The European Collaborative Housing Award is a public recognition of innovative and inclusive housing projects, able to inspire their peers and to influence housing policies, both locally and internationally. The Award provides a platform for experience sharing, seeks to increase the visibility and strengthen the Collaborative Housing movement across Europe. Winning projects integrate the shortlist of the 2018 World Habitat Awards, an annual award organized by Building and Social Housing Foundation and UN-Habitat.

Collaborative Housing projects (co-housing, housing cooperatives, community land trusts, participatory and self-organized housing initiatives, intentional communities etc.) were invited to document and submit their initiatives to the collaborative online ‘social production of habitat platform’ (psh.urbamonde.org). An international panel of housing experts and professionals selected four inspiring initiatives invited to participate in the 2017 edition of the EXPERIMENTDAYS.
2017 AWARDS

MILANO, ITALY
CENNI DI CAMBIAMENTO
The largest social and collaborative housing project ever built in Italy within the SIF - the Italian funding platform for social housing. With its bottom-up approach and the ample provision of shared and public spaces, Cenni is a manifesto for a new generation of social housing: one that contributes to building communities, not only homes.

LONDON, UK
"NEW GROUND" COHOUSING COMMUNITY
A group of twenty-six elderly women, who have fought for almost 20 years to build affordable homes, and lead the way for senior cohousing in the UK.

VILLEURBANNE/LYON, FRANCE
VILLAGE VERTICAL
14 households of diverse backgrounds, and all but one eligible for social housing benefits, have collaborated in order to build the first collective ownership housing cooperative in France. Affordability, diversity and community links with the neighborhood are at the core of the project.

VIENNA, AUSTRIA
WOHNPROJEKT WIEN
The project was initiated by a group of people joining in 2009 and sharing the dream of a new way of living together in the city: affordably, collaboratively, enhancing sustainability and sharing ideas and spaces.

In 2017, the selection committee decided to award a special mention to the ST. ANN’S REDEVELOPMENT TRUST (stART) in London in order to manifest its support to a community-led initiative that seeks to prevent the St. Ann’s Hospital area from being sold to private housing developers and to secure community-ownership and affordability on the long term.

Selection Committee 2017
Anja Planiscek (University of Ljubljana / Trajekt), Christiane Droste (UrbanPlus), Darinka Crisichke (TU Delft), Guido Schwarzendahl (Co-operative Housing International, Bauverein Halle&Leuna), Liat Rogel (HousingLab), Mariangela Veronesi (Building and Social Housing Foundation), Marina Yoveva (Habitat for Humanity), Melissa Fernandez (University of Lancaster), Michael LaFond (id22: Institute for Creative Sustainability), Rolf Novy-Huy (Stiftung trias).

The second European Collaborative Housing Award is co-organized by urbaMonde (France/Switzerland) and id22 (Germany) with the support of the "On y va - Auf geht’s - Let’s go" program and the French Ministry for Territorial Cohesion.

Layout: Marie Grob
Illustration and photo credits belong to the respective project authors

more information at psh.urbamonde.org
CENNI DI CAMBIAMENTO

Cenni di Cambiamento is the most important social and collaborative housing project ever built in Italy within the SIF - the Italian funding platform for social housing. Completed in 2013, it hosts 122 social and affordable homes, mainly rented out to young people with different income levels. There are residential services for people with special needs, common spaces, services and public spaces for the neighborhood and shops. Cenni is a manifesto for a new type of social housing in Italy thanks to its innovative funding structure, multi-stakeholder approach, architectural design and both design and management processes that involve and empower the tenants and the wider community at all stages.

CONTEXT

Cenni di Cambiamento (“Cenni”) consists of 4 buildings, a mix of blocks and towers, realized on a plot of 17,000 sqm in Quarto Cagnino neighborhood, west of the centre of Milan. The process began in 2005 and involved experimenting with: innovative funding, public-private partnerships, participatory architectural design, social management, and community organization. It inspired its “twin brother” in Milan: Figino Borgo Sostenibile.

