

PATRIZIA – Zaragoza

Case Study **ESG**

# Resident engagement workshop in Zaragoza



**PROJECT:**  
Zaragoza Workshop Affordable  
Housing Project



**COMPANY:**  
PATRIZIA



**LOCATION**  
Zaragoza, Spain

## Challenge

Affordable housing is often measured in units and square meters. But what about quality of life? How can affordable housing move beyond the business case: creating good homes and strong communities facilitating a good quality of life, even with tight budgets?

The Zaragoza initiative aimed to explore these questions by looking at how future affordable housing developments can combine well-designed homes, strong management, and active community engagement. The goal was to identify what future residents value most in their homes and surroundings and to apply these findings to the planning, design and management of the project.

## Solution / Approach

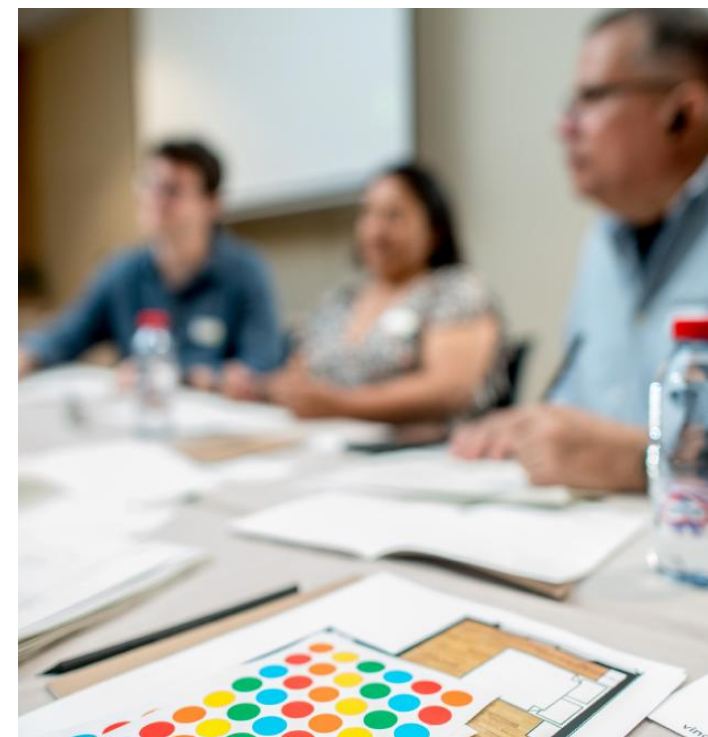
In September 2025, around 30 citizens from different household types – singles, couples, couples with children, and single parents – took part in a workshop on future affordable housing in their area in Zaragoza, Spain. The workshop was conducted by a group consisting of community

engagement experts, architects, employees of the developer and the appointed property operator. The purpose was not to reach consensus but to collect different and sometimes contradictory perspectives as valuable input for design and management.

The workshop was held for an affordable housing project in Zaragoza that is part of PATRIZIA Sustainable Communities portfolio, PATRIZIA's impact fund within living.

### Key objectives:

- > Understand unique needs, preferences, perceptions and priorities of prospective tenants of affordable housing in Zaragoza;
- > Use insights to inform the final design, outdoor and communal areas of the project;
- > Understand how the operator can support social inclusion and interaction among neighbours;
- > Train the architect, developer and operator to effectively facilitate resident workshops for development projects



## Results

The workshop confirmed that good affordable housing depends not only on well-designed homes and outdoor spaces, but also on strong community ties and management. Participants highlighted the need for flexible, comfortable homes with access to green space and emphasised the importance of trust, clear rules, and affordable costs for shared activities and places for interaction.

### Design insights:

- > Participants highlighted practical and adaptable homes with sufficient space, good storage, sound insulation, central heating and at the right location with views of green/natural spaces;
- > Terraces and balconies connected to green areas or play areas were valued. Small dwellings were seen as acceptable when well designed and sufficient, clean and safe outdoor and community space was available;

### Outdoor and communal spaces:

- > Residents valued shared areas that encourage contact to your neighbors, such as comfortable indoor spaces and safe, green outdoor zones;
- > Playgrounds, gardens, and barbecue areas were regarded as important, alongside good lighting and accessibility for safety and comfort.

### Management insights:

- > Participants expressed support for a community builder or concierge to maintain shared areas, promote trust and support community interaction at least in the first years of operation;
- > Clear communication of rules was considered essential, and shared activities such as gardening or cooking were viewed as affordable ways to strengthen social ties;
- > A rent level of about €22 per sqm per month was seen as fair in Zaragoza.

**My biggest learning was realising the very different perspectives and needs that people have, as well as the great demand for affordable housing in the area. I also learned about the importance of creating spaces that encourage community life and shared experiences.**

**Operating Partner of PATRIZIA  
Sustainable Communities**



## Outcomes

The Zaragoza workshop provided valuable insights for this particular project but also for future affordable housing developments. Participants' reflections helped highlight the importance of balancing physical design with community life and management.

The process also strengthened collaboration between stakeholders, neighbors (young and old), operator and manager of the buildings as well as the developer/investor. It showed that engaging residents before construction provides useful input for developer, architects and operators, supporting the creation of attractive dwellings in an open setting.

The workshop generated a framework for similar activities in other locations, including steps for preparation, recruitment, facilitation, and documentation. The approach is now being shared within the PATRIZIA Sustainable Communities portfolio.

**Good design starts with understanding people and placing them at the heart of the design and operation. By integrating local we create buildings that serve communities and deliver lasting positive impact.**

**Marleen Bekkers, Fund Manager at PATRIZIA Sustainable Communities**



Source: PATRIZIA, Zaragoza workshop

## PATRIZIA

PATRIZIA has been providing investment opportunities in smart real assets for institutional, semi professional and private investors for more than 40 years. PATRIZIA is driven by its mission to build smarter communities and sustainable futures. This commitment is exemplified through its impact investment vehicle, PATRIZIA Sustainable Communities. Reinforcing its long-term vision, the company aims to become a leading impact investor in real assets, targeting a significant share of its AUM in impact investments by 2035.