Boulevard da Paz

Submitted By: São Paulo City Hall



Organization Profile

Organization Name: Executive Secretariat of the Watersheds Program – São Paulo City Hall

Organization Type: Subnational government

Website: https://prefeitura.sp.gov.br/web/secretaria_executiva_do_programa_mananciais

Practice Details

Country(ies): Brazil

City(ies): São Paulo

Start Year: 2012

Ongoing: Yes

End Year: N/A

Main Adequate Housing Components:



Housing Thematic Areas:



Relevant SDGs:



UN-HABITAT

Problem & Context

The Boulevard da Paz (Peace Boulevard) Housing Complex is located in the Guarapiranga basin, a watershed protection area characterized by precarious settlements, lack of infrastructure, and environmental degradation. Before the intervention, the area contained informal housing built on unstable slopes, subject to landslide risks, and lacked water supply, sewage, and drainage systems, which worsened the contamination of water bodies and public health conditions. Families lived with insecure land tenure, social vulnerability, and exposure to environmental hazards. The absence of public facilities and structured urban spaces compromised the right to adequate housing, demanding integrated solutions that combined social housing, mitigation of geotechnical risks, infrastructure provision, and environmental preservation. The situation highlighted the urgent need for a structured public intervention capable of breaking the cycle of vulnerability and territorial degradation.

Solution Developed

The Boulevard da Paz Housing Complex addressed urban precariousness in areas of geotechnical and environmental risk, benefiting low-income families, especially those living in R3 and R4 zones (high and very high-risk areas, with potential for disasters and requiring urgent intervention, according to Civil Defense). The project ensured the right to remain in the territory, with safe housing, urban infrastructure, and access to essential public services. As an innovation, it broke with the logic of forced removals by resettling 539 families into new housing units, alongside slope stabilization works, road improvements, and the implementation of public facilities such as a primary health unit, coworking space, and urban park. The initiative adopted an integrated urbanization model with technical, social, and legal solutions, including land regularization under Federal Law No. 13,465/2017 and Municipal Law No. 17,734/2022, consolidating land tenure and citizenship.

Implementation

The implementation of Boulevard da Paz Housing was part of the third phase of the Mananciais Program, focused on urbanizing precarious settlements in environmentally protected areas. Actions included the removal of families at risk (R3 and R4) with rental assistance; slope stabilization; construction of 539 vertical housing units; road improvements; and the implementation of a Primary Health Unit, coworking space, and urban park.

Coordinated by the Executive Secretariat of the Mananciais Program and the Municipal Housing Secretariat, with support from the Health, Environment, and Economic Development Secretariats, the project involved construction companies for civil works and social teams for community engagement.

Interventions began in 2012/2013, and the housing complex was structured following the creation of the Executive Secretariat in 2021, integrating housing, environment, and social

policies. Funding came from the Municipal Treasury, the FMSAI (Municipal Fund for Environmental Sanitation and Infrastructure), and FUNDURB (Urban Development Fund).

Enablers & Obstacles

The implementation of the solution relied on several facilitating factors, including the engagement of the local community, political support from the São Paulo City Hall, coordination with municipal agencies, and the availability of geospatial data that supported the planning of interventions. The technical training of the involved teams also contributed to the efficient execution of the works.

Among the main challenges was the need to relocate families from risk areas, a delicate process that required negotiation, constant communication, and guarantees of safe resettlement. Measures such as social monitoring, prioritizing resettlement within the territory, and transparent dialogue with residents were essential to minimize impacts and ensure the continuity of interventions.

Results & Impact

The housing initiative directly benefits approximately 2,604 families through the urbanization of risk areas, including water and sewage networks, paving, and public facilities, promoting safety and quality of life. The planned implementation of the Primary Health Unit (UBS) will serve between 5,000 and 6,000 families, expanding access to health services. Additionally, 539 new housing units are planned, ensuring safe resettlement and dignified housing for low-income families.

Qualitative impacts include strengthening community bonds, reducing socio-environmental vulnerabilities, and enhancing the value of the territory. Beyond the direct beneficiaries, the project generates significant indirect impacts, such as job creation during the interventions, stimulation of the local economy, encouragement of formalization of commerce and services, and strengthening of community networks.

In the long term, the interventions promote urban regularization, foster economic opportunities, contribute to environmental preservation, and mitigate risks of landslides and flooding. The initiative demonstrates an integrated urbanization approach that combines social inclusion, resilience, and continuous improvement of the community's quality of life, serving as a reference for future interventions in vulnerable territories.

Replication & Scale Up

The practice is not replicable, as each action of the Mananciais Program is planned exclusively according to the specificities of each area of operation. Factors such as topography, socio-

environmental vulnerabilities, population density, and community context make each intervention unique, preventing direct replication in other territories.

The housing practice can be expanded through increased financial and technical resources, integration with health, education, and mobility policies, and strengthening community engagement. Investments in infrastructure, safe resettlement, and additional housing units allow for broader reach and benefit more families while maintaining an integrated approach to urbanization, social inclusion, and mitigation of socio-environmental risks.

Policy Uptake

This housing practice has been fully adopted into formal policy frameworks and legislation, and is being implemented at scale with institutional support.

The housing practice supported municipal pilot discussions, providing data that informed urbanization and resettlement strategies in risk areas. The lessons learned guided protocols of the Mananciais Program, allowing impact assessments before expanding the actions. Currently, the practice is incorporated into the Mananciais Program and municipal legislation, with support from the City Hall, integration with urban policies, and structured resources, ensuring implementation, monitoring, and replicability adapted to each area.

Lessons & Takeaways

In retrospect, it would be important to improve resettlement planning to reduce social impacts, increase communication and participation of families, expedite licensing and construction processes, and strengthen strategies for monitoring and maintaining infrastructure. Enhancing integration between urbanization, health, and public services sectors would also contribute to greater efficiency and broader benefits for the community.