



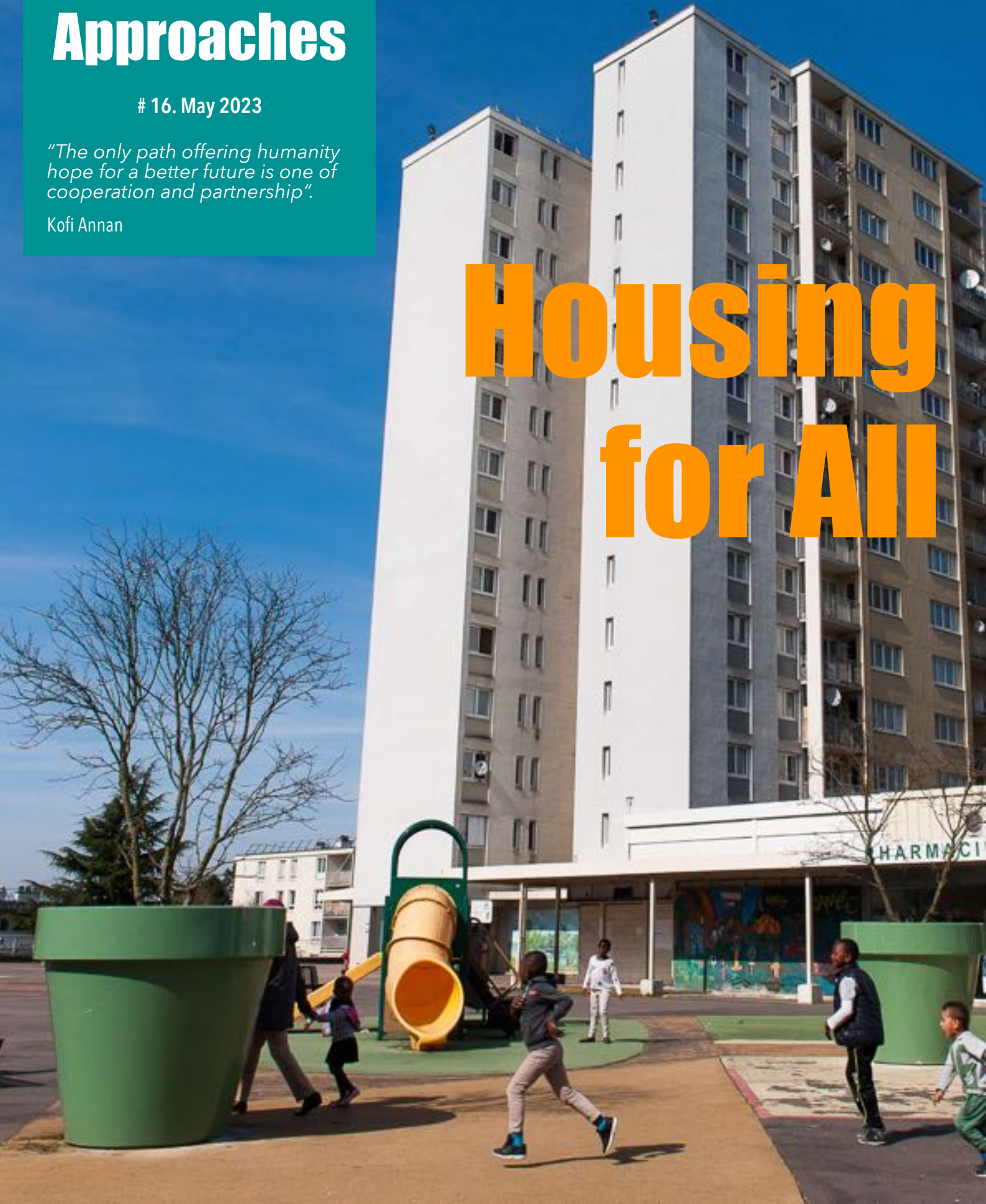
Cooperative Approaches

16. May 2023

"The only path offering humanity hope for a better future is one of cooperation and partnership".

