



La Borda. Housing Cooperative through transfer of use



Summary

La Borda pursues a cooperative housing model governed by a grant of use, whereby property is always collective while use is personal. The model eliminates property speculation and profiteering. Members of the cooperative can decide on juridical, legal and economic aspects and the housing infrastructure itself. One of its main objectives is to prioritise environmental aspects, which is economically achievable through creating homes with a passive design or low-energy consumption, with local, decentralised and self-managed renewable energy generation. Less energy and materials are consumed as major appliances and amenities are shared.

Why is it a case of energy citizenship?

La Borda represents an example of energy citizenship in the form of a housing cooperative whose objective is to change how people live and share, using a house built with energy efficiency measures whose members are trying to reduce the overall environmental impact of everyday living.



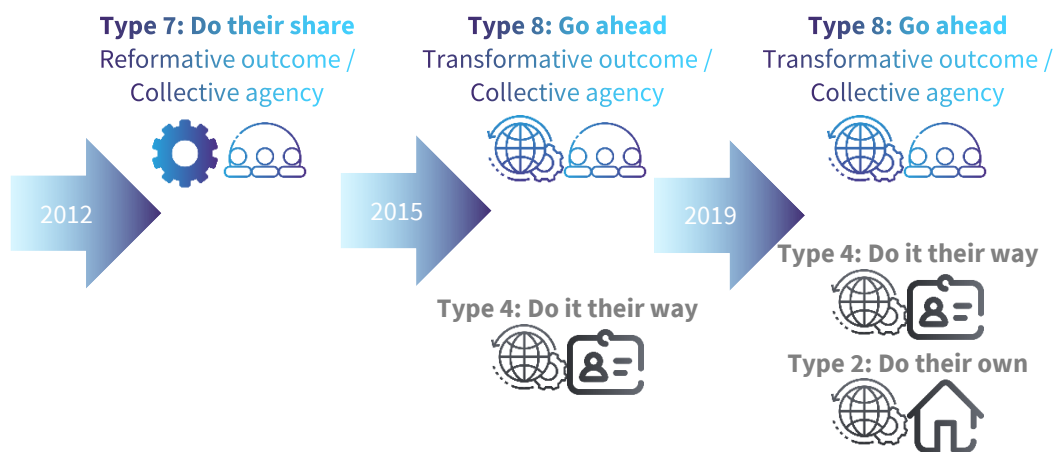
Goals



1. Guaranteeing access to affordable and decent housing, contributing to making access to housing universal;
2. Developing a new model of production, management and ownership of housing;
3. Creating and promoting an alternative societal model and implementing a viable community housing project in an urban context.