ORGANIZATION

Officina Gabetti 15, named after a bordering street, is the association of Cenni tenants. Formed in 2014, it aims to promote collaborative services and activities, as well as running the common spaces. The second actor, DAR=CASA, is a non-profit cooperative with the mission to create affordable housing for low and moderate-income citizens in Milan. As the Social Manager, DAR=CASA is in charge of the property and community management, and it was also responsible for the selection of tenants and homes assignment. The third actor is the Fondazione Housing Sociale (FHS), a private non-profit entity, which aims to develop economically-sustainable social and collaborative housing initiatives, without relying on grants. Cenni is the first project in which FHS has engaged itself as social and technical advisor within the SIF social housing program. The “FHS model” for the Community Build Up helps residents plan the use of their shared space and to draw up self-governing rules. The process begins about six months before the arrival of the residents and ends a year after their move in.

LAND NEGOTIATION

In 2008, the Municipality of Milan offered the first Italian Ethical Fund dedicated to Social Housing (FIL1) the right to use a parcel of public land for the realization of a housing project at rental rates below market prices.

PLANNING

Strongly committed to facilitating the community building process, Fondazione Housing Sociale (FHS) undertook a long collaboration with the residents in the planning and management of shared services and communal spaces. They addressed issues such as: Residential services for people with special needs, for example young people with physical and mental disease; Temporary accommodation services for young people who just left their parents’ home; 9 shared spaces for collaborative services; 4 common spaces with terraces on the top floor of the towers; 3 locals and urban services open to the neighborhood and 6 commercial spaces.

Cenni was designed by the architectural studio Rossi Prodi Associati, which won the International Architectural Competition in 2009. The design concept is inspired by the idea that public space is a fertile ground for the social and collaborative relationships that lie at the core of Cenni’s social mission. This concept resulted in a green public space – the inner court with no fences – that becomes the gathering place for residents and neighbors. A threshold space separates the housing blocks from green public spaces, gathering residents and neighborhoods in the inner courtyard. The continuity from the private dimension of the single dwellings to the open spaces was requested in the SIF planning guidelines and has resulted in a well-organized system of “in-between spaces”: terraces, pathways, loggias.
CONSTRUCTION
The construction system is made of a wooden structure with Xlam elements, which guarantee high performances in terms of safety, sustainability, energy savings, and living quality. The 9-story South tower was one of the tallest realized in Europe for a long time. Cenni’s design was awarded and selected for a number of architectural and design prizes: 2015, Medaglia d’oro della Architettura Italiana, Triennale di Milano; 2015 Mies Van der Rohe Award; 2014 Premio Innovazione Amica dell’Ambiente, Legambiente.

FINANCING
The project can took off thanks to the Integrated System of Funds (SIF). As an ethical real estate fund, SIF was established in 2009 as part of the “National Housing Plan” Act. Managed by CDP Investimenti Sgr S.p.A., the Fund primarily invests its own wealth in local real-estate funds which are in turn managed by other asset management companies through 40 to 80% shareholdings. The remaining portion of the local funds’ resources is provided by investors in the relevant territory, such as banks or private social enterprise foundations. It is then the responsibility of the local asset management companies to manage these funds and to implement each individual social housing project. As of December 2016, 31 local funds were approved throughout Italy with 9 different fund managers.

MANAGEMENT
The property is owned by FIL1 and managed by the Asset Management Company – InvestiRe Sgr. 46% of the apartments are rented at reduced prices (about 30% below market prices), 14% with a rent-to-buy formula, 11% with public housing rent prices and 9% for people with special needs and managed by specific entities, such as: social enterprises, associations and cooperatives. Every commercial space has its own shopkeeper.

