



HOUSING ORGANISATIONS
CREATING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Exchange

TOOLS FOR SOCIAL HOUSING PROVIDERS



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English

Foreword



David Orr

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The members of CECODHAS altogether represent 32 000 organisations at the local level, the majority being housing co-operatives. They manage around 25 million homes. Among CECODHAS members, we identify three main traditions: co-operatives, public housing companies, and not-for-profit/voluntary organisations.

These different traditions represent richness for our sector, but we should not let the differences in types of organisations divert the attention from our common contribution to provide “access to decent and affordable housing for all in communities which are socially, economically and environmentally sustainable and where all are enabled to reach their full potential” as our vision statement states.

The citizens are less concerned about the type of company, they care about the good work we do in the places where we work.

The collective work that we have done (25 million homes), together with our investment in neighbourhoods, have contributed to social cohesion in the EU. Social enterprises have a profound impact not only on bricks and mortar but also on the lives of people and places where they live.

Providing for the community is not a new idea, it has a long history. In England there is a housing association whose creation dates as far back as the 13th century. The result of our history is a model and a network that has proved key to welfare provision in the past and that has the potential to be transformational in the future.

We are building a great success story, but starting from conditions that still need a long way to go. This success is based on our common role as providers of decent and affordable housing in good neighbourhoods.

David Orr, President.



Claire Roumet
Secretary General

Housing Organisations creating Social Capital



On the initiative of Rudy de Jong, chairman of the Internal Market working group of CECODHAS, CECODHAS decided to start an internal discussion about social enterprises delivering housing, in accordance with our working programme for 2009 which includes working towards a specific and enabling legal framework for social business at EU level.

"Pillar 2" of the CECODHAS work programme 2009 includes two aims which concern the position of social housing organisations within the EU:

- The social business sector should be better identified and the value it adds recognised.
- A legal framework and procedures must be put in place for the development of social business in Europe.

In order to give concrete shape to these aims, two strategic seminars – on 2 March in Brussels and on 17 April in Prague – were organised at the behest of the internal market working group.

The aims of these two seminars were:

1. To raise consciousness among the members of CECODHAS that important changes that directly affect the position of social housing organisations are taking place within the EU.
2. To stimulate recognition among the members of CECODHAS that this topic affects them.
3. Identification of the common characteristics of the social housing organisations within the EU.
4. Determination of the common characteristics of the social housing organisations by the members of CECODHAS, in order that these can be used in external communication and to influence the EU institutions.

The first two items constituted the aim of the first seminar, on 2 March 2009 **'Social housing providers between services of general interest and market regulation: a changing position?'**.



The workshop organised in Prague on April 17, in occasion of the European Conference on Social Economy organised by the Czech Presidency of the European Union, **'Social enterprises delivering housing: Diversity of organisations in Europe for the same mission'** focused on an explanation of the role and position of the social housing organisations in the various EU countries, based on the role they play in delivering SGI.

The initiative aimed at agreeing on a definition of the common characteristics of the social housing organisations within the EU, so that these can be used in the external communication.

The provisional conclusions of the two seminars, which are presented below, will be discussed during the next CECODHAS Executive Committee meeting at the end of October 2009.

CECODHAS members are social enterprises delivering decent and affordable housing for all in

neighbourhoods which are socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable and where people can reach their full potential.

Although CECODHAS members have a common mission, there is a great diversity in Europe in term of types of organisations providing affordable housing, their position in society, their legal position, the regulatory system in the member states, and other aspects. In general, we distinguish 3 forms of housing organisations: co-operative, public, and private/voluntary organisations.

This diversity amongst providers of affordable housing is the result of the history of the growing European social model, a history which began over 150 years ago. This rich diversity characterising our sector leaves us with some open questions.

The first question is: to what extent the differences are just in our minds? If we were to ask our clients, residents, members what is important for them, I suppose they their answer would

have to do with quality of housing and neighbourhoods, access and affordability.

The second question has to do with the European context. It's becoming more and more important for us to be visible and recognizable at the European level. What makes it even more important today is the effect of the Lisbon Treaty. The European Commission will have to develop a regulation system for services of general interest and for the introduction of the European Charter in primary law of the EU.

It is crucial that actors in the social economy find their place within this regulatory system; therefore we must be not only visible but also recognizable in our specificities. This is the reason why in this workshop we have tried to define the common characteristics of public, voluntary and cooperative housing providers. We started with a conceptual view on housing organisations in Europe, which was explained through three presentations. Presentations which showed us many examples of the European reality, with a special focus on co-operative housing, particularly in the new member states. In these countries co-operative housing is often one of the dominant forms of housing, the Czech Republic being a typical example.

Thanks to this conceptual view supported by examples of good practices, we could identify four organisational qualities which

characterise our sector, namely:

- We are sensitive to public interest while at the same time making our own choices
- We are sensitive to public regulation but always bearing our values and missions in mind
- We are sensitive to the market without letting this be conclusive to our activities
- We address problems in society filling the gaps left by other institutions

Furthermore, in the enriching debate that followed we identified as common characteristics four added values that we bring to society, by:

- Re-investing earnings into our objectives
- Offering social and economic stability to households, neighbourhoods and the society as a whole
- Making long term investments contributing to a sustainable society
- Giving members, residents and stakeholders a central position into our decision-making and being accountable to society for our activities.

These organisational characteristics and added values help housing organisations throughout Europe to better identify themselves vis-à-vis the EU institutions and make a contribution to the European social dimension.



Report on CECODHAS workshop

Social enterprises delivering housing: Diversity of organisations in Europe for the same mission



The workshop 'Social enterprises delivering housing: Diversity of organisations in Europe for the same mission', organized by CECODHAS in partnership with SCMBD (Union of Czech Housing Co-operatives) within the framework of the European Conference on Social Economy organised by the Czech Presidency of the European Union, was held in Prague on 17 April 2009. The aim of the workshop was to discuss the role and position of social housing providers in EU member states. It focused on the role these organisations play in providing services of general interest

(SGI) in a context of the demands of society, stakeholders and housing markets. The workshop reflected on the common characteristics of the variety of organisations providing housing and housing-related services throughout the EU, with a view to better identify the social housing sector and to raise awareness of its added value.

The workshop was chaired by Rudy de Jong, chairman of CECODHAS Internal Market working group. After a welcoming speech by **Vít Vaníček** (president of SCMBD), who also took the opportunity to introduce the housing context in Czech Republic with a particular attention to the key role played by housing co-operatives, CECODHAS president **David Orr** opened the event with a short but incisive speech on the common role housing organisations play throughout the EU, despite differences in types of organisations. CECODHAS members altogether represent over 32 000 organisations at the local level, managing around 25 million homes.





Among CECODHAS members, we identify three main traditions: co-operatives, public housing companies, and not-for-profit/voluntary organisations. What brings together CECODHAS members is their work as providers of decent and affordable housing in good neighbourhoods. The collective work that CECODHAS members have done (25 million homes), together with their investment in neighbourhoods, contributes to social cohesion in the EU and will continue to do so in the future.

