



# Social housing: best international practices

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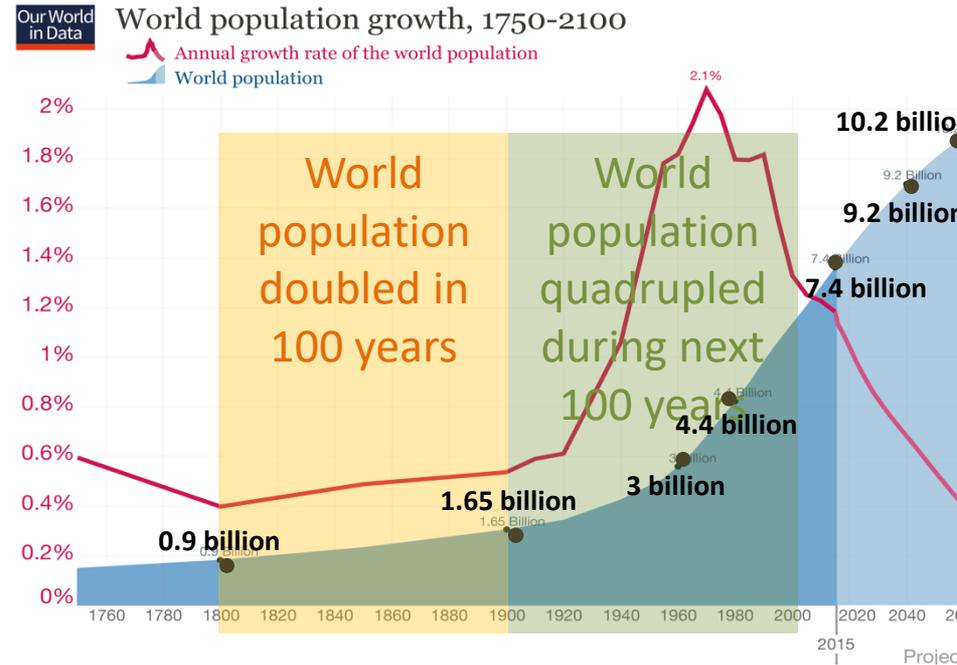
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# Challenges of the New Millennium

- World population has now passed the 7 billion
- Global urban population has surpassed the rural with over 50% of people now living in cities
- Cities occupy 2% of the earth surface, generate 75% of CO2 emissions and consume between 60 and 80% of global energy
- Notwithstanding, cities around the world produce 80% of global economic output, therefore
- There is a need to find a path for sustainable urban growth that will support and not hinder urban economic growth



# Challenges of the New Millennium

- Until 2030, almost all of the world's total population increase will take place in urban areas
- Slum population will reach about 41% of the world's total urban population
- With the current population growth rate and housing demand, 3 billion people or 40% of the world's population will need new housing, urban infrastructure and other services
- Finding housing solutions for this expansion of cities will prevent informal development





# Responsible social housing

- Social housing should respond also to these global challenges:
  - Need for more resources
  - Resilience from natural hazards
  - Environmental protection
  - Social inclusion
  - Economic efficiency



