

European Community-led Housing Award 2016 – Press Release

29th of May 2016, Louvain-la-Neuve, Ferme du Biereau, Av du Jardin Botanique, 12am-1.pm

Four award-winning projects of the **European Community-led Housing Award 2016** will present their initiatives in the framework of the 7th Habitat Groupé Fair (Salon de l'Habitat Groupé).

Citizens as City-Makers!

Community-led housing is at the core of current debates on sustainable cities in Europe. There is an increasing interest for community-led approaches in the housing sector, given that they generate new models of solidarity between citizens, the elderly, generations and people from diverse backgrounds, and contribute sustainably to solving the housing crisis. Across Europe, inhabitant groups organise themselves according to different organisational and legal models: Habitat Groupé, Housing Cooperatives, Community Land Trusts, Collaborative Housing, CoHousing, etc... Referred to as 'community-led housing'. Whatever their name or legal form, these initiatives contribute to putting the citizens at the core of the production of our cities and constitute real alternatives to the prevalent model of top-down and profit-oriented city-making. Today, there is a need for bridging the gaps between different models and cultural approaches.

The European Community-led Housing Award

The European Community-led Housing Award should be understood as a mechanism enhancing the recognition of the transformative character of habitat projects led by inhabitant groups. This process seeks to stimulate experience exchange and knowledge sharing at the project level and to strengthen the European movement of community-led or collaborative housing that reinvents the ways of building our cities. The exchange mechanism is organised in collaboration between urbaMonde, Building and Social Housing Foundation (the organiser of the World Habitat Awards¹) and Habitat&Participation ASBL. The presentation of the award-winning projects will take place on Sunday, 29th of May between 12am and 1.30pm, in the framework of the 7th Habitat Groupé Fair (Salon de l'Habitat Groupé). A wide and diverse audience will have the chance to discover four projects, presented by their representatives from Spain, Switzerland, Germany and the United Kingdom. Additionally, a series of knowledge sharing events will be organised between Belgian and European projects during the weekend in Louvain-la-Neuve and Brussels.

Towards European policies supportive of community-led housing initiatives?

Beyond rewarding four exemplary projects, the award seeks to acknowledge the commitment, diversity and creativity of the whole range of European citizen movements engaged in the field of community-led housing. Although an increasing number of local governments, social housing agencies, as well as housing professionals and academics, is interested in community-led housing initiatives, which have managed to influence local and national public policies, it is crucial to enhance their visibility among civil society and public institutions. There is, in fact, a need to develop supportive public policies at the European level in order to scale-up community-led housing solutions and models.

¹ Building and Social Housing Foundation has been coordinating the World Habitat Awards for the past 30 years in collaboration with the United Nations. Learn more: <https://www.bshf.org/world-habitat-awards/>

Mehr als Wohnen, Zurich, Switzerland



Mehr als Wohnen is a federation of 60 housing cooperatives that planned, financed and managed the construction of an entire neighbourhood, home to 1,100 residents and 150 jobs in the City of Zurich. The scale (cooperative neighbourhood), energy-efficient buildings, social diversity and the predominance of common spaces are but some examples of the innovation at the core of this project.

Granby4Streets CLT, Liverpool, UK



In the context of poverty, social exclusion and top-down approaches towards urban renewal, the inhabitants of Toxteth in Liverpool created the Granby4Streets Community Land Trust to defend their interests. Granby4Streets CLT has successfully managed to negotiate with public actors and social investors to implement participatory urban upgrading and social projects at the benefit of more than 2,000 residents.

La Borda, Barcelona, Spain



The Housing Cooperative “La Borda” originated from an activist movement in “Le Sants”, a working-class neighbourhood in Barcelona. La Borda seeks to integrate housing with the social economy and the Care economy, and to encourage new models of living in community. It constitutes at the same time the first experience of collective property in the city of Barcelona.

Spreefeld, Berlin, Germany



The Building and Housing Cooperative “Spreefeld” is situated in the former ‘no man’s land’ between Eastern and Western Germany. Founded in 2011 and inhabited since 2014, it is a successful example of local resistance to speculative, top-down and large scale area development, and has managed to provide affordable homes and public and semi-public spaces.

For more information:

Hub Europe 2016: <https://www.urbamonde.org/en/hub-europe-2016>

World Habitat Awards: <https://www.bshf.org/world-habitat-awards/>

Salon de l'Habitat Groupé: www.habitat-groupe.be/salon2016/

Social Production of Habitat Video Summary: <https://vimeo.com/142355996>

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