
- Provision of 4,800 hours of community support per year for the 'SHARE intergenerational contract'.
- 80 council staff members trained in the local care ecosystem.

RESULTS AND IMPACTS



CALICO

U CITY	U POPULATION
::: Brussels, Belgium	::: 1 100 000
U BUDGET	
::: EUR 12 000 000	
U TYPE OF FINANCING OF THE FUNDING SCHEME	
::: FEDER UIA grant: 6M€ Housing sales : 6M€	



- U The Care and Living in Community (CALICO) project was launched in the Brussels-Capital Region (BCR) to provide affordable housing in Brussels. At the core of CALICO was the construction of 34 housing units and the creation of a Community Land Trust (CLT), an innovative model of community-managed housing. This model ensures the financial accessibility of housing by separating land ownership from building ownership and incorporating safeguards against speculative resale. CALICO also incorporates a community care approach within a co-housing framework, blending three unique forms of co-living across three community-led housing clusters. This project integrates intergenerational, intercultural, and gender-specific needs, supporting residents throughout the life cycle with facilities for both birth and end-of-life care in a home-like setting. Residents are empowered to foster mutual aid and solidarity, while being trained to co-create a new governance model to manage their housing cluster collectively.

::: ABOUT :::

- U CALICO aligns with the City of Brussels' vision for inclusive, caring, and sustainable neighbourhoods. By promoting community-led, intergenerational housing supported by ethical governance and innovative financial schemes, the project strengthens social cohesion, reduces inequalities, and advances a people-centred, resilient urban transition.

::: CITY STRATEGY :::

- U
- Brussels Housing administration
 - Community Land Trust Brussels: in charge of the implementation
 - Logement Pour Tous: Social Real Estate Agency
 - Angela D
 - Fair Ground Brussels
 - Pass-ages and Vill'age de Pass-ages

::: STAKEHOLDERS :::

- U Involvement / buy-in from the future occupants, with the community dimension being central to its model. From the outset, CALICO placed strong emphasis on involving residents in every stage of the project, from planning and design to governance. This active participation creates a foundation for mutual care and shared decision-making, which is essential for maintaining the social fabric and long-term sustainability of the community. Without this buy-in, the project's goals of creating a socially inclusive, cooperative living environment would be difficult to achieve.

::: ENABLING CONDITIONS :::

- U
- Involvement of residents at the inception
 - Limitation of the resale price
 - Community Led Governance

::: STRONG POINTS :::

- U FEDER UIA grant: 6M€
Housing sales : 6M€
The CALICO project relied on significant public intervention, particularly through UIA funds. The infrastructure has been financed through UIA Funds (about 4 million €), loans (about 2M€), and the sale of some appartments in the CLT model (about 5M€). 1M€ of UIA funds has been dedicated to finance the operational costs and the staff, for the duration of the project.

::: FUNCTIONING OF THE FINANCIAL SCHEME :::

- U
- Strong Partnerships: The success of the CALICO project was rooted in its partnerships between public authorities, non-profits, and community organisations. Collaboration ensured that each partner brought specific expertise and resources, which would not have been as easily available otherwise.
 - Resident involvement at the Inception: From the very beginning of the project, CALICO prioritised resident involvement, ensuring that future occupants were active participants in the planning, design, and governance of their housing. This early engagement fostered a sense of ownership and collective responsibility among residents, empowering them to co-create a community that catered to their needs.
 - Adapting to Local Urban Planning Regulations: Each city operates under its unique set of zoning laws and regulatory frameworks that dictate land use and development processes. Navigating these complexities is essential for any CLT seeking to secure land and create social housing.
 - Community-led Governance: The project was governed by a tripartite board that included residents, local community members, and public authority representatives, ensuring that all voices were heard and balanced.
 - Involvement of Central Organisation: The involvement of a central organisation, such as the Community Land Trust Brussels (CLTB) in CALICO, was important in coordinating the various aspects of the project. CLTB acted as a facilitator, leveraging its experience and resources to manage land acquisition and navigate regulatory challenges. Having a central body helped ensure continuity and efficiency, reducing the complexity and risks involved in establishing a CLT.

