




A green and social laboratory in the city

PAX – Patios de la Axerquía



(ES)
CORDOBA

 322,071



Recovery and resilience through cultural heritage in a post pandemic world



Challenge

A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Cordoba is known for its Patios that have both tangible and intangible value. An exemplary case of Mediterranean urban planning, the Axerquía district is marked by a network of patio houses, where several homes are designed around a multifamily inner courtyard. Over the past years, the historic centre of Cordoba has been deserted by its inhabitants because of the real estate bubble pushing residents away and the rising cost of housing, mainly driven by the touristic boom.

In the Axerquía district, it is estimated that 400 elderly people live on their own and that 50 patio houses are vacant or for sale. The challenge is therefore to revive the city centre through the rehabilitation of patios, while avoiding its gentrification and “museumification”.



Solution

PAX - Patios de la Axerquía is a private initiative aiming to stimulate urban renewal with social innovation processes to maintain residential use in areas with a high heritage value facing gentrification. Active at economic, technical, environmental and socio-cultural levels, PAX seeks to rehabilitate the traditional patio houses that constitute “social-green cells” bringing community and ecological values to the city.



How ?

- 1 PAX maps empty patio houses with historic value and in need of rehabilitation. It supports a non-speculative model of housing through the establishment of cooperative groups, where property and use are separated.
- 2 PAX organises local labs to explain its strategy, the benefits of living in the historical part of the city and thereby generates cooperative groups able to acquire and rehabilitate the patios. PAX targets especially young and elderly people.
- 3 PAX undertakes the rehabilitation work, developing training materials, using traditional materials and architectural techniques to reduce energy consumption and promoting the greening of the courtyards creating a green network in the city centre.
- 4 The rehabilitated patios can house previous residents, members of the cooperative and their families and have spaces dedicated to emergency housing and social activities or small commercial uses.
- 5 PAX promotes its strategy towards the municipality and encourages it to buy patios for public housing or to give the right to use to groups of citizens.
- 6 In line with the Faro Convention Network, PAX facilitates the identification and empowerment of the “Heritage Community”. It also works at establishing an international network to exchange on urban heritage.

CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ACTION
Sharing solutions in European cities and regions





Budget/Financing

€ 60,000/year

- PAX Association operates with a yearly budget of €60,000 approximately, which is funded by 60% with Horizon 2020 fundings, 20% by the city of Cordoba, 10% by the region, and 10% by the PAX Cooperatives and Ecosystem.
- The first patio rehabilitation by the PAX Astronautas Cooperative in 2022 cost €900,000, financed by the Ethical Bank (45% for buying the patio, 45% for rehabilitation works, 10% technical costs).



Management

- The PAX association was founded in 2018 by three associates, having a background in architecture and anthropology.
- PAX collaborates with various public and private partners, which contribute to the multidisciplinary and multilevel aspects of its strategy.
- It works closely with groups of citizens and neighborhood associations on collective ways of living in patio houses. It also works with several academic institutions on the ecological benefits of patios; the problem of gentrification in Córdoba; the patios from an anthropological view; and the rules of vegetation in patios to face climate change.
- In 2022 and 2023, thanks to the support of the Municipal Institute for Economic Development of Córdoba (IMDEEC), two people were hired to work on an urban and social map of the city and to amplify the international connection of PAX.



Contact

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Transferability

PAX aims to be transferred to similar contexts, especially in Mediterranean cities.

- Surround yourself with solid and reliable partners, both locally and internationally, for better dissemination of the project.
- Do not underestimate the time spent supporting the work of cooperatives and solving conflicts.
- Secure public funding in the long term to allow the rehabilitation of patios with cooperatives or PAX as innovative governance tools.



Impact

- Through the empowerment of neighbourhood associations and groups of residents, the importance of the rehabilitation of patios is recognised by the local community, the public administrations at regional and local levels, academics, and banks.
- A first pilot project (a patio with 6 families) was completed in 2022. Pax is now working on two new similar projects.
- The PAX team overcame financing and ownership issues in a limited time. The heritage dimension brought together an extended community around the first “patio house”.
- PAX Ecosystem is a network of social and neighbourhood associations, academical entities and public institution that both at local and regional scale contributes to build a Heritage Community.
- PAX has been recognised by the Faro Convention Network, the World Monument Fund and the European Heritage Award. This helps to be stronger locally and to disseminate the strategy globally.



Links

- [Website](#)
- [Short video presentation](#) (in Spanish, with English subtitles)
- [Short video presentation](#) (in Spanish only)
- [Report](#) (in Spanish only)
- [Faro Convention Network](#)
- [European Heritage Award / Europa Nostra Awards 2022](#)



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