Vincent Gruis, Associate professor of Housing Management at Delft University of Technology, proposed in his presentation a conceptualisation of social enterprises in housing (see page 10) which set a useful framework for the following interventions and discussion.

Darinka Czischke, Director of CECODHAS Observatory, presented a review of missions and activities amongst social enterprises delivering housing, referring to the conceptualisation presented by Gruis

and integrating it with supporting evidence and examples from the social housing sector in different countries. Social enterprises delivering housing show a variety of legal and organisational forms, but their common core task is construction & management of housing as economically viable business practice combined with social goals.

Based on the results of CECODHAS General Survey 2008, she highlighted the trend towards diversification of activities of not for profit housing providers with a particular attention on so called non-landlord activities, whose importance is rapidly increasing. The latter include additional services to tenants and neighbourhood services, which are typical activities of not-for-profit housing providers (either directly or through partnerships with other organisations) and contribute to the quality of life of residents and to the sustainability of neighbourhoods and local communities. Examples from CECODHAS membership were used to illustrate how social enterprises in the



housing sector combine solidarity with business efficiency, combine public policy/social goals with the interest of their members, contribute to urban regeneration and social balance within districts thanks to a long term strategy, and work in partnership with local stakeholders to address wider social and economic issues.

After Darinka's intervention, **Claus Hachmann**, chairman of CECODHAS cooperative section, presented the role and position of housing cooperatives in the EU. Hachmann explained the principles and values which are at the basis of co-operatives activities, and stresses how at the same time activities can differ much from one housing co-operative to another, in particular for what concerns the type of tenures they offer to members (ownership, long-lease, mixed forms). Co-operatives, which represent a major share of CECODHAS members and provide over 10 million dwellings throughout the EU, share some common characteristics with other housing organisations in different

legal forms: they provide sustainable and not speculative housing; they set common goals for the residents, and provide affordable housing and good services for the residents. They also carry out activities which are of general interest, through which they bring an added value to society.

He also explained how housing co-operatives represent a successful model of economic and social sustainability that is surviving the financial and economic crisis much better than other sectors (despite the fact that cooperatives providing housing for home ownership are suffering a heavier impact than those providing rental housing). Housing co-operatives work in combination with saving institutions, creating an economically sound and stable model with good perspective for future developments.

Last but not least, **Martin Hanak** of the Czech Union of Housing Co-operatives (SCMBD) presented the union and its activities. SCMBD currently manages about 480 000 flats for rent and 220

000 for home ownership in the Czech Republic. Most SCMBD dwellings are in multi-dwelling buildings stock and housing cooperatives spend much effort on the refurbishment of pre-fabricated buildings. Housing co-operatives provide services on the housing market in competition with other actors, therefore they are entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, they play a key social role due to different factors. First of all, rents in the co-operative sector are at least 2.5 times cheaper than the average market level, including municipal housing which is still let at regulated rents. Furthermore, more than 30% of the country population lives in co-operative housing, which ensures stability (for households and for the economy) especially in times of crisis and good quality services. Finally, in the Czech Republic there is no entity fulfilling social housing provision, and members of housing co-operatives are mainly people on low-middle income, often in disadvantaged areas. For these reasons, housing co-operatives fill a gap left in society by institutions and they feel they de facto substitute the state in social housing provision.

During discussion which followed, thanks to active involvement of the audience of the workshop and to the initiative of Eva Bauer (GBV) who started the debate, the participants identified some specificities which distinguish CECODHAS members from other institutions or companies dealing with housing construction and urban regeneration. These specificities include: re-investing earnings into our objectives; offering social and economic stability to households, neighbourhoods and the society as a whole; making long term investments contributing to a sustainable society; and giving members, residents and

stakeholders a central position into our decision-making, and being accountable to society for our activities.

This is how CECODHAS members bring an added value to society.

Conceptualising social enterprise in housing: report from CECODHAS workshop in Prague (17 April 2009)



Based on the presentation by Vincent Gruis, Associate Professor of Housing Management at Delft University of Technology (the Netherlands)



At the workshop **'Social enterprises delivering housing: Diversity of organisations in Europe for the same mission'** which was organised by CECODHAS in cooperation with its Czech member SCMBD, (Union of Czech Housing Co-operatives) within the framework of the European Conference on Social Economy organised by the Czech Presidency of the European Union, **Vincent Gruis** delivered a speech on **'Conceptualising social enterprise in housing'**. He presented two different perspectives on social enterprise, and proposed four main characteristics which could be explicative of the nature of social enterprise in the housing sector.

Below is a report of the issues he presented during the workshop, which served as a very useful conceptual basis for the presentations that followed and for the rich debate which concluded the event.

The institutional perspective on social enterprise provides an overview of what kind of organisations we are referring to when talking about social enterprises. According to Social Enterprise London (SEL, 2001), the latter comprise a variety of organisations, including, amongst others, co-operatives (associations of persons united to meet common economic and social needs through jointly owned enterprises) and social businesses (non-profit businesses, often set up to support the work of a charity or non-governmental organisation).

According to this conceptualisation of social enterprises (SEL, 2001 and Crossan, 2005), what distinguishes them from other types of businesses and bodies (private sector, socially responsible business, charity and voluntary sector, and government) is that social enterprises generate proceedings from their activities, they have social goals, and they are governed by the people who benefit of the services provided.

Along the same line, the criteria set by EMES argue that social enterprises are characterised by: continuous activity; high degree of autonomy; significant level of risk; minimum amount of paid work; an explicit aim to benefit the community; an initiative launched by citizens; decision-making power not based on capital ownership; participatory nature; and limited profit-distribution (Defourney).

The problem with these perspectives is that by taking all these criteria into account and combining them to get to a strict definition of social enterprises we end up excluding a lot of organisations that may in fact bear many of the characteristics that can be associated with social enterprise.



Another perspective on social enterprise explores the organisational characteristics of institutions. From this point of view, social entrepreneurship means developing entrepreneurial approaches in the interest of public/ societal objectives, using public and private means, and employing principles from commercial business such as innovation, market orientation and risk taking (based on De Boer, 1999).

According to both perspectives, if we are to put social enterprises into a wider context, we can position social enterprises between the state, the market and the society. This is explained from the institutional perspectives in that social enterprises basically work on the market for the benefit of the society and society has control power over these organisations. Also according to the organisational perspective social entrepreneurship represents a *modus operandi* which combines market principles, aspects of public management, and the principle of solidarity which is characteristic of civil society.

Therefore, keeping in mind the inputs from the different perspectives, Vincent Gruis proposed to focus on what he considers to be four key aspects of social entrepreneurship,

which can be applied to CECODHAS members and their work.

According to him, social entrepreneurship is:

- Being sensitive to challenges in society, but making your own choices
- Being sensitive to public policy but keeping your own mission in mind

- Taking market demand, opportunity and risks into account, but not letting these be conclusive in decision-making
- Filling the gap left by other institutions and taking up problems that are left by others in society

These points reinforce the idea that social enterprises in their activities have to deal with competing principles which are characteristic in turn of the market or the state, and in this context find their own position and their own way to respond to societal needs.

