La Raval: Intergenerational Cooperative Housing in Manresa

Submitted By: La Dinamo Fundació



Organization Profile

Organization Name: Lacol SCCL and La Ciutat Invisible SCCL

Organization Type: Civil society

Website: https://laraval.cat/

Practice Details

Country(ies): Spain

City(ies): Manresa

Start Year: 2024

Ongoing: Yes

End Year: N/A

Main Adequate Housing Components:



Housing Thematic Areas:



Relevant SDGs:



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Problem & Context

The La Raval project in the Barri Vell of Manresa tackles challenges related to housing access, social cohesion, and demographic change. The area has long suffered from depopulation, speculation, and neglect, leading to vacant buildings and fragmented communities. Despite urban renewal efforts, there's a lack of long-term, affordable housing that fosters rootedness and solidarity. La Raval proposes an intergenerational cooperative housing model based on collective ownership and self-management, promoting affordability, care, and mutual support. It addresses gaps in public policy, such as the lack of support for community-led housing, urban strategies favoring private development, and missing legal and financial tools for intergenerational and non-speculative housing. The project offers a replicable model for municipalities aiming to support community-rooted housing in historic neighborhoods.

Solution Developed

The La Raval project addresses housing exclusion and social fragmentation through the creation of an intergenerational cooperative housing model in the Barri Vell of Manresa. It provides a long-term, non-speculative housing solution for people that can't access to affordable, stable housing. The project enables residents to co-own and self-manage their homes through a housing cooperative on public land under a long-term lease (cessió d'ús model).

Its main objectives are to ensure affordable, secure housing, promote community care and mutual support, and contribute to the revitalisation of the historic centre without displacement. The approach fosters social mix and rootedness by intentionally combining different generations and household types.

What makes La Raval innovative is its social and institutional model: public-cooperative collaboration, participatory design, and a legal structure that prevents speculation. It integrates housing with community life and collective governance, serving as a scalable model for inclusive urban regeneration.

Implementation

The implementation of La Raval involved a coordinated set of actions to develop an intergenerational cooperative housing project on municipally owned land in the Barri Vell of Manresa. Key steps included: (1) securing public land through a long-term cessió d'ús agreement, (2) co-designing the project with future residents through participatory workshops, (3) setting up the cooperative's legal and governance framework, and (4) defining architectural plans with strong social and environmental criteria.

The project is led by La Dinamo Fundació, providing legal, technical, and social support. The City of Manresa facilitated land transfer and political backing. The architectural cooperative Lacol

led the participatory design process. Future residents played an active role in shaping both the physical space and governance model.

The process began in 2017 with community outreach and site identification. In 2019, the land was secured and the cooperative formally constituted. Design and permitting took place between 2019–2022, and construction was completed in April 2024.

Implementation was supported by a mix of public subsidies (local and regional), ethical banking loans (Coop57 SCCL), member contributions, and in-kind technical assistance. The project demonstrates a strong public–community partnership and a replicable model for inclusive, non-speculative urban regeneration.

Enablers & Obstacles

Key enablers of La Raval included strong political will from the City of Manresa to allocate public land for cooperative housing and the active involvement of La Dinamo Fundació, which provided expertise and guidance throughout the process. Community engagement was also critical, with future residents participating from the early stages. The legal framework of cessió d'ús allowed for long-term affordability and non-speculative use.

Obstacles included bureaucratic delays in securing permits and formalising the land transfer, as well as limited financial instruments adapted to cooperative housing. These were addressed through persistent dialogue with public institutions, use of ethical finance mechanisms, and leveraging technical support from experienced partners. Building trust between all actors and maintaining resident involvement over several years was also a challenge, met through continuous communication and co-creation dynamics.

Results & Impact

La Raval has delivered 18 cooperative housing units in the Barri Vell of Manresa, offering secure, long-term housing for over 39 people. Monthly contributions range from €480 to €720, around 30% below market rent, made possible through the cessió d'ús model and public support.

The project has strengthened intergenerational solidarity and mutual support by integrating shared spaces: a kitchen-dining room, multipurpose rooms, laundry, terraces, and a polyvalent hall. These community areas, located mainly on lower and upper floors, were co-designed with residents and function as transitional spaces between public and private life. A new public passage connects Plaça Hospital to the Anònima site, boosting urban permeability and revitalising the historic centre.

The building follows bioclimatic design, with a compact shape, high thermal mass, and cross-ventilation. Facades use cork and lime insulation, eliminating thermal bridges. Thermal systems are fully centralised with aerothermal energy and radiant floors, powered by photovoltaic

production. A translucent-roofed courtyard acts as a passive thermal regulator and natural ventilator throughout the year.

La Raval sets a replicable model for inclusive, sustainable, community-led housing, contributing to social cohesion and the transformation of urban centres through the social and solidarity economy.

Replication & Scale Up

El Rusc

- Developed by Sostre Cívic
- Located in a rehabilitated, debanked building, it provides 12 homes targeting young people and elders.
- Monthly fees range from €335–€385, with a refundable entry contribution of €1,900–€2,400

La Bertrana

- Led by Sostre Cívic, this new-scale project on municipal land aims to deliver 60 officially protected cooperative homes
- Under construction since early 2025, it follows the same cessió d'ús model and will operate under public–community partnership frameworks.

La Raval model can be scaled by securing public land under cessió d'ús agreements, supported by favourable policies, ethical finance, and technical assistance. Municipalities must prioritise non-speculative housing and partner with cooperatives. Foundations like La Dinamo and networks like Sostre Cívic enable replication. In Catalonia, the model has considerably grown since La Raval started in 2017. Now there are already 70+ cooperative housing projects and around 1,200 units.

Policy Uptake

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

La Raval has helped bring cooperative housing into local policy in Manresa, leading the city to support two new projects and integrate the model into its urban regeneration strategy. Regionally, it aligns with Catalonia's push for non-speculative housing, influencing discussions led by INCASÒL and the Department of Territory. As one of over 70 projects in Catalonia, La Raval serves as a pilot that informs land, finance, and housing policies supporting the cooperative sector.

Model replicated through La Dinamo Fundació in projects including La Bertrana (60 homes) and El Rusc (12 homes), collectively involving 620+ people.

Scaling requires public land via cessió d'ús, supportive policies, ethical finance, and technical assistance.

Lessons & Takeaways

One key lesson from La Raval is the need to streamline administrative procedures, as delays in permits and land agreements slowed implementation. Earlier alignment with municipal departments could improve timing. More public financial support would help lower monthly costs further, enhancing accessibility. Additionally, stronger support for resident groups and better coordination between technical, political, and community actors from the start would ensure a smoother and more inclusive process.

Note

Image credit: Adrià Goula