Kofi Annan

Housing for All





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The challenge of housing for all



By Roland DAVAL

Article 25.1 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services.

And yet, today, one in eight of the world's inhabitants lives in a slum, which represents 881 million

people in developing countries, including 251 million in East Asia and 200 million in Africa, a doubling for this region since 1990.

Today, our cities are facing unprecedented demographic, environmental, economic, social and spatial challenges. As a result of the major phenomenon of urbanization, six out of every ten people in the







world will reside in urban areas by 2030. More than 90 percent of this growth will occur in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

In France, the number of homeless people has grown massively. There are 200,000 people in emergency accommodation with many factors of fragility that contribute to precariousness, including the negative views that are held by many members of the wider society.

Yet, the French government has still mobilized resources to support a housing policy supporting housing access for all.

Billions paid blindly

In the February 2023 issue of Challenges magazine, an article about real estate entitled 'Billions paid blindly', explores how housing policy is based on a myriad of tax codes yet all without any guarantee that new construction be built and located where the

French need them most. The author of this article cites that each year the State devotes nearly 40 billion euros to housing projects. In 2020, in their report, the government inspectors within the Department of Finance and Sustainable Development recommend that these dated policies shift from 'an open window' to controlled and directed support whereby housing is allocated based need.

An explosive crisis

The elimination in places and reduction in others in real estate niches is meeting with strong resistance. The promoters, managers and other actors of the BTP anticipate a collapse of in new collective construction should certain tax advantages disappear. In March 10, 2023 the newspaper Le Monde published an article entitled, 'The housing crisis, an explosive case left unresolved.'. The

author of the article states, "*The construction of new housing in France is slowing down: at the end of January, new housing starts over three months had fallen by 3.3% compared to the same period in 2022, and authorizations had dropped by 22% according to the French Building Federation*".

The following observations are also to be made: "*In total, public aid for housing, including new construction and renovation, fell from 42.8 billion euros in 2016 to 38.2 billion in 2021. Yet housing-related tax revenues have never been so high: 88.3 billion versus 70.6 billion five years earlier.*"

Reinvesting in the housing realm

The same daily, in an article dated March 22, 2023, reports on the situation in Ile-de-France following a study by the

Attached to living together with values based on self-respect and respect for others, whoever they may be, APAC wants to help promote a different society, based on partnership, cooperation, social justice and shared leadership.

Paris Region Institute.
"What will the Ile-de-France look like in twenty years? Where will new housing be built and at what rate? This is a key question in a region where 1.3 million people are still living in poor housing or do not have their own home and where one household in five is over-occupied... The high cost of real estate penalizes households. For example, in 2019, the median income of households accessing the property was two and a half times higher than the average income of households in Ile-de-France according to the study.

Also in the same daily, in an article dated February 20, 2023, devoted to "Real estate in the face of climate change," Laurence Costes, a sociologist, and Marlène Ghorayeb, an urban planner, point out that "today's residents attach more importance to the living environment and the quality of their homes. They

affirm a desire to "live differently", in housing that is not only economic but also convivial and ecological. This opens the way to a revival of residents' initiatives. Reinvesting in housing is hence becoming a way to act out in one's own daily life, this building up society. Projects in the field are being vetted around associations or groups of people who show a desire to recreate a way of life, to promote social ties based on an ecological conscience.

Attached to living together with values based on self-respect and respect for others, whoever they may be, APAC wants to help promote a different society, based on partnership, cooperation, social justice and shared leadership.

Considering that cooperative approaches and partnerships are invaluable in facilitating learning and the dissemination of

knowledge, in solving complex problems, in managing collective projects, in improving the social, economic and cultural conditions of populations and in building community, the Association for the Promotion of Cooperative Approaches (APAC) has devoted an entire issue of the magazine to the individual and collective good that results when one has a suitable home.