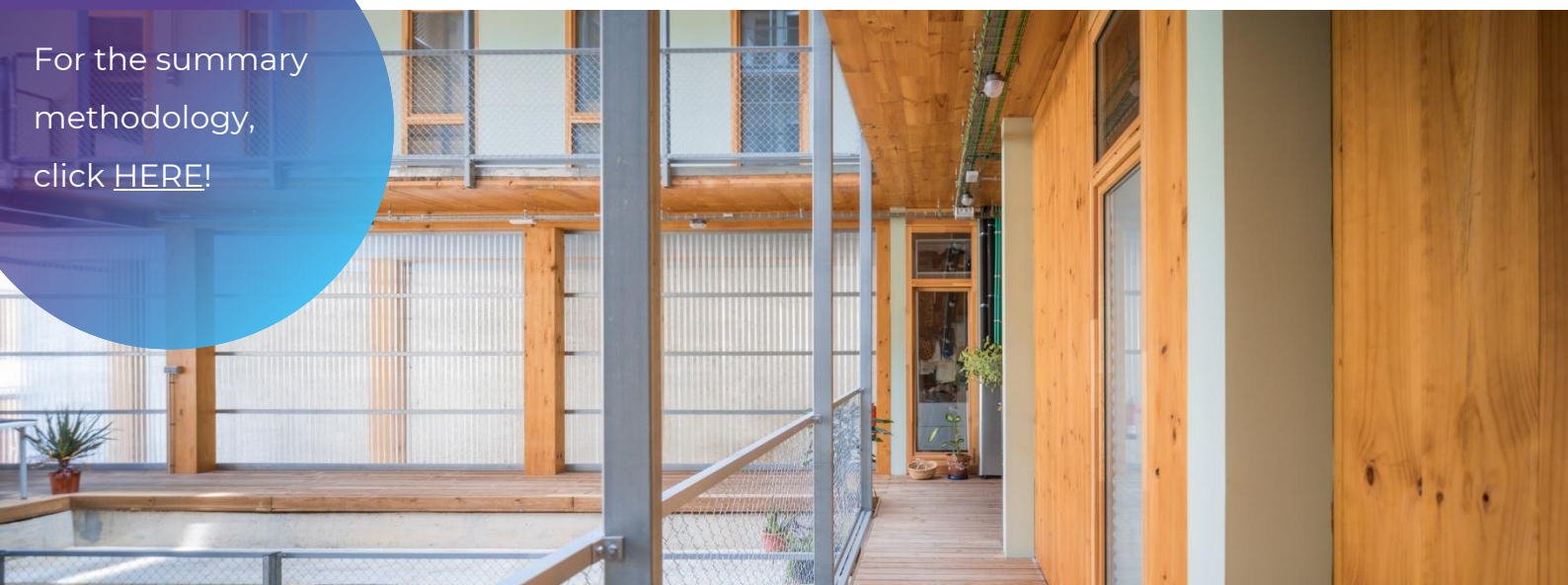
The story and the typology

La Borda aspires to become an alternative model to traditional public housing, affordable for people on low incomes. To this end, it is interested in becoming a self-managed neighbourhood on a human scale, in which social commitment and a different way of developing the city prevail, taking advantage of existing resources and reusing them in an ecological and sustainable way.



Case history summary

For the summary methodology, click [HERE!](#)



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101022492.

Phase 1: Establishment of La Borda, 2012-2015

Before the formal beginning of the building construction, they “had already work[ed] on the project [for] about five years. The years before the construction were years of a lot of work at the model and group constitution level”.

La Borda was born in 2012 as a result of three contextual factors: (1) a housing crisis fuelled by a reduction in household disposable income; (2) the emergence of the social economy – and in particular, the cooperative movement – as a potential basis for the development of alternative housing schemes; and (3) the existence of a neighbourhood movement linked to the urban renewal process of the former industrial estate of Can Batlló.

A group of neighbours occupied one of Can Batlló’s abandoned industrial buildings and used a **Phase 2: Construction, 2015-2019**

After intense negotiations, an agreement was signed between Barcelona City Council and the cooperative in 2015, whereby the municipality leased a plot of land in Calle Constitució, registered as social housing, to the cooperative for 75 years.

To create a space with a sustainable and participatory design, a “constructive phase [involving the] participatory design of the building” was implemented, whereby “future inhabitants c[ould] define the entire project according to their needs”. This is important, as it also contributed to the council considering giving permission for the similar use of other land on the territory of the city. In this phase, the main energy citizenship type of case became community-based, with a

participatory process to determine how they would like to see the site used.

This was the beginning of the self-organisation and self-promotion process for creating the La Borda Housing Cooperative. During this phase, the case may be classified as the collective (citizen-based and hybrid) and reformatory “Do their share” ENCI ideal type.

	Individual			Collective	
					
 Reformatory	1. Do their bit (in the household)	3. Do their bit (within organizations)	5. Make their voice heard	7. Do their share	9. Do the job
 Transformative	2. Do their own (in the household)	4. Do it their way (within organizations)	6. Make their vote count	8. Go ahead	10. Make their claims

Main type: Do the job

Reformatory outcome / Citizen-based and hybrid agency

transformative goal orientation, as the framework was established and construction started. With the strengthening of the cooperative, an organisationally embedded, transformative type of citizenship type also arose.

	Individual			Collective	
					
 Reformatory	1. Do their bit (in the household)	3. Do their bit (within organizations)	5. Make their voice heard	7. Do their share	9. Do the job
 Transformative	2. Do their own (in the household)	4. Do it their way (within organizations)	6. Make their vote count	 8. Go ahead	10. Make their claims

Main type: Go ahead

Transformative outcome / Citizen-based and hybrid agency

Secondary type: Do it their way (within organisations)

Reformatory outcome / Organisationally embedded agency

Phase 3: Cohabitation, 2019-

In 2019, the construction was completed, and the community moved in. As members saw it, *“it was a very big phase of finishing the houses (...) we entered a phase of starting to live together, we entered [during the] pandemic [which] also gave us another rhythm”.*

The case has become a benchmark for the development of public policies.

After the construction phase, the experiential phase started. Here, the main type did not change, as the purpose of the cooperative remained the same. But, by moving in, people became residents of the community rather than ‘just’ members of the cooperative; thus, an individual, household type of

energy citizenship has also appeared as a secondary ideal type.

