



CATALOGUE OF

BLUEPRINTS

FOR AFFORDABLE AND RESILIENT HOMES



Republica - Image credits: Sebastian van Damme, Maikel Samuëls, 2024

FOREWORD

Foreword by Commissioner Roswall:

The sense of home is far more than a roof over our heads. It is the place where lives are built, communities are formed, and people find themselves safe and feel that they belong. Where people find this sense of home, what is seen as beautiful stems from this kind of experience. Housing defines our neighbourhoods, expresses our culture, builds history and narratives around our cities and creates the democratic cornerstones of our societies. Yet for many Europeans today, affordable and quality housing has become increasingly unattainable. What Europe is facing is more than a housing crisis. It is a social crisis. It undermines cohesion, limits mobility, and threatens the dignity and quality of life of millions of Europeans.

At the same time, local communities and neighbourhoods are increasingly exposed to climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity and human-induced risks like droughts, wildfires, floods, and water scarcity, which undermine economic security, deepen social and health inequalities and jeopardise the very European way of life. Citizens need affordable solutions which also boost the resilience and crisis preparedness of neighbourhoods, while respecting Europe's cultural diversity and local heritage.

Resilience and affordability are deeply intertwined. A home that is unaffordable offers no stability, and a home that is not resilient offers no future. The New European Bauhaus was created precisely to navigate these intersections. Since 2020, it has demonstrated that sustainability, inclusion, and quality of experience are not competing but mutually reinforcing values. Homes and neighbourhoods that are energy-efficient, climate-adapted, and community-centred reduce long-term costs for

residents, ease pressure on public services, improve well-being and strengthen the social fabric that holds communities together. Ultimately, bridging affordability and resilience pushes the door open further to much needed innovation on planning, renovating and financing our living environments. As part of Europe's response to the housing crisis, the New European Bauhaus will foster place-based transformations that boost people's and communities' preparedness to climate-related risks and natural disasters, as well as their economic and social resilience.

The New European Bauhaus *Catalogue of Blueprints for Affordable and Resilient Homes* is a concrete contribution to that effort. It presents transferable and replicable elements of NEB-aligned projects, rendered as "blueprints". It starts by identifying underlying challenges faced across Europe and then delves into how projects employ different mechanisms to respond to those environments. Each project offers a distinct formula for achieving affordability and resilience. Brought together, the blueprints not only serve as a source of inspiration, but as a practical replication tool for architects, designers and public authorities.

This first version of the Catalogue takes 20 selective examples of NEB aligned projects, and it invites stakeholders to express their views. This book is only a beginning. The collection and analysis of high-quality projects which are aligned with NEB values and principles will continue in the form of a digital catalogue, a tool managed by and for the NEB Community and all those who will want to contribute to it, be inspired by it and replicate its solutions in other parts of Europe or beyond.

Jessika Roswall, European Commissioner for Environment, Water Resilience and a Competitive Circular Economy



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INTRODUCTION



Living Places Copenhagen, 2023, Image credits: Adam Mork

The New European Bauhaus (NEB) Catalogue of Blueprints for Affordable and Resilient Homes is a practical expression of the initiative's vision to enable the clean transition in our built environment. Rooted in the NEB's core values of Beautiful, Sustainable, Together, this catalogue brings together design solutions in the form of "conceptual blueprints" that demonstrate how living spaces can be resilient to environmental challenges, and simultaneously affordable and enriching to everyday life.

This work responds to the European affordable housing crisis, recognising that this is a crisis not just of supply, but of affordability, energy performance, social inclusion and long-term resilience. It is in this context that the Blueprint Catalogue positions housing as a central arena for Europe's clean transition: one where climate action, affordability and quality of life must be addressed together. The key purpose of the Catalogue is to demonstrate how different European projects have responded to these and related challenges in order to provide learning for adaptation. Here we focus on a localised form of replication which we refer to as transferable actions in recognition of the diverse regulatory frameworks across Europe. Across Europe, communities are already imagining new ways of living that respond to climate challenges while strengthening a sense of belonging and well-being. Yet too often these solutions do not get disseminated or are not translated to a format that enables implementation in a different context. This is in part due to a need for knowledge sharing tools that account for the intersections of today's different challenges, providing a logical structure for navigating and ultimately replicating existing solutions. This Catalogue addresses that gap by curating a set of adaptable blueprints that translate the NEB vision into tangible, usable forms. Each Blueprint reflects a commitment to sustainable construction, to inclusive approaches, and to the quality of experience that turns housing into meaningful places to live.

The Blueprints are intended to serve as a source of inspiration and practical guidance for housing development communities across Europe, including public authorities, housing providers, architects, developers, community organisations, funders and policymakers. They allow readers to identify projects that have faced similar contexts to their own, whether economic, social or environmental, and to understand the specific levers used to respond to those challenges. The Catalogue is meant to contribute to a reshaping of the perceptions surrounding affordable housing, inviting us to part from associations of degradation or dysfunctionality and move towards images of attractive, well-designed and desirable living spaces. It contributes to building legitimacy around the idea that affordability does not have to come at the expense of quality or dignity. Ultimately, this legitimacy is also crucial for substantiating the need for reducing regulatory and permitting barriers and other bottlenecks preventing the implementing these types of projects at local, regional and national governance levels. The cases show that different challenges require different combinations of levers. A housing provider dealing with ageing post-war stock may look to Grand Parc Bordeaux or Tour Bois-le-Prêtre, where retrofit, structural reuse and passive extensions were used to avoid demolition

while improving quality. A municipality facing energy poverty may learn from SUPERSHINE, where district-scale retrofit and Energy Performance Contracts help offset upfront costs and reduce delivery risk. Cities with vacant public or private properties may look to AHA Budapest or Reclaim Žižkov, where empty buildings are reactivated through public coordination, social housing agency models or temporary community use. Places facing overheating and lack of green space may draw from Roofscapes, NEBOurhoods or Republica, where rooftops, blue-green infrastructure and neighbourhood-scale climate systems are treated as core urban infrastructure. Communities seeking long-term affordability and stronger social fabric may look to La Borda, Gleis 21 or Collegium Academicum, where cooperative ownership, shared space and co-design reshape how housing is financed, governed and lived in.

By making these approaches accessible, the Catalogue aims to support communities, practitioners and decision-makers in shaping environments that are not only functional, but that simultaneously improve the quality of life for residents and the resilience of the spaces they inhabit. In doing so, it contributes to a broader cultural shift, where the transformation of our homes and neighbourhoods becomes a collective project, grounded in the belief that all communities deserve spaces that enhance well-being and a sense of belonging.

Ultimately, the Catalogue presents affordability and resilience not as separate ambitions, but as mutually reinforcing outcomes. Homes become more affordable when they are energy efficient, durable, adaptable, well governed and supported by appropriate finance. Homes become more resilient when they are rooted in social networks, connected to climate-responsive infrastructure and designed for long-term use rather than short-term extraction. The Blueprints therefore invite Europe's housing actors to move beyond isolated solutions and toward a shared repertoire of approaches that can be adapted, combined and scaled across different places.

Project selection for this initial version of the Catalogue draws fundamentally from New European Bauhaus projects, as these often integrate affordability and resilience by design. The NEB projects included were funded through dedicated calls (i.e. Horizon Europe Social and Affordable Housing District Demonstrators, Single Market Program Affordable Housing Initiative projects, European Urban Initiative - Innovative Actions projects, Horizon Europe Lighthouse demonstrators, and NEB prizes) or contributing calls (i.e. Joint Horizon Europe Call between Mission 100 Climate Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030 and Mission Adaptation to Climate Change). A minority of additional projects are included from a compilation of NEB-aligned housing projects screened by the NEB Facility Experts Group.

That being said, this Catalogue is more of a starting point than it is an end product. The collection and analysis of additional high quality affordable and resilient housing projects is foreseen to continue under the stewardship of the NEB Lab on Housing. They are well placed to guide the growth, diversification and enrichment of this new resource.

THE APPROACH

To understand how housing projects deliver both affordability and resilience, this Catalogue adopts a matrix framework influenced by the [2025 Strategic Foresight Report's Resilience 2.0 model](#), which identifies a need "to build up economic, societal, environmental and political resilience". The Catalogue draws on these areas, presenting three interdependent contexts: **Economic, Social, and Environmental**. These Contexts reflect the primary conditions through which affordable and resilient housing is shaped. The Matrix also identifies the **mechanisms through which successful outcomes are achieved**, referred to as **Levers**. These Levers represent the practical actions across design, governance, finance, construction, and social engagement, that enable projects to respond to specific contextual challenges.

CONTEXTS

The Contexts describe the needs, pressures or vulnerable conditions to which each Blueprint responds. They represent the "ground layer" upon which a project must build, inevitably shaping the project's approach. These contexts commonly take the form of financial and delivery pressures, social and community needs, or environmental and climate-related risks.

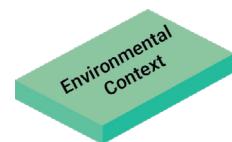
The three contexts:



The Economic Context captures needs related to affordability, viability and delivery. It includes situations where housing is particularly difficult to provide, improve or maintain because of high construction costs, limited public budgets, rising rents, energy poverty, underused assets, fragmented retrofit markets or the financial burden of demolition and rebuilding.



The Social Context captures needs related to inclusion, stability, participation, perceptions of safety, care and community life. It includes situations where housing challenges are linked to displacement risk, weak social fabric, social isolation, lack of support services, or unequal access to neighbourhood spaces.

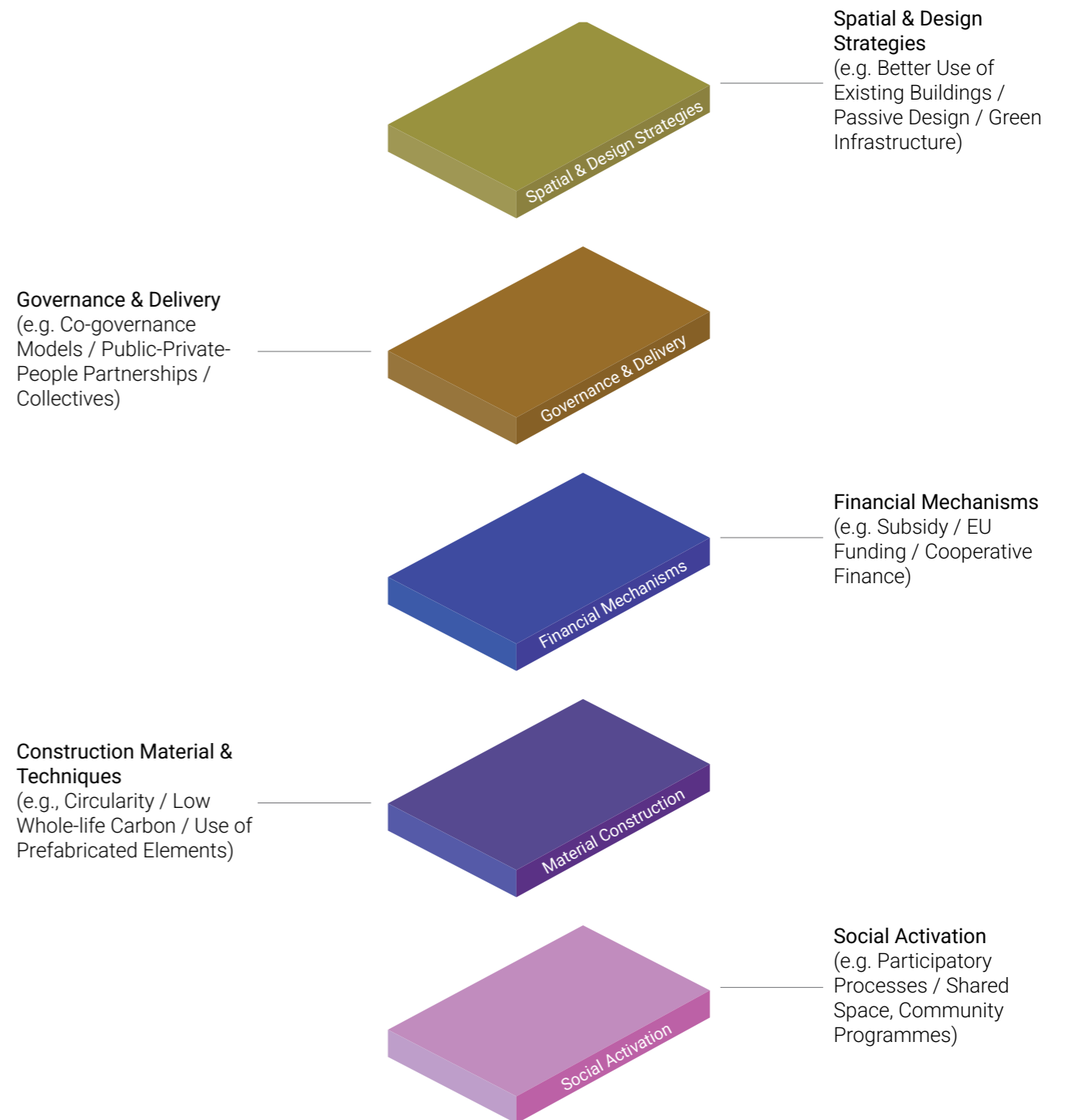


The Environmental Context captures needs related to climate adaptation, carbon reduction, resource efficiency and environmental quality. It includes situations where homes and neighbourhoods are exposed to overheating, flooding, high energy demand, material waste, environmental degradation or the need to transition to low-carbon living.

Together, these Contexts draw our attention to the overlooked reality that affordability and resilience are not achieved by strong design alone. They emerge when strong design or methods are tailored to the financial pressures, social conditions and environmental risks. The role of the Blueprints is to draw attention to and elucidate how different projects recognised these complex needs and used specific levers to respond to them. These Levers are presented on page 11.

LEVERS

The Levers included in the Matrix emerged from the Blueprints and represent recurring strategies that consistently enable successful outcomes. They are grouped into five domains:



These Levers form practical tools observed across the case studies. The Matrix reveals that different projects combine these Levers to respond to different economic, social and environmental needs with the end goal of affordability and resilience.

THE MATRIX

The Matrix is designed to show the relationship between need and response. Each project is first understood through the primary Economic, Social or Environmental Context it addresses: the underlying pressure, gap or challenge that makes action necessary. The Matrix then identifies the Levers used to respond to that need, showing whether projects rely on spatial design, governance, finance, material strategy or social activation to deliver affordable and resilient outcomes.

The Matrix therefore shifts the focus from **what a project is** to **why it was needed and how it responded**. It provides a structured way to compare different Blueprints, identify projects facing similar challenges, and understand which combinations of Levers were used to create transferable solutions for affordable and climate-resilient homes.



THE MATRIX



DEFINITIONS

The table below shows the considerations under each Lever, presenting a definition and examples of how these are demonstrated in various blueprints.

SPATIAL & DESIGN STRATEGIES

	DEFINITION	IMPLEMENTATION
Better Use of Existing Buildings	The upgrading and transformation of existing buildings, for example via adaptation, retrofit, expansion, refurbishment, adaptive reuse or repurposing, to improve performance, extend lifespan, and enhance living quality without full demolition.	Better use of existing buildings reduces embodied carbon and can reduce capital cost while enabling in-situ improvement (e.g. Grand Parc Bordeaux, dr0p).
Green Infrastructure	The integration of nature-based solutions such as green roofs or circular water systems, and natural processes into the built environment to manage climate impacts and improve environmental performance.	Green infrastructure contributes to increased climate resilience, heat mitigation, water resilience, and biodiversity while improving liveability (e.g. Roofscapes, Republica).
Passive Design	The use of building form, orientation, and material strategies to regulate light, temperature, and airflow naturally, minimising reliance on mechanical systems and energy consumption.	Passive design is a cost-reduction and resilience tool, lowering energy demand and improving comfort (e.g. Grand Parc Bordeaux, Living Places Copenhagen).

GOVERNANCE & DELIVERY

	DEFINITION	IMPLEMENTATION
Co-governance Models	Housing or urban development led by public authorities that engages people in decision-making and management across the boundaries of public agencies.	Co-governance models enable scale, equity, and coordination, particularly in retrofit and affordable housing programmes (e.g. SUPERSHINE, AHA Budapest).
Public-Private-People Partnerships	Collaborative structures involving multiple stakeholders (public, private, civil society and community actors) to share resources, expertise, and risk.	Partnerships are used to manage complexity and facilitate delivery, especially in multi-system or innovative projects (e.g. NEB-STAR, Republica).
Collectives	Formal and informal models in which residents or users jointly own, manage, and make decisions about housing or space.	Collectives remove speculative pressures and enable long-term affordability and community control (e.g. La Borda, Gleis 21).

FINANCIAL MECHANISMS

	DEFINITION	IMPLEMENTATION
Public Funding	Financial support from European, national or regional programmes used to enable innovation, scale implementation, and reduce delivery risk.	Public funding can act as a catalyst for systemic change, particularly for pilot-to-scale transitions (e.g. NEB-STAR, SHAPE).
Subsidy	Targeted financial support used to reduce the cost of development or housing for users, ensuring affordability and inclusion.	Subsidy bridges the gap between market cost and social need, especially in retrofit and vulnerable housing contexts (e.g. SUPERSHINE, AHA Budapest).
Cooperative Finance	Collaborative or innovative financing models that reduce reliance on speculative capital and support long-term affordability.	Cooperative finance can be used to stabilise costs and align financial structures through non-market housing models (e.g. La Borda, Gleis 21).

MATERIAL & CONSTRUCTION

	DEFINITION	IMPLEMENTATION
Circularity	Design and construction approaches that enable materials and components to be reused, adapted, and kept in circulation over time.	Circularity operates at system level, linking material flows, adaptability, and long-term value (e.g. Re-Sourcing Commons, Republica).
Low Whole-life Carbon	The use of materials, construction methods and systems that minimise greenhouse gas emissions across the building lifecycle, including sustainable bio-based materials.	Low whole-life carbon strategies align environmental performance with cost efficiency, particularly through low-carbon materials and reduced material use (e.g. Living Places).

