

The project seeks to address the growing problem with housing affordability found in many cities in the NWE region, by supporting the establishment of more and successful Community Land Trusts (CLTs), initially in four cities to 'prove the concept' - Brussels, London, Ghent and Lille. CLTs are democratic community-based organisations that develop and manage homes that are affordable to people on low and median incomes and remain affordable. CLTs create cohesive neighbourhoods through ongoing affordability and extensive community and resident involvement. There is a growing interest in this innovative approach amongst communities and authorities and significant potential for CLTs to move from a 'niche' model to a mainstream option for housing supply.



Plenary session at the conference of 22 May 2018 in Lille in the presence of the main actors of CLT development in Europe

1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Audrey Linkenheld (Lille Local Councillor, co-author of legislation on French CLT model), Frédéric Roussel (Emeritus Notary, Conseil supérieur du Notariat) & An Descheemaeker (President of CLTB)

(1) A failure to accommodate modest and middle-class households in the city

In big cities, the rise in prices leads some modest households to settle in the periphery. We are now facing an affordable housing crisis in the major part of European cities. The answer to this rise in housing costs can come from the local scale.

(2) The genesis of CLT in Europe

During the 2000s, some English and Brussels associations became interested in a model from the United States: the Community Land Trust (CLT). CLTs are democratic community-led organisations that take an innovative approach to developing and managing homes that are affordable to low and median income households and remain permanently affordable, thereby creating sustainable, cohesive and thriving neighbourhoods. More recently, the CLT has been transposed into French law, by application of the ALUR law, under the name of "Organisme de Foncier Solidaire" (OFS).

2. THE CLT MODEL : ROOTS & DEVELOPMENT

John Davis (Writer and community organiser of the CLT movement in the United States), Yves Cabannes (Emeritus Professor of Development Planning, University College London) & Audrey Linkenheld

(1) Roots of CLT in the United States (J. Davis)

The CLT movement was born in the United States in the 1970s. The first innovation took place in the state of Georgia in 1969, in a political context marked by the African-American civil rights movement. This story is recounted through the movie 'Arc de Justice', co-produced by John Davis.

According to John Davis, the CLT's classic model is based on three pillars:

- (1) the **community** is built around a non-profit organisation to acquire land.
- (2) **land ownership** is collective, houses are owned individually by families.
- (3) The **organisation's** goal is to preserve the affordability of long-term housing.

(2) Lessons from the American experience

What did they do right :

- The CLT is an effective response to house a middle class forgotten by public policies;
- The system of governance integrates equally inhabitants, public authorities, and other people from the neighborhood into the Board of Directors;
- The US CLT model is not rigid, it constantly evolves, adapts and develops in different local, political and legal contexts;
- US CLTs have developed a national network that enhances their visibility.

What did they do wrong :

- Most CLTs focus solely on housing production;
- The development of the community is often neglected;
- The CLT movement needs a new generation of leaders;
- The geographic area of CLT tends to expand, limiting the power of the community;
- CLTs sometimes have trouble sustaining their business

(3) Roots of the movement in the United Kingdom (Y. Cabannes)

There are three important events that have grounded CLT's approach in the UK:

- (1) the movement of diggers in 1649: these people reacted to the privatisation of communal lands in the United Kingdom by creating communities sharing ownership of farmland.
- (2) Thomas Spence wrote "The Real Rights of Man" in 1775 in which he denounced the conversion of parishes into corporations. It promotes the establishment of autonomous parish communities.
- (3) Ebenezer Howard wrote in 1898 his work on garden cities and presented a system for capturing capital gains in perpetuity for the community. The issues of sustainability, collective governance, and land as a common good are at the heart of this book.

The first English CLT, Granby 4 Streets CLT, was born in Liverpool in the early 2010s. In a declining neighborhood facing the vacancy of old lodgings residents, people have mobilized and chose the CLT model to create a sustainable community.



From left to right : Yves Cabannes, John Davis & Audrey Linkenheld

(4) Roots of the French Model (A. Linkenheld)

If the recent development of CLTs in the United Kingdom and Belgium follows the US CLT tradition, it is first initiatives around the participatory habitat that have emerged in France. Faced with this new request to the local authorities of some inhabitants, reflections around the sharing of land has begun. The advantage of the OFS is its flexibility that allows adaptations to local contexts. In the French model, the place of the inhabitants in governance has not been made mandatory. If we are far enough away from the participative model in Lille, it is because this reflection is done at the communal scale.

3. URBAN CLT PILOTS IN EUROPE

City of Lille, Tom Chance (Head of Grants and Development, National CLT Network), Keith Cowling (Bristol CLT), CLTB Gent, London CLT, CLT Bruxelles

(1) The main goals of the INTERREG project

The SHICC project has been chosen for the social innovation it brings to urban housing production. The goals set by the partners are: (1) to prove the concept; (2) to create a supportive local, regional and national policy, funding and regulatory environment for CLTs, and (3) to build a movement across the North-West European Region.

(3) Introduction to the four pilot Urban CLTs

CLT GENT

Created in 2013, this CLT aims to meet the demand for housing of low income households. Their financial model remains fragile because there is no sustainable fund from the public sector that would allow Gent's actors to produce housing. By 2022, a first CLT project should see the light of day, consisting of 34 housing units, with a cooperative supermarket and a community garden.

LONDON CLT

Created in 2007, London CLT seeks to respond to the crisis of affordable housing triggered by the very sharp rise in property prices in London. The goal is to offer housing whose price is related to the income of Londoners. The first operation in CLT has 23 dwellings. The London CLT also seeks to develop broader action for the neighborhoods in which CLT operations are developing.