EXPERIENCE-SHARING
Cenni di Cambiamento is a visionary pilot project in the field of social housing in Italy, and particularly in the framework of the SIF. It has set the basis for the implementation of other projects, such as Borgo Sostenibile, and has resulted in a specific know-how that FHS is now disseminating through its own network both at national and international level. In 2017, the project was presented at the International Social Housing Festival in Amsterdam, and made all relevant documents publicly available. The residents’ association is considered an “expert” in social housing and they have recently started exchanging experience with other associations, cooperatives, neighborhood groups and construction companies. As a result of this engagement, a new project started in 2017, “Comunità Dinamiche”, in which they assist in implementing a model of local development focused on the collaboration of tenants, shopkeepers, service providers, cultural and entertainment promoters.
NEW GROUND COHOUSING COMMUNITY

"New Ground" is made up of a group of twenty-six women between 50 and 88 years old of a variety of backgrounds and cultures, almost all of whom lived alone prior to the project. What brings them together is the determination to stay as self-dependent and active as they can while they are growing older. More than 15 years of struggle for planning and inclusive, affordable and adequate housing solution for the elderly resulted in an intentional community and a model for CoHousing responding to the needs of ageing societies.

CONTEXT

OWCH, or the Older Women’s Cohousing Company, came together in 1998 as a result of learning about senior cohousing in The Netherlands. After a visit of several Dutch communities, we have been trying to establish a mixed tenure, mutually supportive community for older women who would otherwise live alone.

In the UK, 60% of women aged 75+ live alone and this trend is growing. We did not wish to experience isolation and loneliness. We also wanted to stay in charge of our own lives, in a society that is quite ageist and patronising. We recruited a housing association developer as a partner, in order to include women lacking equity. Working in partnership with their end-users was and remains an unfamiliar relationship for many UK housing associations. We ourselves lacked development skills and found little support. Through many trials and disappointments, we persevered, and in 2010, the Hanover Housing association purchased a site for us and front-funded our 25-unit scheme. Construction was completed at the end of 2016. 17 women bought their flats and 8 flats were bought by a small housing association as landlord for women who are social renters.

ORGANIZATION

We have always organized ourselves in a way that would build group solidarity and cohesion. We met monthly for all those years and many women came and left. Our activities were a mix of group development, external outreach, and marketing. Our group development focused on issues such as conflict resolution, decision-making, shaping policies for mutual support, etc. and we also tasked small groups of our members to take specific work forward.

LAND NEGOTIATION

We searched London for years to find likely sites, without success. Eventually, in 2009, Hanover Housing offered to hire a site-searcher for us. We drew up our own specifications for a site near transport routes, shops and local amenities. We chose a small derelict school site from 12 possibilities and this was purchased ‘at risk’ by Hanover in early 2010. This site (0.83 acres) is now dedicated to our building and is two minutes from High Barnet High St and the bus route.

PLANNING

The project was designed by Pollard Thomas Edwards (PTE) Architects, working with the OWCH group and Hanover Housing. PTE pioneered a series of 6 participative workshops where the women could add their perspectives to the design. We also carried out our own survey of the site and its preservation area, noting the design attributes of the neighboring Victorian cottages. Participation in the design was a shot in the arm for a group which had struggled to stay buoyant and motivated against so many disappointments. It gave everyone a real sense of ownership of the building.

The design of ‘New Ground’ achieves the important objective that internal circulation and communal spaces should work to facilitate the ease of social interaction. While it is possible to retreat into one’s own private space, the blend of personal and common spaces allow OWCH members to meet each other casually. Individual flats, mostly one and two bed-flats, are spacious and airy. Large windows and generous balconies and patios link the women to the outside world; for most, over the garden. Kitchen windows offer a glimpse into interiors for a casual wave as one passes. We share a large garden, a laundry, a common room with kitchen, and a guest room.

Dialogue with the local planning authority was the job of the architects. Our project was delayed for at least two years by the local council’s opposition, out of fear that the new community of older women would make demands on their social care budget. The planning officers themselves added significant delay - for instance, we had to prove no demand existed to renovate the derelict school. Local policy was nothing but obstructive and we had to lobby for change and cooperation, write to all the neighbors, and hold information sessions in local cafes and the library.