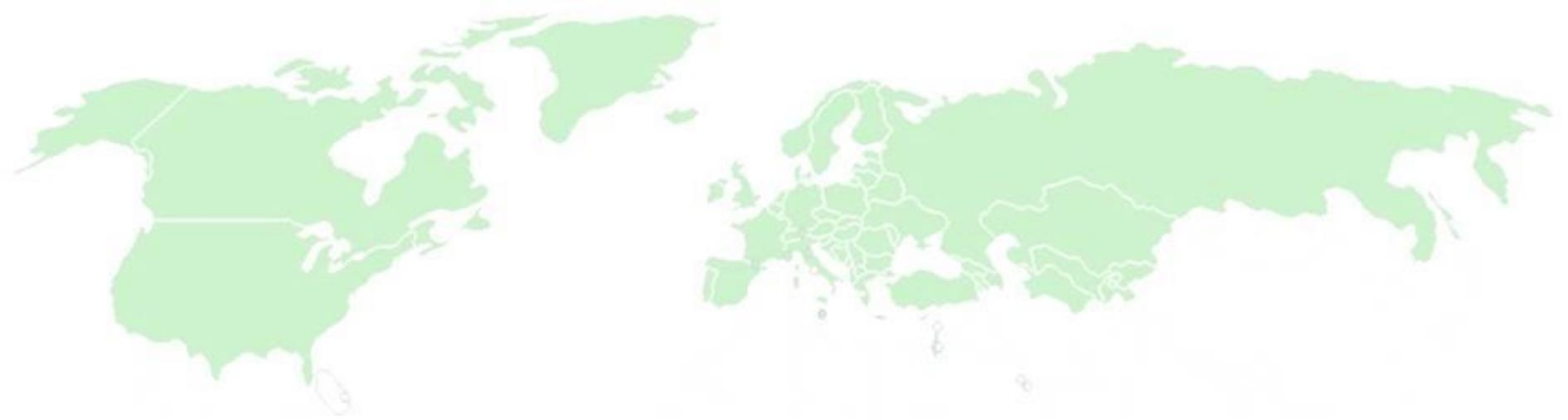
### Differences consist:

Terminology, histories of origin, who they serve, who provide them, how they are managed, how the rent are set, where housing is located, the physical nature of the housing stock, the means of financing new housing, how the housing subsidies work

**THERE IS NO SIMPLE DEFINITION OF SOCIAL HOUSING THAT FITS EVERY COUNTRY EQUALLY WELL<sup>1)</sup>**

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<sup>1)</sup> UNECE, 2014



What makes a social housing THE best practice?

**“BEST” MODEL VS. “BEST” PROJECT**

# The Dutch model

- Dutch social rental sector has a large size (31%)
- It offers dwellings of a relatively good quality and functions without receiving substantial subsidies
- Social housing associations has benefited from generous subsidies between 1950 and 1980
- They became autonomous in 1980s and financially independent in 1995
- Dutch housing associations function according to the revolving fund principle . This implies that the income that housing associations receive from letting and selling homes is sufficient to cover their investments in new affordable housing, housing refurbishment and neighborhood regeneration (community investments)



# Inclusionary Zoning (USA)

- Inclusionary zoning - establishment of zoning regulations that require affordable housing development in one of the three ways:
  - as a percentage of the developed units that must be affordable (e.g. 15%),
  - off-site construction of the affordable units,
  - cash-in-lieu paid into a housing fund



The waterfront of Boston Harbor is one of the areas where the city is trying to encourage developers to set aside affordable housing units in their projects, using inclusionary zoning

# Density bonus (USA and UK)

- The practice of granting density beyond what would normally be permitted on a site
- Generally the increase in density is tied to the delivery of an amenity that benefits the community, including green space, arts and cultural facilities, and increasingly, affordable housing (mostly social housing).