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- Crossan, D., Bell, J., and Ibbotson, P. (2005). *Towards a classification framework for social enterprises*. School of International Business and School of Business, Retail and Financial Services, University of Ulster.
- Social Enterprise London (2001). *Introducing Social Enterprises*. <http://www.sel.org.uk/>
- Defourny, J. *Concepts and realities of social enterprise: a European perspective* <http://www.emes.net/>

Housing Co-operative Ludwig-Frank (member of GdW), Mannheim, germany



Name of Co-operative:

Vermietungsgenossenschaft
Ludwig-Frank eG

Type of Co-operative:

Tenants' Co-operative Society

Year of Formation:

1990

Address:

Melchior Str. 10, D – 68167 Mannheim

Tel.:

+ 49 (0) 621 401805-0

E-mail:

info@Vermietung-Ludwig-Frank.de

Person to contact:

Claus Hachmann, Hachmann@gdw.de

Number of members:

400

Number of dwellings:

395
(out of which 100 were uninhabitable at the beginning of the project)

Description of the case

Mannheim is a city in Southern Germany with 320,000 inhabitants, of which 20 % are foreigners who immigrated to Germany (migrants). The city was heavily damaged during World War II. The housing complex which today belongs to the Vermietungsgenossenschaft (tenants' co-operative) Ludwig Frank consisting of about 400 dwellings near the city centre was among the first reconstruction projects erected in 1949/1950. In 1990 these flats did no longer meet the standards of modern housing. There was a high fluctuation of tenants. Vacant flats were allotted to socially weak groups, unemployed

persons and migrants, resulting into the creation of a ghetto in the area. Plans to demolish the houses prevented repairs and investments so that the houses and the situation of the inhabitants deteriorated further.

An initiative of active citizens to save the housing complex was formed and in 1990 a housing co-operative society was established, which – after difficult negotiations with the city government – took over the housing complex at very favourable conditions with the commitment to invest into upgrading the dilapidated houses. When the co-operative took over in 1990, more than 100 of the

400 flats were vacant and considered uninhabitable.

The pilot project resulted from a tenants' initiative supported by the city council and came to the following results:

- 400 dwellings earmarked for demolition were saved, the dwellings were transferred from the **City of Mannheim** to a cooperative established by its inhabitants free of charge with the condition that the co-operative society would rehabilitate and modernise the dwellings by way of self-help and shared responsibility. Rehabilitation works were carried out by **local companies** and included energy-saving measures
- Co-operative self-help and solidarity were extended to include social and community work, integrating members with a migration background (i.e. foreigners living in Mannheim), solving the problem that according to a survey conducted among inhabitants a strong group of tenants of Turkish origin attracts further inhabitants with a Turkish background.

By offering a **Kindergarten** and a special **meeting point** called "Treffpunkt Neckarstadt-Ost" the co-operative society has succeeded in bringing the heterogeneous group of members together, mobilising their participation in meeting common needs and familiarising them with co-operative ideas. The result of these efforts is a co-operative community in which people have been living together peacefully during the past 15 years.

The meeting point has both volunteer and paid staff, and it is managed and financed by a **registered association officially recognised as a charity**, which works in close collaboration with the housing co-operative. The Co-operative works together with an **adult education centre, the workers' welfare organisation AWO and the Technical High School of Social Sciences (Fachhochschule für Sozialwissenschaften) in Munich.**

The meeting point carries out a vast program for all age groups aimed at offering training for better qualification and opportunities to spend leisure time together.

Among these offers are:

- Help for school children to do their home work (additional tuition),
- German language training for different age groups and special courses for women,
- classes on sewing, arts and crafts and on care for the elderly and
- training courses on the use of computers.

In 1992 the tenants' co-operative Ludwig-Frank was awarded the United Nations "World Habitat

Award" for its successful efforts to integrate members with multi-cultural

backgrounds into one co-operative community. In the same year, the co-operative Ludwig-Frank was also awarded a price within the "Social City" contest.

Mutual understanding and integration of perspective tenants in co-operative housing, in Breganz (Austria)



Name of Co-operative:

Wohnbauselbsthilfe, Vorarlberger gemeinnützige reg. Gen.m.b.H.

Type of Co-operative:

Non-profit Housing Co-operative Ltd. (Gemeinnützige Wohnbau Genossenschaft mbH)

Year of Formation: 1950

Address:

Bachgasse 1 a, AU - 6900 Bregenz

Tel.: +43 (0) 5574/43155 – 0

E-mail:

erich.mayer@wohnbauselbsthilfe.at

Person to contact:

Dipl. BW Erich Mayer

Number of members: 3,301

Number of dwellings: 65 housing estates = ca. 110 houses with approx. 2,700 apartments and 40 shops/workshops

Affiliation to federations and other organisations:

- Federation of Austrian Non-profit Building Associations,

Auditing Federation (Verband österreichischer gemeinnütziger Bauvereinigungen
GBV – Revisionsverband)

- Co-operation with the City of Bregenz and with the Institute for Social Services (Institut für Sozialdienste, IFS)

Description:

The project focused on elaborating a concept for familiarising new members moving into co-operative apartments with each other and with their rights and obligations as members, tenants and neighbours.

The site of the project is Rheinstraße Süd, Bregenz and comprises four houses with 62 apartments of good quality with 68 parking lots in garages and 10 in open air. The inhabitants of the housing complex are about 100 adults and 50 children and young persons. As a result of demographic change, new problems have to be solved.



Tensions and conflicts among tenants resulting from:

- Different needs and preferences of different age groups.
- Multi-cultural background of tenants in one neighbourhood: 40 percent Austrians, 50 percent Austrian citizens with migration background and 10 percent foreigners.
- Need for persons with different cultural and religious background to live together peacefully and to tolerate each other's different lifestyle.

Goals

The aim of the project is to create a climate of mutual understanding and tolerance from the outset by taking the following measures:

- Bring the prospective tenants together and offer them the chance to come to know each other.
- Generate in them the feeling of joint responsibility for the space in which they will live together.
- See the housing estate as something with which they can identify themselves.
- Improve their capacity to communicate with each other and eventually to deal with conflicts.

The expected results are to improve the quality of life, to reduce conflicts among tenants and to reduce or avoid vandalism.

Multi-stakeholder approach

In the pilot project of accompanying new tenants when moving into co-operative apartments, three partners work together with the tenants:

- City Government of Bregenz,
- Institute for Social Services (ISS) and
- Wohnbauselbsthilfe, Vorarlberger gemeinnützige reg. Gen.m.b.H.

The work is accomplished in three steps over a period of nine months with two working groups.

- A **steering committee** consisting of officials of the City Government, local politicians, the ISS and board members of the housing co-operative is responsible for elaborating the concept.
- An **operative project group** which consists of representatives of the housing administration and of social services of the city, social workers and of the co-operative society is responsible for carrying out the project.

After implementation of the pilot project, opinions were collected from the different stakeholders.

- **Tenants** showed a very positive reaction. 80 percent of the tenants used the opportunity to come to know each other.
- The **City of Bregenz** saw the project as very successful. It is planned to develop this method as a standard procedure for future housing projects above 25 dwellings.
- The **media** showed much interest and provided full television coverage.
- **Other communities** followed the pilot project with interest. Some might make use of this experience.

