



# A map of imaginations for broader housing futures

When we think of ‘housing imaginations’, we identify several dominant urban visions that shape prevailing notions of what housing futures could and should look like. On the one hand, the imaginary of the ‘global city’, shaped by neoliberal ideologies and the intensification of private investment, technological advancement, or the (re)development of “world-class” facilities, luxury housing and retail. These visions may serve an elite class, but have been used to sanitise and expel the urban poor. On the other hand, images of dystopian landscapes shaped by the inaction towards the effects of the climate crisis, the concentration and commodification of resources, and the intensification of inequalities and violence. In the midst of these landscapes of expectations and/or crisis, housing imaginations are often portrayed as a complicit force; reproducing the ideology that “there is no alternative” to precarity than the intensification of capital or market-led delivery of housing.

This provocation takes inspiration from pluriversal calls for the recognition of the ‘multiple worlds’ that we already inhabit. It is an invitation to imagine an alternative map of housing futures—one that embodies the potential for resisting these predicaments by celebrating alternative practices and rehearsing reparative, pluralistic, and emancipatory housing futures.

This alternative map – which doesn’t aim to be exhaustive – explores practices and initiatives that advance four different pathways to re-imagine future landscapes:

- **Repairing**

This pathway includes initiatives that counter a housing future shaped by intersecting crises, violence, risk and displacement. Examples include experiences of squatting, rescuing memory and indigenous knowledge, upgrading existing structures, making space for refuge, and various forms of solidarity and innovative horizontal collaboration in housing production that tackle both current and emerging social and environmental risks.

- **Collectivising**

This pathway includes practices that challenge a market-oriented housing future based solely on individual property ownership. Examples include experiences of cooperatives, community land trusts, special planning zones, and other commoning and equality-oriented initiatives that prioritise the social value of housing.

- **Co-producing knowledge and practices**

This pathway encompasses initiatives that challenge a housing future shaped by commodified data and exclusionary smart city frameworks. Examples include collective forms of mapping, civic media production, enumeration, planning, and co-design that prioritise the knowledge of the urban majorities.

- **Queering spatial arrangements**

This pathway highlights initiatives that oppose a housing future grounded in patriarchal structures and heteronormativity. Examples of these experiences might be queer housing, cooperatives for the elderly, and other models that demonstrate diverse socio-spatial arrangements.

The practices in this map exist today and offer many of the keys for a different tomorrow. For each of them, we ask: how do they envision housing futures? How do they contest mainstream imaginaries? And how are these futures built and by whom?

In producing this atlas of alternative imaginaries, we invite reflections on the already possible, exploring utopian visions for housing futures which centre caring, collective, and reparative practices of living and dwelling.

# Map's entries:



## Repairing

1. Occupation of central buildings to repair housing futures - the case of Nitel in Lagos, Nigeria
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# A. Repairing



## 1 | Occupation of central buildings to repair housing futures - the case of Nitel in Lagos, Nigeria

### How do they advance the pathway?

While housing markets and policies tend to exclude groups from their housing rights, organised grassroots groups are contesting those exclusionary patterns and finding ways to secure well-located housing collectively. By repurposing abandoned buildings in central areas of the city, housing movements restore the social and ecological function of land and property. This happens in places as diverse as Brazil, South Africa and Greece. In Lagos, Nigeria's largest city, the occupation of the Nitel building demonstrates that repurposing abandoned buildings for low-income housing can serve as a model for repairing and revitalising cities and housing futures.

### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

Lagos has often been portrayed as a city of despair, violence, and uncontrolled growth, which is sustained by narratives of criminalisation and stigma around the urban poor. By demonstrating alternative ways of inhabiting Lagos Island, Nitel's organisers are contesting narratives that place evictions, violence and displacement as the only 'solution' to the regeneration of the city centre.