SOCIAL ACTIVATION

	DEFINITION	IMPLEMENTATION
Participatory Processes	Participatory processes in which users actively shape the design, development, or use of buildings and spaces.	Participatory processes ensure relevance, acceptance, and long-term success, particularly in community-led and housing projects (e.g. drOp, La Borda).
Shared Space	Living places that include spaces designed for common use, supporting social interaction, resource sharing, and reduced reliance on private space.	Shared space is a key affordability mechanism, enhancing quality of life by democratising access to space and enabling social interaction (e.g. Gleis 21, SHARE).
Community Programmes	Activities, services, and engagement initiatives that activate spaces, support users, and sustain long-term social value.	These programmes ensure ongoing use, maintenance, and behavioural alignment, linking physical intervention to social resilience (e.g. Rock the Block).

THE BLUEPRINTS

This set of Blueprints has been developed to show how projects across Europe are responding to the interconnected challenges of housing affordability and climate resilience. Each Blueprint presents a project overview and a set of Transferable Actions that may inform other housing, neighbourhood or urban development projects. The Blueprints do not present affordability and resilience as separate outcomes; rather, they show how projects combine spatial, financial, governance, material and social levers to respond to specific needs.

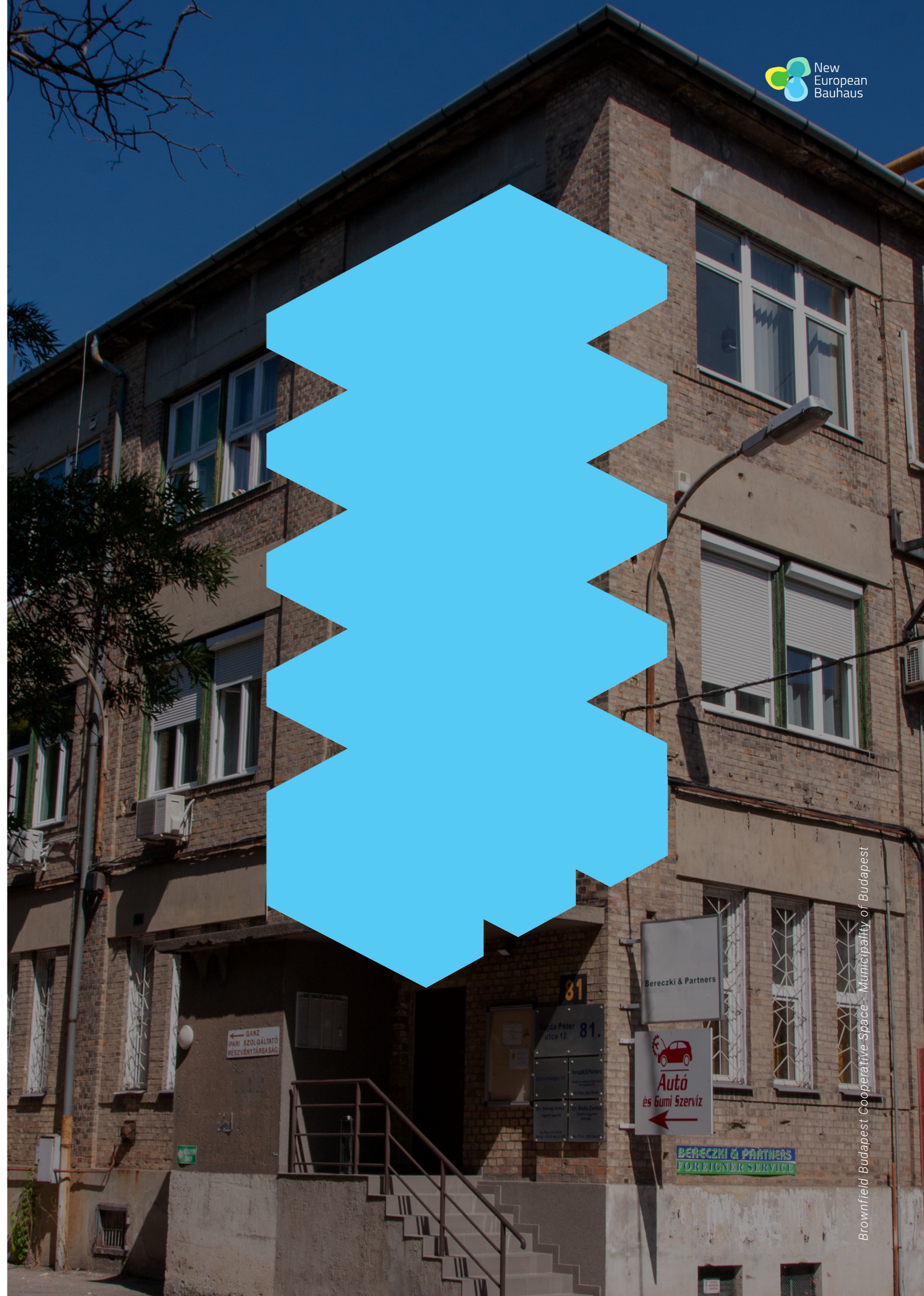
Each Blueprint identifies a primary context, Economic, Social or Environmental, while recognising that many projects generate value across all three. Presented below is an overview of the primary Context addressed in each Blueprint and a brief description of the Levers utilised.

ECONOMIC PRIMARY CONTEXT		
	Tour Bois-le-Prêtre	Responds to the Economic Context of deteriorating high-rise housing and demolition-led regeneration by proving that use of existing buildings and extension can deliver better whole-life value.
	Grand Parc Bordeaux	Responds to the Economic Context of ageing post-war social housing and high demolition/rebuild costs through structural reuse, extension and in-situ retrofit.
	ProLight	Responds to the Economic Context of fragmented and costly use of existing buildings delivery by standardising and aggregating retrofit solutions for scale.
	SUPERSHINE	Responds to the Economic Context of energy poverty and underfunded social housing retrofit through district-scale renovation, subsidy and Energy Performance Contracts.
	SHAPE-EU / SHAPE II	Responds to the Economic Context of limited municipal capacity and fragmented affordable housing delivery by strengthening governance, finance and partnership models.
	Collegium Academicum	Responds to the Economic Context of student housing shortages and rising costs through self-build, cooperative finance and low-carbon construction.
	Brownfield Budapest Cooperative Space	Responds to the Economic Context of underused industrial land and high redevelopment costs through cooperative, incremental regeneration.

SOCIAL PRIMARY CONTEXT		
	dr0p	Responds to the Social Context of under-resourced neighbourhoods and weak local capacity through incremental, co-designed transformation.
	AHA Budapest	Responds to the Social Context of housing insecurity, energy poverty and vulnerable households through affordable housing supply, social support, the Housing Agency model and an Early Warning System.
	La Borda	Responds to the Social Context of housing speculation and affordability pressure through cooperative ownership and shared living.
	Gleis 21	Responds to the Social Context of demand for participatory, community-led housing through cooperative governance embedded in a public housing framework.
	SHARE	Responds to the Social Context of ageing, isolation and care needs through intergenerational housing and integrated support.
	Rock the Block	Responds to the Social Context of weak social fabric, ageing polykatoikia housing stock and unsatisfied housing needs through participatory building-level renovation and care networks.
	Reclaim Žižkov	Responds to the Social Context of vacant urban buildings and limited access to affordable community space through temporary, community-led activation.
	Safer Cities - Romsås Centre	Responds to the Social Context of perceived unsafety, unequal access to public space and fragmented neighbourhood life through co-designed public-space safety methodology, the Social Ring, Green Ring and cross-sector governance.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIMARY CONTEXT		
	NEBourhodos	Responds to the Environmental Context of fragmented urban systems and climate adaptation needs through neighbourhood-scale integration of energy, landscape and social innovation.
	NEB-STAR	Responds to the Environmental Context of city-level decarbonisation targets through coordinated climate-neutral district transformation.
	Roofscapes	Responds to the Environmental Context of urban heat and limited space for green infrastructure through rooftop-based distributed climate infrastructure.
	Republica	Responds to the Environmental Context of brownfield regeneration, flooding and resource use through circular design and blue-green infrastructure.
	Living Places Copenhagen	Responds to the Environmental Context of high embodied and operational carbon in housing through passive design and low-carbon materials.
	Re-Sourcing Commons	Responds to the Environmental Context of construction waste and linear material use through circular material ecosystems and reuse infrastructure.

ECONOMIC PRIMARY CONTEXT





Tour Bois-le-Prêtre - Image Credits: Druot, Lacaton & Vassal

TOUR BOIS- LE-PRÊTRE

Team	Lacaton & Vassal + Druo
Location	Paris, France
Programme/ Funding	Paris Habitat
Start & End Dates	January 2007 - December 2011
Primary Context	Tour Bois-le-Prêtre responds to the economic context of deteriorating high-rise housing and policy pressure for demolition by proving that using existing buildings can deliver comparable or greater social, environmental and economic value than demolition and rebuild.

CASE OVERVIEW

Tour Bois-le-Prêtre is a pioneering social housing retrofit in Paris that challenged the assumption that ageing high-rise housing should be demolished. Completed by Lacaton & Vassal with Frédéric Druot, the project transformed a 1960s residential tower by extending apartments with winter gardens and balconies, improving space, light, comfort and energy performance. Its significance lies in demonstrating that retrofit could be a serious alternative to demolition: cheaper, lower-carbon, less disruptive and socially protective. As a precursor to Grand Parc Bordeaux, it provided a crucial proof point for policymakers and housing providers considering the future of post-war housing estates.



Tour Bois-le-Prêtre - Image Credits: Druot, Lacaton & Vassal

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to demonstrate that retrofit can outperform demolition and rebuild in terms of whole-life value
- How to prove that ageing social housing can be upgraded without displacement

CONTEXT:

- Post-war high-rise social housing perceived as obsolete
- Policy and market preference for demolition-led regeneration
- Poor thermal performance and constrained apartment layouts
- Risk of resident displacement and loss of affordable housing
- Need to test whether retrofit could deliver measurable value at lower cost

NEB VALUES:

Sustainable: The project reduces embodied carbon by retaining the existing structure and improves operational performance through passive envelope upgrades.

Beautiful: The addition of winter gardens and balconies transforms constrained dwellings into brighter, more generous and more flexible homes.

Together: Residents remain in place during the transformation, preserving social networks and proving that upgrading housing does not need to displace communities.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Prove Retrofit as a Viable Alternative to Demolition (Better Use of Existing Buildings / Circularity)

Tour Bois-le-Prêtre is important because it tested and proved that a deteriorating high-rise could be meaningfully transformed rather than demolished. By retaining the existing structure and adding new spatial layers, the project delivered improved homes at lower environmental and financial cost. This gave policymakers and housing providers a concrete precedent showing that retrofit is not a compromise, but a credible regeneration strategy capable of delivering better homes while avoiding the waste and disruption of demolition.

Use Whole-life Value to Compare Retrofit Against Rebuild (Circularity / Co-governance Models)

The project demonstrates that decisions about ageing housing should not be based only on short-term capital cost or visual obsolescence. By considering embodied carbon, construction time, resident disruption, future energy use and social continuity, retrofit becomes a stronger whole-life value proposition than demolition and rebuild. Tour Bois-le-Prêtre shows how public housing providers can evaluate regeneration through a broader value framework, where environmental savings and social stability are counted alongside financial cost.

Deliver In-situ Retrofit to Protect Social Value (Better Use of Existing Buildings / Co-governance Models)

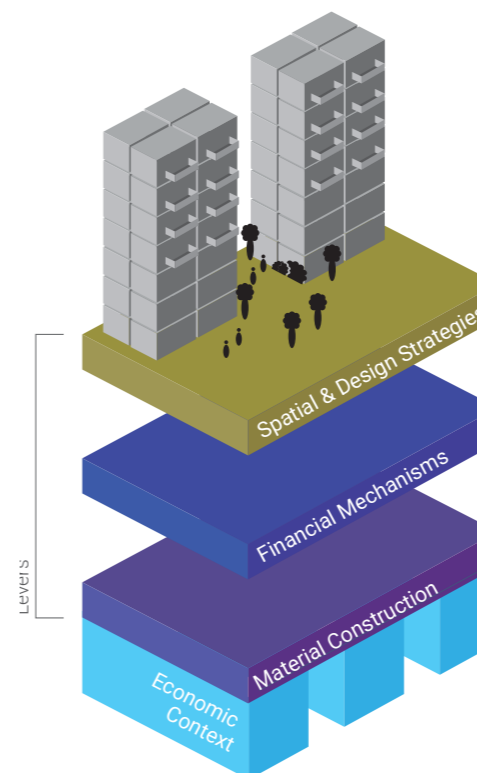
A central lesson of the project is that keeping residents in place is not only socially beneficial, but also economically and politically valuable. Avoiding relocation reduces disruption, temporary housing costs and the loss of established support networks. The external extension strategy allowed major improvement works to proceed while residents remained in occupation. This demonstrates to public authorities that social continuity can be built into retrofit delivery, making regeneration less disruptive and more acceptable to existing communities.

Use Extension to Show that Retrofit Can Improve Quality, Not Just Performance (Better Use of Existing Buildings / Passive Design)

Tour Bois-le-Prêtre proved that retrofit can do more than correct technical deficiencies. The winter gardens and balconies increased usable space, improved daylight, expanded views and created flexible thresholds between inside and outside. These additions also improved thermal performance, showing that spatial quality and environmental performance can be delivered through the same intervention. For policymakers, the project demonstrates that retrofit can produce visible, lived improvements that residents value, not only hidden energy-efficiency gains.

Create a Demonstration Project to Unlock Wider Policy Change (Co-governance Models / Subsidy)

The project functions as a demonstrator for public housing strategy, showing that a carefully designed retrofit can produce evidence for wider change. Its success helped establish a policy argument that post-war housing stock should be assessed for transformation before demolition is considered. By investing in one visible pilot, Paris Habitat helped create a transferable model for other housing authorities. The lesson is that demonstration projects can shift institutional confidence, making retrofit easier to fund, approve and replicate.





Grand Parc Bordeaux - Aquitanis - Druot, Lacaton & Vassal, 2015-2016. Image credits: Philippe Bourdieu

GRAND PARC BORDEAUX

Team	Lacaton & Vassal + Druot + Hutin
Location	Bordeaux, France
Programme/ Funding	Public housing (Aquitanis)
Start & End Dates	January 2016 - December 2017
Primary Context	Grand Parc Bordeaux responds to the economic context of ageing post-war social housing and rising retrofit costs by implementing low-cost extension and structural reuse strategies that upgrade quality without displacement.

CASE OVERVIEW

Grand Parc Bordeaux is a landmark social housing retrofit that redefines how large-scale modernist housing can be transformed without demolition. Designed by Lacaton & Vassal with Druot and Hutin, the project upgraded 530 dwellings through the addition of winter gardens and extended living spaces, dramatically improving quality of life while maintaining affordability. Crucially, the intervention was delivered with residents remaining in place, avoiding displacement and preserving community networks. By prioritising spatial generosity, environmental performance, and cost-efficiency, the project demonstrates a scalable model for urban retrofit that addresses social, economic, and environmental resilience simultaneously.



Grand Parc Bordeaux - Aquitanis, Druot, Lacaton & Vassal, 2015-2016, Image credits: Philippe Ruault

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to upgrade ageing housing stock without demolition or displacement
- How to improve energy performance and liveability simultaneously
- How to deliver high-quality transformation within constrained public budgets

CONTEXT:

- Large-scale post-war social housing facing functional and environmental obsolescence
- High risk of demolition-driven displacement and loss of affordable housing stock
- Increasing pressure to reduce carbon emissions in the built environment
- Need to improve living standards without increasing rents

NEB VALUES:

Sustainable: The project significantly reduces embodied and operational carbon through reuse and passive design strategies, demonstrating a low-impact alternative to demolition-led redevelopment.

Beautiful: By introducing generous winter gardens and enhancing spatial quality, the project transforms everyday living environments into light-filled, flexible, and dignified spaces.

Together: Residents remain in place throughout the process, preserving social networks and ensuring that transformation strengthens rather than disrupts community life.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Extend Rather Than Replace (Circularity / Better Use of Existing Buildings / Passive Design)

Rather than demolishing the existing housing blocks, the project demonstrates how extending buildings can deliver significant improvements in space, comfort, and performance. The addition of winter gardens and balconies increases usable area while retaining the structural frame, reducing both embodied carbon and construction costs. Lightweight, prefabricated elements enable efficient installation with minimal disruption. This approach shows that spatial generosity and housing quality can be achieved more economically by building onto what already exists, positioning extension as a scalable alternative to demolition-led redevelopment.

Retrofit In Situ to Preserve Communities (Better Use of Existing Buildings / Co-governance Models)

The project is designed to allow residents to remain in their homes throughout construction, avoiding displacement and maintaining community stability. External construction methods minimise disruption to daily life, ensuring continuity of social networks and local identity. This approach reduces the hidden social and economic costs associated with relocation, such as loss of support systems or employment instability. By treating retrofit as a process of continuity rather than interruption, the project demonstrates how housing transformation can strengthen communities while improving physical conditions.

Use Passive Space as Environmental Infrastructure (Passive Design / Better Use of Existing Buildings)

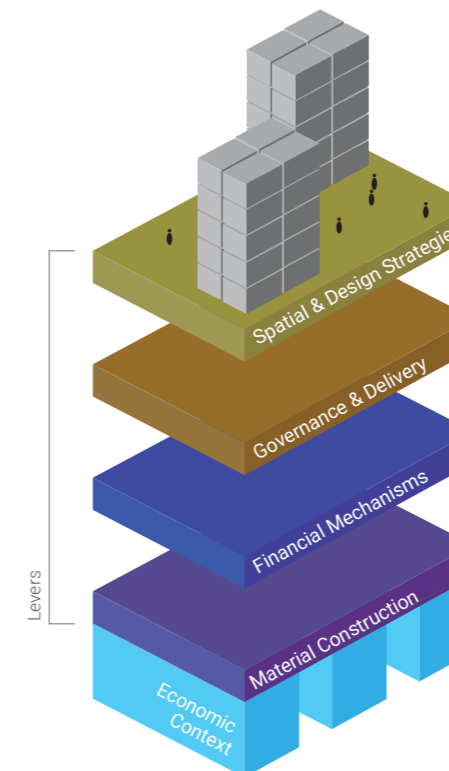
Winter gardens and glazed extensions function as thermal buffer zones, regulating temperature and improving energy performance without relying on complex mechanical systems. These spaces capture solar heat in winter and provide shading and ventilation in summer, reducing energy demand and lowering utility costs. At the same time, they increase the flexibility and usability of living spaces. This strategy shows how environmental performance can be embedded directly into spatial design, turning architecture itself into a form of low-cost, low-carbon environmental infrastructure.