Patronato Municipal de la Vivienda de Alicante (member of AVS)



Project title: Intergenerational housing "Plaza de America"

Location: Alicante, Spain

Number of units concerned: 72 Intergenerational dwellings with communal areas and services (including parking), Health care center, Day center for elderly people, underground parking

Details of any State/EU funding received: subsidies and mortgage

loans from the State Housing Plan

Contact details: Plaza Santísima Faz, 5 - Alicante - 03002

Tf: 965206329 - 965206364 -

Fax: 965142907

<http://www.alicante-ayto.es/vivienda/home.html>

Contact person:

Gaspar Mayor Pascual, gaspar.mayor@alicante-ayto.es

The project Plaza de America is part of an ambitious programme by the Municipality of Alicante, aimed at housing elderly people by providing multi-generational buildings constructed on municipal land, complemented by local health and recreational services for the inhabitants. The municipality of

Alicante, through the Patronato Municipal de la Vivienda and in close cooperation with the Council for Social Action is implementing a programme which will imply multi-generational housing projects in three different sites, namely Plaza de America, Benalua and Lonja-Mercado, with the intention of extending the programme to other neighbourhoods as well in the future.

Patronato Municipal de la Vivienda de Alicante is an independent and autonomous body owned by the Municipality of Alicante, with separate legal status, which has been working for 30 years to solve housing problems of the most vulnerable. Its main activities are direct provision of housing, mediation on the private rental market, rehabilitation and revitalisation of the City historical centre and peri-urban areas with serious integration problems, and participation in European and international projects.

Poor economic conditions, housing not adapted to their specific needs, isolation and solitude are all factors which often oblige elderly people to either choose to live with their children or to prematurely enter sheltered houses. To respond to this situation, this programme aims at providing affordable housing with the necessary security, comfort, protection and social integration which allow elderly people to live independently and happily. Young people are involved on a voluntary basis in the communal organisation of everyday life in the buildings and neighbourhood, and in particular cultural and recreational activities which take place in communal spaces. On the basis of a 'good neighbour's agreement', each young person is in charge of taking care of four older people living in

the same building, helping them with everyday activities and alerting the Patronato in case of danger.



Residents of the project are people below a certain income, and the apartments are rented as social dwellings (vivienda de protección pública or VPO), at very affordable rents. Wide spaces are dedicated to communal services (library, computer centre, areas for social events and workshops, vegetables gardens and laundry), and the project comprises also a health care centre, as well as a day centre located on the premises of the project but open to all inhabitants in the quarter.

The provision of certain services such as the parking, sport centre and other recreational centres are outsourced to other companies/organisations, and different administrations are involved according to the intervention needed.

Northern Ireland Housing Executive

**Housing
Executive**



COMMUNITY BUILDING IN NORTHERN IRELAND

For the last 35 years the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has worked daily with 600 community groups right across Northern Ireland, consulting the groups on policy development for delivery of housing services, rental payment methods, mediation services, anti-social behaviour policy and monitoring of contractor performance.

As well as this, the Housing Executive works on a range of community building projects and the Community Education and Training Project in Lenadoon, Belfast is a strong example of this work.

Project title: The Lenadoon Forum.

Details of any State/EU funding received: ESF

Contact Details:

leonard.sproule@NIHE.gov.uk

The Lenadoon Forum has been very successful in providing community education and training programmes for the past 13 years, both in the vocational and non vocational sphere. Throughout this period the Forum has established contacts with the Government Department of

Employment and Learning and Belfast Metropolitan College, and various other statutory agencies. Education and training was identified as one of the priorities for the local area.

The Lenadoon Community Forum Training & Education Project is an innovative programme aimed at addressing the employment needs of local long term unemployed, women returners and disadvantaged people living in the local area.

The staff team who are involved in the project have all been involved in the design, delivery, management and monitoring of European Social Fund assisted projects in previous years and between them have a broad range of skills and expertise in community education and training and employment related services.

The aim of the project is to address the learning needs of adults in order to improve their educational attainment and enhance the employability of those individuals who might otherwise be excluded from the labour market and to put in place a range of support services to help them achieve this. These support services include free childcare provision in an on-

site registered crèche. With the Lenadoon Women's Group running Parenting, Personal Development & Health Courses on a weekly basis the Education and Training Project is able to refer participants to some of these courses for additional support if required.

For those participants enrolling in evening classes, a youth club operates in the complex alongside the courses and participant's children can enrol if they wish. Participants who enrol for courses during the summer months can also enrol their children in the Summer Scheme which operates at the same time as the courses. One to one learning is also provided by the Training Co-ordinator if required and students also have the benefit of individual needs assessments, CV skills, job search techniques, IT training, numeracy and literacy support, work advice and guidance and job search assistance from the local Job Assist centre.

Lenadoon Community Forum has very strong links with employers who have benefited in the past by being able to tap into the pool of qualified students coming through the project. These include, The Royal Group of Hospitals, Royal Mail and North and West Health & Social Services Trust. The Forum also works closely with the local Job Assist Team and the West Belfast and Greater Shankill Health Employment Partnership.

Working with the Housing Executive and Housing Associations provides the opportunity to inform new residents of the services available in the area and they have been able to enrol for classes. Through this range of contacts the Forum seeks to continue to add to the 3,200 participants who have already come through the project.

COMMUNITY ENERGY PROJECT IN BALLYMONEY, NORTHERN IRELAND

This innovative project has involved young people in a range of activities designed to encourage the wider community to consider the impact

of their daily activities on the wider environment and world sustainability.

Background

In the past, 'The Mill Youth Club' in Balnamore was involved in several projects to raise awareness of recycling and environmental issues. Building on this and taking into consideration the more global concern of the size of our Carbon Footprint, a further project was planned.

The Project

The Youth Club, supported by Balnamore & District Community Association working with the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, developed proactive approach to involving young people in a range of activities designed to encourage the wider community to consider their impact on the world around them.

The Programme was divided into a 4 step plan:

1. 'Have you got the energy?'
2. Reduce, Reuse & Recycle
3. Get on Your Bike ... or Feet!
4. Water Waste and Smart Shopping

Using these steps as broad headings many activities took place during the April – September 2008 period. These involved a lot of people in the community and also sought the help of larger organisations such as Oxfam Ireland to help with issues such as textiles recycling and the promotion of the scheme, and there was financial support from a local energy saving organisation.

Part of the project involved the promotion of Eco Energy [Green Energy Tariff] with every household signing up receiving low energy light bulbs.

Combining this with a Low Energy Day which encouraged the village to reduce the amount of energy they used, the aim was to contribute to the reduction of the 2 tonnes of CO² entering the atmosphere each year.

Simple energy saving activities were also promoted, ranging from



encouraging parents to walk their children to school instead of driving, promoting the use of water “Hippos” in toilet cisterns to save water and encouraging good value shopping and fair trade.

In addition the Youth Club helped make draught excluders for distribution to members of the community and also assisted in the making of worm composters which were given as prizes in monthly draws for those using a mini-recycling centre set up in the Community centre.

