In an illegal occupation, you cannot formally build anything. Yet, any intervention by the authorities in these areas depends on the organization of the population and the availability of a place to meet. Given this paradox, this Community Center is not only removable and mobile but was also built with the help of more than 1,200 volunteers from the community. Thus, architecture not only helps to formalize illegality but also to rebuild the social fabric.

Keywords
Laws
Building
Management
Community
Project
Facing the urgent need for an intervention in the Cañada Real, the largest informal settlement in Spain, the community and the municipality of Madrid come together and write a list of conditions for “the joint hiring of the supply, assembly and drafting of technical documents needed for the implementation of a non-permanent endowment structure.” The contest was declared void twice. We present ourselves to the third call, already known for another public project carried out in Madrid – although not yet legalized – with the experience and intention to involve and care for the largest number of direct or indirect users of the future social facility.

The methodology begins by approaching the place’s educational centers, where the vast majority of children, neighbors of the Cañada Real, are found. We also visited all the families settled near the project’s location, house by house. Likewise, we identified and invited the social entities and neighborhood associations to participate, as well as the emerging organizations. Knowing that there were neighbors deprived of freedom (thus future users), we decided to collaborate with those in the Soto del Real prison where – like in other places – slabs, walls, trusses, roof panels and window frames are prefabricated, which were later used and assembled in the official building site. On this account, it is understandable for our construction signage to read: “Access allowed to any person alien to the building site.”

That the protocol of participatory construction of the socio-community center is made up of more than 1,200 people – including near 600 minors, 17 social entities, 1 penitentiary center, 3 universities, and many other volunteers – cannot leave the Recetas Urbanas team impassive. This is the first experiment with a new regulation of public-social co-management.

All the social clauses implemented by this methodology – that where not part of the original technical specifications – make this project much more surprising and risky. It is important to stress that the process has been accompanied by technicians from the different administrations involved, who have improved this initial lack in the project’s bases drafting, by collaborating and providing solutions with a perfect understanding of the morphological needs and changes of the project (as in the case of the increase of
LEYENDA / LEGEND

1. Sala de usos múltiples / Multi purpose room
2. Almacén / Storage room
3. Taller / Workshop
4. Oficinas / Office space
5. Taller y cocina / Workshop and kitchen
6. Baño para discapacitados / Accessible restrooms
7. Baños / Restrooms
8. Cuarto de instalaciones / Installations room
9. Taller / Workshops
10. Terraza / Terrace
the built square meters and the involvement of users in the construction).

The different actors have understood the need for a public-social co-management, through a shared and creative technical resolution on both sides. Finally, thanks to the impetus and the desire to participate, we procured two workshops of 45 m² and one of 30 m², a community space of 70 m² as well as 90 m² of self-sufficient offices and bathrooms, all without increasing the budget. Part of the success lies in the reuse of materials, including those from the municipal warehouses in Madrid. ARQ
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Arquitectos / Architects: Recetas Urbanas
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Ubicación / Location: Cañada Real Galiana, Carretera de Valdemingómez, 28031 Madrid, España
Cliente / Client: Comunidad y Ayuntamiento de Madrid
Cálculo estructural / Structural engineering: Recetas Urbanas
Construcción / Construction: Autoconstrucción liderada por Recetas Urbanas
Instalación sanitaria / Sanitary: Winter Summer Instalaciones sl
Instalación eléctrica / Electrical installation: Emilio Calderón, Rachid Abdeslami Ben Omar

Otras especialidades / Specialties: Aerogeneration sl, Winter Summer Instalaciones sl
Material / Materials: Paredes prefabricadas de madera autoportantes y estructura metálica, terminaciones de tableros osb, paneles de fibrocemento, tarima vinílica / Prefabricated self-supporting wooden walls and steel structure, building finishes of osb board, fiber cement panels and vinyl flooring
Presupuesto / Budget: 690 us$/ m²
Superficie construida / Built area: 300 m²
Superficie del terreno / Site area: 955 m²
Año de proyecto / Project year: 2018
Año de construcción / Construction year: 2018-2019
Fotografía / Photography: Recetas Urbanas y Juan Gabriel Pelegrina
Visualizaciones 3D / 3D Visuals: David Blasco