

# LA MINA TRANSFORMATION PLAN

## Social Innovation in Barcelona

### La Mina: a deprived neighbourhood

- La Mina is a neighbourhood built on the outskirts of Barcelona in the 1970s and segregated from the rest of the city. It was designed to house a population with minimal resources that had been living in various settlements of shantytowns in Barcelona.
- Historically, the neighbourhood has suffered from significant shortages in terms of services and facilities.
- It has also been one of the most marginalized and stigmatized areas of the city, facing serious social and urban problems.
- At the end of the 1990s there was a pressing need to intervene in the social situation in the neighbourhood, linked with the presence of very active neighbourhood associations and the pressure resulting from urban reform in areas around la Mina.



### The transformation plan: an innovative approach

- In 2000 the "Transformation Plan for the Neighbourhood of la Mina" (PTBM in Catalan) was launched, financed through the URBAN II programme with funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). La Mina was also part of a pilot project of the Local Social Capital programme of the European Social Funds.
- This plan was innovative because the essential link between urban transformation and social intervention was something completely new in local planning and based on the joint participation of professionals from diverse fields (architects, economists, educators and social workers). The objective is to transform the neighbourhood through an integrated and comprehensive intervention aimed at strengthening the community in the medium and long-term, leading to complete normality.
- Participation as a central axis of the process: interests and decisions of neighbours in the transformation of their neighbourhood were taken into account: direct involvement through assemblies and creation of working groups (entities and technical representatives), regular meetings and informative sessions.

### Urban governance and main actors

- **La Mina Neighbourhood Consortium**, which included representatives from different levels of government (the two local governments of Barcelona and Sant Adrià de Besòs, as well as the regional government of Catalonia).
- **La Mina Platform of Neighbours and Neighbourhood Organizations** (which currently includes 12 organizations and at one time it included 24 organizations) and the Neighbourhood Association of La Mina. They are non-profit associations that perform cultural or educational activities. Their actions are aimed at the whole population of the neighbourhood or at specific groups: families, women, older people, etc.
- **The participatory structure of the Plan** organized around neighbourhood residents, experts, politicians and representatives of organizations. What has been fundamental in this process is the change in the role of neighbourhood residents, who are playing an active role in the transformation of the neighbourhood.



### The innovation

- Participation and collective effort of different administrations on a local project that has led to greater transversality.
- Fundamental role of neighbourhood and civic network during the project and beyond.
- Strengthening democracy through educating and fostering the integration and participation of neighbourhood residents.
- Development of strengthened communication channels between agents
- Intervention of powerful technical and professional services in the neighbourhood.
- Emergence and promotion of innovative activities initiated by organizations and associations in the field of training and labour insertion, reconciling work and family life, local economic development and social and educational support (e.g. literacy projects with elderly -involving grandparents with their grandchildren-, local radio as a space for education and debate, a gym for teenagers directed by an Olympic medallist, etc.).
- Specific socio-educational action on issues concerning family and the household.



### The results

- The isolation and segregation of the neighbourhood has been overcome by means of a new participatory urban governance.
- Public housing and facilities have increased.
- Improvement of the overall conditions of the neighbourhood (cleanliness, creation of public spaces as a new park with a family recreation area, a new library, etc.).
- Economic sector strategy of social responsibility were involved in the programmes for social and labour market insertion and sheltered employment.
- Reduction of recipients of the minimum income allowance.
- Communication plan designed to provide information on the project and to improve the image of the neighbourhood (e.g.: a space on the local broadcaster Radio La Mina).
- The impact has been less than expected in terms of the eradication of anti-social behaviour on the part of certain segments of the neighbourhood population.