Leverage Public Investment for Long-term Value (Co-governance Models / Subsidy)

Public leadership enables investment decisions that prioritise long-term social and environmental value rather than short-term financial return. Funding is directed toward durable improvements in space, comfort, and performance, without transferring costs to residents through rent increases. This approach recognises housing as essential infrastructure, where benefits accrue over time through reduced energy costs, improved wellbeing, and lower maintenance. The project demonstrates how public investment can unlock higher-quality outcomes while maintaining affordability and ensuring equitable access to improved living conditions.

Maximise Value Through Structural Reuse (Circularity)

By retaining the existing structural frame, the project significantly reduces material consumption, waste, and construction time compared to demolition and rebuilding. This approach lowers embodied carbon while freeing up resources to invest in meaningful spatial upgrades, such as extensions and improved interiors. Structural reuse allows the project to deliver high-impact improvements at lower cost, demonstrating that existing buildings can be valuable assets rather than liabilities. It establishes reuse as a default strategy for achieving both economic efficiency and environmental performance in housing transformation.





PROLIGHT

Team	ProLight Consortium
Location	Multiple EU Locations
Programme/ Funding	Horizon Europe
Start & End Dates	June 2021 - May 2025
Primary Context	ProLight responds to the economic context of fragmented and expensive retrofit delivery by implementing standardised, prefabricated, and aggregated retrofit solutions to enable scalable and cost-efficient upgrades.

CASE OVERVIEW

ProLight is a European innovation project focused on developing scalable, standardised retrofit solutions for existing housing stock. Rather than treating retrofit as a bespoke, one-off intervention, ProLight explores how industrialised processes, prefabrication, and coordinated delivery models can accelerate building upgrades across entire districts. The project addresses the dual challenge of energy transition and housing affordability by reducing costs, timelines, and complexity. By combining technical innovation with governance and financing mechanisms, ProLight demonstrates how retrofit can move from isolated exemplars to system-level transformation, enabling cities to upgrade large volumes of housing efficiently while maintaining social and environmental goals.



ProLight - European Science Communication Institute, 2025

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to scale retrofit delivery beyond individual projects
- How to reduce cost, time, and complexity of upgrades
- How to ensure affordability while improving performance

CONTEXT:

- Large volumes of ageing housing stock requiring energy upgrades
- Slow and fragmented retrofit delivery processes across Europe
- Rising energy costs and increasing energy poverty
- Need for scalable solutions to meet climate targets

NEB VALUES:

Sustainable: ProLight delivers significant energy and carbon reductions through scalable retrofit systems that improve building performance at scale.

Beautiful: While focused on systems, the project supports improved spatial quality and comfort through better-designed building envelopes and living conditions.

Together: By prioritising affordability and public coordination, the project ensures that large-scale retrofit benefits are accessible to all residents.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Standardise Retrofit Solutions for Scale (Better Use of Existing Buildings / Public-Private-People Partnerships)

ProLight demonstrates how standardising retrofit components and processes can significantly reduce costs and enable large-scale delivery. By developing repeatable, prefabricated solutions for façade upgrades and energy improvements, the project reduces design time, labour intensity, and uncertainty across multiple buildings. This approach allows housing providers to move from one-off interventions to programme-based delivery. Standardisation increases efficiency while maintaining quality, showing that affordability can be achieved not only through cost reduction, but through the ability to scale consistent, high-performance retrofit solutions across entire housing portfolios.

Aggregate Projects to Unlock Economies of Scale (Public-Private-People Partnerships / Co-governance Models)

A key innovation of ProLight is the aggregation of multiple housing projects into coordinated retrofit programmes. By bundling demand across buildings or districts, the project creates sufficient scale to attract investment, streamline procurement, and reduce unit costs. This approach improves bargaining power with suppliers and contractors while enabling more efficient delivery logistics. Aggregation transforms fragmented, small-scale retrofit into a structured pipeline of work, making large-scale transformation financially viable and operationally manageable for housing providers and municipalities.

Use Prefabrication to Reduce Time, Cost, and Disruption (Low-carbon / Better Use of Existing Buildings)

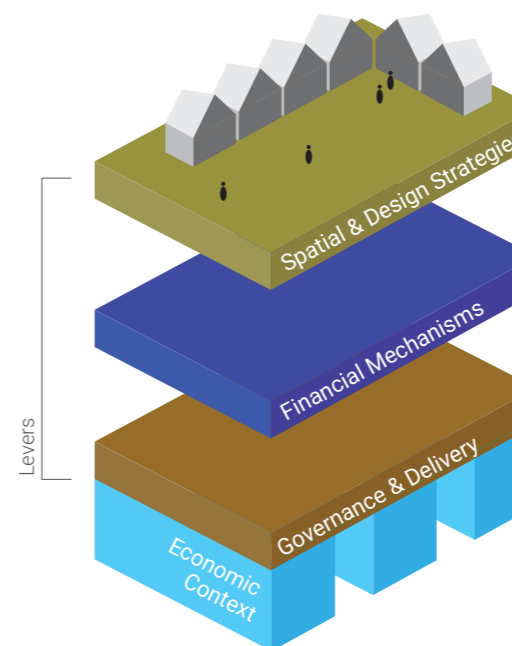
ProLight applies prefabricated façade and building components that can be manufactured off-site and installed quickly. This reduces construction time, limits on-site disruption for residents, and improves quality control. Faster installation lowers labour costs and minimises the need for temporary relocation. Prefabrication also supports consistency across projects, ensuring reliable performance outcomes. The approach demonstrates how industrialised construction methods can accelerate retrofit delivery while protecting residents and maintaining affordability.

Leverage Public Coordination to Enable Delivery (Co-governance Models)

The project highlights the importance of public sector coordination in organising retrofit at scale. Municipalities and housing authorities play a key role in aligning stakeholders, aggregating demand, and facilitating access to funding. This coordination reduces fragmentation in the retrofit market and enables more strategic, long-term planning. Public leadership ensures that affordability and social outcomes remain central, while also providing the stability needed for private sector participation. The project shows that systemic change in housing delivery requires strong institutional frameworks.

Combine Energy Performance with Cost Efficiency (Low-carbon / Better Use of Existing Buildings)

ProLight integrates energy efficiency improvements - such as façade upgrades, insulation, and system optimisation - into a cost-effective delivery model. By reducing energy demand, the project lowers operational costs for residents while contributing to climate targets. Crucially, these improvements are delivered in a way that balances upfront investment with long-term savings. The project demonstrates that environmental performance and affordability are not competing objectives, but can be aligned through efficient design, delivery, and financing strategies.





SUPERSHINE project - Lighthouse Riga, Latvia. APBRT - Agency for the Promotion of the European Research

SUPERSHINE

Team	SUPERSHINE Consortium
Location	Multiple EU Locations
Programme/ Funding	Horizon Europe
Start & End Dates	November 2022 - March 2026
Primary Context	SUPERSHINE responds to the economic context of energy poverty and underfunded social housing retrofit by combining district-scale renovation, public-private delivery models and Energy Performance Contracts to reduce upfront costs, improve performance certainty and lower energy bills for vulnerable households.

CASE OVERVIEW

SUPERSHINE is a Horizon Europe initiative focused on renovating social housing to reduce energy poverty and accelerate the transition to low-carbon living. The project supports public authorities in upgrading social housing districts through integrated technical, financial and governance models. Its importance lies not only in the physical retrofit measures, but in the way it explores financial structures – including guaranteed savings, shared savings and energy supply contract models – that help local authorities overcome upfront cost barriers and reduce the risk of underperformance. SUPERSHINE therefore positions retrofit as both a climate action and a social affordability tool.



SUPERSHINE project - Lighthouse Herring, Denmark, New Orangery, APRE - Agency for the Promotion of the European Research

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to reduce energy poverty through large-scale social housing retrofit
- How to overcome high upfront costs that prevent public authorities from renovating at scale
- How to align climate targets, affordability and long-term public value

CONTEXT:

- High levels of energy poverty among households living in inefficient social housing
- Public authorities facing capital constraints and competing investment priorities
- Need to renovate ageing housing stock while protecting tenants from rent or cost increases
- Growing use of performance-based financing models to make retrofit financially viable
- Pressure to meet climate targets while ensuring a socially just energy transition

NEB VALUES:

Sustainable: SUPERSHINE reduces energy demand and emissions by supporting energy-efficient renovation of social housing districts, integrating energy performance with wider low-carbon district strategies.

Beautiful: The project improves everyday housing quality through warmer, healthier and more comfortable homes, showing that energy renovation can also improve dignity and liveability.

Together: By targeting social housing and energy-poor households, SUPERSHINE ensures that the benefits of the energy transition are directed toward communities most exposed to high energy costs.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Use Energy Performance Contracts to De-risk Retrofit Investment (Energy Performance Contracts / Public-Private-People Partnerships)

SUPERSHINE demonstrates the importance of performance-based financing models, including guaranteed savings and shared savings contracts, for social housing retrofit. These models allow local authorities to offset upfront costs by linking investment to future energy savings, while transferring some performance risk to specialist delivery partners. This is particularly valuable where municipalities lack capital or technical capacity. Energy Performance Contracts help make retrofit more bankable, measurable and accountable, ensuring that promised savings are central to the delivery model rather than an uncertain future benefit.

Target Retrofit Investment Where Energy Poverty is Highest (Subsidy / Co-governance Models)

SUPERSHINE prioritises social housing and households struggling with high energy bills, ensuring that retrofit investment delivers direct social and economic impact. By targeting buildings where poor energy performance and low household income intersect, the project maximises the value of public intervention. This approach ensures that energy renovation is not captured only by better-off households or easier-to-finance buildings. It positions retrofit as part of a just transition, where climate investment directly reduces household vulnerability and improves everyday living conditions.

Deliver Retrofit at District Scale (Public-Private-People Partnerships / Co-governance Models)

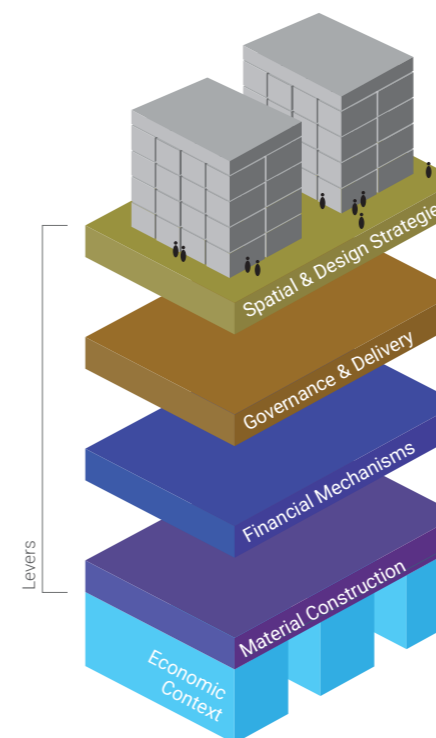
SUPERSHINE moves beyond individual building upgrades by organising renovation at district scale. This enables more efficient procurement, coordinated technical delivery and integration with wider systems such as smart grids, renewable energy, water and waste management. Working at district level reduces fragmentation and creates a stronger investment pipeline for public authorities and private delivery partners. The approach demonstrates that large-scale social housing retrofit requires coordination across buildings, infrastructure and governance, rather than isolated interventions delivered one block at a time.

Protect Tenants from Cost Increases During Renovation (Subsidy / Co-governance Models)

A central lesson from SUPERSHINE is that retrofit must be designed so that vulnerable residents benefit from lower energy costs without facing unaffordable rent increases or repayment burdens. Subsidy, public funding and performance-based financing can be combined to cover upfront costs and share savings fairly. This prevents energy renovation from becoming a driver of exclusion. The project demonstrates that affordability safeguards must be built into retrofit finance from the beginning, especially where works are carried out in social housing or low-income districts.

Combine Technical Retrofit with Resident Engagement (Participatory Processes / Community Programmes)

SUPERSHINE recognises that technical upgrades only deliver lasting impact when residents understand, accept and benefit from them. Engagement helps align renovation measures with real household needs, supports correct use of new systems and builds trust in the process. This is especially important in energy-poor communities, where residents may be sceptical of works that appear to risk higher costs or disruption. By combining technical retrofit with social engagement, the project strengthens uptake, performance and long-term value for residents.





SHAPE - Wientaierlasse, European Responsible Housing Awards 2025

SHAPE-EU / SHAPE II

Team	SHAPE Consortium
Location	Multiple EU Cities
Programme/ Funding	Horizon Europe
Start & End Dates	January 2023 - December 2026
Primary Context	SHAPE responds to the economic context of limited municipal capacity to deliver affordable housing by implementing governance, financing, and partnership frameworks that enable large-scale housing provision.

CASE OVERVIEW

SHAPE-EU / SHAPE II is a European initiative focused on improving the ability of cities to deliver affordable and sustainable housing at scale. Rather than directly constructing buildings, the project works at the system level, supporting municipalities with tools, frameworks, and knowledge to navigate complex housing delivery challenges. By addressing governance, financing, and collaboration, SHAPE enables cities to move from fragmented, project-based approaches to coordinated, long-term housing strategies. The project demonstrates that affordability and resilience depend not only on design, but on the systems and institutions that enable delivery.



Left: SHAPE - Casernes des Reuilly, Merlin Dauge / Ville de Paris - Best practice in the European Affordable Housing Initiative SHAPE I
 Right: SHAPE - Esporles, Best Practice in the Affordable Housing Initiative European Partnership SHAPE II

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to enable cities to deliver affordable housing at scale
- How to overcome fragmented governance and delivery systems
- How to align financing with long-term affordability and resilience goals

CONTEXT:

- Housing affordability crisis across European cities
- Limited municipal capacity to manage complex development processes
- Fragmented funding and governance structures
- Increasing need to align housing delivery with climate goals

NEB VALUES:

- Sustainable:** The project supports the integration of environmental performance into housing delivery systems at scale.
- Beautiful:** By enabling better design processes and outcomes, the project contributes to higher-quality living environments.
- Together:** Strong emphasis on collaboration and public leadership ensures inclusive and equitable housing delivery.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Build Municipal Capacity to Deliver Housing (Co-governance Models)

SHAPE demonstrates that cities require strong internal capacity to manage the complexity of housing delivery. This includes technical expertise, governance structures, and strategic planning tools that enable municipalities to coordinate projects effectively. By strengthening these capabilities, the project allows cities to move beyond reactive, project-by-project approaches toward proactive, long-term housing strategies. This capacity building reduces delays, improves efficiency, and ensures that affordability and resilience goals are consistently embedded in delivery processes.

Enable Cross-sector Partnerships for Delivery (Public-Private-People Partnerships)

The project highlights the importance of collaboration between public authorities, private developers, and community stakeholders. By facilitating partnerships, SHAPE helps align different interests and resources, reducing fragmentation and improving outcomes. These partnerships enable access to expertise, finance, and innovation that individual actors may lack. The project demonstrates that delivering affordable and resilient housing requires coordinated effort across sectors, with clear roles and shared objectives.

Develop Alternative Financing Models (Cooperative Finance)

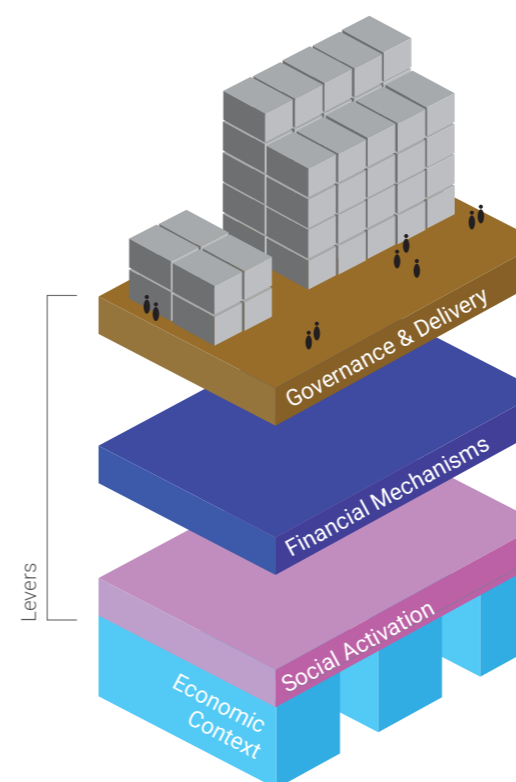
SHAPE explores financing approaches that move beyond traditional market-led development, including cooperative finance, public investment, and blended funding models. These approaches help stabilise costs and reduce reliance on speculative markets, making housing more accessible. By aligning financial structures with long-term social and environmental goals, the project ensures that affordability is maintained over time. This demonstrates that innovative financing is essential for delivering resilient housing systems.

Align Policy and Planning with Housing Delivery (Co-governance Models)

The project supports the integration of housing objectives into broader planning and policy frameworks. By aligning regulations, zoning, and climate targets with delivery processes, SHAPE ensures that projects can be implemented more efficiently. This coordination reduces barriers and accelerates development while maintaining quality standards. The project shows that policy alignment is critical for enabling scalable and consistent housing delivery.

Promote Knowledge Sharing and Replication (Public-Private-People Partnerships)

SHAPE facilitates the exchange of knowledge and best practices between cities, enabling successful approaches to be adapted and replicated in different contexts. This reduces duplication of effort and accelerates learning across the sector. By creating networks and shared resources, the project strengthens collective capacity and supports wider impact. It demonstrates that collaboration and knowledge transfer are key to scaling affordable and resilient housing solutions.





