Melhorias

Submitted By: São Paulo Metropolitan Housing Company



Organization Profile

Organization Name: São Paulo Metropolitan Housing Company

Organization Type: Subnational government

Website: https://cohab.sp.gov.br/

Practice Details

Country(ies): Brazil

City(ies): São Paulo

Start Year: 2023

Ongoing: Yes

End Year: N/A

Main Adequate Housing Components:



Housing Thematic Areas:

- Social Housing
- Housing Rights & Social Inclusion
- Housing Policy, Legislation & Governance
- Housing Data & Monitoring

Relevant SDGs:



UN-HABITAT

Problem & Context

In major urban centers such as São Paulo, the housing challenge is not limited to the quantitative deficit; it is equally about the structural inadequacy of existing homes. In many peripheral areas, families rely on self-construction, where renovations and expansions are carried out gradually, constrained by financial hardship. This often results in unfinished walls, improvised electrical systems, or fragile structures that jeopardize health and safety. According to the João Pinheiro Foundation (2022), over 40 million households in Brazil face some form of structural inadequacy – ranging from the absence of proper finishes to precarious or improperly executed installations. In practice, this means that nearly 6 in 10 Brazilian families live in housing conditions that undermine their dignity, safety, and well-being. Addressing this reality requires urgent housing policies that move beyond reducing the deficit and ensure access to truly adequate, resilient, and dignified homes for all.

Solution Developed

The “Pode Entrar – Melhorias” Program reaffirms the right to adequate housing as an essential condition of citizenship in São Paulo. Targeted at families with incomes between 1 and 6 minimum wages, the program reduces vulnerabilities and improves quality of life through housing upgrades financed with non-repayable public funds. The interventions include adjustments to plumbing and electrical systems, waterproofing, and finishing works, prioritizing both the needs identified by beneficiaries and the technical inadequacies detected.

Execution is carried out by accredited companies under technical supervision. Management is supported by a digital platform that securely and transparently integrates and streamlines the workflow, starting with the georeferenced registration of housing units, photographic records, budgets, and reports submitted by service providers, along with audits and document availability for COHAB-SP. This innovative model combines housing policy, efficient public management, technology, and social impact, ensuring traceability and direct community participation in the decision-making process regarding home improvements.

Implementation

The “Pode Entrar – Melhorias” Program was created by COHAB-SP in partnership with the Municipal Housing Secretariat (SEHAB), grounded in the Municipal Strategic Master Plan (Law No. 16,050/2014, art. 291, III) and the Pode Entrar Program Law (Law No. 17,638/2021, art. 2, VI). To launch the initiative, the Regulatory Decree, Internal Regulation, and Accreditation Notice for service providers were established.

In the last two months of 2023, two pilot projects tested the program’s structure and methodology on a small scale, demonstrating its practical effectiveness.

Fully funded by public resources, with an initial investment of R$ 33 million (approximately USD 6 million), the program guarantees that beneficiaries bear no direct costs, transforming lives by providing safe, dignified, and high-quality housing improvements to families across São Paulo.

- 2nd semester / 2023 → Development of the Program Regulation
- October / 2023 → Municipal Decree No. 62,873/2023
- December / 2023 → Pilot Project
- 1st semester / 2024 → Customization of the Management Platform
- January / 2024 → Internal Regulation of the "Pode Entrar – Melhorias " Program
- February / 2024 → Publication of Accreditation Notice No. 001/24
- March / 2024 → Accreditation of Companies
- June / 2024 → Launch of the first intervention area and Start of Works
- 2025 → Progress and management of works

Enablers & Obstacles

The Program relied on strong political and institutional support from the São Paulo City Hall, through SEHAB and COHAB-SP, which ensured swift regulation and legitimacy in its implementation. The adoption of a proprietary digital platform enabled data integration, real-time monitoring, and fully transparent management, strengthening coordination among beneficiaries, accredited companies, technical teams, and public managers. The main challenges included the need for documentation regularization of beneficiary families and the complex logistics of works in densely populated and hard-to-access areas. These obstacles were overcome through constant dialogue, close engagement with communities, and the operational flexibility of field teams. The experience demonstrates that technological innovation, combined with efficient public governance, can transform housing policies into concrete solutions.

Results & Impact

The "Pode Entrar – Melhorias" Program, led by COHAB-SP, began with a small but powerful pilot: the renovation of a lot housing two families. The results were immediate and profound: improvements in health, well-being, and dignity for the residents. This impact confirmed the program's solid structure and its potential for expansion. In the second half of 2024, the program scaled up, launching 11 intervention areas across all five regions of São Paulo and registering 793 families living in social vulnerability. The selection of these areas was guided by technical criteria, using the São Paulo Social Vulnerability Index (IPVS) and the legal land tenure status of each territory, ensuring equity and effective resource allocation.

Replication & Scale Up

The program was developed based on the principle of replicability, with a structure, regulations, and platform designed to allow its application in multiple territories simultaneously. After the pilot project, it was replicated in 11 polygons (areas of operation) distributed across the five regions of the city of São Paulo. The program's structure was designed to ensure its scalability and adaptation to the specificities of each territory.

In order to broaden the scope of the initiative and expand the program, we have identified critical areas for enhancement, including the need to increase the availability of financial resources to serve additional regions and scale up operations. It is also essential to strengthen the technical team, improve internal processes, and refine communication with beneficiaries, thereby ensuring greater operational efficiency.

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 Pode Entrar – Melhorias Program has been part of the housing policy of the Municipality of São Paulo since 2023, serving as an instrument to promote adequate housing for low-income families in regular or potentially regularizable areas, and implemented with the purpose of reducing housing inadequacy.

Lessons & Takeaways

The experience highlighted the importance of an integrated process between public management, technology, and technical field operations to ensure efficiency and quality in housing improvements. The need for constant updating of registries and documentation proved to be a critical point, requiring the enhancement of preliminary guidance provided to beneficiaries. The use of a technological platform and the standardization of procedures will be maintained and further improved as the foundation for future expansions.