Other activities which took place over the period also included:

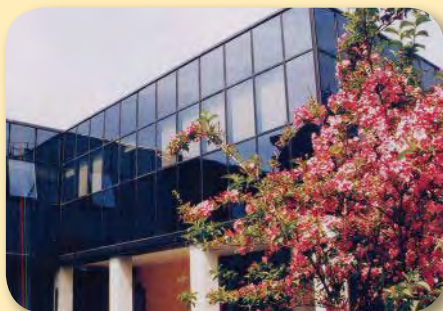
- A Fuel poverty road show aimed at mothers and older people
- Senior members organised promotional days at the local Community Recycling Facility, with activities for young children and information on what happens to all the materials.
- Raising awareness of locally grown food and ‘food miles’.
- Encouraging smart shopping.
- Making and distributing efficient watering devices.

With young people aged 4 – 16 involved in the programmes, their role in village life has been enhanced as well as providing them with a more practical understanding of what can be accomplished through simple activities and small changes of lifestyle.

The Future

As for the future, building on the success of the event it is hoped that the community will continue to be more environmentally aware and through simple lifestyle changes make a continuing contribution to providing a safer and healthier environment for all.

AUPREMA Co-operative, Milan, Italy



Name of Co-operative: AUPREMA Co-operative

Year of Formation: 1903 (date of foundation of the first of the 4 merged co-operatives), 1998 (date of the merger of 3 co-operatives), 2004 (date of merger of the 4th co-operative)

Contacts:

www.auprema.it

Tel.: + 39 02 6607 181

E-mail: info@auprema.it

Contact person: Elena Malagoli

Number of members: 12,055

Number of dwellings: Total dwellings built: 3,170; total dwellings under construction: 677, out of which 2,379 dwellings built as "undivided property" (flats belonging to the AUPREMA Co-operative and assigned to members with an irrevocable, lifelong, rental contract) and 260 dwellings of the "undivided property" type under construction; 791 dwellings built and sold to members as "individual property" and 417 dwellings of this type under construction.

Affiliation to federations and other organisations:

AUPREMA is affiliated to **LEGACOO**P (National league of Co-operatives and Mutuals), to the National Housing Co-operative Association, **ANCA**b and to **ALCA**b. (the regional Branch of the ANCAb).

AUPREMA is by definition a People's Co-operative.

The aim of AUPREMA is to reduce the general social housing problem and to increase the people's social inclusion by providing good dwellings/houses; this aim is accomplished by the means the market allows but keeping in consideration only the business that can help to reach the above mentioned social aspects and also cultural and health factors.



AUPREMA is the result of the development of four historical housing cooperatives located in the city of Cinisello Balsamo since the year 1903, which later merged into AUPREMA.

It is the general development policy of the board of directors to make sure that the values and principles of co-operation are complied with and adjusted to the present social context. The board is trying to give the right answer to social challenges of our society and to keep the "sense of community" high among members. Therefore, even though housing has always remained the centre of its work, now AUPREMA is developing a network of activities as a new way of improving life in a housing co-operative, by providing new services linked to the quality of life, recreational and sports activities, tourist services and health care support. To deliver these services, AUPREMA has 4 'daughter' societies:



- Consorzio IL SOLE and RSA (out-patients clinic and clinic for not self-sufficient patients)
- MONDO AUPREMA (travel agency)
- CIRCOLO AUPREMA (cultural and sports club) and
- AUPREMA FOUNDATION (established to support international solidarity projects)

Furthermore, AUPREMA has a share in ITALNORGE Co-operative, a cooperative society established by Norwegian and Italian owners to manage flats located in a resort village built by AUPREMA in Tuscany.

Members are continuously informed about the co-operative's activities and projects, e.g. by a quarterly review, an annual social balance sheet and on the web site. The society organises special members' meetings and study groups on specific topics, where members can express their views, the board is interested in.

Achertok and Liemers, The Netherlands



'Working together to provide positions for 400 apprentice construction workers annually'



In the regions of Achterhoek and Liemers (eastern Netherlands), local governments, educational institutions and participants in the construction sector (including 13 housing associations) have signed a covenant to make as many building projects as possible into apprentice construction workers' job sites.

Training advisor Wim Derksen of *Fundeon*, the Learning Centre for Vocational Training in Construction, is happy with this covenant signed by 38 parties. "A steering committee and various working groups – made up of representatives from all parties involved – have been formed.

Together, we can offer a fascinating and educational place to work for 400 apprentice construction workers each year."

The students work alternately at an apprentice construction site. This is a fully fledged project where they will be supervised and guided by recognised instructors. There are about 150 apprentice jobs needed annually. Derksen: "This should be possible."

ProWonen in Borculo is one of the signatories. Gerard Tenniglo, properties team leader: "Fewer and fewer construction workers are coming up. So this type of practical

work training is important. Contractors too, are recognizing the need for this."

According to the Central Office for National Training Organizations (COLO), there is a danger that we'll see a shortage of 150,000 intermediate vocational training positions. Derksen: "That is spread over all sectors. Construction is just about the only sector where apprenticeships are continuing. Nevertheless, this covenant is good for preventing problems."

Arnhem-Nijmegen



A strong arm to help the underprivileged stay off the streets

Source: Aedes Magazine April/2009

Nine Dutch housing associations in the region of Arnhem-Nijmegen have formed a collaboration to achieve goals such as improving the underside of the housing market. This co-operative effort is known as KR8 (pronounced *kracht*, meaning strength/power in Dutch). Social services organisations are enthusiastic about this idea of creating a single point of contact, keeping lines of communication short and energy high. "Because of KR8's initiative, no questions will remain unanswered."

Whitewashing walls, tearing down and building new, bricklaying, carpentry, tiling...all activities that are no longer mysteries to the participants in the *Dak & Thuis* (roof and home) project in Arnhem. *Dak & Thuis* is one of the projects set up by the nine Arnhem-Nijmegen housing associations in co-operation with the Salvation Army and the social employment organisation *Pauropus*. "An honest and realistic contractor for the bottom end of the housing market," according to their site www.pauropus.com.

Building bridges

This successful project is part of the so-called Keten van Kansen (chain of opportunities), a co-operative

effort between housing associations and social organisations in the metropolitan region of Arnhem-Nijmegen. The objective is to bring vulnerable groups such as the homeless, (ex) addicts, ex-psychiatric patients, residents from women's shelters and ex-convicts a few rungs higher on the housing ladder.

The project manager at *Keten van Kansen* is Marlies van den Akker. She works on behalf of the housing associations that are part of the co-operative KR8. "It used to be that requests from social organisations would come in to random staff members of a housing association who would just add it to their regular work load. That's fine for the individual requests (a client looking for living space). But despite all good intentions, tackling complex problems just never got off the ground."

Jan Jans, director of the Salvation Army in Gelderland province, is happy with KR8. "It's very good for us to have one point of contact. Marlies van den Akker has knowledge, experience and she organises work in the form of projects. She negotiates on behalf of nine housing associations and also has a certain mandate to do so. She can delegate projects to the right housing association."