COLLEGIUM ACADEMICUM

Team	DGJ Architektur + Collegium Academicum Cooperative
Location	Heidelberg, Germany
Programme/ Funding	Cooperative / self-build student housing
Start & End Dates	January 2018 - October 2022
Primary Context	Collegium Academicum responds to the economic context of student housing shortages and rising costs by implementing self-build, cooperative governance, and low-cost construction strategies.

CASE OVERVIEW

Collegium Academicum is a student-led cooperative housing project in Heidelberg that combines self-build, timber construction, and collective governance to deliver affordable accommodation. Developed through strong resident participation, the project enables students to contribute directly to the construction process, reducing labour costs while strengthening ownership and community. The use of sustainable materials and efficient design further lowers environmental impact. By aligning affordability, participation, and environmental performance, Collegium Academicum demonstrates how alternative delivery models can create resilient housing solutions tailored to specific user groups.



Collegium Academicum - Image credits: Thilo Ross, Heidelberg; source: DGJ Architektur GmbH, Frankfurt am Main.

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to deliver affordable student housing in high-cost urban contexts
- How to reduce construction costs without compromising quality
- How to combine participation, sustainability, and scalability

CONTEXT:

- Rising demand for affordable student housing
- Limited access to low-cost accommodation in university cities
- Growing interest in participatory and cooperative housing models
- Need to reduce environmental impact of new construction

NEB VALUES:

Sustainable: The use of timber construction and efficient design reduces embodied carbon and environmental impact.

Beautiful: Simple, well-crafted spaces and shared environments create a strong sense of identity and belonging.

Together: Resident participation in both construction and governance fosters a strong, collaborative community.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Enable Self-build to Reduce Development Costs (Participatory Processes)

Collegium Academicum demonstrates how involving residents directly in the construction process can significantly reduce labour costs while building a strong sense of ownership. Students contribute to elements of the build, lowering overall project expenditure and making housing more affordable. This approach also strengthens community bonds before occupation, as participants collectively shape their living environment. While requiring careful coordination and support, self-build offers a viable strategy for reducing costs and increasing engagement, particularly in contexts with limited funding.

Use Cooperative Governance to Maintain Affordability (Collectives)

The project is organised as a cooperative, ensuring that housing remains affordable over time by removing speculative pressures. Residents collectively manage the building and make decisions about its operation, aligning governance with long-term community benefit. This structure stabilises costs and allows the project to adapt to changing needs. Cooperative governance also fosters responsibility and engagement, demonstrating how alternative ownership models can provide durable, resilient housing solutions.

Apply Low-carbon Construction Methods (Low-carbon)

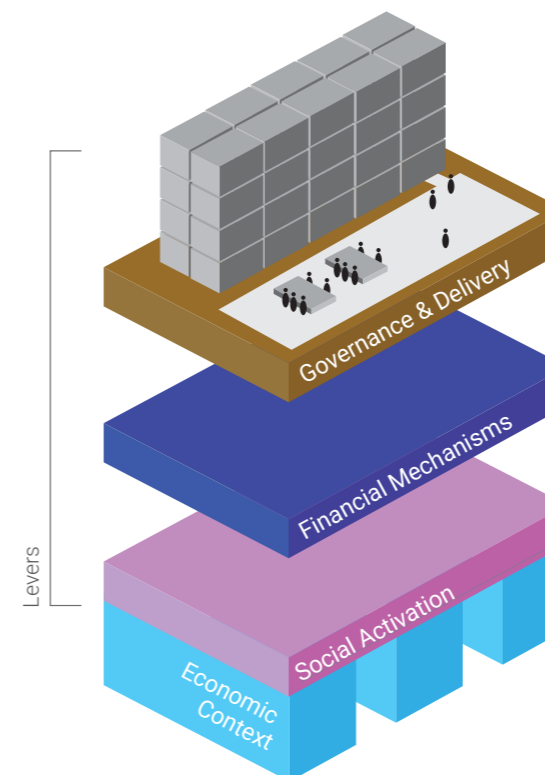
Timber construction is used to significantly reduce the embodied carbon of the building while maintaining cost efficiency. Prefabricated timber elements allow for faster construction and lower material impact compared to conventional methods. This approach aligns environmental performance with economic viability, showing that low-carbon construction can be both practical and affordable. The project demonstrates how material choice can contribute to resilience without increasing costs.

Combine Compact Private Units with Shared Spaces (Shared Space)

The design balances smaller private rooms with generous shared facilities, including kitchens, study areas, and social spaces. This reduces individual unit size and cost while maintaining a high quality of life. Shared spaces encourage interaction and collaboration, strengthening community ties. This approach demonstrates how spatial organisation can improve affordability and social cohesion simultaneously, particularly in housing for specific groups such as students.

Align Design, Delivery, and Community Objectives (Public-Private-People Partnerships)

Collegium Academicum integrates design, construction, and governance into a unified process driven by the needs of its users. By aligning these elements, the project ensures that decisions support both affordability and long-term usability. This integrated approach reduces inefficiencies and creates a more resilient housing model. The project shows that successful delivery depends on coordination between technical, financial, and social factors.





Brownfield Budapest Cooperative Space - Municipality of Budapest

BROWNFIELD BUDAPEST COOPERATIVE SPACE

Team	Local Cooperative + Design/Planning Partners
Location	Budapest, Hungary
Programme/ Funding	Cooperative / mixed funding model
Start Date	January 2020
Primary Context	Brownfield Budapest responds to the economic context of underused industrial land and high redevelopment costs by implementing cooperative, incremental regeneration strategies.

CASE OVERVIEW

Brownfield Budapest Cooperative Space is a regeneration initiative that transforms underutilised industrial land into a cooperative, mixed-use environment. Rather than relying on large-scale, capital-intensive development, the project adopts an incremental approach, combining adaptive reuse with new, low-cost interventions. Cooperative ownership ensures long-term affordability and collective control, while shared spaces maximise the efficiency of land use. By working with existing conditions and building over time, the project demonstrates how brownfield sites can be reactivated in a flexible, resource-efficient way that supports both affordability and resilience.



Brownfield Budapest Cooperative Space - Municipality of Budapest

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to activate brownfield land with limited financial resources
- How to deliver affordable housing within cooperative structures
- How to balance incremental development with long-term planning

CONTEXT:

- Underused industrial land within urban areas
- High cost of conventional redevelopment
- Limited access to affordable housing
- Growing interest in cooperative and community-led models

NEB VALUES:

Sustainable: The project reduces material use and environmental impact through reuse and incremental development.

Beautiful: The combination of old and new creates a layered, adaptable urban environment.

Together: Cooperative ownership and shared spaces foster collective responsibility and community life.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Activate Brownfield Sites Through Incremental Development (Circularity)

The project demonstrates how brownfield land can be brought into use through phased, incremental development rather than large upfront investment. By starting with small, adaptable interventions, the project reduces financial risk and allows the site to evolve over time. This approach enables continuous use and improvement, rather than waiting for full redevelopment funding. It also allows development to respond to changing needs and conditions. The project shows that incremental strategies can unlock complex sites while maintaining affordability and flexibility.

Use Cooperative Ownership to Stabilise Costs (Collectives)

Cooperative ownership ensures that land and housing remain outside speculative markets, stabilising costs over the long term. Residents collectively manage and make decisions about the development, aligning financial and social objectives. This reduces exposure to market fluctuations and ensures that affordability is maintained. The model also builds a strong sense of ownership and responsibility among participants. The project demonstrates how collective governance can support both economic resilience and long-term housing stability.

Combine Reuse with Low-cost New Interventions (Circularity / Low-carbon)

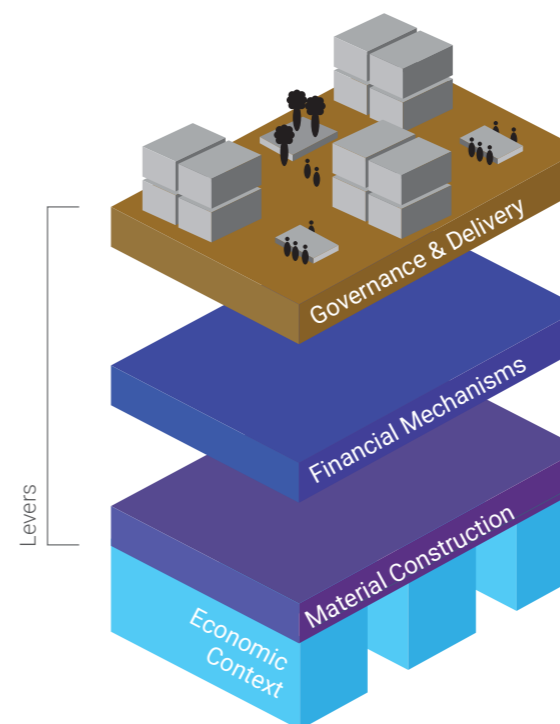
The project works with existing industrial structures where possible, supplementing them with simple, low-cost new construction. This reduces material use and construction costs while allowing for flexible adaptation of space. By combining reuse with targeted additions, the project maximises the value of existing assets while meeting new needs. This approach demonstrates how hybrid strategies can deliver both environmental and economic benefits in regeneration contexts.

Design Shared Spaces to Maximise Land Use Efficiency (Shared Space)

Shared facilities are central to the project, allowing multiple users to access resources and amenities collectively. This reduces the need for duplication and lowers individual costs, while also creating opportunities for social interaction. Shared spaces support a more efficient use of land, particularly in constrained urban environments. The project shows how spatial design can enhance both affordability and community resilience through collective use.

Allow Flexibility for Long-term Adaptation (Circularity)

The development is designed to evolve over time, with flexible spaces that can be adapted as needs change. This reduces the need for costly redevelopment in the future and allows the project to remain relevant over the long term. Flexibility also supports diverse uses and user groups, increasing resilience. The project demonstrates that designing for change is essential in uncertain economic and environmental conditions.



SOCIAL PRIMARY CONTEXT





drOp - Ayuntamiento de Armua, 2025

drOp

Team	drOp Project Consortium
Location	Multiple EU Locations
Programme/ Funding	Horizon Europe
Start & End Dates	January 2023 - December 2026
Primary Context	drOp responds to the social context of under-resourced neighbourhoods and limited access to large-scale investment by implementing incremental, co-designed interventions that enable gradual and community-led transformation.

CASE OVERVIEW

drOp is a neighbourhood-scale initiative that explores how small, incremental interventions can collectively transform urban environments. Rather than relying on large, capital-intensive redevelopment, the project focuses on co-designed, low-cost actions that improve environmental performance and social cohesion over time. By integrating green infrastructure, spatial upgrades, and community engagement, drOp demonstrates how transformation can be distributed and adaptive. The project positions residents as active participants in change, showing that resilience and affordability can be achieved through continuous, locally driven processes rather than singular, top-down interventions.



drOp - Ayuntamiento de Ermua, 2025



CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to deliver meaningful housing and environmental improvements with limited resources
- How to align physical interventions with community needs
- How to build long-term resilience through incremental change

CONTEXT:

- Fragmented neighbourhoods with limited access to investment
- Increasing climate pressures at local scale (heat, water, biodiversity)
- Low capacity for large-scale redevelopment
- Need for community-led and adaptable solutions

NEB VALUES:

- Sustainable:** The project integrates green infrastructure and low-impact interventions to improve environmental performance over time.
- Beautiful:** Incremental upgrades enhance the quality and usability of everyday spaces.
- Together:** Co-design processes place communities at the centre of transformation, strengthening ownership and cohesion.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Implement Incremental Retrofit Strategies (Better Use of Existing Buildings)

drOp demonstrates how small-scale, phased interventions can collectively deliver significant improvements without requiring large upfront investment. By breaking transformation into manageable steps, the project reduces financial risk and allows adaptation over time. This approach enables housing and neighbourhood upgrades to respond to changing needs and conditions, rather than being fixed at the point of delivery. Incremental retrofit also allows resources to be deployed more efficiently, making it particularly relevant in contexts where funding is limited but the need for improvement is urgent.

Embed Co-design to Ensure Relevance and Uptake (Participatory Processes)

A core principle of drOp is the active involvement of residents in shaping interventions. Through co-design processes, communities identify priorities, contribute ideas, and influence outcomes. This ensures that solutions are locally appropriate and widely accepted, increasing the likelihood of long-term success. Co-design also builds trust between stakeholders and strengthens community capacity. The project shows that participation is not just a social benefit, but a practical tool for improving the effectiveness and sustainability of housing and environmental interventions.

Integrate Green Infrastructure into Everyday Spaces (Green Infrastructure)

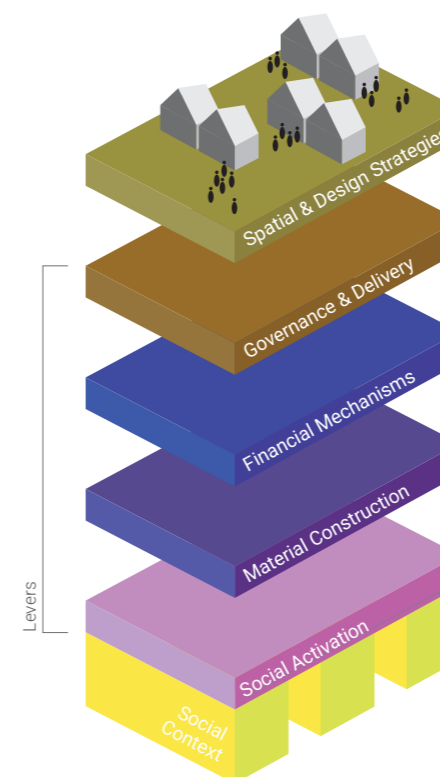
drOp incorporates planting, water management, and shading strategies directly into neighbourhood spaces. These interventions help mitigate heat, manage stormwater, and improve biodiversity, while also enhancing the quality of public and semi-public areas. By embedding environmental performance into existing urban fabric, the project avoids the need for large, standalone infrastructure. This distributed approach is both cost-effective and scalable, demonstrating how climate resilience can be achieved through small, integrated actions across multiple sites.

Use Low-cost Interventions to Catalyse Change (Community Programmes)

The project prioritises interventions that are affordable, quick to implement, and highly visible. These actions create immediate impact, building momentum and encouraging further investment and participation. By demonstrating value early, drOp helps unlock additional resources and support. This approach is particularly effective in underinvested areas, where large-scale projects may not be feasible. It shows how strategic, low-cost actions can act as catalysts for broader transformation.

Build Local Capacity for Ongoing Transformation (Community Programmes)

Beyond physical interventions, drOp invests in building local knowledge and capability. Through workshops, engagement processes, and collaborative delivery, residents and stakeholders develop the skills needed to sustain and extend improvements over time. This creates a foundation for ongoing transformation that is not dependent on external actors. The project demonstrates that resilience is not only about physical infrastructure, but also about the ability of communities to adapt, maintain, and evolve their environments.





AHA Budapest - Municipality of Budapest, 2023-2026, Image credits: Adrienne Galloy / Márton Merész / Mókembe

AHA BUDAPEST

Team	AHA Budapest Consortium
Location	Budapest, Hungary
Programme/ Funding	European Urban Initiative – Innovative Actions / New European Bauhaus
Start & End Dates	January 2019 - December 2023
Primary Context	AHA Budapest responds to the social context of housing insecurity and energy poverty by combining affordable housing supply, private vacant-home mobilisation, early intervention systems and integrated social support into a new municipal housing service model.

CASE OVERVIEW

AHA Budapest is an EU-funded initiative designed to address Budapest's intertwined housing affordability and energy poverty crises. Led by the Municipality of Budapest, the project combines the conversion of a vacant former school into near-zero-energy social housing with broader housing-system innovation. It develops a municipal housing office, a data-driven Early Warning System, flexible housing options and a Social Housing Agency-style model to make affordable letting more attractive for private landlords. By combining physical reuse, social support, energy advice and institutional reform, AHA Budapest positions housing as a preventative, inclusive and resilient public service.



AHA Budapest - Municipality of Budapest, 2023-2026, Image credits: Adrienne Gallov / Márton Merész / Mókembé

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to expand affordable housing supply in a city with limited social rented stock
- How to prevent housing insecurity before it escalates into eviction or homelessness
- How to make social housing attractive, stable and scalable for public and private actors

CONTEXT:

- High levels of housing insecurity and social vulnerability
- Underutilised public and private building stock
- Limited access to affordable housing for at-risk groups
- Need for integrated approaches linking housing and social services

NEB VALUES:

- Sustainable:** The project reduces material use and emissions through adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- Beautiful:** Improvements to living conditions create safe, dignified, and supportive environments.
- Together:** By combining housing with social services, the project strengthens inclusion and community support networks.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Convert Vacant Public Buildings into Near-Zero-Energy Homes (Circularity / Better Use of Existing Buildings)

AHA Budapest demonstrates how unused public buildings can be converted into affordable, energy-efficient housing rather than remaining vacant or being sold off. Its Demo Hub converts a former school into homes for households experiencing housing difficulty, showing how public assets can be repurposed to expand supply quickly and visibly. This approach reduces embodied carbon, avoids new land take and creates a model for other municipal buildings. It links reuse directly to affordability, dignity and environmental performance.

Use a Social Housing Agency Model to Mobilise Vacant Private Homes (Co-governance Models / Public-Private-People Partnerships)

AHA Budapest shows how a Social Housing Agency model can bring vacant private homes into affordable use by making participation more attractive for landlords. The agency can mediate between owners and tenants, reduce landlord risk, support tenant selection, manage rent collection and provide a trusted public interface. This is especially relevant across Europe, where vacant private properties are a major untapped housing resource. The model expands affordable supply without relying only on new construction or limited municipal stock.