# The case of Vienna

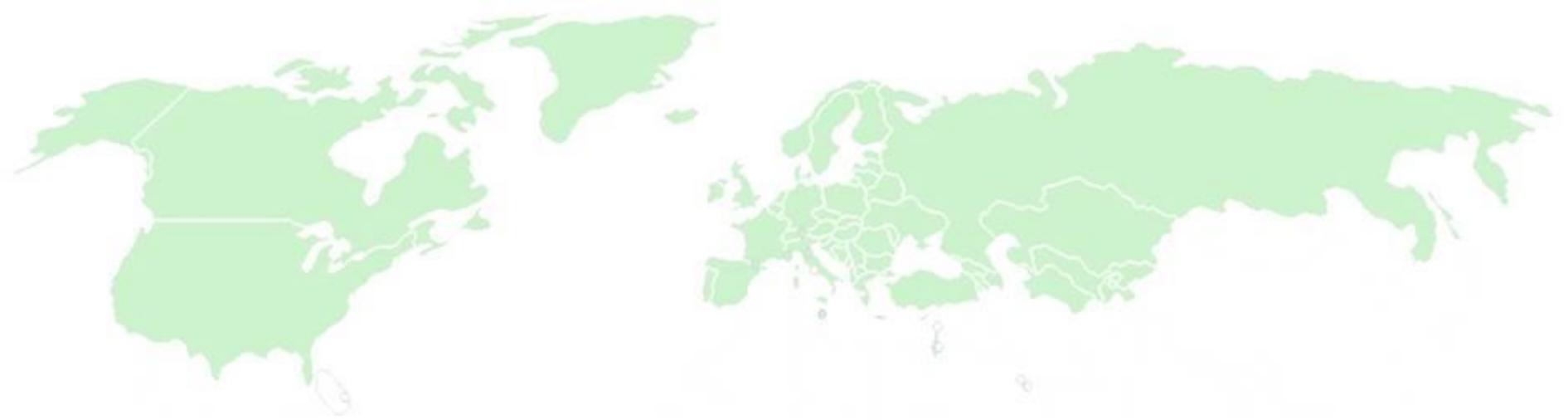
- Vienna's city government owns and manages 220,000 social housing units, which represent about 25 percent of the city's housing stock. These city-owned housing units are meant primarily for lower-income residents.
- The city also indirectly controls 200,000 units that are built and owned by limited-profit private developers through a city-regulated process, an approach adopted in the 1980s, when it decided to collaborate with the private sector to build affordable housing rather than developing and owning more public housing



**'Gasometre-City', one of the world's most spectacular conversion projects opened in 2001, which preserve the genius loci of this industrial monument . Four huge gas tanks, erected in 1899, had been unused since 1986 when the gas supply was changed to natural gas. The buildings include 602 apartments, most of them subsidized within the social housing programme, and 250 units in a students' hostel. 47,100 m2 serve for commercial purposes, including one of Vienna's largest event halls with up to 4,000 seats, and a kindergarten. The underground parking for 811 vehicles and 1,200 more can park on special parking decks.**

- 
- The city buys land suitable for residential development and retains control over the type and nature of development
  - It then solicits proposals from various private developers, which will build and retain ownership of the housing units
  - A jury evaluates these proposals based on four criteria:
    - architectural quality,
    - environmental performance,
    - social sustainability, and
    - economic parameters such as proposed rent levels and costs.
  - After the jury selects a developer, the city sells the land to the developer at an affordable price
  - In addition, the city gives the developer a loan with favorable terms such as low interest rates and extended repayment periods

## HOW IT WORKS?



**Assessing the sustainability:**

Social sustainability

Economic sustainability

Environmental sustainability

# **“BEST” SOCIAL HOUSING PROJECT**

# 8 HOUSE (TALLET) Copenhagen, Denmark

- Year built: Completed 2010
- Architects: BIG-Bjarke Ingels Group
- Budget: Eur 92,000,000
- Area: 61,000 sq. m.
- Accommodates a variety of activities; 475 residential units; 10,000 m<sup>2</sup> of businesses, and community facilities.
- The units vary 65 -144 m<sup>2</sup>; varied spectrum, different backgrounds and age groups