To this end, various actors in the fields of housing and affordable housing, in particular associations, have agreed to contribute to this issue by sharing their experience and their analysis. We would like to thank them warmly.

For the Executive Committee of APAC

Roland DAVAL

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The right to housing

A global challenge



By Roland DAVAL

Today, our cities are facing unprecedented demographic, environmental, economic, social and spatial challenges. As a result of the major phenomenon of urbanization, six out of ten people in the world will reside in urban areas by 2030. More than 90 percent of this growth will occur in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Without effective urban planning and design, the consequences of this urbanization will be dramatic. In many cities, the effects are already being felt: lack of decent housing and the growth of slums, inadequate or obsolete infrastructure—whether roads, public transportation, water and electricity supply or sanitation—increased

unemployment and poverty, an explosion of insecurity and crime, pollution and health problems, devastation caused by natural and man-made disasters and other disasters due to climate change.

To ensure that the growth of our cities and urban areas translates into opportunities for all, we must change our policies and approaches to urbanization. UN-Habitat, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, was mandated by the UN General Assembly in 1978 to address the problems of urban growth. For nearly forty years, UN-Habitat has been committed to improving living conditions in human settlements and urban areas of all sizes around the world. UN-Habitat is currently present in more than 70 countries around the world.



Kibera, the largest slum in Africa, in the center of Nairobi (Kenya)

International Law

Yet the right to adequate housing, which includes the right to secure tenure without fear of eviction, is recognized as part of international law.

Article 25.1 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services".

The European Social Charter of 1961, revised in 1996, states in Article 31 that "Everyone has the right to housing".

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, states in its article 11.1 that "The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous

improvement of living conditions."

This right to adequate housing concerns all States, as they have all ratified at least one treaty referring to adequate housing and have all committed themselves to protect this right.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing specifies that for housing to be declared as such, it must meet, at a minimum, the following criteria

- Security of tenure that provides legal protection against forced eviction, harassment and other threats.
- Affordable housing without compromising the occupants' enjoyment of other basic rights.
- Livability, which must ensure the physical safety of the inhabitants and provide sufficient space.



- Accessibility, which must take into account the particular needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups.
- Location, which must allow for proximity to employment opportunities, health services, schools,

childcare and other social facilities and not be located in a polluted or dangerous area.

- Cultural criteria to take into account and respect the cultural identity of the occupants.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration signed in 2000 recognizes the dire situation of the poorest urban populations. Member states committed to improving the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020. While

this number may seem very large, in 2000 it represented only 10% of the slum population. Today, one in eight of the world's inhabitants lives in a slum, which represents 881 million people in developing countries, including 251 million in East Asia and 200 million in Africa, a doubling for this region since 1990.

UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat is the United Nations program working towards a better urban future (from the United Nations website - <https://unhabitat.org>)

Its mission is to promote socially and environmentally sustainable human settlements development and access to decent housing for all.

The organization manages a wide range of projects, from post-disaster reconstruction programs in Haiti, to activities in the DRC to address slum



Mumbai, India : slums of Behrampada

Aujourd'hui, un habitant de la planète sur huit vit dans un bidonville, ce qui représente 881 millions de personnes.



Cairo agglomeration: 21 million inhabitants

growth and housing issues, to developing land policy guidelines for the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.

With a permanent staff of 400 and up to 2,000 contractual employees, UN-Habitat coordinates its activities through its headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, as well as through four regional offices, one for Latin America and the Caribbean in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, one for Asia and the Pacific in Fukuoka, Japan, one for the Arab States in Cairo, Egypt, and one for the African States, also in

Nairobi, Kenya. Several liaison and information offices around the world are dedicated to building and maintaining relationships with key governments, multilateral organizations and development agencies.

The majority of UN-Habitat's funding comes from voluntary contributions from governmental and intergovernmental donors. UN member states, through the UN General Assembly, provide the regular budget. Other UN

agencies, local authorities, the private sector and multilateral organizations provide funds for specific projects.