Deploy an Early Warning System and Housing Office to Prevent Eviction (Co-governance Models / Community Programmes)

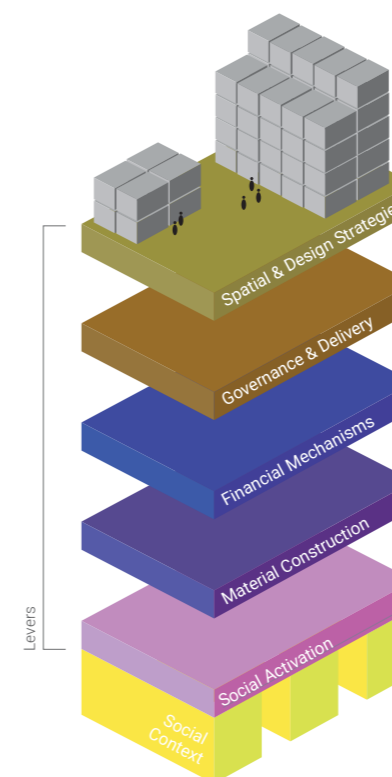
A central innovation of AHA Budapest is its Early Warning System, which identifies households at risk of rent arrears, energy debt or housing exclusion before crisis point. By working with utilities, energy providers, social services and district municipalities, the local authority can intervene early with advice, support or financial measures. The Municipal Housing Office provides a single access point for this support. Together, these tools shift housing policy from emergency response to prevention, reducing eviction and homelessness risk.

Link Energy Advice and Retrofit Support to Housing Security (Subsidy / Better Use of Existing Buildings)

AHA Budapest connects housing affordability with energy affordability by combining advice, retrofit support and financial tools such as grants or revolving funds. This recognises that households can lose housing stability not only through rent pressure, but also through unaffordable energy bills. By improving energy performance and supporting residents before arrears escalate, the project strengthens both economic and environmental resilience. It demonstrates that affordable housing policy must address the running costs of homes, not just access to dwellings.

Create Flexible Housing Pathways and Build Trust Through Participation (Participatory Processes / Community Programmes)

AHA Budapest does not rely on a single housing solution. Alongside the Demo Hub, it tests flexible options such as cohabitation, flat exchange and supported routes into more stable housing. Future residents and neighbours are also engaged to reduce stigma around social housing and build trust in the project. This combination of flexibility and participation helps housing support respond to different household needs. It reframes social housing as dignified, attractive and beneficial to the wider neighbourhood.





La Borda - 2026. Image credits: Adrià Garcia i Mafeu

LA BORDA

Team	Lacol + La Borda Cooperative
Location	Barcelona, Spain
Programme/	Cooperative housing model on public land
Start & End Dates	January 2015 - June 2018
Primary Context	La Borda responds to the social context of housing speculation and affordability crisis by implementing cooperative ownership and shared living models that remove housing from the market.

CASE OVERVIEW

La Borda is a pioneering cooperative housing project in Barcelona that challenges conventional housing models by removing homes from the speculative market. Developed through a resident-led cooperative and designed by Lacol, the project is built on public land and financed through collective mechanisms. It combines private living spaces with extensive shared facilities, reducing individual costs while enhancing quality of life. The project demonstrates how alternative ownership structures, combined with participatory design, can deliver stable, affordable, and socially resilient housing that remains accessible over time.



La Borda - 2026, Image Credits: Adrià Garcia i Mateu

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to deliver permanently affordable housing outside speculative markets
- How to balance private living with collective space and governance
- How to align financing, land use, and community ownership

CONTEXT:

- Rising housing costs and speculative pressure in urban markets
- Limited access to affordable housing for residents
- Growing interest in cooperative and non-market housing models
- Need for housing systems that support long-term stability and community

NEB VALUES:

- Sustainable:** The project uses efficient design and shared resources to reduce overall material and energy consumption.
- Beautiful:** High-quality shared and private spaces create a strong sense of identity and everyday comfort.
- Together:** Cooperative governance and shared living foster strong social cohesion and collective responsibility.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Establish Cooperative Ownership to Remove Speculation (Collectives)

La Borda demonstrates how cooperative ownership can stabilise housing costs by removing properties from the speculative market. Residents collectively own and manage the building, ensuring that housing remains affordable over time. This model prevents price inflation driven by market forces and aligns decision-making with long-term community benefit. By separating housing from profit-driven dynamics, the project creates a more resilient and equitable system. It shows that ownership structures are a critical lever in delivering sustained affordability.

Use Shared Spaces to Reduce Individual Housing Costs (Shared Space)

The project incorporates extensive shared facilities - such as kitchens, workspaces, and communal areas - reducing the need for larger private units. This allows overall construction and living costs to be lowered while maintaining high quality of life. Shared spaces also support social interaction and resource efficiency, enabling residents to access more amenities collectively than they could individually. This approach demonstrates how spatial design can directly contribute to affordability while strengthening community life.

Leverage Public Land to Enable Non-market Housing (Co-governance Models)

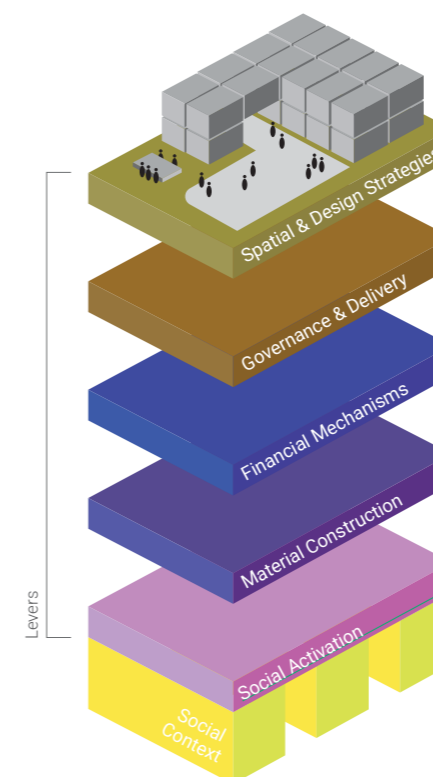
La Borda is built on publicly owned land, which is leased to the cooperative rather than sold. This removes land cost from the development equation, significantly reducing overall housing costs. Public land also ensures long-term control over use, preventing future speculation. This approach demonstrates how municipalities can play a key role in enabling affordable housing by providing access to land, aligning public resources with social objectives.

Embed Co-design in Development Processes (Participatory Processes)

Residents are actively involved in the design and development of the project, ensuring that the building reflects their needs and priorities. This participatory approach improves functionality and strengthens a sense of ownership among residents. Co-design also builds community from the outset, creating social cohesion that supports long-term stability. The project demonstrates that involving users in decision-making leads to more effective and resilient housing solutions.

Align Financing with Collective Governance (Cooperative Finance)

The project uses cooperative financing models, including collective loans and shared financial responsibility, to fund development. This approach reduces reliance on speculative investment and aligns financial structures with long-term affordability goals. By distributing risk and responsibility across the cooperative, the model creates financial resilience and stability. It demonstrates how aligning finance with governance is essential for sustaining non-market housing models.





Gleis 21 - Image credits: Hertha Hurnaus, 2019

GLEIS 21

Team	einszueins architektur + Gleis 21 Cooperative
Location	Vienna, Austria
Programme/ Funding	Limited-profit housing + cooperative model
Start & End Dates	January 2016 - December 2019
Primary Context	Gleis 21 responds to the social context of demand for participatory and community-led housing by implementing cooperative governance embedded within public housing systems.

CASE OVERVIEW

Gleis 21 is a cooperative housing project located within Vienna's Seestadt Aspern development, combining resident-led governance with the city's established limited-profit housing system. Designed by einszueins architektur, the project integrates private apartments with a wide range of shared spaces, including communal kitchens, workshops, and cultural areas. By embedding cooperative principles within a strong public housing framework, Gleis 21 demonstrates how affordability, social cohesion, and high-quality design can be delivered simultaneously. The project offers a scalable model for combining bottom-up participation with top-down support in urban housing delivery.



Gleis 21 - Image credits: Hertha Hurnaus, 2019

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to integrate cooperative housing within existing public systems
- How to balance affordability with high-quality design and shared amenities
- How to support long-term community governance and stability

CONTEXT:

- Strong public housing tradition in Vienna
- Growing demand for participatory and community-led housing models
- Need to maintain affordability in new urban developments
- Increasing interest in shared living and collective resource use

NEB VALUES:

- Sustainable:** Efficient spatial design and shared resources reduce overall consumption and environmental impact.
- Beautiful:** High-quality architecture and generous shared spaces enhance everyday living conditions.
- Together:** Cooperative governance and shared facilities foster strong social interaction and collective identity.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Embed Cooperative Models within Public Housing Systems (Collectives / Co-governance Models)

Gleis 21 demonstrates how cooperative housing can be successfully integrated into established public housing frameworks. By combining resident-led governance with Vienna's limited-profit housing model, the project benefits from both stability and participation. Public systems provide financial security and regulatory support, while cooperative structures enable local decision-making and long-term stewardship. This hybrid approach reduces risk while maintaining flexibility, showing that affordability and community control can coexist when supported by strong institutional frameworks.

Use Shared Facilities to Enhance Quality and Reduce Costs (Shared Space)

The project incorporates extensive shared spaces, including communal kitchens, work areas, and social rooms, allowing private units to be more compact and cost-efficient. These shared facilities provide access to amenities that would be unaffordable at an individual level, increasing overall quality of life. At the same time, they encourage interaction and collaboration among residents. This approach demonstrates how spatial design can simultaneously reduce costs and strengthen social cohesion, making housing both more affordable and more liveable.

Enable Resident-led Governance and Long-term Stewardship (Collectives)

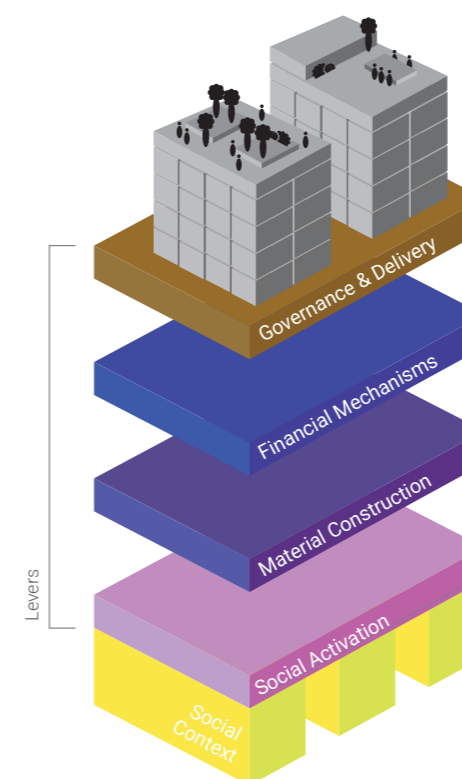
Residents play an active role in managing and maintaining the building, contributing to decision-making processes and ongoing operations. This involvement creates a strong sense of ownership and responsibility, supporting long-term stability and care for the building. Resident-led governance also allows the project to adapt over time to changing needs. The project demonstrates that empowering residents is essential for creating resilient housing communities that can sustain themselves beyond initial delivery.

Combine Public Support with Collective Financing (Cooperative Finance)

Gleis 21 uses a hybrid financial model that combines public funding mechanisms with cooperative investment from residents. This approach reduces reliance on speculative markets and ensures long-term affordability. Public support lowers initial costs, while collective financing distributes responsibility among residents. This alignment between funding and governance creates financial stability and resilience. The project shows how blending funding sources can unlock innovative housing models while maintaining economic viability.

Integrate Social and Cultural Functions into Housing (Community Programmes)

Beyond residential use, the project includes spaces for cultural activities, events, and community initiatives. These functions extend the role of housing beyond accommodation, creating a vibrant and active environment. By supporting social interaction and collective activities, the project strengthens community ties and enhances everyday life. This approach demonstrates that housing can act as social infrastructure, contributing to broader urban resilience and cohesion.





SHARE - Ayuntamiento de Fuenlabrada, Municipality of Fuenlabrada, 2026, Image credits: Estudio Entresitio

SHARE

Team	SHARE Consortium
Location	Multiple EU Locations
Programme/ Funding	EU-supported social housing initiative
Start & End Dates	January 2020 - December 2024
Primary Context	SHARE responds to the social context of ageing populations and social isolation by implementing intergenerational housing models integrated with care and community support systems.

CASE OVERVIEW

SHARE is an intergenerational housing initiative that combines residential provision with integrated care and support systems. The project is designed to address social isolation, ageing populations, and unequal access to services by embedding support directly within housing environments. By combining private living spaces with shared facilities and social programmes, SHARE creates environments that enable mutual support and long-term stability. The project demonstrates how housing can function as social infrastructure, improving wellbeing while reducing pressure on external healthcare and social systems.



SHARE - Ayuntamiento de Fuenlabrada, Municipality of Fuenlabrada, 2026, Image credits: Estudio Entresitio

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to address social isolation and ageing within housing models
- How to integrate care systems into everyday living environments
- How to deliver inclusive housing that supports long-term wellbeing

CONTEXT:

- Ageing populations across Europe
- Increasing social isolation and pressure on care systems
- Limited integration between housing and social services
- Need for inclusive and adaptable housing models

NEB VALUES:

- Sustainable:** The project reduces reliance on external systems by embedding care and support within housing environments.
- Beautiful:** Carefully designed shared and private spaces create comfortable, dignified living conditions.
- Together:** Intergenerational living and shared spaces foster strong social connections and mutual support.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Integrate Housing with Care and Support Systems (Community Programmes)

SHARE demonstrates how combining housing with embedded care services can improve long-term outcomes for residents while reducing pressure on external systems. By integrating support such as healthcare access, social programmes, and daily assistance into the housing model, the project addresses both physical and social needs. This approach creates a more stable and supportive living environment, particularly for vulnerable groups. It shows that housing can act as a platform for delivering essential services, strengthening resilience at both individual and community levels.

Use Shared Spaces to Enable Social Interaction and Support (Shared Space)

The project incorporates shared spaces designed to encourage interaction between residents, including communal kitchens, lounges, and activity areas. These spaces facilitate informal support networks, reducing reliance on formal care systems and improving overall wellbeing. Shared facilities also allow for more efficient use of space, lowering individual housing costs while enhancing quality of life. This approach demonstrates how spatial design can support both affordability and social resilience through collective use and interaction.

Promote Intergenerational Living Models (Community Programmes)

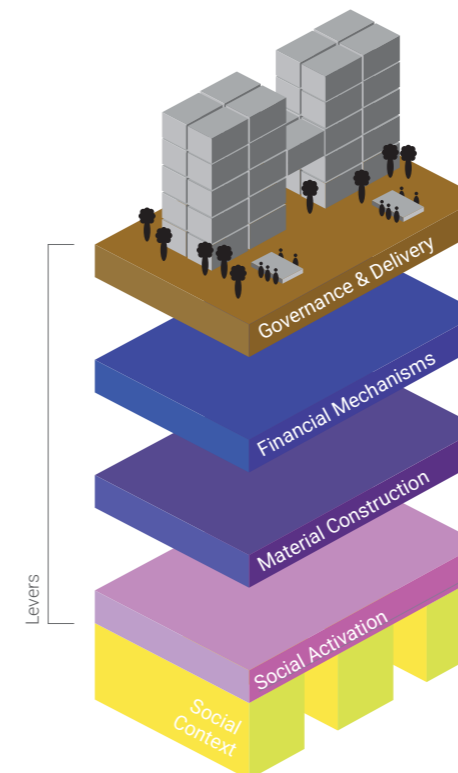
SHARE brings together residents of different age groups, creating opportunities for mutual support and knowledge exchange. Younger residents can provide informal assistance to older residents, while older residents contribute experience and stability to the community. This model reduces social isolation and strengthens community cohesion. By designing housing that supports diverse user groups, the project demonstrates how intergenerational living can enhance resilience and create more inclusive environments.

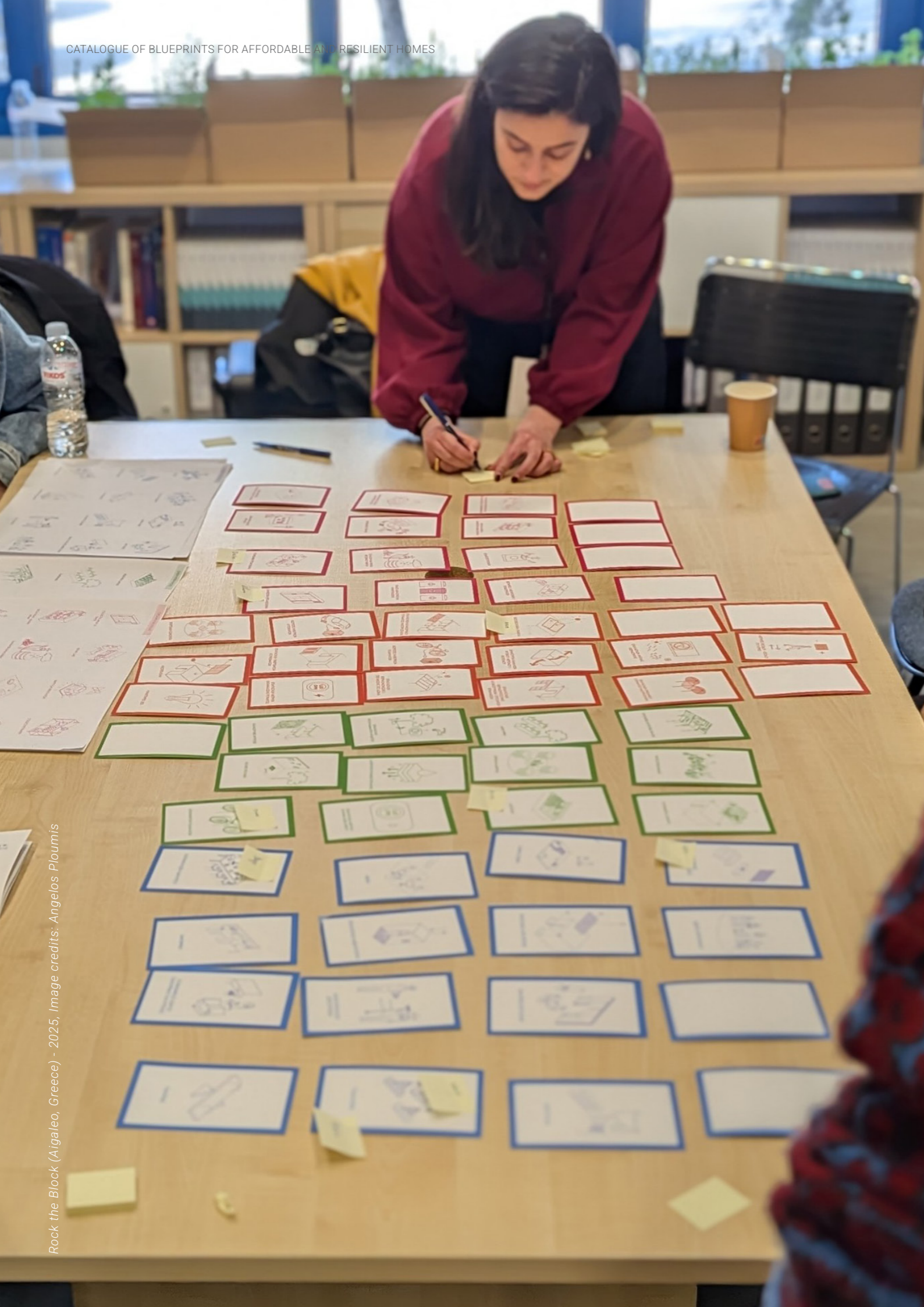
Adapt Existing Buildings for Inclusive Use (Better Use of Existing Buildings)

The project often works with existing building stock, adapting spaces to accommodate new uses and accessibility requirements. This reduces construction costs and environmental impact while enabling faster delivery. Retrofitting existing buildings also allows projects to be implemented within established communities, maintaining social continuity. This approach demonstrates how reuse can support both affordability and inclusion in housing delivery.