# 8 House - Key Sustainable Features

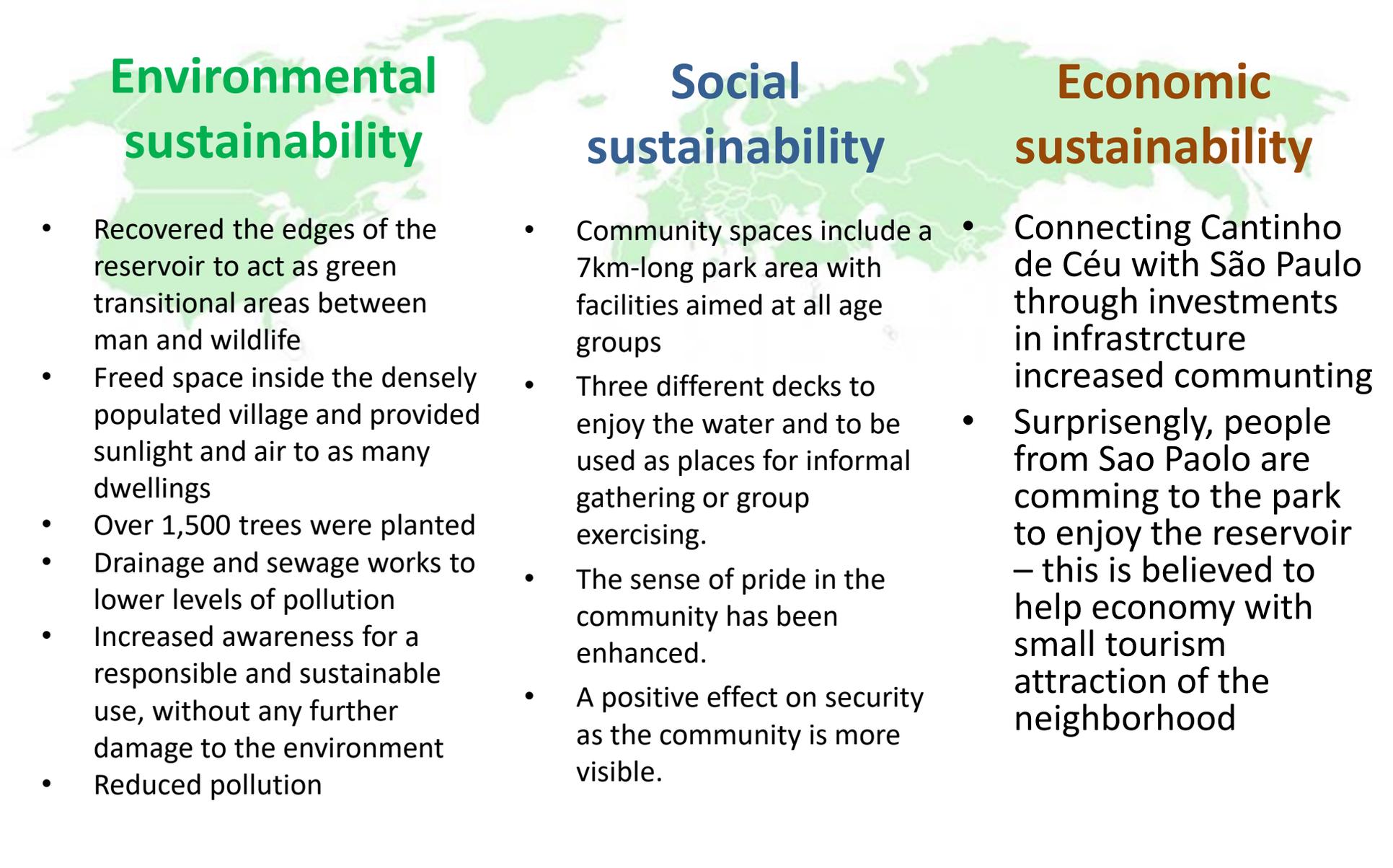
- 1,700 m2 of Green roof and other forms of planting that help reducing urban heat island effect.
- 10,000 m2 of businesses and community facilities to start local economy and promote socialization.
- Functional mix of residential, retail and office activities that enhances and support economic diversity.
- Residential mix from all levels and age groups of society, offering inspiring communal spaces for informal gathering and casual encounters.

Environmental Sustainability Objectives			Social Sustainability Objectives					Economic Sustainability Objectives		
minimize use of resources	minimize pollution	protect biodiversity	ethical facilities	adequate facilities	housing needs met	interaction with locality	quality of architecture	competitive business	economic diversity	employment
3	4	4	3	5	4	5	5	5	5	5

# Cantinho do Céu – São Paulo Brasil

- One of the most deprived areas in the city, with an estimated population of 43,556 inhabitants, occupying 154 ha
- The challenge for the architects was to provide a decent built environment for the families already established, while protecting and preserving an important reservoir and its wildlife





## Environmental sustainability

- Recovered the edges of the reservoir to act as green transitional areas between man and wildlife
- Freed space inside the densely populated village and provided sunlight and air to as many dwellings
- Over 1,500 trees were planted
- Drainage and sewage works to lower levels of pollution
- Increased awareness for a responsible and sustainable use, without any further damage to the environment
- Reduced pollution

## Social sustainability

- Community spaces include a 7km-long park area with facilities aimed at all age groups
- Three different decks to enjoy the water and to be used as places for informal gathering or group exercising.
- The sense of pride in the community has been enhanced.
- A positive effect on security as the community is more visible.