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What is inhabiting?

Habitat and social action



Interview with Jacqueline LANCON by Dominique Bénard



DB - Hello Jacqueline, I would like you to share with us your experience of 10 years as director of social and health policies for the city of Evry. First of all, it is worth recalling that the new city of Evry was born out of the master plan for the development and urban planning of the Paris region, published in 1965, which provided for the creation of five new cities around Paris, each with a population of 300,000 to 1 million inhabitants: Evry, Cergy-Pontoise, Marne-la-

Vallée, Sénart and Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines. The main objective of the plan is to avoid urban concentration in Paris and to achieve multipolar urban development.

An innovative project becoming a ghetto

JL - Yes, for the first time, the new town of Evry was the subject of a coherent overall plan. The general objective was to provide future residents with everything they would need on site and to ensure

a balance between housing and work, cultural and leisure activities, and transportation. It was planned to build on stilts in order to reserve all the first floors for everything that the population might need: shops, health and social facilities, schools, etc. A set of levels made it possible to separate the types of traffic (pedestrians, private vehicles, services, public transport). In addition, a special effort was made to promote social diversity:

In addition, a special effort was made to promote social diversity: publicly assisted housing was systematically combined with non-assisted housing in order to avoid a ghetto effect.



"Pyramides" neighbourhood. Evry - (photo MARTIN ARGYROGLO)

publicly assisted housing was systematically combined with non-assisted housing in order to avoid a ghetto effect.

DB - What was the situation when you arrived?

JL - Well, we can say that the page of "good living" on the site had definitely been turned. One example is the Pyramides neighbourhood, which was built with the aim of putting an end to the monotony of the low-

income bars and towers of the 1960s. Michel Macary, the architect in charge of the project, had the idea of developing an intermediate habitat between the individual and the collective with a terrace for each dwelling.



Evry.Town Hall. Photo LP/Florian Garcia

Hence the pyramid shape. But when I arrived, none of the initial intentions were visible on the site, except for the urban form, which contrasted with the monotony of the 1960s buildings. The separation of traffic flows, which was supposed to provide an advantage, had created distance. The underground parking lots that occupied very large, undifferentiated spaces under the buildings had just been condemned. No one wanted to use these obscure places, which had been the scene of every imaginable dysfunction: rodeos and car races, thefts, fires,

games of hide-and-seek with the police... The squares and facilities dedicated to meeting and connecting the inhabitants had become dead places. Drug trafficking was rampant. Most of the traditional shops had closed. They had been replaced by community businesses adapted to the habits of the new inhabitants. Any penetration of a stranger to the neighborhood - health professionals, deliverymen - was identified as an intrusion. It was not uncommon to find one's car tires slashed or

windows broken...

DB - A ghetto situation was created...

Stigmatization and frustration

JL - Exactly. In the beginning, everything was in place to make things work... And then, from the 80's on, the situation started to deteriorate. The first inhabitants had left the city to build individual houses in the small villages of the surroundings, a poorer population had replaced them, often of immigrant origin. A vicious circle had set in: the level of schooling had dropped, the middle-class population was leaving the neighborhood. The impoverishment of the social housing stock had introduced another population with different practices and precarious resources. The social mix, which had been designed on the basis of a geographical distribution of the various types of

A strategy of reconquest and social and urban requalification of the Pyramides neighbourhood from a global approach and a coherence of means and actions.

buildings in the area, was called into question by a reality that had escaped the initial intentions. All the social indicators were in the red. Those who could no longer leave because it was too late or because their property had been devalued, felt themselves under compulsory residence, with a rejection of the other, a stigmatization and therefore a kind of frustration with what used to be good and was no longer possible.

DB - But at the same time, a new municipal team had been elected around Emmanuel Valls and was going to try to react. You participated in this effort...

