



SOCIAL PRODUCTION HABITAT

TOWARDS A EUROPEAN PLATFORM

CONTEXT

Organized inhabitants groups throughout Europe are developing innovative and sustainable habitat alternatives to the traditional real estate market, the related housing crisis, the insecurity of land tenure and the resulting inequalities.

Models which are now spreading across European countries, like housing cooperatives, community land trusts, habitat groupé, Baugruppen, have shown that cities can be produced “for and by their inhabitants”, whenever the community stands together in solidarity and the inhabitants and civil society are recognized as partners in urban planning.

However, despite the relevance of these solutions, it appears that these civil society actors are working in silo, thus limiting the empowering effect of knowledge sharing, creation of new synergies, recognition by public authorities and wider dissemination of their models.

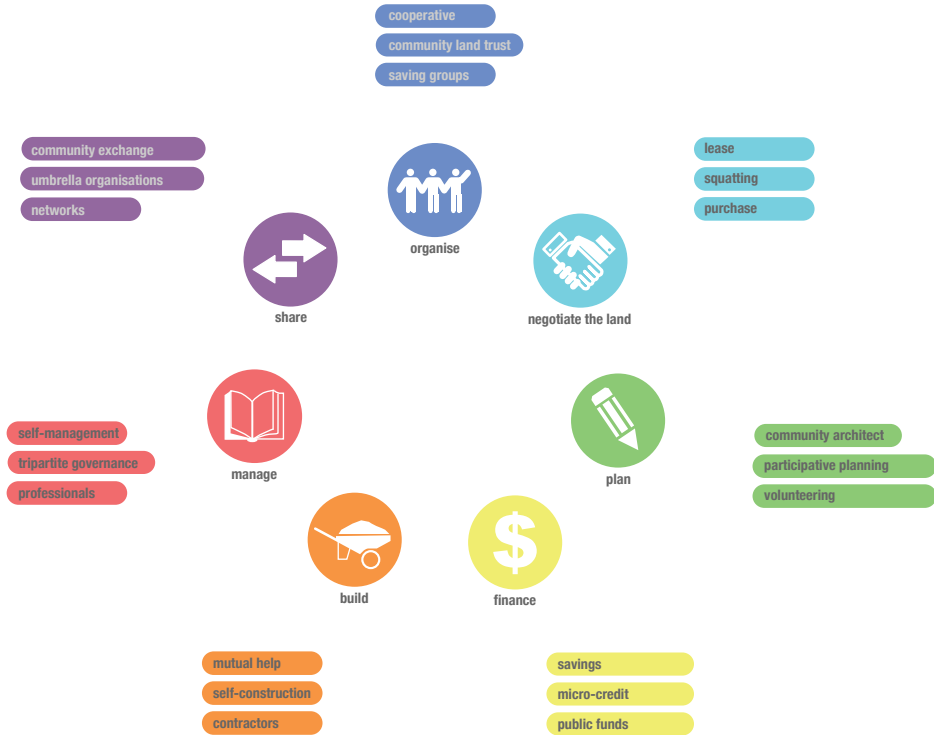
As a response to these limits and in order to foster a dissemination of innovative solutions on a larger scale, several European civil society organizations decided to join forces by creating a European platform of Social Production of Habitat (SPH).

This platform will be developed with the following aims:

- Enhance the visibility and documentation of local projects, thus raising collective awareness about housing problems and existing innovative solutions
- Incentivize inhabitants’ groups to meet and exchange their experiences
- Facilitate the emergence of partnerships between civil society and public actors at the local and global levels

The European platform of SPH will also be linked to a larger international platform on the same thematic, which will aim to create links between different regional networks (HIC Latin America, SDI Africa, ACHR Asia, etc.). One of the components of this global platform will be the Social Production of Habitat Award, issued in collaboration with the Building and Social Housing Foundation (UK).

SOCIAL PRODUCTION OF HABITAT PROCESS



PROJECT

The target population of the project are local inhabitants' groups and organizations involved in the planning of their cities by proposing alternative and innovative solutions of habitat (housing cooperatives, community land trusts, urban social movements, grassroots organizations, etc.).

The platform seeks to empower their capacity of action as well as their recognition at the regional and international level, by favouring a participative and bottom-up process. Through the platform, they will be able to disseminate their projects, to exchange their knowledge, thus to constitute an incentive for other citizens and to foster new cooperation and solidarity links across regions and countries.

The platform is not only a participative and open-data website that documents and maps innovative habitat projects, but also includes:

- International and regional meetings; which aim at bringing together inhabitants' groups, civil society, public authorities, academic institutions and actors from the private sector, thus being an incentive for dialogue, experience sharing, new partnerships and a strategic place where to build up and strengthen legitimacy and recognition for grassroots initiatives.
- Exchange trips on the field; which will take place in the frame of the SPH Award set up in collaboration with the Building and Social Housing Foundation. The selected SPH projects among the ten finalists of the World Habitat Award will be granted a field trip, allowing them to assist a hub meeting of one of the partner networks in another country, thus encouraging knowledge and experience exchange.
- Social events, conferences, forums, exhibitions, etc.

The partner organizations will leverage their existing networks to make known the platform and to invite exemplary SPH projects to join. They will participate in the coordination of the project, particularly by integrating the platform to their regional Hub meetings and by committing to organizing jointly an annual European Hub meeting, which should bring together a high number of actors involved in innovative habitat solutions.



PARTNERS

The following partner organizations and networks will collaborate in developing and implementing the European Platform for Social Production of Habitat:



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Habitat & Participation is a Belgian association founded in 1982, which aims at promoting participative decisional processes in the fields of habitat, land management and urban and rural development. It works on developing tools for citizen participation, offers advising support in the implementation of community-led housing projects and promotes housing right on a national and international level.

Community Land Trust (CLT) UK is a national CLT network created in 2010 that promotes and supports the work of CLTs and its members across England and Wales. It provides resources, training and advice for CLTs and advocates on their behalf to Government, local authorities, funders, lenders and others.

Cooperative Housing International (CHI) is a sectoral organization of the International Co-operative Alliance, founded in 1895 in England. The CHI was established to promote the development of co-operative housing worldwide through information dissemination, knowledge transfer, dialogue facilitation, support to their members and creation of new partnerships.

The Swedish National Association Cohousing Now (Kollektivhus Nu), formed in 1981, counts 41 co-housing units and 9 organizations of collaborative housing. It works to promote collaborative housing and other alternative ways of living, supports existing and future co-housing units, informs about cohousing and aims at influencing authorities.

UrbaMonde is an association based in Geneva that works as focal point of the Habitat International Coalition network on Social Production of Habitat and as a support actor for housing cooperatives in Switzerland and ‘vulnerable inhabitants’ groups worldwide. It was awarded the Ashoka Impact Award in 2012.

The Building and Social Housing Foundation (BSHF) is an independent research organization that works in the UK and internationally to identify innovative housing solutions and foster the exchange of information. It has gathered the most extensive database on social habitat projects over the last 30 years thanks to the World Habitat Award.

Dutch Cohousing (LVCW) is a national network in the Netherlands that promotes the development of cohousing and other intentional communities, by making information available to citizens’ groups, representing the interests of completed projects and contributing to policy development by national and local authorities.

Coordin’actions is a French association founded in 2005 developing concrete action programs between the social, economic and institutional actors and the citizens of a territory in order to reduce societal weaknesses. It notably promotes participative habitat, like housing cooperatives and habitat groupé.

ICT partner : Daniel Gatica Perez, professor at Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne in Switzerland, and head of the social computing group at the IDIAP research institute, which is among the most active independent research institutions in information technology.



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