La Morada, Feminist and LGTBIQ+ Cooperative Housing in Barcelona

Submitted By: La Dinamo Fundació



Organization Profile

Organization Name: Lacol SCCL and La Ciutat Invisible SCCL

Organization Type: Foundation and philanthropy

Website: https://ladinamofundacio.org/project/la-morada/

Practice Details

Country(ies): Spain

City(ies): Barcelona

Start Year: 2018

Ongoing: No

End Year: 2024

Main Adequate Housing Components:



Housing Thematic Areas:

- Housing Affordability & Financing
- Communal & Self-Build Housing
- Housing Rights & Social Inclusion

Relevant SDGs:



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Problem & Context

La Morada is a feminist and LGTBIQ+ housing cooperative in the Roquetes neighborhood of Barcelona. It addresses key challenges: the lack of access to affordable, dignified housing for marginalized communities, the commodification of housing, and the invisibility of feminist and queer needs in public policy. The project offers an alternative model focused on collective ownership, care, and community life. Emerging from a context of rising housing prices and social exclusion, it highlights major policy gaps: insufficient public support for cooperative housing, lack of recognition of LGTBIQ+ housing needs, limited public land for non-speculative use, and inadequate financing mechanisms for alternative housing models. La Morada is a pioneering response to these gaps, yet its reliance on foundations like La Dinamo and solidarity-based financing underlines the urgent need for stronger institutional frameworks to support community-led, inclusive housing projects.

Solution Developed

The project concretely tackled the challenge by creating 12 permanently affordable homes under the “cessió d’ús” (use-right) model, removing housing from speculative logics. The main beneficiaries are women, lesbians, trans, and queer individuals committed to collective living and care-based communities.

The main objectives were to secure stable, non-speculative housing; foster a self-managed, care-centered community; promote social cohesion; and create an inclusive, safe space for gender and sexual diversity. Additionally, La Morada aimed to root itself in a working-class neighborhood with a strong history of resistance, contributing to local community life.

Innovative aspects include:

- Social innovation: Governance based on feminist, horizontal, and non-hierarchical values.
- Architectural flexibility: Modular housing that adapts to changing life needs.
- Institutional innovation: Partnership with La Dinamo Fundació, enabling private land use through a non-speculative surface rights model.
- Financial innovation: Hybrid funding model using ethical finance (Coop57) and community-supported contributions.

Implementation

La Morada implemented a feminist, LGTBIQ+ cooperative housing project through a series of coordinated actions: collective project design by future residents, architectural planning with Lacol, legal and financial structuring with La Ciutat Invisible, and integral support from La Dinamo Fundació. The cooperative developed a non-speculative model of 12 social housing units with shared community spaces. Key actors included: La Morada (resident-led cooperative),

La Dinamo (landowner and technical support), Lacol (architecture), La Ciutat Invisible (legal/economic advisory), Coop57 (ethical financing), and local community networks.

The timeline began with collective planning and land allocation in 2021, architectural development and funding in 2022, construction starting in January 2023, and expected completion by mid-2024.

Resources included a €1.9M budget, with initial resident contributions (€26,000 each), monthly fees (€745), a mortgage from Coop57, and a participatory loan from Coop57 and La Dinamo. Partnerships were essential to realizing this innovative, inclusive housing model.

Enablers & Obstacles

Key enablers of La Morada included strong community engagement and self-organization by the cooperative members, deep-rooted in feminist and LGTBIQ+ activism. Support from La Dinamo Fundació was essential, offering technical assistance and land through a surface rights agreement. Partnerships with Lacol and La Ciutat Invisible ensured architectural and legal expertise, while ethical finance from Coop57 enabled funding. The legal framework of “cessió d’ús” in Catalonia also provided a supportive regulatory base.

Major obstacles included limited access to affordable land, overcome by using land owned by La Dinamo. Lack of public financing in cooperative housing projects based in private land. That was addressed through resident contributions, Coop57 loan and solidarity-based financing. Another challenge was navigating complex bureaucratic processes not tailored for non-traditional housing models.

Results & Impact

La Morada has created 12 permanently affordable housing units under the HPO (officially protected housing) scheme, with residents contributing €26,000 initially and paying a monthly fee of €745—substantially below Barcelona's market rates. The project also includes 270 m² of community spaces that promote shared care work, emotional support, and collective life.

A key impact is on low-income and marginalized groups—especially women, lesbians, and trans people—who often face systemic exclusion from stable and dignified housing. La Morada provides long-term housing security and self-management, empowering residents socially and economically.

A major innovation is the removal of a private urban plot from the speculative market to develop a non-profit housing project. Through a surface rights agreement with La Dinamo Fundació, this land is permanently dedicated to affordable housing, contributing to the expansion of the public-cooperative housing stock.

Broader impacts include strengthening the social fabric in the Roquetes neighborhood, fostering community participation, and encouraging solidarity networks. Environmentally, the building is designed with passive energy strategies and shared infrastructures to reduce resource consumption. La Morada sets a powerful precedent for inclusive, sustainable, and feminist housing, offering a replicable model for urban transformation that aligns with the right to housing and ecological justice.

Replication & Scale Up

La Morada has not been replicated as an identical project, but its model—community-led, non-speculative housing in cessió d'ús—has been successfully scaled through La Dinamo Fundació. Projects like La Raval, La Titaranya, La Closca and others now involve over 620 people. Key factors for replication include legal and financial tools, ethical financing (Coop57), La Dinamo's technical support, and access to land via surface rights. Each project is autonomous but shares a common cooperative foundation and political view.

Scaling up La Morada's model requires increased access to public or private land through surface rights, stronger public policies supporting cessió d'ús, and dedicated funding for cooperative housing especially when the cooperative extracts private land and makes affordable shield housing. Expanding technical support networks like La Dinamo and promoting partnerships with ethical finance institutions are key. Replication depends on empowering local groups while ensuring institutional frameworks that recognize and support community-led, non-speculative housing.

Policy Uptake

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

La Morada, as part of La Dinamo's ecosystem, has contributed to positioning the cessió d'ús model in housing policy debates in Barcelona and Catalonia. The project has informed local strategies promoting non-speculative housing and has been referenced in pilot programs for public land allocation to cooperatives. Its success strengthens the case for integrating community-led housing into broader public housing policies.

Lessons & Takeaways

In hindsight, La Morada would benefit from earlier engagement with public institutions to ease bureaucratic processes and secure more stable support. Strengthening financial accessibility for lower-income members and reducing upfront contributions would improve inclusivity. Additionally, clearer timelines and risk assessments during construction could enhance project planning and reduce uncertainty for future residents.

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Note

Image credit: Milena Villalba