Align Social Programmes with Spatial Design (Community Programmes)

SHARE integrates social activities and programmes into the design and operation of housing, ensuring that spaces are actively used and maintained. This alignment creates environments that support engagement, participation, and wellbeing. By linking spatial design with ongoing programming, the project ensures long-term viability and impact. It demonstrates that resilient housing requires not only well-designed spaces, but also systems that support their continued use.





Rock the Block (Aigaleo, Greece) - 2025. Image credits: Angelos Plourmis

ROCK THE BLOCK

Team	Consortium led by Municipality of Egaleo / Aigaleo
Location	Aigaleo / Egaleo, Athens Metropolitan Area,
Programme/ Funding	European Urban Initiative – Innovative Actions; New European Bauhaus
Start Date	March 2024
Primary Context	Rock the Block responds to the social context of weak social fabric, ageing polykatoikia housing stock and unsatisfied housing needs by implementing participatory building-level renovation, care networks and municipal housing support structures.

CASE OVERVIEW

Rock the Block is a European Urban Initiative project in Aigaleo, Greece, focused on improving affordable housing through the transformation of polykatoikias: multi-residence apartment blocks that are common across Athens. The project moves beyond household-by-household renovation by treating the building as the unit of intervention. It combines technical upgrades, green and circular improvements, co-designed action plans, neighbourhood care networks and new municipal support structures. Its ambition is to show that affordability depends not only on rent or energy costs, but also on housing quality, mutual support and the capacity of residents to collectively improve their living environment.



Rock the Block (Aigaleo, Greece) - 2025, Image credits: Angelos Ploumis

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to address the link between low-quality ageing housing stock and unsatisfied housing needs
- How to strengthen weak community bonds and mutual care alongside physical renovation
- How to prevent green upgrading from leading to displacement, speculation or exclusion

CONTEXT:

- Affordable co-living and care networks
- Ageing buildings, energy poverty, rising rent pressure, disrepair, aesthetic poverty and weakening social cohesion.
- Community building and institutional care through a new Housing Office and Co-Living Hub

NEB VALUES:

Sustainable: Rock the Block supports energy-efficiency, green, circular and functional improvements to ageing apartment buildings, reducing environmental burden while improving housing quality.

Beautiful: The project addresses “aesthetic poverty” by upgrading façades, shared areas and building environments, improving the everyday appearance and dignity of polykatoikias.

Together: Participation, care networks, skills-building and co-living structures are central to the project, positioning affordability as something produced through mutual support as well as physical renovation.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Use the Polykatoikia as the Unit of Intervention (Better Use of Existing Buildings)

Rock the Block shifts affordable housing intervention from the individual household to the shared apartment block. This matters because many challenges in polykatoikias - energy performance, façades, entrances, roofs, shared areas and maintenance - are collective rather than individual. By working at building level, the project can address shared needs more coherently and reduce fragmentation between residents. This creates a stronger platform for technical upgrades, collective decision-making and long-term affordability than isolated household renovation schemes.

Co-design Building Action Plans and Care Networks with Residents (Participatory Processes / Community Programmes)

The project develops Polykatoikia Action Plans through participatory workshops that translate residents’ everyday needs into concrete renovation and care priorities. Residents help define building problems, available skills, support needs and preferred interventions, rather than simply responding to technical proposals. This process strengthens legitimacy and builds trust between residents, municipalities and project partners. By connecting renovation decisions with mutual care, repair, recycling, childcare, elderly support and shared activities, Rock the Block treats affordability as both a physical and social condition.

Combine Energy, Green, Circular and Inclusive Upgrades (Green Infrastructure / Circularity / Better Use of Existing Buildings)

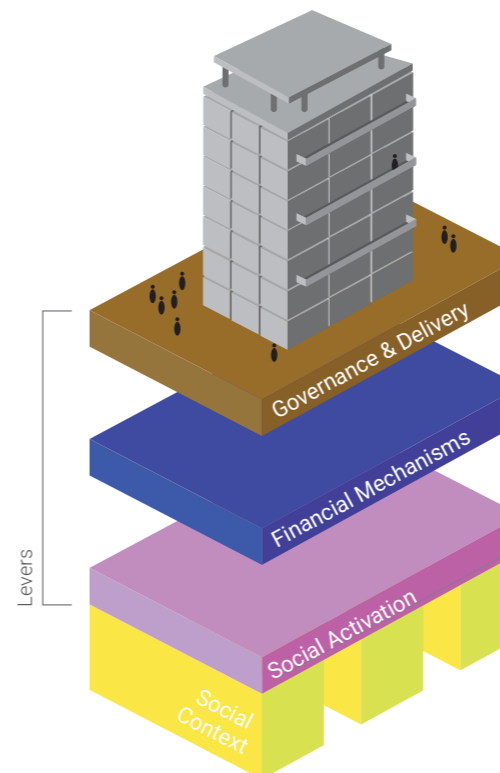
Rock the Block avoids treating renovation as a narrow energy-efficiency exercise. Instead, residents consider a broader package of interventions, including insulation, heat pumps, green roofs, rainwater reuse, communal facilities, accessibility improvements and aesthetic upgrades. This integrated approach links climate resilience with affordability, dignity and inclusion. By combining technical, environmental and social improvements within one building-level roadmap, the project demonstrates how ageing housing can be upgraded without separating energy performance from everyday liveability and community wellbeing.

Create Municipal Support Structures and a Co-Living Hub (Co-governance Models / Community Programmes)

The project establishes a municipal Housing Office and Co-Living Hub to support residents beyond the physical renovation works. The Housing Office provides free advice on housing protection, consultation and improvement processes, while the Co-Living Hub hosts skills-building, caring, educational and community activities. Together, these structures turn the project from a one-off building upgrade into a continuing support system. They help residents access knowledge, coordinate action and sustain improvements over time, strengthening both institutional and community capacity.

Use Funding and Transferable Roadmaps to Protect Affordability (Subsidy / Public-Private-People Partnerships)

Rock the Block uses public funding to support permanent building-level interventions while linking investment to affordability goals. This is important because green upgrading can sometimes lead to rent increases, speculation or displacement. The project therefore combines funding with safeguards, policy recommendations and transferable roadmaps for other cities. By involving transfer partners and producing learning for local, regional and national authorities, Rock the Block turns a local pilot in Aigaleo into a wider model for affordable co-living and neighbourhood housing strategy.





RECLAIM ŽIŽKOV

Team	Reclaim Žižkov Collective
Location	Prague, Czech Republic
Programme/ Funding	Grassroots / community-led initiative
Start Date	January 2018
Primary Context	Reclaim Žižkov responds to the social context of vacant urban buildings and limited access to affordable space by implementing temporary, community-led activation strategies.

CASE OVERVIEW

Reclaim Žižkov is a grassroots initiative in Prague that reactivates vacant and underused buildings through temporary community-led occupation. The project challenges conventional development timelines by demonstrating how spaces can be brought back into use quickly and with minimal investment. By enabling cultural, social, and housing-related activities within these spaces, the initiative creates immediate value while building momentum for longer-term transformation. Reclaim Žižkov shows how informal, bottom-up approaches can complement formal development processes, unlocking access to space and supporting more inclusive and adaptable urban environments.



Reclaim Žižkov, 2021

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to activate vacant buildings without large-scale investment
- How to provide affordable access to space in dense urban areas
- How to enable community-led use within restrictive property systems

CONTEXT:

- High levels of vacant or underused urban buildings
- Rising demand for affordable space for housing and cultural use
- Rigid development processes delaying activation
- Growing interest in temporary and flexible urban use

NEB VALUES:

- Sustainable:** The project reduces resource use by reactivating existing buildings rather than constructing new ones.
- Beautiful:** Temporary uses and cultural activities bring new life and identity to previously unused spaces.
- Together:** Community-led activation strengthens social networks and collective ownership of space.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Enable Temporary Use to Unlock Value in Vacant Buildings (Circularity)

Reclaim Žižkov demonstrates how temporary use can activate underutilised buildings quickly and at low cost. By allowing short-term occupation, spaces that would otherwise remain empty can support housing, cultural, and community functions. This approach generates immediate social and economic value while longer-term plans are developed. It also reduces the risks associated with vacancy, such as deterioration or misuse. The project shows that temporary use can be a practical tool for improving access to space and supporting more flexible and responsive urban development.

Use Light-touch Interventions to Enable Rapid Activation (Better Use of Existing Buildings)

The project relies on minimal, low-cost modifications to make buildings usable, avoiding extensive refurbishment or structural changes. These light-touch interventions reduce both financial and environmental costs while allowing spaces to be occupied quickly. By focusing on essential improvements, the project ensures that resources are used efficiently. This approach demonstrates how existing buildings can be adapted for new uses without significant investment, supporting both affordability and sustainability.

Empower Communities to Shape and Manage Space (Participatory Processes)

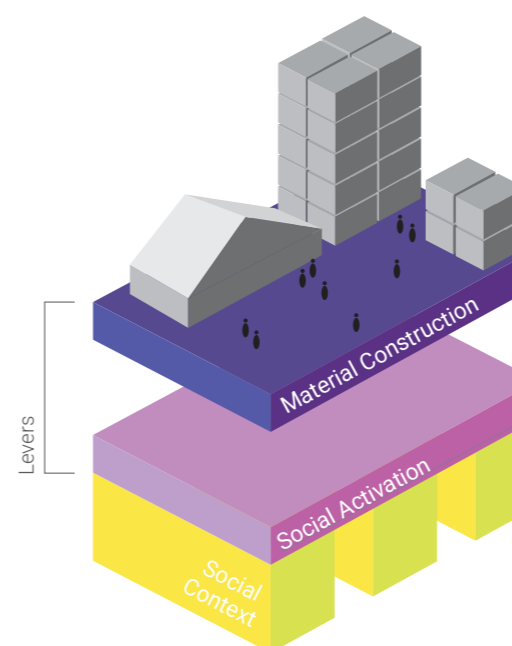
Reclaim Žižkov places control of space in the hands of local communities, enabling users to define how buildings are used and managed. This approach builds a strong sense of ownership and responsibility, supporting long-term engagement. Community management also allows spaces to adapt to changing needs over time. The project demonstrates that empowering users is key to creating resilient and inclusive urban environments.

Use Flexible Governance to Support Adaptive Use (Public-Private-People Partnerships)

The initiative works with flexible agreements and informal governance structures to enable temporary occupation. This reduces administrative barriers and allows projects to move quickly from concept to implementation. Flexible governance also supports experimentation, enabling new uses and models to be tested. The project shows that adapting governance frameworks is essential for unlocking the potential of vacant spaces.

Bridge Temporary Activation and Long-term Development (Public-Private-People Partnerships)

Reclaim Žižkov acts as a bridge between vacancy and permanent redevelopment, demonstrating the potential of spaces before long-term decisions are made. Temporary use can inform future plans by testing ideas and building community support. This reduces uncertainty and improves outcomes for permanent development. The project shows that short-term interventions can play a strategic role in shaping long-term urban transformation.





Safer Cities - Romsås Centre - InnoArch/Grape Architects/OsloMet/Æra, 2024-2025

SAFER CITIES - ROMSÅS CENTRE

Team	InnoArch, with Grape Architects, OsloMet, Æra Strategic Innovation, Oslo Police District and wider public, private, research and civil society partners
Location	Romsås Centre, Oslo, Norway
Programme/ Funding	InnoArch / Oslo Innovation Programme
Start Date	March 2024
Primary Context	Safer Cities responds to the social context of perceived unsafety, unequal access to public space and fragmented neighbourhood life by implementing a co-designed, evidence-based methodology that combines spatial improvement, social programming and cross-sector governance.

CASE OVERVIEW

Safer Cities and Neighbourhoods Through Public Space Design is an InnoArch-led methodology that reframes urban safety as a condition of access, autonomy and inclusion. Its first pilot at Romsås Centre in Oslo applies a data-driven and participatory Safety Model to a local centre experienced as unsafe, fragmented and underused. The project combines spatial analysis, resident experience, police data, social programming and organisational collaboration to identify how public space can become safer and more inclusive. Rather than treating safety as policing or surveillance alone, the methodology positions it as a shared outcome of design, trust, activity and everyday urban life.



Safer Cities - Romsås Centre - Innoarch/Grape Architects/OsloMet/Æra, 2024-2025

- CORE CHALLENGE:**
- How to improve perceived safety without relying only on security or control measures
 - How to combine physical design, social activity and long-term governance into one delivery model
 - How to ensure women, young people, older people, people with disabilities and other vulnerable groups can use public space with greater autonomy

- CONTEXT:**
- Romsås Centre is a shopping centre and housing cooperative that includes social housing and adapted housing units
 - The centre is an important local meeting place but is experienced by many as unsafe and uninviting
 - Challenges include fragmented ownership, lack of holistic management, low urban quality and limited social activity
 - The Safety Model identifies safety as an interaction between the built environment, the social aspect and perceived safety
 - The Romsås plan proposes mutually reinforcing interventions, including the Social Ring, Green Ring, strengthening existing structures, phased upgrading and a new collaboration model

- NEB VALUES:**
- Sustainable:** The methodology supports sustainable urban development by reusing and strengthening existing local centres, improving walkability, green mobility and everyday access rather than relying on new construction or isolated security measures.
- Beautiful:** The project improves public space quality through better lighting, visibility, active ground floors, green routes, entrances and social meeting places, transforming an uninviting centre into a more attractive and dignified local environment.
- Together:** The project is fundamentally collaborative, bringing residents, municipalities, property owners, researchers, police, NGOs and private actors into a shared process that treats lived experience as a core knowledge base.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Create a Shared Safety Diagnosis Using Built, Social and Lived Experience Evidence (Participatory Processes / Public-Private-People Partnerships)

The Safety Model begins by establishing a shared understanding of safety in the local context. At Romsås Centre, this means combining resident lived experience with spatial analysis, police knowledge, professional expertise and data about urban life. Perceived safety is treated as equal evidence, not as a secondary concern. This allows partners to understand how lighting, visibility, maintenance, activity, belonging and previous experience shape whether people feel able to use public space. The process creates a common platform for action before design solutions are proposed.

Strengthen Everyday Activity Through the Social Ring and Shared Functions (Shared Space / Community Programmes)

The Social Ring creates continuous and accessible connections and meeting places around Romsås Centre, allowing the area to function beyond normal opening hours. By linking services such as libraries, youth initiatives, cafés, culture, sport and social spaces, the project increases everyday presence and informal oversight. This strengthens perceived safety by generating positive activity rather than relying only on security measures. The action shows how shared space and programming can turn a fragmented local centre into a more welcoming and inclusive civic environment.

Use the Green Ring to Connect Homes, Schools, Services and Nature (Green Infrastructure)

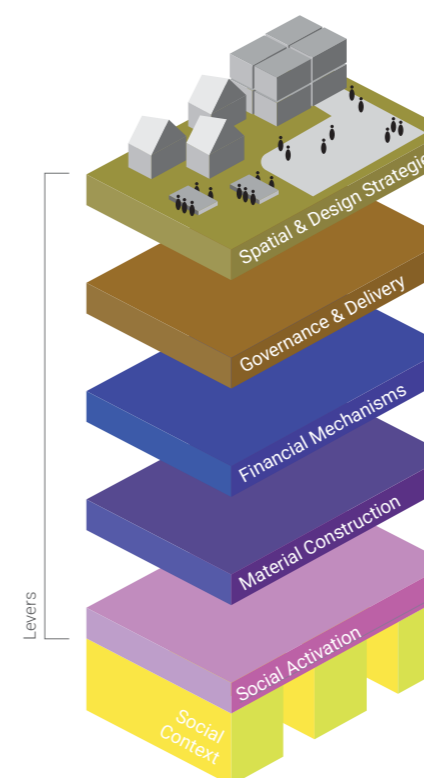
The Green Ring creates safer and more attractive walking routes between homes, schools, the centre and surrounding nature. By improving pedestrian links, transitions between indoor and outdoor spaces, vegetation and access to green areas, the project supports both environmental quality and social inclusion. These routes make movement through the neighbourhood more comfortable, legible and inviting, especially for people who may otherwise avoid isolated or poorly maintained paths. The action shows how green infrastructure can support safety, mobility and wellbeing simultaneously.

Activate Edges and Ground Floors to Reconnect the Centre (Better Use of Existing Buildings / Circularity / Shared Space)

Romsås Centre suffers from inactive edges, unclear entrances and back areas that reduce visibility and activity. The project proposes more entrances, open façades and active ground-floor functions to reconnect the centre with its surroundings. By strengthening the existing structure rather than replacing it, the strategy improves safety and urban quality while making better use of what is already there. New functions on currently inactive sides create meeting places and increase presence, particularly for children, young people and everyday users.