The problems of vulnerable groups are difficult ones, Jans says. "We'd like for them to live independently as much as possible with a minimum of supervision. Which always brings us automatically in contact with housing associations. Only after people have a roof over their heads can you begin to work on their welfare, health, daily schedule and schooling. Most preferable is to call on their own sense of responsibility, using a project such as *Dak & Thuis*. Sometimes this doesn't

work, as in the case of homeless addicts with psychological problems who are regular 'clients' of the justice system. We take these 'care avoiders' off the streets via *Domushuizen* (see the section headed *Keten van Kansen*).

Director Hanny Jansen of the Regional Institution for Supervised Living (RIBW) for Arnhem and the Veluwe Valley is also full of praise. She speaks of an 'absolute plus for our society'. "Everyone profits when there are as few homeless people on the streets as possible. It used to be that we would have to go to several housing associations with our problem cases. Now I can put all our unorthodox requests in one inbox – the one belonging to Marlies van den Akker. She can look backstage and see which housing associations have space. That makes a big difference in time and energy."

At first, the co-operating housing associations in the Arnhem-Nijmegen region were directing their efforts towards housing alone. Now, says KR8 Chairman Henk Peter Kip, the attention is aimed more towards the quality of life in neighbourhoods. Kip is also Director of the housing association Portaal Nijmegen and fills the KR8 chair for a period of one year. "The Directors of participating housing associations agreed to rotate the chairmanship in alphabetical order."

He sums up the advantages to the co-operative effort: KR8 is good at housing, problem solving and bringing various groups and organisations together. "But we're not good at relief. We don't want to be a care financier, to take over any responsibilities. Those who come to us must bring their own input."

"Housing associations guarantee continuity in housing while social

organisations have to offer continuity in care. At the same time, this is the difficult aspect of the enterprise. After a year and half we have now assigned ten projects but whether they all come to fruition and are successful is the big question."

KR8 now consists of nine housing associations, and a housing stock of some 90,000 units. This is nearly 90 percent of the total stock of housing association properties in the region. Since its establishment, the regional network has had the support of Aedes (umbrella organisation for housing associations). The nine housing associations are: Portaal Arnhem and Portaal Nijmegen, Woonservice IJsselland (in Doesburg), Vivare (Arnhem), Laris Wonen en Diensten (Didam), Stichting Volkshuisvesting Arnhem, Talis (Nijmegen), Standvast (Nijmegen), Oosterpoort (Groesbeek) and Lingewaard Wonen (Huissen).

Keten van Kansen

Together with social relief organisations, KR8 began the project *Keten van Kansen* to offer vulnerable groups a step up on the housing ladder. Initially, it has to do with ten projects:

1. Ad Hoc Pension – Together with the RIBW Arnhem/Veluwe Valley, KR8 is working on the realisation of a first-phase relief shelter for the homeless.
2. Waiting list properties – Independent housing with community facilities for RIBW clients.
3. *De Alliantie* – Forms of living for 16 to 23-year-olds with long-term psychological and/or psychosocial problems.
4. Investing in Perspective – Intensively supervised start in



housing, education and welfare for young people with psychosocial and/or learning disabilities.

5. Spearhead Living – A combination of treatment, supervision and meaningful daily activities.
6. After the IMC – Group and supervised living for clients coming from the Intramural Motivation Centre (IMC).
7. A (relief) home of one's own – Spaces in a shelter for women, with the possibility of moving on to independent living.
8. *Dak & Thuis* – A project in which, by providing them with their own individual space, homeless young people can have a chance at meaningful days and new perspectives.
9. Prison Gate Office – Pilot project in which, together with the Salvation Army, local governments and the justice department, KR8 looks for structural solutions for the relief of homeless ex-prisoners with multiple problems.
10. *Domus* – Together with KR8, the Salvation Army is realising facilities for people who cause problems with unacceptable behaviour. Housing, supervision, treatment and counselling for schooling and work.

Gårdsten



Photo copyright Christer Hallgren.

Gårdsten is a housing district owned by the housing company Gårdstensbostäder AB situated in Gothenburg, Sweden. The houses in Gårdsten are part of what in Sweden is referred to as the 'Million Homes Program', which was a program aiming to build one million new dwellings over a ten-year period starting 1964.

In 1997 Gårdstensbostäder began a transformation of Gårdsten with the objective to change a housing area which at this time was characterized by more than 2 000 apartments, high vacancies and stigmatized tenants.

The first project was rebuilding of a neighborhood called Solhusen, which almost halved the tenants' use of electricity and heating. The houses also got greenhouses on the ground floor where the tenants can make their own cultivation. Furthermore Gårdstensbostäder has carried through a huge effort to improve the waste sorting and composting in the whole district.

Besides a physical reclamation of the district Gårdstensbostäder have

had a liberate strategy to contribute to a positive social development of the area. One example of how Gårdstensbostäder has done so is to play an active role in increasing the employment of the tenants. Since 1997 1100 jobs have been conveyed to the occupants in Gårdsten. One way of doing this is to encourage their contractors to employ people from the district in the tender procedures.

2008 an evaluation of the transformation of Gårdsten was done by two professors at the Swedish Royal Institute of Technology – KTH. The investigators estimated the capital value for the society to be almost 300 million Swedish kronor. At the same time the financial loss for the housing company was 200 million Swedish kronor. This shows that the positive results for the society clearly exceed the financial loss for the housing company. This is one way of calculate on the profitability of a project. However it is hard to find the right data and to evaluate the capital value for the society.

The attitude and policy of

Gårdstensbostäder have been given positive attention in different ways. In 2006 the housing company received a Swedish price called 'Stora samhällsbyggarpriset', which is yearly given to a high quality building by the trade associations. The company received the price with the citation that they deliberately use their role as a property owner and building constructor to lead and support a social development process.

The example of Gårdsten clearly shows that a housing company can urge the social and economical development in a positive way and that the condition for a successful work is a property owner with a long-term perspective and strong financial support from the owner.

For more information please contact Anki Eriksson at Gårdstensbostäder, phone: +46 31 332 60 32, e-mail: gbg@gardstensbostader.se. www.gardstensbostader.se

Social entrepreneurship in social housing: A review of missions, organisational approaches and activities



**By Darinka Czischke, CECODHAS
European Social Housing Observatory**

Social housing actors as social entrepreneurs

Social housing providers feature as important social economy actors across Europe. There is a variety of forms that social housing organisations can take, such as non-profit organisations and (semi)governmental organisations. In addition, housing cooperatives also feature as social economy actors operating in this field. Some of these housing organisations can be described with traditional 'state', 'market' or 'civil society' labels, but many correspond in fact to hybrid organisational forms, encompassing characteristics of state, market and third sector organisations. This group could be referred to as social enterprises. Despite the fact that the concept of social enterprise in the context of housing has been poorly defined, general definitions of **social enterprise** do illustrate principles that can be found in many social housing organisations.

Generally, social enterprises are defined as organizations driven by a social mission, which trade in goods or services for a social purpose. In these organisations, surpluses are principally reinvested for that purpose in the community, rather than maximising profit for shareholders and owners. Other common definitions stress that social enterprises can be found amongst local communities acting together to provide services needed by the local population, particularly where the service cannot be provided through the market economy. For the purpose of this briefing, we will look at the range of missions and activities of social housing providers/companies, bearing in mind this general definition of social entrepreneurship.