JL - Yes, I arrived just after the election of Manuel Valls as mayor of Evry in 2002. The new mayor was going to implement a new policy with firmness and commitment. He led a strategy of reconquest and



Manuel Valls, Mayor of Evry

social and urban requalification of the Pyramides neighbourhood from a global approach and a coherence of means and actions. The low-cost housing properties were brought together in a common structure with private properties that had fallen into disrepair. From there, an urban project was built around 3 axes: (1) reconfiguration of the neighborhood's morphology by defining new parking and traffic zones, demolitions and reconstructions; (2) setting up a team in the

neighborhood led by the municipality and assigned to the quality of day-to-day management of the stock and to the coherence of the local urban management approaches implemented by the various landlords; (3) requalification of the buildings to give back to the preserved buildings the attractiveness that is essential in a perspective of renewing the social mix.

A need for social integration

DB - This urban project also included a social action component. What was its



orientation?

JL - In the new town of Evry, 26 ethnic groups were identified. Many different cultures collided. The newcomers were adapted to contexts and environments that had nothing to do with the practices of French society. As director of social integration and health policies in the city of Evry, my main question was *"How can we make sure that people appropriate the practices that allow them to find their place in French society?"* Our main objective was to bring the different publics to share the same behaviors in the collective space and to access the same means of information, in order to live together. We had to find ways to give the inhabitants the keys to reading the host society and to offer the learning necessary for their understanding. Studies had shown that the

differences in culture in these neighborhoods were the source of conflict between opposing lifestyles.

The educational apartment

DB - Can you cite concrete projects implemented to enable people to appropriate these common norms?

JL - First of all, there is the question of the appropriation of housing. I would like to cite a specific case, that of Mrs. F... a young woman from Benin, a newcomer of about 35 years old, mother of 6 children who was given a 5-room apartment after having succeeded in leaving a polygamous family. The social workers made a home visit to find out if the young people were satisfied with this assignment, since she had wanted to move out.

On the spot, they noticed a very particular

appropriation of the apartment. In this dwelling, Mrs. F... reproduced the layout of the African hut. Only three rooms were occupied and used as bedrooms. The two other rooms are used for storage: in one room, there are provisions, bags of rice, tins, onion nets... In another room, on the floor there are a multitude of empty shopping bags and other bags overflowing with stuff... Once their astonishment is over, the social workers decide to propose to Mrs F. a project to invest her housing.

There was no question of imposing another organization without any exchange or support. Appointments are made. A counsellor in social and family economy intervenes. Mrs F. is delighted with the advice given to her. She admits that she had the intuition that the housing was not invested enough, but she

The social workers were able to go very far in this partnership based on a relationship of trust, buying furniture, decorating, maintaining the apartment, hygiene, relations with the neighborhood

did not know how to do it. She is willing to accept all the proposals that are made to her.

In the end, the quality of the support allowed the young people to integrate more easily. The social workers were able to go very far in this partnership based on a relationship of trust, buying furniture, decorating, maintaining the apartment, hygiene, relations with the neighborhood ... The transformation of the place was spectacular, her children were very proud of their new living environment that resembled that of their friends. They could bring friends to the house. From this example we designed a particular project called "the educational apartment".

DB - Can you explain it?

JL - The word is a misnomer because the term educational can imply



Un appartement pédagogique (photo CAF)

a difference between the one who knows and the one who doesn't know. But we couldn't think of another name. The objective was to build, from the notion of living, a link with the territory, starting from the fact that being at home, in the private sphere, represents a resource that has extensions in the public sphere, in terms of expression, exchanges and appropriation of places. It is also important for the academic success of children who find their

place in school insofar as they can make a link between their family sphere and their wider environment. The educational apartment was developed and lived in a collegial manner. It was organized by a team of social workers, but the participation of the inhabitants was essential.