### How are these futures built and by whom?

Media4Change is a collective led by young members of the Nigerian Slum/Informal Settlement Federation, which has worked for over a decade in developing media that highlights the voices of the Nigerian urban poor. They used media production and training to document episodes of state violence but also to propose counter-narratives that oppose the criminalisation and stigma of informal settlement dwellers. As part of their work, they have captured through the video "NITEL: Shelter from the Storm" the voices and history of a community mobilising for housing justice.

[Learn more](#)

## 2 | Radical housing practices in Italy: making imaginaries of housing futures from the community to the community

### How do they advance the pathway?

What here we identify as radical housing practices in Italy envision collective possibilities for urban reparation by appropriating, reinventing, and managing shared socio-spatial resources for urban life to flourish.

They establish sanctuaries for vulnerable populations experiencing housing precarity, mending the ability for all to access shelter and spaces for intimacy and care. They restore the centrality of the social value of land, prioritising community autonomy and wellbeing over real estate profit. They renovate abandoned buildings and infrastructures, making visible imaginaries of alternative housing futures.

Radical housing practices offer a space for experimentation, pointing toward a future grounded in the commons.

### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

Radical housing practices challenge cities' commodification by subtracting spaces from real estate speculation and turning them into commons.

"Space of Mutual Aid" in Milan and "Spin Time Labs" in Rome remove properties from real estate portfolios, integrating housing dimensions with metropolitan socio-cultural hubs.

"Carracci Casa Comune" in Bologna and "Casette alla Giudecca" in Venice squat public housing to highlight its systematic abandonment by local authorities, in favour of privatisation, speculation and securitisation, and to reinstate community assets for popular use.

"Porto Fluviale Occupato" in Rome and "Residenza Collettiva Transitoria de La Salette" in Turin demonstrate how social movements can effectively push local institutions to develop unconventional housing projects that serve the community's needs.

"Quarticciolo Ribelle" in Rome allies with the university to stop a securitarian neighbourhood plan and promote a bottom-up ecosystem of projects.

### How are these futures built and by whom?

These projects are activated by alliances of dispossessed, activists, students, refugees, evicted, scholars, migrants, artists, and, in general, citizens concerned with the city's increasing exclusivity that marginalises the poor.

Many of these experiences are outcomes of the post-2008 crisis cycle of housing struggle (2011-2014), often rooted in social movements with longer trajectories. They build on solidarity bonds and principles of mutual aid across tenant movements and other grassroots organisations fighting for equal rights for all. They tackle urban inequalities by producing knowledge, practices, and spaces outside of capitalist dynamics and building people's power and freedom through squatting and organisation.

Learn more:

#### Space of Mutual Aid (Milan):

Book chapter, Emanuele Belotti (2017, ITA): [Abitare informale e Migrazioni](#)

#### Spin Time Labs (Rome)

Book, Chiara Cacciotti (2024, ITA): [Qui è tutto abitato](#)

#### Carracci Casa Comune (Bologna)

Reportage, Isaia Invernizzi (2024, ITA): [A Bologna l'occupazione di un palazzo si è risolta in modo diverso](#)

#### Casette alla Giudecca (Venice)

Reportage, Nicola Zolin (2024, ENG): [Here we live, here we stay](#)

#### Porto Fluviale Occupato (Rome)

Project description, Arti Civiche (2021, ITA): [Porto Fluviale Rechouse](#)

#### Residenza Collettiva Transitoria de La Salette (Turin)

Journal article, Laura Ferrero (2020, ENG): [Gaining/regaining housing stability through collective action](#)

#### Quarticciolo Ribelle (Rome)

Reportage, Francesco Ermani (2025, ITA): [A Roma un'alternativa al decreto Caivano esiste già](#)

## 3 | Enabling the right to build through Housing Support Centres (HSCs) in South Africa

### How do they advance the pathway?

In the context of austerity, greater institutional support for community-driven, incremental and more secure housing is needed. While the state is not able to provide affordable housing for all, Housing Support Centres (HSC) can be a vehicle to facilitate this support to communities that are building their own homes, providing access to organisational, technical and administrative assistance.

### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

Amid the growing discourse around 'self-built' housing, especially in the context of fiscal constraints and the de-prioritisation of new large-scale public housing projects, there is an opportunity for self-build to be enabled and supported through HSCs. In the absence of incremental planning and alternative individual tenure arrangements, and the highly limiting nature of planning, environmental and engineering norms and building regulations, HSCs can be an important element in shifting the housing focus beyond just sites-and-services, and towards a more collaborative approach between government, NGOs, and communities to enable and support the right to build.

### How are these futures built and by whom?

Significant experience has been gained by both the state and NGOs in the setting up and operation of HSCs linked to the Enhanced People's Housing Process (EPHP), which assists households in actively contributing towards the building of their own homes. HSCs can also build from similar experiences in countries like Brazil and India. In Brazil, the housing support framework includes laws to enable technical housing support, which also require that technical assistance prioritise initiatives in housing areas declared by law to be of public interest. Support is to be provided by architecture, urban planning and engineering professionals who are either public servants, members of teams of NGOs and NPOs, professionals linked to academic outreach programmes, or self-employed professionals or members of teams of legal entities. In India, Building Centres undertake the design and implementation of housing projects for low-income residents, and are also involved in designing cost-effective building components that prioritise using local materials. Innovative building materials produced at the centres are used with indigenous building technologies in these projects, with on-site training programmes helping to provide the necessary skilled labour.

[Learn more](#)

## 4 | Tactical interventions to repair the public realm - interventions to recover public spaces for people

### How do they advance the pathway?

Born in the USA and rooted in Design Thinking, the premise of tactical urbanism is to take short-term actions for long-term change. Bottom-up and driven by collective action, tactical urbanism as an approach to urban planning has spread throughout Latin America (e.g. Colombia, Chile, Mexico) as a way to provide spaces that are inclusive and foster a sense of ownership. Mainly intervening in public spaces, tactical urbanism has been used in informal settlement upgrading.

### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

By taking small actions that recuperate spaces for people, these interventions transform spaces to make them inclusive and support the creation of reciprocity networks. Tactical urbanism actions can transform unsafe spaces into safe ones, improving living conditions in informal settlements. Fostering inclusivity in open spaces, collective actions such as communal gardens potentially address food security while allowing tight-knit communities to prosper.

### How are these futures built and by whom?

These futures are built by collective actions, grassroots initiatives and/or individual actions that temporarily claim spaces, potentially becoming permanent, thus allowing for long-term change. They sometimes manifest as punctual (artistic) manifestations (e.g. painting a wall, providing urban furniture), sometimes as community-driven needs (e.g. children's playground, closing a street, community gardening). These actions are usually bottom-up and people-led (artists, community organisations, and grassroots groups), but also include a wide range of other actors, such as NGOs, local government, and businesses. Therefore, it can include both informal DIY actions (such as placing barriers along streets to reduce car speed, or even prevent vehicular access) or local government-led actions (like pop-up plazas).

[Learn more](#)



## 5 | Collaborative and co-housing initiatives across Europe

### How do they advance the pathway?

Co-housing addresses systemic issues in housing by fostering more resilient, equitable and sustainable living environments in which collective actions are taken by a group of people who share common values, by co-designing and managing the living environment. By doing so, co-housing contributes to housing adequacy by fulfilling the principles of affordability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability

### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

Unlike market-oriented and speculative housing, this approach prioritises housing accessibility and affordability over profit because it is driven by the needs and values of residents, further enhancing the acceptability of housing outcomes. It provides a model for collective ownership as opposed to the prevailing focus on home ownership in the context of housing commodification and financialisation.

These initiatives emphasise the agency in tackling the housing crisis through collective models of ownership and community living. They seek to have a long-term impact on urban sustainability by enhancing the contribution of housing to social sustainability objectives (e.g. community building), economic sustainability objectives by pooling resources and shared facilities, and environmental sustainability by incorporating shared heating systems, solar power, and waste reduction practices.