Establish Long-term Governance and a Learning Loop for Operation (Co-governance Models / Public-Private-People Partnerships)

The Romsås strategy recognises that safety cannot be delivered through a one-off design intervention. It proposes a collaboration model between the municipality, property owners, civil society and private actors to coordinate financing, programming, maintenance and operation over time. This is supported by the Safety Model's learning loop, where measures are tested, evaluated and adjusted based on actual use and changing conditions. The action turns safety into an ongoing process of stewardship, rather than a fixed design outcome.



ENVIRONMENTAL PRIMARY CONTEXT





CHILL spORT- NEBourhoods / MGS / Florian Mayr, 2024 / City of Munich, Department of Urban Planning / NEBourhoods Consortium

NEBourhoods

Team	NEBourhoods Consortium
Location	Munich, Germany
Programme/ Funding	New European Bauhaus
Start & End Dates	June 2022 - May 2025
Primary Context	NEBourhoods responds to the environmental context of fragmented urban systems and urgent climate adaptation needs by implementing integrated, neighbourhood-scale solutions combining energy, landscape, and social innovation.

CASE OVERVIEW

NEBourhoods is a flagship New European Bauhaus demonstrator project exploring how neighbourhoods can act as integrated systems for climate-neutral living. Based in Munich, the project brings together housing, energy, mobility, and landscape into a cohesive urban framework, combining technical innovation with participatory design. Rather than focusing on individual buildings, NEBourhoods operates at district scale, testing how coordinated interventions can deliver environmental performance while improving everyday life. Through iterative experimentation and strong community engagement, the project demonstrates how climate action can be embedded into the social and spatial fabric of neighbourhoods, creating scalable models for inclusive and resilient urban transformation.



Left: Start Living-Lab - NEBourhoods, Image Credits: Patrick Thomas, 2023
 Right: Energy Communities - NEBourhoods, Image credits: Patrick Thomas, 2024
 City of Munich, Department of Urban Planning / NEBourhoods Coordination

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to integrate housing, energy, mobility, and landscape systems into a coherent neighbourhood strategy
- How to deliver climate-neutral outcomes while ensuring social inclusion and affordability
- How to test and scale innovative solutions in real-world urban contexts

CONTEXT:

- Urgent need for climate mitigation and adaptation at neighbourhood scale
- Fragmented urban systems limiting efficiency and performance
- Growing demand for participatory and inclusive urban development
- Requirement for scalable, replicable models of sustainable living

NEB VALUES:

- **Sustainable:** The project integrates climate-neutral systems across housing, energy, and landscape, reducing emissions while improving environmental performance at neighbourhood scale.
- **Beautiful:** By enhancing public space, green infrastructure, and spatial quality, the project creates attractive, liveable environments that support everyday wellbeing.
- **Together:** Through co-design and community engagement, NEBourhoods ensures that residents are actively involved in shaping transformation, strengthening social cohesion and long-term ownership.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Design Neighbourhoods as Integrated Systems (Public-Private-People Partnerships / Green Infrastructure)

NEBourhoods demonstrates that housing cannot be addressed in isolation, but must be integrated with energy, mobility, and landscape systems at neighbourhood scale. By coordinating these domains, the project reduces duplication, improves efficiency, and enables shared infrastructure. This systemic approach ensures that environmental strategies operate at the appropriate scale, delivering greater impact than building-level interventions alone. It also allows resources to be used more effectively, supporting both cost efficiency and climate performance. The project shows that resilient housing depends on integrated, multi-system urban design.

Use Living Labs to Test and Refine Solutions (Public-Private-People Partnerships / Community Programmes)

The project operates as a living laboratory, allowing new technologies, spatial strategies, and governance models to be tested in real-world conditions. This iterative approach enables continuous refinement based on user feedback and performance data, reducing risk before wider implementation. By embedding experimentation within everyday environments, NEBourhoods accelerates innovation while ensuring relevance and usability. This method also builds confidence among stakeholders, demonstrating that new approaches can be both effective and scalable. The project highlights how testing in practice is essential for delivering reliable, long-term solutions.

Embed Co-design Across All Phases (Participatory Processes)

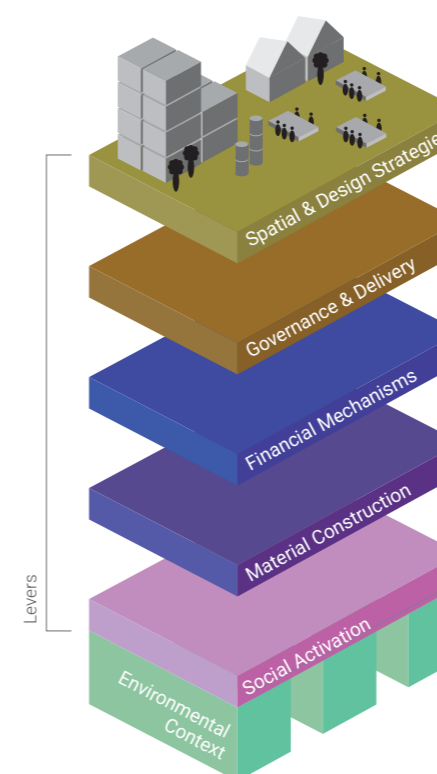
Co-design is central to NEBourhoods, involving residents and stakeholders throughout planning, design, and implementation. This ensures that interventions respond to real needs and are more likely to be accepted and maintained over time. Participation also builds trust, strengthens social networks, and increases local capacity to manage change. By integrating co-design as a continuous process rather than a one-off consultation, the project aligns technical solutions with everyday life. It demonstrates that social engagement is not optional, but essential for delivering resilient and effective housing transformation.

Integrate Green Infrastructure as Core Urban Systems (Green Infrastructure)

Green infrastructure is treated as essential infrastructure within the project, embedded throughout the neighbourhood to manage heat, water, and biodiversity loss. Planting, shading, and water-sensitive design reduce reliance on energy-intensive systems while improving environmental quality. These nature-based solutions deliver multiple benefits simultaneously, from climate adaptation to enhanced public space. By integrating green infrastructure into the urban fabric, the project achieves cost-effective resilience that can be scaled across cities. It demonstrates how environmental performance can be delivered through design rather than technology alone.

Align Environmental Innovation with Social Inclusion (Community Programmes)

NEBourhoods ensures that climate innovation is accessible and inclusive, avoiding solutions that benefit only a limited group. By integrating affordability, accessibility, and participation into environmental strategies, the project ensures that improvements are shared across the community. This alignment strengthens long-term viability, as residents are more likely to support and sustain interventions that meet their needs. The project demonstrates that climate resilience must be socially embedded to be effective, linking environmental performance with equity and everyday experience.





NEB-STAR

Team	NEB-STAR Consortium
Location	Stavanger (NO), Prague (CZ), Utrecht (NL)
Programme/ Funding	Horizon Europe
Start & End Dates	September 2022 - August 2026
Primary Context	NEB-STAR responds to the environmental context of city-level decarbonisation targets by implementing coordinated, multi-system urban transformation across housing, energy, and mobility infrastructures.

CASE OVERVIEW

NEB-STAR is a large-scale European initiative focused on delivering climate-neutral districts through coordinated, multi-system interventions. Operating across several cities, the project integrates housing retrofit, renewable energy systems, sustainable mobility, and public space improvements into unified urban strategies. Rather than treating these domains separately, NEB-STAR aligns them through strong municipal leadership and cross-sector collaboration. By embedding climate targets into planning and delivery frameworks, the project demonstrates how cities can move beyond pilot projects toward systemic transformation, creating scalable models for low-carbon, resilient urban living that balance environmental performance with social and economic considerations.



Left: NEBSTAR - Svankevigå mai, 2024
Right: NEBSTAR - Utopisk framtidsverksted, 2023



CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to coordinate multiple urban systems to achieve climate-neutral outcomes
- How to scale integrated solutions across different city contexts
- How to align environmental ambition with delivery capacity and affordability

CONTEXT:

- Urgent need to reduce emissions at district and city scale
- Fragmentation between housing, energy, and mobility systems
- Cities under pressure to meet climate neutrality targets
- Requirement for scalable, replicable models of integrated urban transformation

NEB VALUES:

Sustainable: The project delivers significant emissions reductions through coordinated interventions across housing, energy, and mobility systems.

Beautiful: By improving public space and integrating environmental strategies into urban design, the project enhances liveability and spatial quality.

Together: Strong municipal leadership and stakeholder collaboration ensure inclusive delivery and shared benefits across communities.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Coordinate Multi-system Transformation (Public-Private-People Partnerships / Co-governance Models)

NEB-STAR demonstrates that achieving climate-neutral housing requires coordination across multiple urban systems, including energy, mobility, and the built environment. By aligning these domains, the project reduces inefficiencies and enables shared infrastructure, such as district energy systems and integrated mobility networks. This approach increases overall performance while lowering long-term costs. Coordinated planning also ensures that interventions reinforce one another rather than operate in isolation. The project shows that systemic integration is essential for delivering both environmental impact and economic efficiency at scale.

Use Municipal Leadership to Drive Delivery (Co-governance Models)

Strong municipal leadership plays a central role in aligning stakeholders, securing funding, and coordinating implementation. NEB-STAR demonstrates how cities can act as conveners, bringing together public agencies, private partners, and communities around shared objectives. This leadership ensures that projects remain focused on long-term public value rather than short-term gains. It also provides the stability needed to attract investment and support innovation. The project shows that effective governance is critical to delivering complex, large-scale housing and climate initiatives.

Scale Solutions Across Multiple Contexts (EU Funding / Public-Private-People Partnerships)

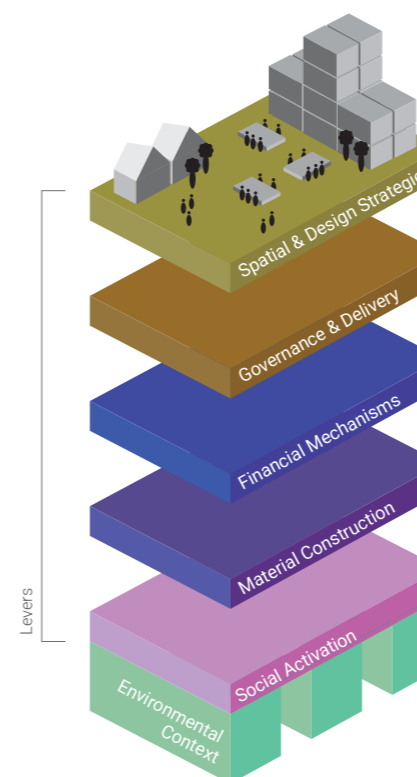
By operating across different cities, NEB-STAR tests how integrated solutions can be adapted to varied urban conditions. This approach enables knowledge sharing and accelerates replication, reducing the time and cost required to implement similar strategies elsewhere. It also helps identify which elements are universally applicable and which require local adaptation. Scaling across contexts strengthens the robustness of solutions, demonstrating that climate-neutral housing strategies can be both flexible and widely deployable.

Embed Climate Targets into Planning Frameworks (Co-governance Models)

The project integrates climate neutrality goals directly into urban planning and development processes, ensuring that environmental performance is a core requirement rather than an optional add-on. This alignment influences decision-making across all stages, from design to implementation. By embedding targets into policy and planning frameworks, NEB-STAR ensures consistency and accountability. The project demonstrates how clear environmental objectives can guide coordinated action and deliver measurable outcomes.

Align Investment with Long-term Environmental Outcomes (EU Funding)

NEB-STAR directs funding toward interventions that deliver long-term environmental and economic benefits, such as energy-efficient housing and renewable systems. This approach ensures that upfront investment leads to reduced operational costs and improved resilience over time. By linking financial decisions to lifecycle performance, the project supports more sustainable and cost-effective development. It demonstrates that aligning investment with environmental outcomes is essential for achieving both affordability and climate resilience.





Roofscapes Studio - 2021. Image credits: Honal Techt, Olivier Faber

ROOFSCAPES

Team	Roofscapes Consortium
Location	Multiple EU Cities
Programme/ Funding	Horizon Europe
Start & End Dates	June 2021 - May 2024
Primary Context	Roofscapes responds to the environmental context of urban heat islands and limited space for green infrastructure by implementing rooftop-based, distributed climate adaptation systems.

CASE OVERVIEW

Roofscapes is an urban innovation project focused on unlocking the potential of rooftops as active components of climate-resilient cities. By converting underused roof space into green, social, and environmental infrastructure, the project addresses urban challenges such as heat stress, stormwater management, and lack of open space. Rather than relying on large, centralised systems, Roofscapes promotes a distributed approach, where multiple small-scale interventions collectively deliver significant impact. By combining environmental function with social use, the project demonstrates how existing buildings can be retrofitted to improve both climate performance and everyday urban life.



Roofscapes Studio - 2021, Image credits: Lionel Leduc, Olivier Faber

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to utilise existing building surfaces to deliver climate resilience
- How to implement environmental infrastructure in dense urban contexts
- How to combine environmental performance with social value

CONTEXT:

- Increasing urban heat island effects and climate risks
- Limited availability of land for green infrastructure
- Underutilised rooftop space across cities
- Need for scalable, low-impact climate adaptation strategies

NEB VALUES:

Sustainable: The project reduces the urban heat island effect, manages water more sustainably, and improves biodiversity through distributed green infrastructure.

Beautiful: Rooftops are transformed into accessible, high-quality spaces that enhance urban experience.

Together: By enabling shared use and community engagement, the project strengthens social interaction and collective ownership.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Activate Underused Surfaces as Climate Infrastructure (Green Infrastructure / Better Use of Existing Buildings)

Roofscapes demonstrates how rooftops can be repurposed as active environmental systems, contributing to cooling, water management, and biodiversity. By utilising existing building surfaces, the project avoids the need for additional land while delivering significant climate benefits. This approach transforms passive elements into productive infrastructure, increasing the performance of the built environment without major structural intervention. It shows that cities can expand their environmental capacity by rethinking how existing assets are used, delivering cost-effective and scalable resilience solutions.

Combine Environmental Function with Social Use (Shared Space)

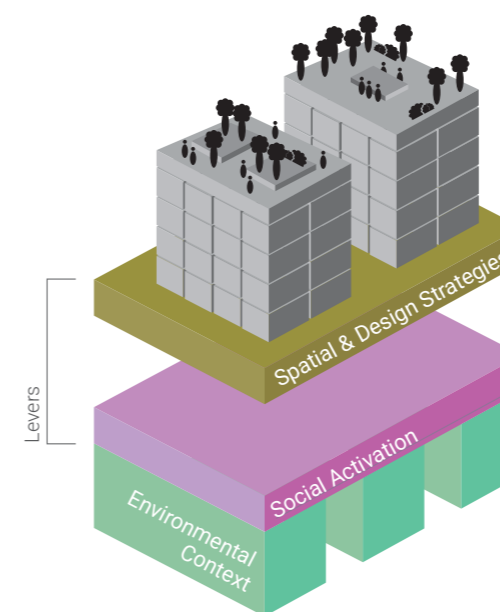
Roofscapes integrates shared spaces into rooftop interventions, allowing environmental infrastructure to also serve social functions. Roofs become spaces for gathering, recreation, and community activity, increasing their value and use. This dual function improves the sustainability of interventions, as actively used spaces are more likely to be maintained and supported over time. The project demonstrates that combining environmental performance with social activation creates more resilient and inclusive urban environments.

Distribute Infrastructure to Increase Urban Resilience (Green Infrastructure)

Rather than relying on large, centralised systems, Roofscapes adopts a distributed model where multiple small interventions collectively improve city-wide performance. This approach increases redundancy and flexibility, making urban systems more resilient to disruption. Distributed infrastructure can be implemented incrementally, allowing cities to adapt over time. The project shows that resilience can be built through accumulation of small-scale actions, rather than dependence on singular large investments.

Integrate Interventions with Existing Buildings (Better Use of Existing Buildings)

By working with existing structures, the project reduces the cost and complexity of implementation. Integrating new systems into current buildings avoids demolition and maximises the value of existing assets. This approach allows resources to be focused on performance improvements rather than new construction. It demonstrates how retrofit can be used to enhance environmental capacity while maintaining affordability and minimising disruption.



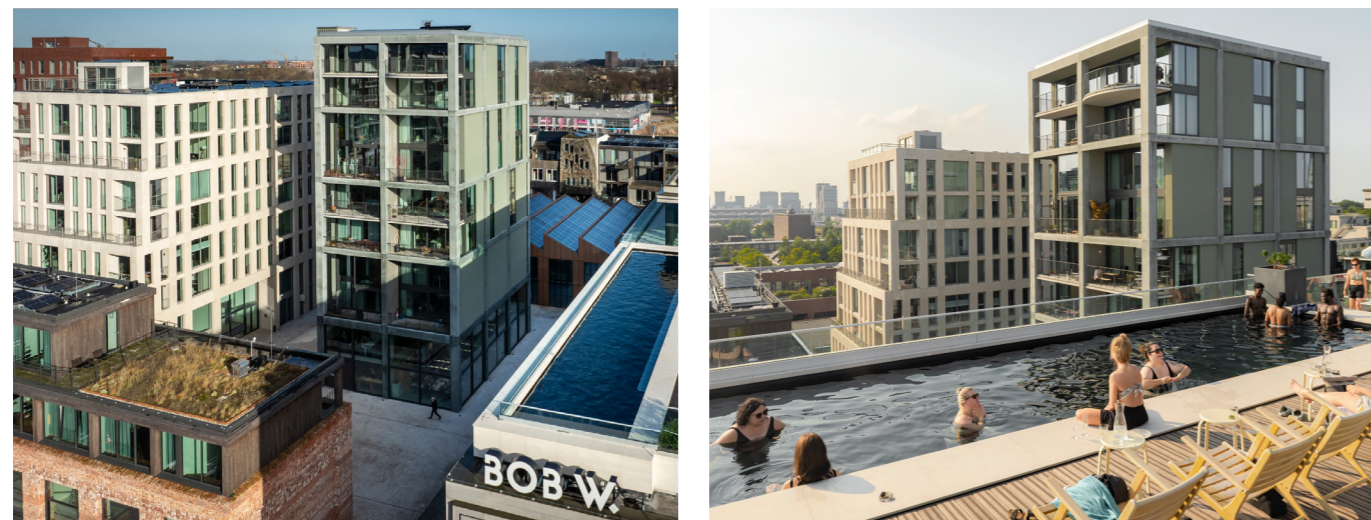


REPUBLICA

Team	Republica Development Consortium
Location	Amsterdam, Netherlands
Programme/ Funding	Mixed-use private development with sustainability-led framework
Start & End Dates	January 2017 - December 2022
Primary Context	Republica responds to the environmental context of brownfield regeneration and climate risk by implementing circular design and integrated blue-green infrastructure at district scale.