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CONSTRUCTION
Hanover Housing, with OWCH, appointed a construction firm to start work in late 2012 via the ‘Design and Build’ method. After demolition, OWCH representatives met on a monthly basis with the builders, the novated architect, the quantity surveyors and Hanover Housing. We liaised between the site meeting and the OWCH group and kept communications disciplined. It was a steep learning curve for us as we were unfamiliar with technical terms and the construction process. It was also challenging for the professionals and the builders to liaise with us. OWCH members were given a degree of choice about some internal features. The group itself specified and ordered all furnishings and equipment for the communal areas.

FINANCING
The project was wholly front-funded by Hanover Housing Association and then sold at market rates to our members and the small housing association landlord for 8 flats. The latter, Housing for Women, received most of the capital for this purchase from a charity, the Tudor Trust, who have always helped OWCH. The prospective purchasers paid 10% deposits to Hanover in 2013, which reduced their risk and tied in our group.

MANAGEMENT
OWCH is fully mutual with a management committee elected annually. The main decision-making body is the community meeting each month, where decisions are taken by consensus. We manage the building ourselves, but, through our procurement process, have appointed an agent to manage repairs and servicing of our communal areas. In order to reduce our service charges, we perform the routine tasks of cleaning and cultivating the large landscaped garden. The group shares cars to an extent, as we have limited parking facilities ourselves. Key individuals take responsibility for First Aid, for ordering bulk supplies; and for organizing our weekly communal meal. Small committees take responsibility for administering and reporting on OWCH finances; for external communications and for maintaining the OWCH Facebook, Twitter and website; for organizing guest room and common room bookings, for social events and for sustaining OWCH membership.

EXPERIENCE-SHARING
Throughout the years, we have worked to inform UK society about the benefits of senior cohousing to older people and to the economy. We approached politicians, policy makers and developers. We attended old age festivals and conferences. We appeared on TV and radio and in newspapers and have spoken at many events. We have put senior cohousing on the map of public consciousness but we remain the only established senior cohousing community in the UK so far. We have commissioned a film about our work to demonstrate to local planners and councils that they should make it easier for older people to follow our example.
The Vertical Village project was launched in 2005. In 2013, 14 households of diverse background, age and income levels moved into their new homes. Residents are invited to share their experiences with the 30 members of Habicoop. Several hundred people (professionals, elected officials, students, project promoters) have already been welcomed, including the former Minister of Housing, Cécile Duflot.

The Vertical Village occupies one third of an ecological building with a total of 37 housing units. The innovative wood-concrete structure received a specific patent. The building was awarded the FIBRA Regional Award for Best Wood Construction. Designed by the architecture office ARBOR&SENS and DETRY & LEVY, the building includes various sustainable measures, such as a photovoltaic roof, mixed heating pellets of wood and gas, preheating of domestic hot water by air extracted from the housings via a heat pump, BBC eiffinger insulation level, and a collective laundry fed by rainwater.

The Vertical Village is a flagship project in France, and is regularly promoted by numerous media, in particular France Télévisions and Radio France. A professional video documentary was produced during the first years of the project. The residents are regularly invited to share their experiences. Habicoop, the French federation of Housing Cooperatives, organizes on site informational meetings and visits, for instance during the European Heritage Days and in the framework of the French Open Door Days of ‘collaborative housing’. The Vertical Village has a duty to share its experience with the 30 members of Habicoop. Several hundred people (professionals, elected officials, students, project promoters) have already been welcomed, including the former Minister of Housing, Cécile Duflot.
In the end of 2009 a committed group of people came together with common interests and the intention to live responsibly in a community, both socially and environmentally. The group of 15 people organized a monthly meeting, which was also attended by other interested people. From the beginning the group was formed by professionals, who took on important roles in its organization.

Wohnprojekt Wien is located in an attractive newly developed urban area, the so called Nordbahnhofgelände. The area includes the former railway station in the North of Vienna. Since the 1990’s the City freed the huge area for the implementation of new urban functions. The area is now part of the urban development program running until 2025, which will develop a new urban neighborhood for more than 20,000 inhabitants.