Type and scope of activities

Social housing providers combine the construction and management of housing as an economically viable business practice with social goals of supporting individuals and families, strengthening communities and compensating for social disadvantage. They have additionally engaged in the promotion of more environmentally sustainable urban development and management. The social housing sector is therefore ideally placed at the intersection of business and public activities to transfer innovation and good practice in both directions – towards private enterprise and towards public services. Examples of these activities are presented in Box 1.

BOX 1**Examples of social housing providers' activities in relation to three specific fields****Economic (the economy and employment)**

Strategies can address both internal and external dimensions of economic sustainability considering for example the use and return on company assets, innovation to maintain competitive advantage and the long term valorisation of assets, local employment generation through procurement policies as well as employee relations and impacts on equalities (DELPHIS, 2008)

- Economic sustainability,
- Asset Values
- Innovation and competitiveness,
- Procurement and supply chains,
- HR employability and motivation,
- Gender and ethnic impacts

Social (social investment, social cohesion and social sustainability)

The provision of good quality affordable housing is an important social sustainability outcome in its own right, but third sector social landlords often take on a wider role in relation to social and community benefits. Audits of such activities are beginning to be undertaken by the national sector bodies (NHF, 2008).

- Affordable, good quality, accessible housing
- Social inclusion & tackling worklessness
- Neighbourhood facilities
- Health and wellbeing
- Education and skills
- Safety and cohesion
- Ageing, gender and ethnicity

Environment (environmental sustainability)

Housing is at the centre of environmental sustainability agenda, both through the development of appropriate construction technologies. CECODHAS recently launched a 3-year initiative with 13 partners from within its membership and supported by the Intelligent Energy Europe programme designed to accelerate the greening of the residential sector.

- Green construction initiatives
- Measures to improve environmental performance of existing dwellings
- Renewable Energy initiatives
- Special focus on the implementation process of Green CSR strategies

Missions and activities

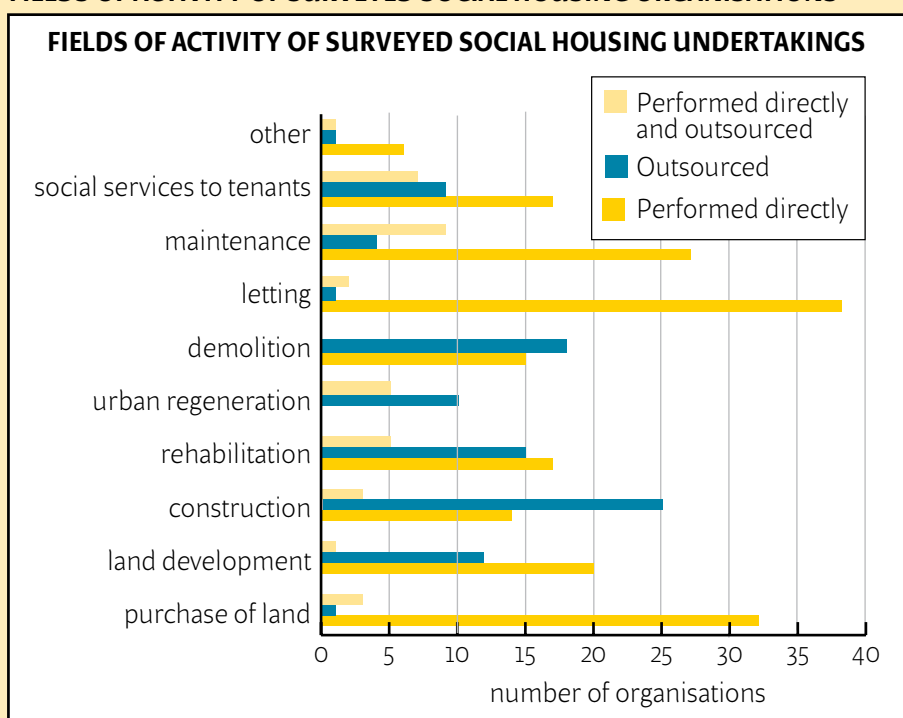
Overall, social housing actors across Europe have as their main **mission to provide affordable and decent housing (either for rent or for ownership) for households who are not able to access that housing in the open market, be it due to financial or other constraints (e.g. housing for special needs)**. Their core task, however, varies according to legal status, types of tenure offered and other country-specific factors. It can be said, however, that amongst the **core activities** that social housing actors carry out across Europe are: **managing rental housing (which more often than not they also own), as well as building new housing to meet shortages in the respective local markets where they operate**. In addition to these activities, many providers consider part of their core task the **provision of related services**,

such as letting, social services to tenants, stock rehabilitation, etc. Figure 1 illustrate these activities and the degree to which providers perform them directly or indirectly amongst companies surveyed across 13 EU member states.

Furthermore, research shows that social landlords perform several activities that go **beyond the traditional tasks of providing social housing ('shelter') and associated services**, such as community development, employment generation, training, work experience and youth projects. These diversification processes may start with the awareness that housing quality is determined by more than the quality of the dwelling itself and that some people need more than a house or they may represent a more commercial response to new markets. The growing importance of these activities is illustrated, for

Fig. 1

FIELDS OF ACTIVITY OF SURVEYED SOCIAL HOUSING ORGANISATIONS



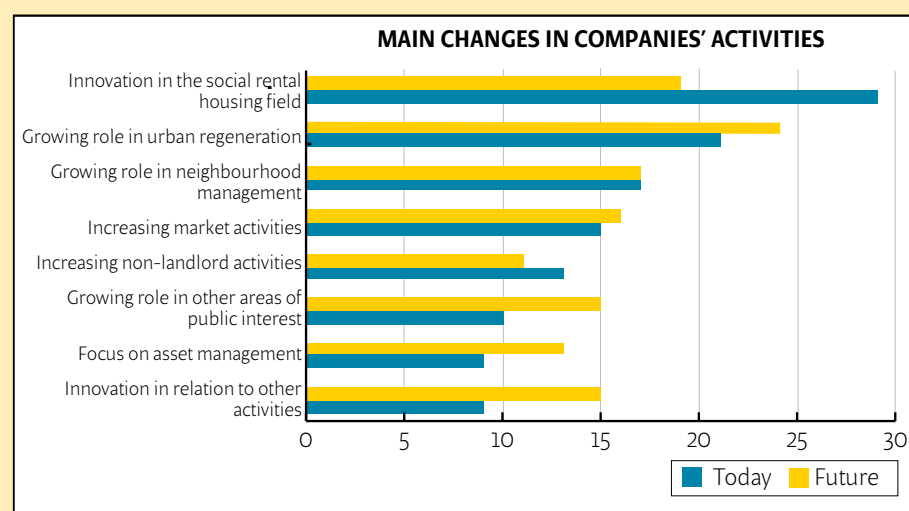
Source: Heino et al. (2007)

example in England, where the National Housing Federation has recently undertaken an audit of such activities.

management and financial viability (i.e. cross-subsidization of social housing activities through building and management of non-residential units,

Fig. 2:

EXPECTED CHANGES IN THE ACTIVITIES OF SURVEYED SOCIAL HOUSING ORGANISATIONS



Source: Heino et al. (2007)

The same survey showed the **widespread performance of non-landlord activities (NLAs)** of a broad kind amongst social housing providers. When asked about the type of NLAs they perform, the first mention was for “additional services to tenants”. Amongst the reasons cited by the surveyed organisations to perform these activities featured: assisting with family budget and helping households’ solvency; improving residents’ quality of life and life chances; providing them with independent living skills and with information on education opportunities. In addition, this activity was meant to help community development and social cohesion.