	Individual			Collective	
					
 Reformative	1. Do their bit (in the household)	3. Do their bit (within organizations)	5. Make their voice heard	7. Do their share	9. Do the job
 Transformative	2. Do their own (in the household)	4. Do it their way (within organizations)	6. Make their vote count	8. Go ahead	10. Make their claims

Main type: Go ahead

Transformative outcome / Collective agency

Secondary types:

Do it their way (within organisations)

Reformative outcome / Organisationally embedded agency

Do their own (in the household)

Transformative outcome / Private in the household agency



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The aspects of energy citizenship

“Direct participation is the central axis of the project and this has a lot of influence, from how the building was designed to how we live, to what priorities we have at any given moment.” **Several members pointed out that such participation “through a horizontal and democratic organisation has been crucial to launching and consolidating the initiative (...) (and) has been promoted and channelled through dialogic and participatory spaces, among which the general assembly and the working commissions stand out”.**

Citizen control

Citizens exert effective control, and their votes have to be taken into account



One of the central aims of La Borda is "to make the best use of existing resources and to reuse them in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way". **This is embodied in activities that reduce consumption and carbon emissions in housing construction.** The commitment to reduce consumption and carbon footprint on a daily basis is also significant.

Carbon limits

Explicit recognition of the carbon limit

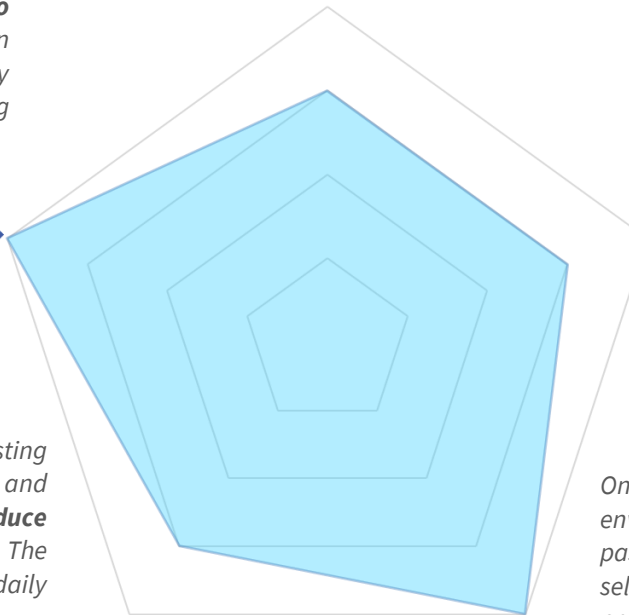


The ultimate objective of La Borda is to ensure that its members can “access affordable accommodation” in a space which is “self-initiated and self-organized by a group of citizens, whose objective was to live in a community and take advantage of the socioeconomic advantages of designing, building and living collectively”. For the moment, this is a challenge to be achieved in a transversal way, not as a central focus of the initiative. To achieve their goals, they also need to consider energy issues.



Democratic energy future

Energy democracy is considered as a positive value, but it remains limited to formal energy democracy



La Borda is committed to “finding decent and efficient housing at an affordable price for member families”, as well as establishing a replicable model which allows “universal access to decent housing through mechanisms which place use, not ownership, at the centre of the activity”. **The fee that can be charged for the use of housing is minimized so as to allow humble people to access it, which is one of the main purposes of the cooperative.** In fact, a long-term goal is to “increase accessibility for people who are in a housing emergency, people with low educational levels or [are] vulnerab[le], etc.”



Equity and justice

Equal access is granted, but limited by various criteria

One of the founding objectives of La Borda is to “give priority to the environmental aspect, economically achievable through homes with a passive design or low energy consumption, with the local, decentralized and self-managed generation of renewable energy. And, in the same sense, promote during the life of the dwelling the achievement of local and closed cycles of energy, water and waste”. **The building is made of wood, with a bioclimatic building design, in addition to having other measures for community life, such as the collectivization of some facilities, which increases efficiency.**



Environmental sustainability

Environmental sustainability is a core issue, and is considered in goal setting



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Further information



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Source of images

<http://www.laborda.coop/es/proyecto/fotografias/>



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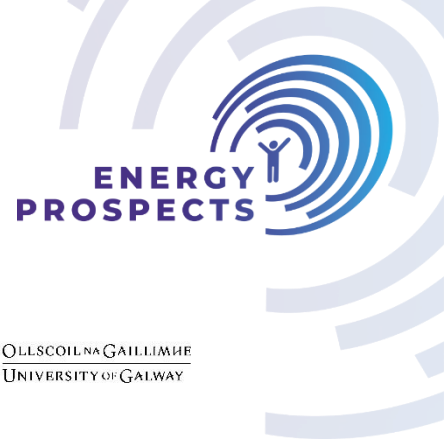
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