Everyone shared their skills

Open to all, it was a place of sharing: the inhabitants acquired know-how and delivered it. The apartment was open three or four



times a week, in the evening. Often, during festive periods, there was the preparation of a meal. At the beginning, it was the social workers who proposed it because people were a bit shy. But then, the women themselves would make a proposal, saying, for example, "*next week we'll make a couscous*". One woman would make the couscous and show everyone else how to do it. In the helping relationship, it is always difficult to be in the position of helper, to be the one who knows and who will give advice to someone who does not know. In the educational apartment, everything was easily balanced.

Everyone shared their skills with the others. For example, we had received sewing machines from the social service. So one woman would say, "*At the next session, I'll show you how to use the sewing*

machines to make cushions or dresses..." In the Pyramides neighbourhood, the results of the educational apartment were so good that Fadela Amara, who had been appointed Secretary of State for Urban Policy by Nicolas Sarkozy, came to the neighbourhood and visited the apartment. Then, it spread: other educational apartments were created in neighboring cities... This initiative was very popular because a balance was found between social workers and residents.

The "Women's Club"

DB - Can you give other examples of successful projects?

JL - In my department, we had developed 22 projects. In addition to the "Educational Apartment" project, I can also mention the "Women's Club". It was a project led by a social worker, who took women

on outings. For example, to visit the Paris Opera. Some women took the train without their husbands for the first time... They were going to visit a place that was very far from their culture... They were going to be in the center of Paris... Even if Evry is only 24 km from Paris, there are people who have never been to Paris. The people who live in these neighborhoods often have very few landmarks other than those of the neighborhood.

The social worker who ran the Women's Club suggested one day, "*What if we went on vacation together?*" So a meeting with the husbands was held to organize the project. It was necessary to find a family home that was affordable and to find additional financial aid. And so, about twenty women, families, with their children, went on vacation

■ *We created a small kitchen next to this social grocery store, which became a tool for sharing know-how and hospitality.*



Early childhood center in Evry.

in the Alps. Most of them did not know the mountains, nor did their children.

The idea was to initiate a behavior, to say there we do it together but if you liked it, if you made this experience your own, then you can enrich it with your own ideas and reproduce it. Here are two examples of integration actions, one through

housing, the other through leisure. I could also give the example of the social grocery store. Inhabitants could buy, at a reduced price, products donated by supermarket chains. The social grocery store was well supplied. It was a way to help people out. It was also a resource for social workers, who could say to a family, depending on its configuration, "You are

entitled to a certain number of weeks of social groceries".

But very quickly, we moved beyond that. It was not only a distribution place where one could leave with a full trolley after having paid 20 euros. We created a small kitchen next to this social grocery store, which became a tool for sharing know-how and hospitality. A social and family economy advisor, made available by the social service, came there two afternoons a week and proposed cooking recipes to be prepared with everything that could be found in the social grocery store. And then, very quickly, people who used the social grocery store also started to propose their own recipes. They had gradually gained confidence and dared to enter into a process of sharing and cooperation.

Another example is that of integration through early



childhood. There was a municipal health center in the neighborhood with 4 doctors, 2 dentists, 2 nurses and 2 physiotherapists. We had created a project with them in the field of birth preparation and the relationship with small children. The project was taken in charge by a doctor. Everything worked very well and here too we managed to share our knowledge because very quickly the African women began to show how to massage children. They have great skills in massaging small children...

DB - You give special importance to this question of sharing skills...

JL - Yes, because the stumbling block that social work ran into at the beginning was that of identifying a difficulty and setting up a system to respond to it. Very quickly we fall into assistance. Real

learning can only take place in the form of sharing and exchange. If we do not ask ourselves what are the resources of the person we wish to help and if we do not try to develop these resources, the person will never be able to take charge of himself and to reach autonomy.

Integration or assimilation?

DB - You talked about integration. Helping people to integrate into the host country. This also opens the question of integration or assimilation. What do you think about this?

JL - Yes, there is the recurrent debate between insertion, integration, assimilation. Assimilation has a negative connotation because it implies that the individual must abandon his or her own culture in order to integrate into the host country, abandon his or her own culture in order to adopt the dominant

culture.