Clearly, these findings show a wide **variety of motives** to perform NLAs, ranging from what we could call ‘very social’ objectives, to more ‘commercial’ ones, notably those related to asset

etc.). However, it is interesting to note that **even the more ‘social’ objectives are linked to the fulfilment of the core task of these companies, namely the good management of their properties.**

Social economy to social economy:
Indirect impact of social housing entrepreneurship on suppliers, partners and communities

The relationship between social housing and other sectors of the social economy as well as with locally based communities is expressed in different forms, such as:

Partnership with third sector organisations through networks

Social housing provides an example of third sector engagement, but it also contributes to the development of social objectives through a

thriving third sector and stimulus to community led enterprises (e.g. to undertake repairs and maintenance services and local community projects, for example supporting business start-ups among their residents). This is illustrated by the example of Wonen Limburg, a Dutch housing association that carries out a number of social projects in the localities where they operate, drawing on partnerships with local stakeholders, such as the Drugs-addicted and homeless day and night care centre in Weert, the Netherlands (Box 2).

Co-operation with private sector organisations through supply chains

There are strong interactions between third sector housing organisations and the private sector which enables them to play an important role in delivery of social goals. Through procurement supply chains third sector housing organisations can influence environmental and ethical standards and for example enhance local employment impacts of housing construction in low income neighbourhoods.

BOX 2: DRUGS-ADDICTED AND HOMELESS DAY AND NIGHT CARE CENTRE

Company: Wonen Weert and care organization MOV (Maatschappelijke Opvang Voorzieningen Limburg)

Location: Weert (The Netherlands), Wilhelminasingel (city centre)

Objective: Fight against drug addiction and related medical problems and preventing criminal behavior in the town.

After negotiations with the town council of Weert in 2005, Wonen Weert became the manager of the building of a day and night care centre for drugs-addicted people and homeless people in the centre of Weert. The social work is outsourced to MOV which works together with Humanitas.



Wonen Weert will become the owner of the building within a defined period of time. Until then it contributes through this initiative to the fight against drugs addiction in this town, as the centre provides (medical) assistance 24h a day to drugs-addicts, so that even still using drugs, this happens under (medical) supervision and with sterile materials. Beneficiaries can also stay for a short period of time in the centre. Homeless people can find there shelter as well. By supporting this project, Wonen Weert manages to a high extend to keep out criminal behavior from its social housing where problems related to drug-addiction and homelessness have been persistent.

Moreover, third sector housing organisations are often the recipients of flows of socially responsible investment and CSR activity by corporate concerns (for example, Business Action on Homelessness in the UK).

Anchorage in local communities

The position of social landlords as

some of the best resourced and most locally rooted institutions in poor and mixed income neighbourhoods gives them a unique opportunity to achieve social goals. The example of the German municipal company SAGA-GWG of Hamburg illustrates this principle through their neighbourhood regeneration project in Veddel district (Box 3).

BOX 3: URBAN AND SOCIAL REGENERATION OF VEDDEL DISTRICT

Company: SAGA GWG

Location: Veddel, Hamburg (Germany)

Objective: Tackling stigmatisation of a neighbourhood through a coherent set of physical, social and cultural interventions.

The Veddel district is situated on an island of the Elbe River and dates back to the 1930s century. It benefits from good quality brick buildings built between 1926 and 1931 in the architecture of Bauhaus, heavily affected by a storm tide in 1962. Over the following decades the neighbourhood suffered a process of physical and social decline, marked by high concentrations of low-income immigrants (mainly of Turkish origin), which gave it the negative image of a 'ghetto'. There are approximately 2,000 dwellings in this neighbourhood, thereof about 1,000 in ownership of SAGA GWG. In 1991 SAGA decided to carry out a regeneration process in the area described as 'refreshing the neighbourhood', completed in 2004. The diagnostic of the main problems included physical deterioration of the area due to deficient maintenance of public spaces, poor retail and bad conditions of the housing stock. There were also incentives for a change of the social situation in the neighbourhood. Amongst the actions taken to improve the situation since 2004 where: Incentives for other ethnic groups to move in (e.g. students, artists, young families); physical upgrading and adaptation to households' needs (e.g. balconies); activating the local economy (i.e. bringing in shops catering for local needs); and improving maintenance. In addition, a special initiative was to launch an International competition to host an artist in the community for one year to foster cultural life in the area, thereby attracting visitors / residents from other parts of the city. Following the change of the social composition of the neighbourhood a change in the local economy followed.

Veddel district regeneration:



Regenerated public space



New community centre
– Multi-purpose hall



Ground floor space
allocated to local shops

Challenges

Beyond the delivery of their core social mission, the broadening of the scope of social housing entrepreneurs coincides with **increased cooperation with other third sector organisations** that provide services in areas of public interest outside housing, such as health, education, employment, safety and welfare. This increased cooperation leads to opportunities for further development of social entrepreneurship and social economy approaches in the third sector. Collaborative projects can open new ways for the organisation to meet social goals. For example, combinations of housing and care services for the target groups of the third sector organisations can also be used to generate employment and opportunities for education among socially disadvantaged people. On the other hand, however, cooperation between third sector organisations in the form of partnerships, for example, may be less transparent and less easy to influence by stakeholders than the individual organisations.

Similar developments can be considered in relation to the supply chains used by social housing entrepreneurs to procure new homes and rehabilitation and regeneration works for existing homes. Many of these organisations already seek to maximise the local employment and training impact of these activities by setting expectations that their suppliers will use and develop local labour. Challenges to such policies can arise when larger housing organisations seek procurement efficiencies by increasing the scale of contracts and dealing with fewer more nationally (or internationally) based suppliers. These examples illustrate the type of tensions between economic

and social objectives which require social enterprises to develop specific approaches to deal with.

Overall, state withdrawal from provision of social services (be it either subsidies to social housing organisations or direct support to tenants) is leaving a gap that, in many cases, social housing actors are expected (or feel compelled) to fill. This gap stretches beyond the provision of a dwelling: it calls for a wider remit and for establishing new governance arrangements which allow these actors to accomplish a number of (at times) conflicting objectives. Therefore, a number of complex challenges arise from these new demands: on the one hand, the question of legitimacy of non-state actors dealing with societal demands; on the other, combining the social purpose that all of them claim to have (either by law, tradition or self-motivation) with the decreasing state funding and increasing competition, which leads them to be more business-oriented. These tensions and challenges remain to be further explored.

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