OFS de la Métropole de Lille

This CLT emerges from the observation that real estate prices in Lille are among the most expensive in France, for an average income of inhabitants lower than the national average. On the strength of this observation, the OFS is created in 2017 to reduce the mechanisms of land speculation and facilitate access to private property of modest families. The project is set up with public and private partners. The first CLT operation has 15 apartments and is part of a 210-unit project.

CLT Bruxelles

CLTB was created by several neighbourhood associations and social activists in 2012. Subsidies from the Brussels-Capital Region allow the CLTB to acquire the land. The governing structure emphasizes the participation of the inhabitants in the decision-making process. Applicants for housing are eligible for social housing and classified into four levels of income. Today, the CLTB has a project of 9 inhabited housing, three projects under construction and five projects under study.

4. THE FRENCH CLT MODEL

French ministry of Housing, Florence Caumes (Coopératives HLM Federation), Christelle Beurienne (Crédit Foncier de France), Romain Paris (Cabinet Rouge Vif Territoire)

(1) The French OFS Model

The OFS / BRS model is a tool to produce housing and a new way of offering a social home ownership for low-income households. In France, the OFS system is a success that nobody expected. Many cities have already embarked on the creation of such a structure and many are in a phase of study. It is an innovative and flexible device that must be able to develop in the tight zone of the housing market.

(2) Cooperative initiatives

The COOP'HLM are in the spirit of the CLT model. Their goal is to promote resident participation, by securing the residential path of households. It is therefore necessary to intervene where land is expensive. The CLT is one of the levers for action that the COOP'HLM wish to seize to develop their activities.

(3) How can banks make it happen ?

The French bank 'Crédit Foncier' supports local authorities. It is an expert in financing the Social Rent-Accession Loan (PSLA). For him, the CLT system is more secure than the PSLA because the French CLT helps and supports households in their accession process. It is therefore interesting for 'Crédit Foncier' to invest in the OFS.

(4) An overall perspective and critical point of view

By observing the American movement of CLTs, we note that the community aspect takes precedence over the production of housing. In France, this model has gone through the social housing filter, which has led to a relative loss of flexibility.

Here are three lessons learned from the comparison of the OFS and CLT model:

- The study of the American context of affordable housing production shows how effective and valuable the French social housing system is.
- In the United States, the affordable housing factory is based on a complex and expensive public-private mechanism. This is also the case in Europe, which is not optimal for the development of CLTs.
- Successful CLTs have generally been based around Community Organizing, to develop neighbourhoods socially (Cincinnati, Boston).

5. WORKSHOPS

A 360° Perspective on CLT Finance

A mapping of the potential sources of funding has been done by the FMDV.

Here are three examples of funding models:

(1) The Community Housing Fund (England): The objective is to reduce the amount of funding sources to start a project.

(2) Social investment is also a development tool for CLTs in the UK. It aims to invest capital for social purposes.

(3) The social mortgage loan in Flanders: this funding is intended for people with low incomes. In short, it would be necessary to reduce the production costs of housing while managing to convince banks to invest in CLTs. Finally, non-monetary resources, and self-construction can be a way to produce cheaper housing. It is also a question of soliciting local governments and making them understand the validity of CLTs. We finally see that the problem is not a lack of money, but access to this money.

Building a genuinely community-led CLT

The goal of this workshop is to take examples from the London CLT and Heart & Hastings CLT because both of which have active communities that take part in the production of housing. Between these CLTs, there are similarities in the desire to take possession of the land to future buyers. For this, regular access to the site is set up. Events to bring the community together are organized throughout the year. Both entities offer community organizing but also development from the individual. The important thing is to think collectively about the development of a CLT. In Lille, participation is more top-down: information meetings on progress on the construction site and nature of housing are organized. In Gent, the creation of a cooperative supermarket welds families around a common project. For this, to discuss is the best way to create solidarities. The role of CLTs is to give tools to individuals while listening to them.

CLTs : A Housing Solution for the Most Deprived ?

The Champlain Housing Trust (CHT) did not directly attempt to accommodate the poor. Its first strategy has been to accommodate populations of the middle classes. Today, most CHT residents have incomes between 60% and 80% of the average income in the United States. Today, the CHT has partnered with hospitals in Burlington. Land ownership, which is the principle of a CLT, allows time to think and make decisions for the long term. However, two-thirds of the CHT housing stock consists of rental housing. In Brussels, the creation of the CLTB was allowed by the presence of a budget of the Brussels-Capital region for the creation of social housing which is not seized by the donors. Vulnerability is not only economic, it is also social. That is why CLTB is committed to the economic and social security of its members.

In France, the CLT can be a way to prevent land speculation, and can become a tool to improve the quality of housing in shrinking cities ; but it is not directly concerned about housing of the most deprived. Thus, the CLT model can become a solution for every persons who need a better housing ? Is it possible to build a CLT only for the most deprived ?



John Davis intervenes during the workshop to house the most deprived

CONCLUSION

The history of the CLT movement is linked above all to the land. This movement has an alternative approach to the land market that it does not see as a commodity but as a common good, from which the power of individuals can be exercised. It is therefore a question of not confusing the production of affordable housing and the constitution of a community whose power comes from the possession of the soil. Most CLTs in the United States are at the initiative of the inhabitants, in a bottom-up approach. Others come from the will of the public authorities, but in both cases the construction of a community foundation is necessary for its proper functioning.