



The three finalists for the international BCN-NYC Affordable Housing Challenge on innovative solutions for more affordable housing have been chosen

- » The aim of the BCN-NYC Affordable Housing Challenge is to find innovative tools and technologies that can cut the time and costs involved in building and renovating in dense urban areas.
- » One of the finalist projects experiments with the possibility of making spaces more flexible, another with making the best use of underused urban areas and the third with the possibility of collectivising and sharing communal areas.
- » They have been chosen from a total of 54 projects submitted from 16 countries.

The BCN-NYC Affordable Housing Challenge, an international competition organised by the i.lab programme of the offices of the Commissioner for Technology and Digital Innovation and the Councillor for Housing of Barcelona City Council in conjunction with New York City Council, is entering its final stage. The three finalist projects, chosen from among 54 projects submitted by participants from 16 countries around the world, were presented today at the Barcelona Housing and Renovation Forum (FHAR).

The aim of this challenge is to find innovative solutions, tools and technologies that can cut the time and costs involved in building and renovating in dense urban areas to make housing more affordable for everyone. The projects received were assessed by a multidisciplinary committee of experts, who chose the following three finalists:

“Elastic Living”

This is a system invented and patented by the Austrian architect Angelo Roventa. The project was submitted in collaboration with Argestructura, design and structure calculation consultants from Barcelona. It is based on the idea of creating compact apartments that enable the rooms to be enlarged or made smaller, depending on needs. The moveable furniture modules allow residents to create different rooms by turning a handle or flicking a switch. The modules can be separated or compacted in various combinations to dismantle functional spaces and set up other ones. The living space moves wherever it is needed at any given moment.



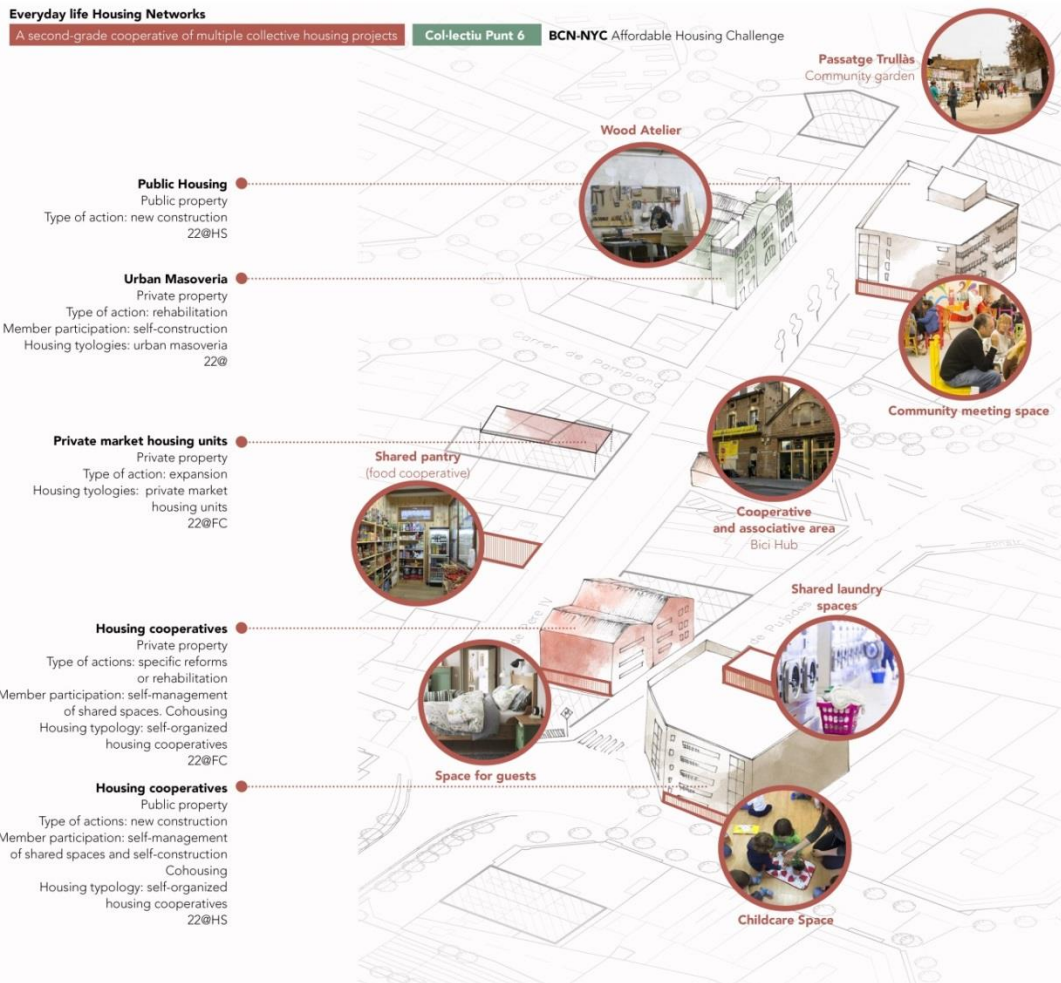
CAH and ATRI:

This idea is a collaborative effort between Columbia National University's "construction system for affordable housing" project and Straddle 3 Barcelona's "innovation for dreams" project. It is an approach for densifying cities by making the most of the vacant spaces that can still be found in the urban fabric. It involves renovating existing buildings and new constructions without affecting the site by means of new, economical building techniques that are light, adaptable and quick to install. This construction idea also allows housing to be built suspended in the air with few ground supports and is even suitable for renovating run-down or underused parts of the city, such as motorways, ports and transport stations.



Col·lectiu Punt 6 SCCL

Col·lectiu Punt 6, the Barcelona collective housing project cooperative offers a feminist perspective in the search for affordable housing solutions. Their proposal seeks to build a housing network of accessible and affordable homes using everyday life as the focus. The idea is to develop a housing network where people live in different housing models while sharing communal services and facilities with the aim of collectivising domestic, care and community work. This network will potentially reduce living costs and maintain accessibility to affordable housing, thus protecting people's right to a home and the right to the city.



Context of the challenge

The lack of adequate, affordable housing is a challenge that has a negative impact on social inclusion, equality, health and well-being, and sustainability. Both Barcelona and New York are committed to meeting this challenge head on, as is made clear in the “*Declaration of Local Governments for the Right to Housing and the Right to the City*”, which both cities led. Faced with rising land and building costs, Barcelona and New York have to find ways of ways of getting a higher return on every euro invested in affordable housing and offering homes more quickly to the families that need it.

Applying innovative construction methods, using alternative and sustainable materials and implementing new cost management and planning systems are all potential ways of building affordable homes. Barcelona is experimenting along these lines with the APROP modular housing programme. And by means of the BCN-NYC Affordable Housing Challenge, these cities want to take the use of new technologies further to reduce the time and costs involved in producing housing, while promoting a clean, sustainable sector.



This initiative also forms part of the European IUC project <http://www.iuc.eu/> through which the Barcelona and NYC housing teams have already been exchanging experiences for some months. The BCN-NYC Affordable Housing Challenge will therefore enable them to supplement these efforts and attract the talent of creative sectors from around the world.

The winning idea will be chosen from among the three finalists at Smart Cities New York in May. Besides a prize of \$20,000 to put the idea into practice, the winning team will have the chance to meet the relevant city housing and technology officials in Barcelona and New York, raising their profile and gaining international recognition.

Sustainable, social urban innovation with the i.lab programme

Barcelona City Council wants to respond to city residents' demands and needs and meet the new challenges facing the city. Hence, the office of the Barcelona City Council Commissioner for Technology and Digital Innovation has set up the i.lab, the laboratory to speed up sustainable, social urban innovation by means of collaboration between public authorities, the academic and business worlds and city residents.

The lab promotes the ethical and responsible use of data and technology, and maximises the sustainability, social impact and scalability of solutions. It also promotes exchanges with other cities. i.lab is part of the Barcelona City Digital Plan and is one of the measures included in the Barcelona Science Plan.

City challenges are identified and launched from this laboratory by means of open competitions to find innovative solutions and improve public services. An initiative whose goals are to encourage the ethical, responsible use of data and technology, and maximise the sustainability, social impact and scalability of the solutions proposed.

www.barcelona.cat/i-lab