In order to acquire collective property in Austria and operate independently, the co-housing group had to be established as a corporate association. They formed the „Association for Sustainable Lives“ (Verein für nachhaltiges Leben).

Wohnprojekt Wien uses the „Sociocracy“ model, developed in the Netherlands, as the internal form of organization and decision-making. Sociocracy based on the values of high democratic participation in decision-making processes and joint responsibility. The dominant system of decision-making is based upon the circle method and consensus principle, which means that decisions can only be taken when no one has a serious objection. This way the decision-making processes have a strong participatory character. In addition, the members and residents decided to do eleven hours of monthly community work a month for the maintenance of the facilities.

Available, and centrally located plots in Vienna are extremely expensive on the free market. Public subsidies in the forms of reduced land prices and reasonable loans were essential to achieve affordability. To obtain such subsidies, the group had to organize an architectural competition and establish a partnership with an architecture office (einszueins architektur) and with a developer (Schwarzatal Housing Association).

At the core of the project is a self-organized community and the shared dream to live together in a sustainable, collaborative and open-minded way. From the very beginning, the participatory planning process aimed at designing the communal spaces and individual apartment units constituted a key element of the project. In the following, the group discussed the creation of an alternative mobility system and a communal garden for the neighborhood.

One of the greatest challenges of the project was to establish individual and private within community spaces through the architectural design. Several communal spaces offer the possibility for exchange and communication while the individual apartment units constitute spaces for retreat. The communicative architecture of the building promotes free and spontaneous encounters. The apartments and the common spaces were developed and designed from the very beginning through the cooperation of the architects and the residents, allowing for alternative ways of living and flexibility to emerge.

The ground floor hosts a communal kitchen, a children’s playroom, a big storage room for bikes and commercial surfaces. A big event hall in the basement, enlightened by a sunken court, can host the assembly of residents and pro-
provide a space for cultural activities in the neighborhood. The rooftop is open to all and includes: a sauna, a meditation room, guest apartments and a library surrounded by the roof terrace and garden. The project seeks to host different lifestyles, cross-generational and cross-cultural, under one same roof.

FINANCING
As defined by the competition, the Wohnprojekt Wien represents a ‘Wohnheim’, which stands for communal housing with special financial support from the Vienna City Council. The total costs were therefore highly reduced in comparison to the free market. Members pay a basic and an individual contribution, their residential rent, the repayment of the building loan and operating costs. The price per month falls under 10 Euros per square meter. At the beginning of the project, each person had to deposit a private fund of 550 Euros per square meter along with a budget for communal facilities.

MANAGEMENT
The building has been in use since December 2013 under the ‘shared ownership’ model. The Wohnprojekt Wien association acts as owner, joint planner, and administrator of the housing complex. The association members live in the flats. Their obligations are detailed in an internal contract with the association (as in a cooperative). In all areas of communal life, the members are actively engaged. The general assembly splits into small working groups responsible for different areas. For example: looking after catering for organizational and communication needs, the housing administration and the management. Communal life is supported by initiatives and working groups, whether in tending the garden or library or in organizing diverse tasks, like the booking of guest-apartments or reserving the event hall. The Wohnprojekt Wien also runs a cooking group, a food coop, and a car-sharing program. Important decisions regarding statutes, the annual planning, budget, flat allocation, rules of use etc., are made by the association itself and established through sociocratic decision-making.

EXPERIENCE-SHARING
Both the Sargfabrik project, Austria’s largest self-governed housing and cultural project (1996) and Wohnprojekt Wien (2013), establish the way for an innovative co-housing culture in the city. Positive results from these lively housing projects radiate into the newly emerging district of Vienna and into the politics of the City Council. The City Council now provides sites for co-housing projects and advertises competitions which appeal to private groups of people, architects and building developers. In parallel, further projects have been initiated, such as “Die WoGen”, which was founded by one of the initiators of the co-housing group Heinz Feldmann. “Die WoGen” is the first Austrian developer which exclusively supports co-housing projects.