# *Acolhem: Moradia com Suporte*

**Submitted By:** Associação Mãos Invisíveis

## Organization Profile

**Organization Name:** Associação Mãos Invisíveis

**Organization Type:** Civil society

**Website:** www.maosinvisiveis.com.br

## Practice Details

**Country(ies):** Brazil

**City(ies):** Curitiba

**Start Year:** 2019 **Ongoing:** Yes **End Year:** N/A

**Main Adequate Housing Components:**




**Housing Thematic Areas:**




**Relevant SDGs:**



UN-HABITAT

## Problem & Context

In Brazil, the Cadastro Único (Single Registry) shows that, as of July 2025, more than 350,000 people were experiencing homelessness.

In Curitiba, there are 4,374 registered, but the actual number is likely higher, as around 50% of this population does not access the registry.

At the same time, the city offers only 1,723 shelter and service spots, revealing a structural mismatch: the numbers don't add up.

A large portion of this population remains on the streets for years, with no prospect of permanent housing.

The current model, known as the step-based system, relies on temporary shelters as the main response.

However, these services do not guarantee stability or comprehensive support.

There is also no data indicating how many people exit homelessness after going through this system, highlighting its low effectiveness as an exit strategy.

This reality makes clear that housing and social assistance policies were not designed to ensure housing as a right.

## Solution Developed

Moradia Primeiro Curitiba ("Housing First Curitiba") was created to address the challenge of long-term homelessness and the lack of housing policies for this population.

The practice guarantees immediate access to dignified and stable housing, accompanied by continuous and specialized support.

Beneficiaries are people experiencing long-term homelessness, many with histories of rights violations, family breakdowns, problematic substance use, chronic health conditions, and threatened motherhood due to loss of parental rights.

The central goal is to ensure housing as a right and a starting point for life reorganization, health promotion, rebuilding relationships, and resuming personal projects.

The innovation lies in breaking away from the step-based system, which conditions housing access on prior stages.

Instead, it adopts the international Housing First methodology, unprecedented in Brazil.

This socially and institutionally innovative approach has shown greater effectiveness and potential for replication in different urban contexts.

## Implementation

Moradia Primeiro Curitiba began in 2019 as a pilot project, the result of coordination between Cáritas Brasileira Regional Paraná and a civil society organization.

The practice included key actions: identifying and selecting long-term homeless beneficiaries; renting housing units in the private market; offering continuous multidisciplinary support; and monitoring impacts on health, relationships, income, and ontological security.

Key stakeholders included:

Organized civil society, especially Associação Mãos Invisíveis (Invisible Hands Association), which provided direct support, advocacy, and built a community support network

UFPR (Federal University of Paraná), responsible for research, data systematization, and technical training

Cáritas Brasileira Regional Paraná, responsible for administration

The implementation process was planned in 2018 and executed from 2019, with the first families and individuals entering the program.

Since then, the project has established service flows, conducted regular team training, and produced monitoring reports.

Financial resources came from parliamentary amendments and civil society donations.

Material and human resources were secured through institutional and community partnerships, enabling maintenance of the technical team, housing rentals, and support for beneficiary families.

## Enablers & Obstacles

The implementation of Moradia Primeiro Curitiba was facilitated by:

- Community mobilization
- The work of Cáritas Brasileira, Associação Mãos Invisíveis, and UFPR, which provided legitimacy, technical training, data production, and direct support to beneficiaries

These partnerships strengthened the methodology and enabled access to housing through dialogue with property owners and real estate agencies.

Main obstacles included:

- Resistance from institutional sectors opposed to breaking with the step-based system
- Bureaucracy in maintaining housing
- Financial resource instability

These challenges were addressed through advocacy, ongoing training, engagement in human rights networks, and securing national and international partnerships to ensure project continuity.

## Results & Impact

Since 2019, Moradia Primeiro Curitiba has served 15 people, guaranteeing immediate housing and continuous support.

Quantitative results, obtained through standardized monitoring tools (Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, WEMWBS, RAS, etc.), show increased self-esteem, improved mental health, strengthened ontological security, and greater financial stability among beneficiaries.

Qualitative evidence, gathered through interviews and observations, indicates reorganization of daily life, renewed community ties, and reduced exposure to urban violence.

Most impacted groups include low-income families, pregnant women, children, elderly individuals, and people with chronic health conditions or problematic substance use.

For these groups, housing was decisive in interrupting institutionalization trajectories, preventing loss of parental rights, and reducing social and health risks.

At the community and structural level, the project demonstrated that renting properties in the private market is viable and can stimulate inclusive housing policies.

In the long term, it helps reduce public health and social assistance costs, expands access to rights, and fosters civic participation.

Though small in scale, the pilot proves the effectiveness of the Housing First methodology in Brazil and reinforces its potential for national replication, aligning with the SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

## Replication & Scale Up

Housing First is an international methodology successfully replicated in the USA, Canada, Europe, and Chile, showing effectiveness in various contexts by guaranteeing immediate housing and continuous support.

In Curitiba, Moradia Primeiro is the pioneering pilot project in Brazil since 2019, implemented through a partnership between the university, civil society, and Cáritas.

Its positive results demonstrate that, when properly applied, the methodology is replicable and has potential for national expansion as a foundational public policy.

Moradia Primeiro Curitiba shows that the Housing First methodology can be scaled nationally by ensuring continuous funding, private market housing rentals, and trained multidisciplinary teams.

To expand its reach, it is necessary to coordinate governments, civil society, and universities, ensuring adherence to methodological principles.

The pilot experience demonstrates that immediate housing, combined with continuous support, is viable, replicable, and strategic for addressing homelessness in Brazil.

## Policy Uptake

This housing practice has informed or been partially integrated into policy discussions, strategies, or pilot-level policy instruments.

Moradia Primeiro Curitiba, Brazil's first Housing First pilot, has existed since 2019 and already informs academic and political debates on homelessness.

A national decree has established the initiative, but it has not yet been consolidated as a large-scale public policy.

The experience serves as a reference in councils and forums, aligning with the New National Policy for the Homeless Population and providing evidence for future strategies.

## Lessons & Takeaways

In retrospect, Moradia Primeiro Curitiba highlights the need to expand the number of housing units and ensure stable funding, reducing reliance on grants and donations.

It also reveals the importance of simplifying bureaucratic processes for renting properties and strengthening coordination with health, social assistance, and income generation policies.

Another key lesson is to invest even more in ongoing team training to ensure fidelity to the Housing First methodology.

## Note

The original submission was received in Portuguese. An automated translation was prepared using Copilot to enable broader multilingual access.