But the problem must be posed in a much more pragmatic way: it is not a question of abandoning one's culture, it is a question of finding in the dominant culture the keys to finding one's place. We live in a society with norms that are not universal, they are just the norms of a certain place and a certain time, but you have to know them and respect them to be able to play the game. When we transmit this message, people receive it and understand it because they want to be happy, they want to have good relationships with others, they want their children to succeed at school. In the intimacy, in the family sphere, the person can find his culture, his traditions, his religious practices, but in the public sphere... well, we behave like the

■ *This "knowing how to live" refers to the apartment, the neighborhood and the city, the country in which my life takes place.*

others.

DB - What you are saying is important: should we not, with realism and humility, help people to acquire the keys to the general culture of the society in which they live, so as to integrate and succeed there, without losing the values of their culture of origin?

Meaning of the word "living"

JL - Yes, in fact, this is the meaning of the word "living". To live is both the house, the place where I live, but also the way I live there, the way I invest this place, where I deploy my habits, my skills, but also my know-how, or I welcome others. It is an ecology, a science of the house, in the sense that its Greek etymology "oikos" and "logos" gives it. A knowledge that unfolds in many directions as the indication of home is multidirectional. To be in oneself with oneself and one's own life, at home




with one's own, outside with others and in society, and at the end of these multiple interlockings, in a world that makes sense. This "knowing how to live" refers to the apartment, the neighborhood and the city, the country in which my life takes place. But also the society, the culture and the language to enter in contact with the others. To live is to "dress" in order to settle and exist. That is why a housing policy cannot be limited to the construction of housing but must take into account the life of

relationships and social interactions of "inhabitants".

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Affordable housing and environmental sustainability