CASE OVERVIEW

Republica is a mixed-use regeneration project that transforms a former industrial site into a circular, climate-responsive neighbourhood. Located in Amsterdam, the project combines adaptive reuse of existing buildings with new construction designed around circular principles and water-sensitive urban design. By embedding sustainability at both building and masterplan scale, Republica integrates landscape, water systems, and material reuse into a cohesive development strategy. The project demonstrates how environmental performance can drive urban regeneration, creating a resilient district that balances ecological function, economic viability, and high-quality urban living.



Republica - Image credits: Sebastian van Damme, Maikel Samuels, 2024

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to regenerate brownfield land while minimising environmental impact
- How to integrate circularity and climate adaptation into urban development
- How to balance ecological performance with economic viability

CONTEXT:

- Post-industrial brownfield site requiring redevelopment
- Increasing climate risks including flooding and urban heat
- Pressure to reduce material use and carbon emissions
- Need for high-density development with strong environmental performance

NEB VALUES:

Sustainable: The project integrates circular construction and water-sensitive design to reduce environmental impact and improve resilience.

Beautiful: High-quality public space and landscape design create a distinctive and liveable urban environment.

Together: The development supports mixed-use, socially active spaces that encourage interaction and community life.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Integrate Blue-Green Infrastructure into Urban Design (Green Infrastructure)

Republica embeds sustainable water management and landscape systems directly into the masterplan, using planting, permeable surfaces, and water retention strategies to manage flood risk and reduce urban heat. These systems function as infrastructure, improving environmental performance while enhancing public space. By integrating blue-green strategies from the outset, the project avoids costly retrofits and reduces reliance on mechanical systems. This approach demonstrates how nature-based solutions can deliver both climate resilience and economic efficiency when treated as core components of urban design.

Prioritise Adaptive Reuse in Regeneration (Circularity)

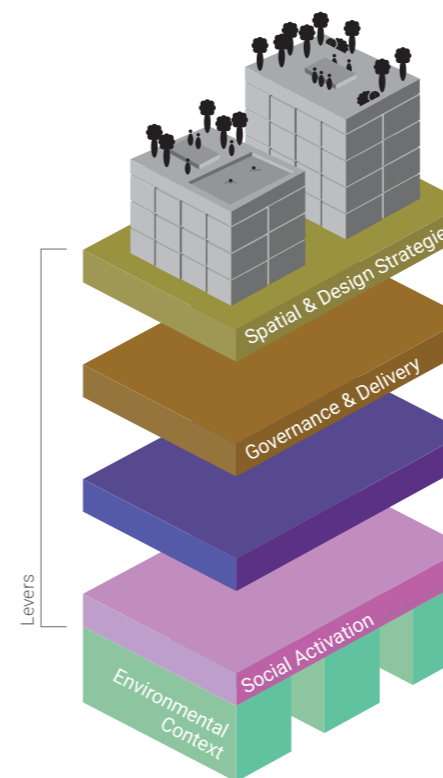
Circularity is integrated into both building design and construction processes, ensuring that materials can be reused, adapted, and retained over time. This includes designing for disassembly, selecting low-impact materials, and reducing waste during construction. The project retains and repurposes existing industrial buildings wherever possible, reducing demolition waste, embodied carbon, and construction costs. Adaptive reuse also preserves the character and identity of the site, contributing to a distinctive urban environment. By working with existing structures, Republica accelerates delivery while freeing up resources for targeted improvements. This strategy demonstrates that reuse can be a primary driver of both environmental performance and economic viability in large-scale regeneration.

Use Mixed-use Development to Maximise Value and Activity (Public-Private-People Partnerships)

Republica combines residential, commercial, and public functions to create a vibrant and economically resilient neighbourhood. Mixed-use development increases density and ensures continuous activity, supporting local economies and reducing the need for travel. This approach maximises the value of land while creating diverse and adaptable urban environments. It demonstrates how combining uses can strengthen both economic viability and social vitality in regeneration projects.

Make Low Whole-life Carbon Part of the Development Business Case (Low Whole-life Carbon)

Republica demonstrates that low whole-life carbon can support, rather than undermine, development viability when it is embedded from the outset. By combining adaptive reuse, circular material choices, energy-efficient systems and climate-responsive landscape design, the project reduces both embodied and operational carbon over time. These strategies also contribute to lower running costs, longer asset life and stronger long-term value. The action shows that carbon reduction is most effective when treated not as an additional sustainability requirement, but as a core part of the project's economic and design logic.





Living Places Copenhagen - 2023. Image credit: A dam Mark

LIVING PLACES COPENHAGEN

Team	EFFEKT Architects + VELUX
Location	Copenhagen, Denmark
Programme/ Funding	Private sector prototype development
Start & End Dates	January 2021 - September 2023
Primary Context	Living Places responds to the environmental context of high embodied and operational carbon in housing by implementing passive design and low-carbon material strategies for scalable residential development.

CASE OVERVIEW

Living Places Copenhagen is a prototype housing project developed to demonstrate how homes can be designed to significantly reduce carbon emissions while improving health and comfort. Developed by EFFEKT and VELUX, the project combines passive design principles with low-impact materials to minimise both operational and embodied carbon. Rather than being a one-off experiment, the project is intended as a scalable model for mainstream housing delivery. By aligning environmental performance with industrial production and user wellbeing, Living Places shows how climate-resilient housing can be both practical and widely deployable.



Living Places Copenhagen - 2023, Image credit: Adam Mork

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to reduce both embodied and operational carbon in housing
- How to deliver healthy indoor environments alongside environmental performance
- How to translate innovation into scalable housing solutions

CONTEXT:

- Construction sector responsible for significant carbon emissions
- Growing need for healthy indoor environments
- Increasing regulatory pressure to reduce lifecycle emissions
- Gap between experimental prototypes and scalable housing delivery

NEB VALUES:

- **Sustainable:** The project significantly reduces both embodied and operational carbon through material choice and passive design strategies.
- **Beautiful:** High levels of daylight, natural materials, and spatial clarity create comfortable and attractive living environments.
- **Together:** By focusing on health and accessibility, the project promotes inclusive, high-quality housing for everyday life.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Design for Passive Environmental Performance (Passive Design)

Living Places demonstrates how passive design can significantly reduce energy demand by optimising orientation, daylight, natural ventilation, and thermal performance. By relying on building form and material strategy rather than mechanical systems, the project achieves stable indoor conditions with minimal energy input. This reduces operational costs while improving comfort and air quality. Passive strategies are integrated from the earliest design stages, ensuring efficiency without added complexity. The project shows that designing for natural performance is a foundational step in delivering affordable, low-carbon housing.

Use Low-carbon Materials to Reduce Embodied Impact (Low Whole-life Carbon)

The project prioritises materials with low embodied carbon, including timber and other bio-based or minimally processed components. By reducing emissions associated with construction, Living Places addresses the full lifecycle impact of housing. Material selection is carefully balanced with durability and cost considerations, ensuring that environmental benefits do not compromise long-term performance. This approach demonstrates how material strategy can play a critical role in delivering climate-resilient housing while maintaining economic viability.

Align Design Innovation with Scalable Delivery (Public-Private-People Partnerships)

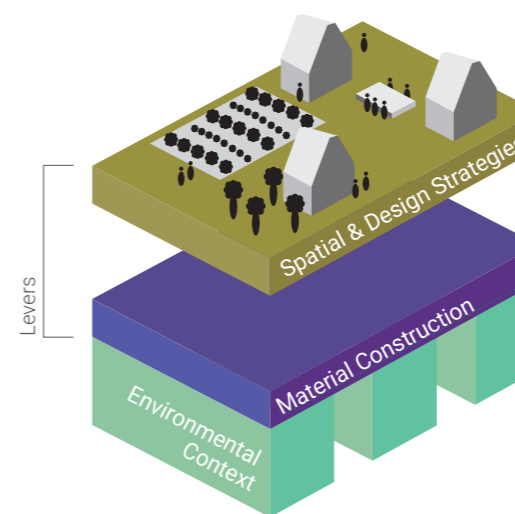
Living Places is developed not as a bespoke prototype, but as a model for replication at scale. By working closely with industry partners, the project ensures that design solutions can be integrated into existing manufacturing and construction processes. This alignment reduces costs and supports wider adoption. The project demonstrates that innovation must be compatible with delivery systems to have real impact, showing how scalable models can bridge the gap between experimental design and mainstream housing provision.

Prioritise Health and Comfort as Core Design Drivers (Passive Design)

By improving living conditions, the project enhances wellbeing and reduces long-term health risks. This approach demonstrates that climate-resilient housing must also support human health, aligning environmental performance with everyday quality of life.

Integrate Lifecycle Thinking into Housing Design (Circularity)

Living Places considers the full lifecycle of buildings, from material sourcing to operation and eventual reuse. This approach ensures that decisions made during design contribute to long-term efficiency and adaptability. By reducing both upfront and operational impacts, the project delivers value over time. Lifecycle thinking also supports flexibility, allowing buildings to respond to changing needs. The project demonstrates that long-term planning is essential for achieving both affordability and environmental resilience.





Re-Sourcing Commons - Image credits: Social Design Studio-Vienna, 2020

RE-SOURCING COMMONS

Team	Re-Sourcing Commons Consortium
Location	Multiple EU Locations
Programme/ Funding	Horizon Europe
Start & End Dates	June 2022 - May 2026
Primary Context	Re-Sourcing Commons responds to the environmental context of construction waste and linear material use by implementing circular material ecosystems and reuse infrastructure.

CASE OVERVIEW

Re-Sourcing Commons is a research and implementation project focused on transforming how construction materials are sourced, reused, and circulated. Rather than treating buildings as one-off products, the project develops systems that enable materials to be recovered, stored, and reintroduced into new developments. By linking material flows with spatial design and local networks, it creates a circular ecosystem that reduces waste and dependency on new resources. The project demonstrates how circularity can move beyond theory into practical application, supporting both environmental performance and cost efficiency in housing and urban development.



Re-Sourcing Commons - Image credits: Social Design Studio Vienna, 2020

CORE CHALLENGE:

- How to operationalise circular construction at scale
- How to reduce reliance on new materials and minimise waste
- How to connect material systems with building design and delivery

CONTEXT:

- High levels of construction waste and resource consumption
- Linear building processes based on extraction and disposal
- Limited infrastructure for material reuse
- Growing need for low-carbon and resource-efficient construction

NEB VALUES:

- Sustainable:** The project reduces material consumption and waste through circular reuse systems and lifecycle thinking.
- Beautiful:** Reused materials contribute to distinctive and context-rich architectural outcomes.
- Together:** Collaboration and shared infrastructure enable collective responsibility for resources and knowledge.

TRANSFERABLE ACTIONS

Create Local Material Reuse Ecosystems (Circularity)

Re-Sourcing Commons demonstrates how local systems for collecting, storing, and redistributing materials can significantly reduce waste and construction costs. By establishing networks that connect demolition, storage, and new development, materials can remain in circulation rather than being discarded. This reduces reliance on new resources while supporting local economies. The project shows that circularity requires not just design strategies, but physical and organisational infrastructure that enables materials to move efficiently between projects.

Use Shared Infrastructure for Material Storage and Exchange (Public-Private-People Partnerships)

The project introduces shared facilities where materials can be catalogued, stored, and accessed by multiple users. This centralised infrastructure improves efficiency by reducing duplication and making reuse more practical. It also lowers barriers to entry for smaller projects that may not have access to storage or logistics. By enabling coordinated material flows, shared infrastructure supports both economic viability and environmental performance. The project demonstrates that physical systems are essential for scaling circular construction practices.

Embed Circular Design into Building Processes (Circularity)

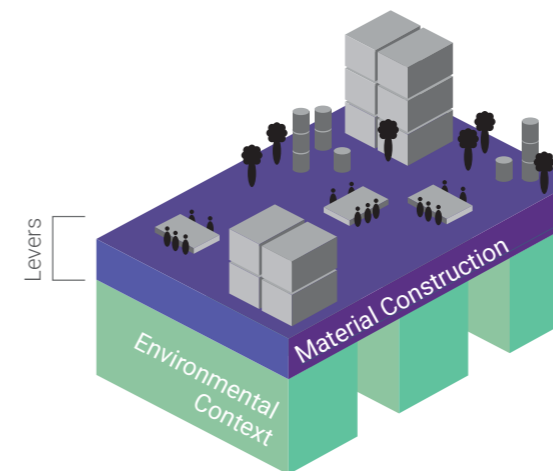
Re-Sourcing Commons promotes design approaches that allow materials to be easily disassembled, reused, and adapted over time. This includes modular construction, reversible connections, and careful material selection. By integrating circular thinking into the design phase, buildings become part of a continuous material cycle rather than an endpoint. This reduces lifecycle costs and environmental impact while increasing flexibility. The project shows that circularity must be embedded from the outset to be effective.

Build Cross-sector Partnerships to Enable Circular Systems (Public-Private-People Partnerships)

The project relies on collaboration between designers, contractors, municipalities, and community organisations to establish functioning circular systems. These partnerships enable knowledge sharing, coordination, and access to resources. By aligning stakeholders around shared goals, the project reduces fragmentation and improves efficiency. This approach demonstrates that circular construction is not solely a technical challenge, but a collaborative one requiring coordinated action across sectors.

Support Behavioural Change Through Training and Engagement (Community Programmes)

Re-Sourcing Commons recognises that circular systems depend on changes in behaviour as well as technology. Through workshops, training, and engagement programmes, the project builds awareness and skills among stakeholders. This encourages adoption of reuse practices and supports long-term change in how materials are valued and used. The project demonstrates that education and engagement are critical components of resilient and sustainable construction systems.





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AUTHORS AND EDITORS

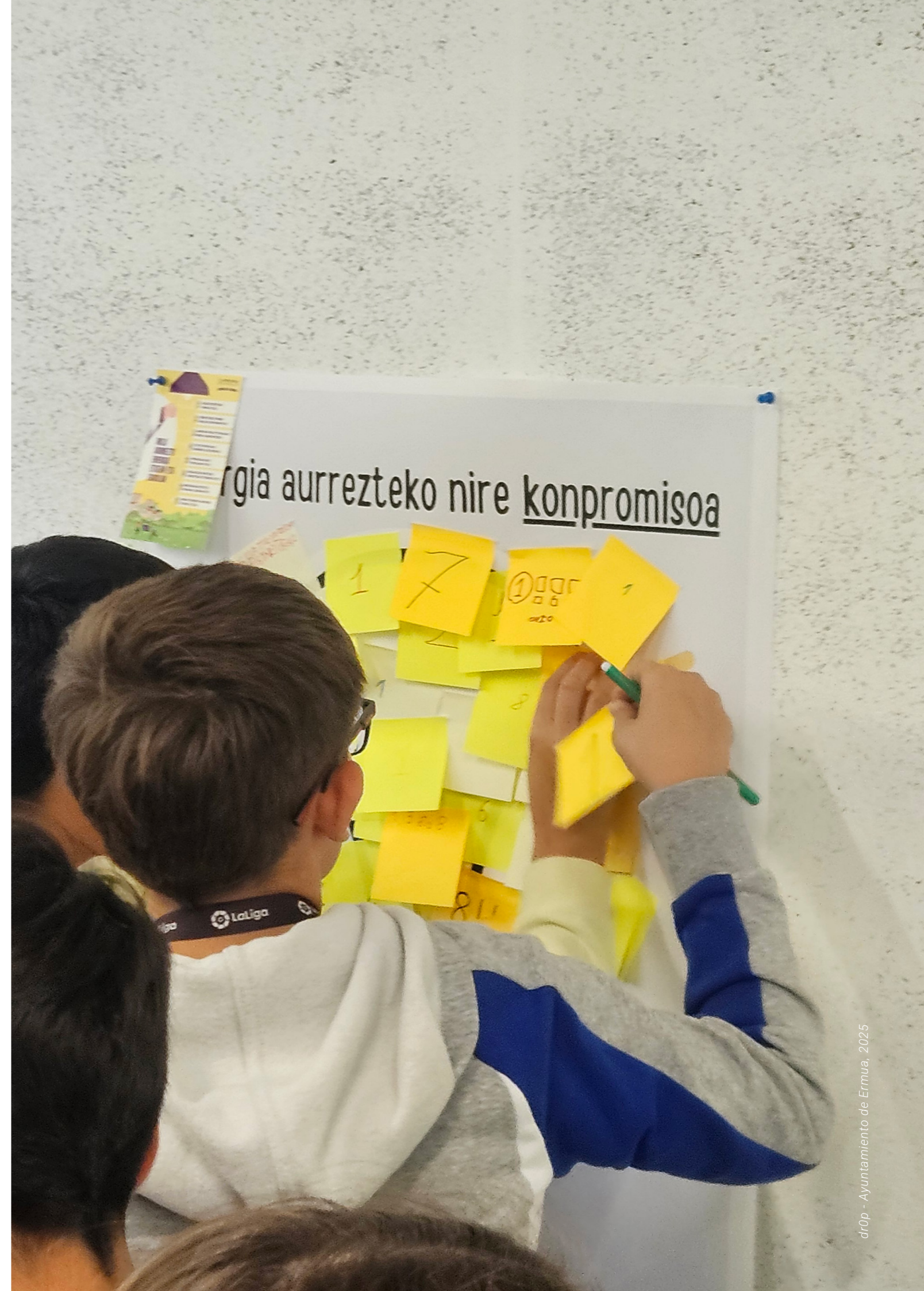
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Gleis 21 - Image credits: Hertha Hurnaus, 2019

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Grand Parc Bordeaux - Aquitaine, Druot, Lacaton & Vassal, 2015-2016, Image credits: Philippe Ruault

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