### How are these futures built and by whom?

In Europe, collaborative housing models include 'Bofeaelleskab' (Denmark), 'Kollektivhus' (Sweden), 'Baugruppen' (Germany, Austria), 'Genossenschaften' (Switzerland, Austria, Germany), 'Habitat Participatif' (France), 'Miethäusersyndikat' (Germany and, more recently, variants in Austria and the Netherlands), 'Community Land Trusts' (England, Belgium, France) and 'Cooperativas en cesión de uso' (Spain), and many other local variants. They usually develop when a group of people come together under a common vision of housing. In collaborative and co-housing models, residents share common spaces, jointly maintain these spaces, and make decisions collectively throughout the entire housing design, construction, and maintenance process.

[Learn more](#)

## 6 | Social production of habitat and self-help housing in Latin America

### How do they advance the pathway?

This social production of housing has been an important mechanism to collectivise housing production in Latin American countries. These experiences have grown and strengthened through networks and coalitions such as HIC-AL and SELVIPH. In some countries, public policies and resources have supported these forms of community self-management through laws that consolidate these experiences as long-term programmes. Some of these countries, Brazil, Mexico, and Uruguay, have been pioneers in this regard. Cooperatives and other legal forms, such as mutual societies and civil associations, allow for self-managed production and ensure long-term community social sustainability and the maintenance of the space.

### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

The housing produced through these processes generates a sense of community and collectivisation of resources, which often surpasses the results of traditional social housing market projects. By prioritising non-speculative forms of housing production, and drawing on forms of collective work such as mutirões in Brazil, they prioritise the investment of resources to improve the quality of life of people. They also promote the democratisation of collective decisions, increasing security in the territories and satisfaction of those involved.

### How are these futures built and by whom?

The organisation of housing production is centred on those who will live in the built homes. The same people lead the production of their homes, from managing state funds, participating in the design, participating in the construction process (as labour or as managers), and strengthening the community that will later inhabit this place created to celebrate life. Thus, the home serves as both a family space, and as a community space, with patios, common rooms, and a strong relationship with the neighbourhood.

[Learn more](#)

## 7 | Collective housing and people-led development in Asia - the case of Indonesia

### How do they advance the pathway?

The Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (ACHR) has for decades promoted collective forms of housing production as a form of addressing informal settlements, by allowing people to lead the development of their neighbourhoods. These interventions have taken different forms and typologies, including re-blocking, upgrading, building in new sites, and developing medium-rise housing. In Indonesia, the Kampung Aquarium community has advanced a typology of a “vertical” or “stacked” village (Kampung Susun), which re-imagines medium-rise housing for marginalised urban dwellers in inner-city locations.

### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

These forms of collective housing respond through people-led initiatives to processes of market enclosure and dispossession. They do that by challenging individual ownership and management of housing, and mobilising collective efforts to access land, design housing, manage resources and envision further developments. In particular, the case of Kampung Susun is a response to other more peripheral, time-limited, unaffordable, restricted forms of housing, and provides an alternative to individual ownership and traditional rental models, advancing collective management and a pathway to cooperative block ownership.

### How are these futures built and by whom?

At the heart of ACHR approaches is the centrality of community organisation leading the processes of neighbourhood transformation, through governance and finance structures that accommodate the collective nature of the process. The Aquarium case has demonstrated how collective housing processes could function as a space of learning between urban poor and municipal governments. This creates a way to promote alternative methods of housing development, build capacity, and de-risk collective housing in the eyes of sceptical actors.

[Learn more](#)

## 8 | Small-scale rental housing in Cape Town

### How do they advance the pathway?

Small-scale rental housing is changing the character of South African cities and helping to solve the crisis of accommodation. Homeowners and micro-developers are investing substantial sums of money in better quality brick-and-mortar flats. Brick-by-brick, they are altering the physical fabric of townships and providing sought-after affordable rental units that neither the public nor the conventional private sector are supplying. Coincidentally, this also contributes to urban densification, income generation, and stronger local economies.

### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

Cape Town's current regulatory regime (including land use, building and title deed regulations, institutional-administrative systems, and bureaucratic practices) fosters informality and inhibits formal investment in small-scale rental housing. Reviewing these obstacles and managing the progressive formalisation of these efforts holds a wide range of benefits for residents and the municipality. Updated land use management and building approvals can ensure safe standards of construction and offer dignified access to ablutions and other basic services. Formal lease agreements would clarify the rights and responsibilities of both landlords and tenants with appropriate channels for dispute resolution, while cooperation with public authorities would prevent encroachments on public open spaces and pavements. These developments would reinforce each other in a positive feedback loop, building confidence and trust among the various stakeholders.

### How are these futures built and by whom?

A growing network of researchers, civil society organisations, municipal officials, and private entities have worked to improve understanding of the sector, strengthen technical capacity, make connections to micro-finance institutions, and press for regulatory changes. This includes Develop Action Group's proposal of a two-pronged approach of broad-based regularisation and progressive formalisation to improve material conditions in the sector. Proposals include incrementally expanding an incentive-based overlay zone in spatially targeted areas, reviewing internal municipal procedures to identify bottlenecks and solutions to speed up approval processes, and developing prototype plans and building design guidelines. As a result of these efforts, the City of Cape Town's latest Human Settlements Strategy acknowledges the significance of small-scale rental housing and commits to promoting its growth and formalisation, laying the foundation for important partnership initiatives and regulatory reviews.

[Learn more](#)

## C. Co-producing knowledge



### 9 | Slum dwellers enumeration and mapping - the case of Know your City

#### How do they advance the pathway?

Community-led data production is critical to inform decisions about housing futures that recognise the realities, needs and aspirations of those living on the margins of society. Through its “Know Your City” initiative, Slum Dwellers International (SDI) has collected critical information in over 5,000 slums in more than 18 countries across the global South. Using enumeration and profiling methodologies, SDI has created an open online platform that gives visibility to grounded data about conditions in informal settlements – a form of urbanisation that is likely to host more than 3 billion people over the next 30 years.

#### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

Official data tends to invisibilise the lives and reality of those living in informal settlements, marking them as grey or empty areas and reinforcing narratives about illegality and the criminalisation of informal settlement dwellers. Challenging that data is critical to changing the basis for planning and decision-making in cities. By providing rigorous community-led data, the “Know Your City” initiative provides evidence that doesn’t exclude marginalised groups.

#### How are these futures built and by whom?

At the heart of the “Know Your City” project – and its youth-led initiative, “Know Your City-TV” – lies the ethos of promoting processes of community mapping, self-enumeration, and profiling as a critical component of community empowerment and organisation. Alongside saving groups, SDI has promoted community-led data collection as an essential democratising tool in its work with local federations.

[Learn more](#)

## 10 | Community Action Area Plans and Learning Platforms in Freetown, Sierra Leone

### How do they advance the pathway?

The Community Action Area Planning (CAAP) initiative in Freetown envisions a future where housing, particularly the upgrading of informal settlements, is planned and delivered by collaborative multi-stakeholder groups centred around residents and their organisations. Within the CAAP process, residents are recognised as knowledgeable contributors who can provide essential insights about their homes, neighbourhoods, and city. They are supported in articulating their views, needs, and desires while elaborating practical options for future housing solutions. This approach highlights the importance of local and experiential knowledge and actively engages residents in meaningful decision-making.

### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

This initiative presents a distinct alternative to traditional top-down planning methods that often focus on evictions and removals, viewing residents of informal settlements as part of the problem rather than as generators of future housing solutions. Conventional approaches frequently silence the voices of urban poor communities, reducing them to mere victims or beneficiaries and undermining their agency and autonomy. In contrast, the CAAP and its institutional framework create a supportive environment that values and amplifies residents' knowledge. This process empowers them and their organisations to gather and analyse data effectively, ensuring that planning decisions reflect their diverse experiences, needs, and aspirations.