::: TRANSFER TIPS :::

- U
- Planning : the agenda was very short
 - Collaboration of so many partners
 - Financing: we needed a financial partner
 - Political support and public funding

::: CHALLENGES :::

- U
- 34 adapted affordable housing units were delivered

::: RESULTS AND IMPACTS :::



EPIU Getafe Healthy Homes - EmPowerIngUs

CITY

Getafe, Spain

POPULATION

189 906

BUDGET

6,227,849.80 € (EPIU)

549 835.00 € (EmPowerIngUs)

TYPE OF FINANCING OF THE FUNDING SCHEME

URBAN INNOVATIVE ACTIONS -UIA (EPIU)
URBACT INNOVATION TRANSFER NETWORK
ITN (EmPowerIngUs)



The EPIU Good Practice merges data intelligence with social policy to identify and mitigate any form of energy poverty., EPIU introduced a holistic, 3-scale approach (Home, Building, Neighbourhood)operationalised through 3 main tools: an Intelligence Unit, a One-Stop Shop (Healthy Homes Office), and Tailor-Made Solutions. Its innovative dimension lies in the integration of advanced data analytics, citizen-centred design, and multidisciplinary governance, shifting municipal services from reactive assistance to initiative-taking, preventive action. The goal is to address energy poverty through data-driven, socially inclusive, and cross-sectoral solutions. Combating energy poverty in the context of the 'right to energy' is linked to the 'right to housing' in a practical, measurable and transferable way, New efficient housing must be followed by renovation of building stock with similar efficiency standards, but at a lower cost, thus generating a more accessible product.

ABOUT

EPIU has set the standard for a holistic approach to the right to energy and housing in Getafe. Sustainable urban development cannot be approached from a solely technical or solely social perspective. That is why the practice uses social and building indicators together. Thus, from energy awareness to the quantitative assessment of the effect of best practices in energy rehabilitation, it seeks to implement methodologies that become structural within municipal policies.

CITY STRATEGY

EmPowerIngUs: EMSV Getafe (Municipal Land and Housing Company of Getafe), Commune d'Etterbeek (be), Municipality of Maia.(PO), e-trikala S.A.(GR), Municipality of Pomorie(BU).
EPIU: EMSV Getafe (Municipal Land and Housing Company of Getafe), Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Asociación de Ciencias Ambientales, Fundación Naturgy, Khora Urban Thinkers, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid y Cruz Roja Getafe , Fundación Laboral de la Construcción. Institute for Energy Diversification and Saving (IDAE), a body attached to the Ministry for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, through the Secretary of State for Energy. It provided access to national databases such as Datadis or the Data mediation platform. The Community of Madrid, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Rights and Agenda 2030, provided social data from the Social Services User Information System (SIUSS). Triodos bank, a financial institution specialised in social, environmental and cultural projects. Ymca and Murialdo, two local NGOs that linked EPIU with citizens by facilitating contact with vulnerable groups during the pandemic. Airbus served as an advisor in energy self-production

STAKEHOLDERS

- Raise awareness of energy poverty as a cross-cutting issue in relations with citizens.
- Systematize procedures without penalizing personalized service through innovation.
- Move from reactivity to proactivity through the use of data.
- Earn the trust of citizens and protect it as an important asset.
- Apply the same criteria for action to other social initiatives not related to energy poverty.

ENABLING CONDITIONS

- Redefines energy poverty and its local manifestation.
- Converts social spending into permanent structural measures.
- Transforms the way the City Council interacts with citizens.
- Is capable of evaluating and measuring the performance of its activities.

Innovates WITH people, not FOR people.

STRONG POINTS

URBAN INNOVATIVE ACTIONS -UIA (EPIU)

URBACT INNOVATION TRANSFER NETWORK ITN (EmPowerIngUs)

FUNCTIONING OF THE FINANCIAL SCHEME

Replicating a good practice is an excellent starting point for tackling problems that are common to many cities. There are several reasons for this:

The first is that EUI projects, like the former UIA projects (including EPIU), are designed with transferability in mind. They are therefore naturally replicable.

The second is that good practices are never completely finished, so transfer is always a good opportunity to refine the original practice. If a city has been successful, it is very likely to be interested in sharing its experience.

It is not necessary to replicate the entire good practice. Each city has its own needs and priorities, and any solution, however small, if adopted and made structural, will make the transfer worthwhile. There are no magic solutions; transferring or replicating is not copying, it is understanding, adapting, and reusing.

TRANSFER TIPS

- Continue to feed the municipal data lake and make the data securely available to all municipal departments to enable them to guide their policies and initiatives based on data.
- Develop new calls for rehabilitation grants to improve access to housing and energy without leaving anyone behind.
- Maintain the service we are providing in our One Stop Shop in its three branches: Renovation, Energy, and Energy Communities.
- Improve the lives of citizens by attracting investment, retaining talent, and transforming ourselves into the Administration of the 21st Century.

CHALLENGES

- Improving comfort conditions is more decisive in energy poverty than reducing energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
- The objective of reducing the population in PE within the scope has been achieved, the methodology for capturing the population has proven to be an essential tool for impacting more of the population.
- Raising PE awareness is a mandatory first step.
- The goal is to empower citizens by self-diagnosis of their level of PE, and this has also been achieved

RESULTS AND IMPACTS