

"Yes We Rent! Leveraging vacant private property to build up a cooperative affordable housing scheme" - Dr. Josep María Raya, Dra. Helena Hernández.

Set in Mataró, ES, "Yes We Rent" tackles a dramatic lack of affordable rental housing. It is characterised by deregulation, atomised ownership, a small rental housing segment, almost inexistent social housing and a city council with few competencies. The economic crisis and its social consequences have aggravated the situation particularly now that housing prices are on the rise again.

"We Rent" will generate an accessible housing stock targeting low-to-medium income households using properties that have been left empty and off the market. With the offer of a guaranteed rent and financial and organisational support to renovate their properties, the project will incentivise risk averse owners to rent to the affordable housing scheme at below market prices.

"Yes We Rent" adds a new, forward-thinking dimension to social renting agencies that goes beyond its participants: through its scale it aims to 'change the rules' of the whole rental market, to put pressure on rents and to contribute to desegregation. In addition to this expected impact, the project tests an original organisational model of a multi-stakeholder coop, which allows public control and the absorption of public investments while drawing on the empowerment and self-management potential of coops. Both the impact and the organisational approach are assessed through a solid research and evaluation framework and together form a model of a transferrable policy instrument for affordable housing.