### How are these futures built and by whom?

At the core of this process is the Community Action Area Plan, a proactive tool designed to enhance local areas through a bottom-up co-design approach. The CAAP process includes creative activities such as drawing-elicited interviews, participatory modelling, mapping, and photography. It establishes a governance system that holds the process accountable to residents and their organisations. The Community Learning Platforms and the City Learning Platform facilitate regular meetings among diverse groups and institutions, fostering open discussions and collaboration. These platforms have become an essential legacy of the CAAP process, providing lasting structures for community-led governance and supporting efforts to improve informal settlements in Freetown.

[Learn more: Link 1 and Link 2](#)

## 11 | 'ZEIS Já': A campaign to promote planning tools to stay in place

### How do they advance the pathway?

"Special Zones of Social Interest" (ZEIS) is an instrument of Brazilian legislation that offers an opportunity to prioritise public investments for social purposes and land regularisation in specific neighbourhoods. The awareness campaign 'ZEIS Já' focuses on civic education through workshops with communities, as well as public and legal agents, to disseminate concepts and entitlements that promote the permanence of communities and encourage infrastructural improvement in areas demarcated as ZEIS.

### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

The campaign attempts to contest processes of dispossession by mobilising and promoting narratives against the commercialisation of social housing. This content is produced by activists and local leaders who provide tools for entitlement and action. It also involves awareness-raising efforts, aimed at residents, public managers and legal agents.

### How are these futures built and by whom?

'ZEIS Já' is not only about advocacy, but also about prioritising the definitions and tools developed by activists, academics, residents, public managers and legal agents. Together, they aim to disseminate concepts, entitlements and instruments related to the permanence of communities and infrastructural improvement in ZEIS areas.

[Learn more](#)

# D. Queering



## 12 | Intersectional City House in Vienna

### How do they advance the pathway?

The Intersectional City House in Vienna was conceived as a support structure for intersectional coexistence. It materialises the narrative of a housing community that has confronted various personal barriers—material, cultural, political, linguistic, and economic—through strategies aimed at transforming these obstacles into spaces of cooperation, interdependence, and mutuality. This approach illustrates how communities can navigate and dismantle enclosures to create an inclusive housing environment where diverse identities can flourish together.

### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

The community within the house, known as the ‘Association for Accessibility in Art, in Everyday Life, in Minds,’ emerged from years of anti-racist and queer activism, culminating in the establishment of the Barrier-Free House in 2015. Architect Gabu Heindl, who designed the building with them, critiques aspects of the legacy of 1920s Viennese social housing while celebrating the era’s struggles for public land ownership. She challenges the notion of inheriting the “strong and unified identities” of Red Vienna, which often perpetuate centralised paternalism and veiled racism, excluding marginalised populations and diverse household arrangements from public housing. Instead, Heindl advocates for the democratisation of housing through decolonisation, queering, and feminisation of its socio-spatial production.

### How are these futures built and by whom?

The community successfully negotiated an unlimited lease period with the owner by agreeing to undertake renovations themselves. They collectively designed principles of a solidarity economy, wherein rent is distributed based on financial capacity rather than unit size, reflecting individual needs. This model encourages negotiation among residents. Renovations were primarily achieved through collective self-building efforts, with the addition of a lift for accessibility. The resulting spatial layout promotes coexistence, with the one-kitchen house typology encouraging communal living and allowing daily activities to spill into shared spaces. This design challenges the modern compartmentalisation of domestic heteronormative roles, ensuring that while boundaries exist, they remain open for negotiation to accommodate both private and communal needs.