## Economic sustainability

- Connecting Cantinho de Céu with São Paulo through investments in infrastructure increased commuting
- Surprisingly, people from São Paulo are coming to the park to enjoy the reservoir – this is believed to help economy with small tourism attraction of the neighborhood

# Case of Tirana– Self-help vs. Social housing

## The Social Housing Project

- 400 social dwellings
- Located in the periphery of the city in an ex-industrial area
- Financed:
  - 60% loan from CEB
  - 40% Land value + municipal budget

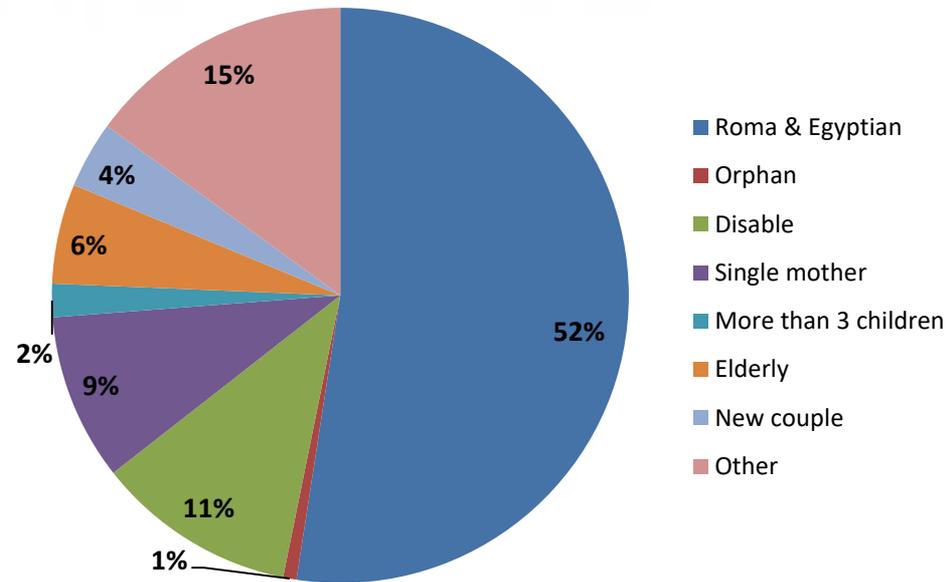


# Case of Tirana–Social housing project

## M&M

- Yearly rent = 4% of cost of construction
- As by legislation, rent shouldn't be more than 25% of income

## Beneficiaries



## Social sustainability

- A court yard serves to all age groups
- A social center is located in the complex
- 20% of families are not low-income (social mix, though it looks not working properly)
- Critical issues:
  - Ground floor premises are housing temporary some 60 Roma families
  - Location isolates the community

## Economic sustainability

- Ground floor is provided for small business
- Critical issues:
  - Approx. 60% of persons are unemployed
  - Management and maintenance is subsidized

## Environmental sustainability

- Built in an ex-industrial area
- Improved the environmental conditions
- Critical issues:
  - The area is not cleaned from industrial remaining



# Case of Tirana– Self-help housing

## Economic, social & environmental sustainability

- Families generate income from small businesses
- Gradual and self-help improvements
- There is not much community interaction, due to the fences, as need for hiding from authorities
- High environmental risks due to the ex-industrial plant, lack of running water and sewerage
- Legalization and privatization has encouraged improvements by inhabitants and infrastructure by local authorities

Before  
privatization  
(2011)

After privatization  
(2017)





# Some conclusions

- There is no one model that fits all
- Each social housing should reflect the economic, social and environmental conditions
- Cultural adequacy is also key in determining the architecture of the social housing
- Location is key in defining the future of the project, if public transport is not well developed
- Social mix cannot be achieved just by mixing different income groups