[Learn more](#)

## 13 | Oak Lawn Place: A housing a gayborhood revival for a queer senior community

### How do they advance the pathway?

Oak Lawn Place is a housing project developed by Resource Center, an organisation established in Dallas in 1983, which is one of the largest LGBTQIA+ community centres in the United States. Resource Center has offered for decades physical and mental health services, legal assistance, and support to transgender youths and seniors. Built in 2024, Oak Lawn Place is a housing project of 84 units designed for LGBTQIA+ seniors aged 55 and over, priced to serve individuals with low- and middle-income levels. Through affordable and inclusive housing, the initiative targets a group that is often invisible to both housing policies and markets, and that requires physical and management arrangements that challenge traditional family units.

### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

As in most cities, many neighbourhoods in Dallas are undergoing processes of gentrification and loss of identity. Oak Lawn Place is located in an area that locals might still refer to as a “gayborhood”, but that is undergoing a process of dispossession and gentrification that is risking losing its history entirely. Resource Center decided to prioritise this particular neighbourhood precisely because of these ongoing processes. Likewise, Dallas has an affordable housing gap that puts many people, especially those at the intersection of discrimination because of age, class, and sexual orientation, at the centre of the housing crisis experience.

### How are these futures built and by whom?

The organisation purchased seven land plots on the edge of the selected neighbourhood to advance its vision of housing. Beyond the location, the building’s design (developed in partnership with Volunteers of America and a local development firm and architectural studio) aimed to create homes for LGBTQIA+ seniors while promoting inclusivity and affirmation. This translated into decisions about the exterior of the building, its colours and outdoor space, but also about the design of the interior, including shared dining spaces, a social lounge, and facilities such as a gym and coffee bar.

[Learn more](#)

## 14 | Carpe Diem: A cooperative designed by women to grow old among friends

### How do they advance the pathway?

Carpe Diem is a housing cooperative led by senior women, centred around care, and tailored specifically to the needs of senior residents, with the goal of providing a space to grow old together. Residents are between 50 and 70 years old and are all co-owners of the project. The capital they invest in the property is returned to them if they ever decide to move elsewhere. New residents go through an interview process to ensure compatibility. The project includes the construction of common areas, such as a dining space, gardens, areas for health and care activities, washing rooms, a park, and a cultural space. Activities support a circular and green economy model that aims to promote self-sufficiency.

### How do they contest mainstream views of housing futures?

Carpe Diem tailors the principles of cooperative housing to provide seniors with a way of developing a community that is not tied to the dominant interpretation of a nuclear family, but rather based on bonds of friendship and mutual aid. Its organisation is driven by principles of solidarity, sisterhood, self-help, and care of the environment. Taking the concept of cooperativism a step further, members of the community take care of one another, as health, nutrition, and intellectual activities are a collective responsibility. Carpe Diem residents engage in participatory decision-making and jointly design common areas and green spaces to adapt to their needs and desires.

### How are these futures built and by whom?

Two groups of friends came together in 2016 to develop a way of spending their adulthood together. They drew inspiration from ongoing cooperative initiatives in Uruguay and other countries. With the partnership of Incubacoop, an Uruguayan institutional mechanism for supporting the formation of cooperatives, the group spent three years understanding each other’s preferences for the location of the cooperative, including the condition that it be no more than 40km from Montevideo. It purchased the land in 2023 after various consultations with real estate agencies. In 2026, they plan to move forward with the architectural design and the construction of common areas. They also seek residents with different income levels to increase the sustainability of the initiative.

[Learn more](#)



The Hub for Housing Justice is a collaborative initiative led by a group of civil society networks and research organisations. This document is part of the first set of **Provocations** produced by the Hub to collaboratively shape agendas that advance housing justice. During the first half of 2025, four working groups facilitated exchanges on each of the propositions of the housing justice framework. Each group, steered by members of the Hub's partner organisations and open to the participation of all key allies, explored what the propositions mean for the housing justice community and how they can provide a framework for action. The resulting first set of Provocations are creative and collective documents that reflect the takeaways from these dialogues and the experiences, lessons, and recommendations highlighted throughout the exchanges.

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