A dilemma in the United States

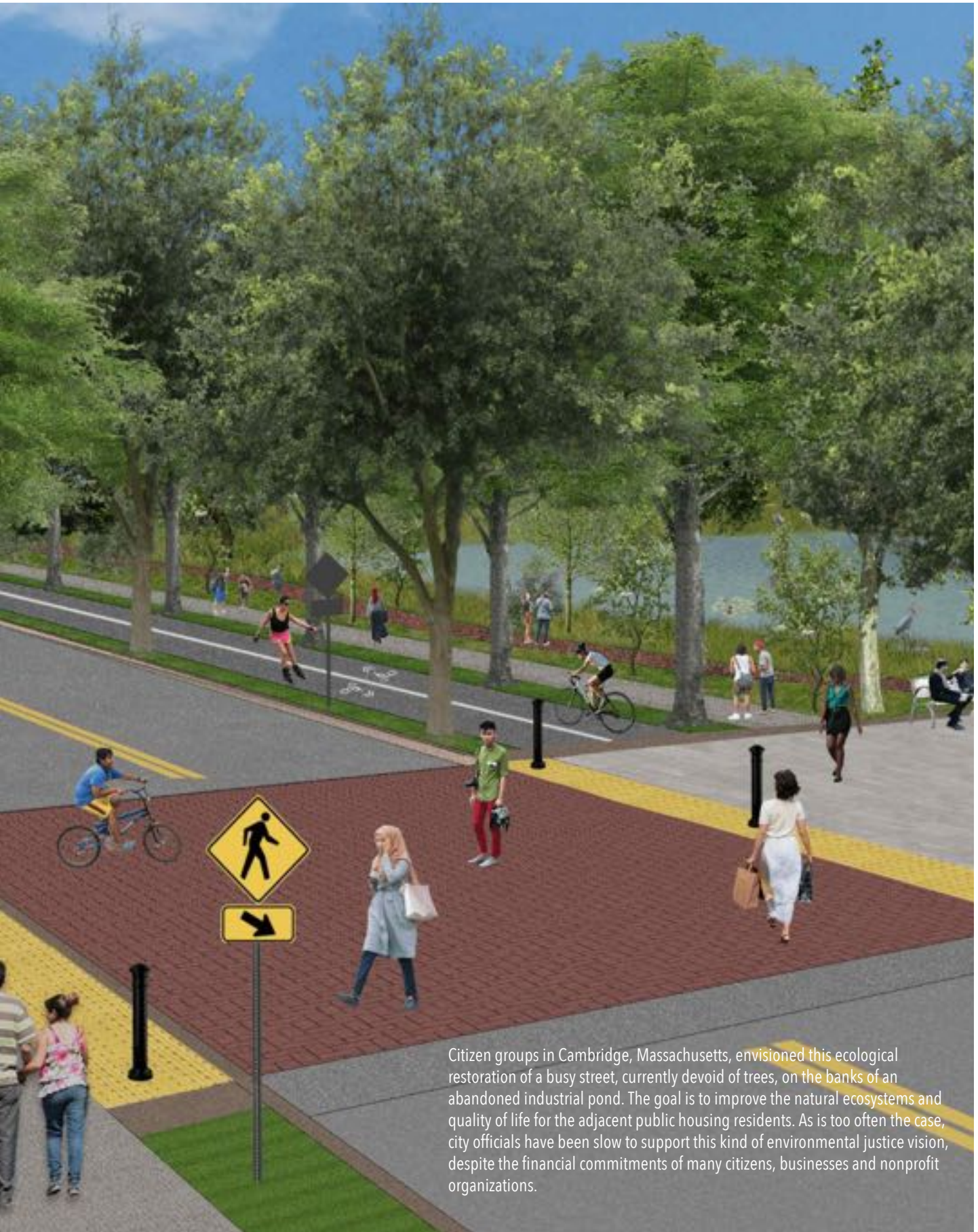
 By Larry CHILDS

In the US, homelessness, what some describe as a crisis of the 'un-housed', is causally linked to unemployment and mental health vulnerabilities both of which are aggravated by a severe shortage of affordable housing. These social risk factors often combine to prevent people from getting or retaining a job and the financial means to access

housing. It is a punishing and vicious cycle - one that begs for clear headed solutions.

The suffering of the unhoused is a visual thing, very apparent to the public as a societal dysfunction frequent in the news. It disrupts entire neighborhoods and businesses as people sleep in shop doorways and





Citizen groups in Cambridge, Massachusetts, envisioned this ecological restoration of a busy street, currently devoid of trees, on the banks of an abandoned industrial pond. The goal is to improve the natural ecosystems and quality of life for the adjacent public housing residents. As is too often the case, city officials have been slow to support this kind of environmental justice vision, despite the financial commitments of many citizens, businesses and nonprofit organizations.



The Homelessness Crisis in the United States

panhandle for money, so everyone is involved.

Single issue Champions

As a result there are many impassioned non-profit organizations and citizen activists who lobby politicians - local, state and federal - for building out more subsidized, affordable housing. Housing not only for the unhoused but for low income families for whom renting is forever and the dream of home ownership

just that, a dream.

While rightfully outraged by the inequities and the generations of corrupt, often racist, policies that brought on the U.S. housing shortage, too many activists and organizations have become single issue champions.

Theirs is an increasingly narrow focus on this one issue while refusing to consider a bigger, more integrated picture. In an era in which U.S. residents' attentions are often spread

across many social issues and campaigns, there is a growing resistance to accepting the actual complexity and interconnectedness of the challenges.

For some, a simplistic interpretation of resolution is a coping mechanism - a response to the confusing onslaught of digital media, news and commentary. Addressing just affordable housing as a panacea and concern, one ranking above all the others, is too common and unleashed considerable false hope. It has also encouraged elected officials and policy makers to ignore and marginalize a host of other time critical issues. Environmental sustainability and justice are among them.

Too often sustainable design for subsidized housing is assumed a luxury, and as cost prohibitive for the poor.

■ *While rightfully outraged by the inequities and the generations of corrupt, often racist, policies that brought on the U.S. housing shortage, too many activists and organizations have become single issue champions...*

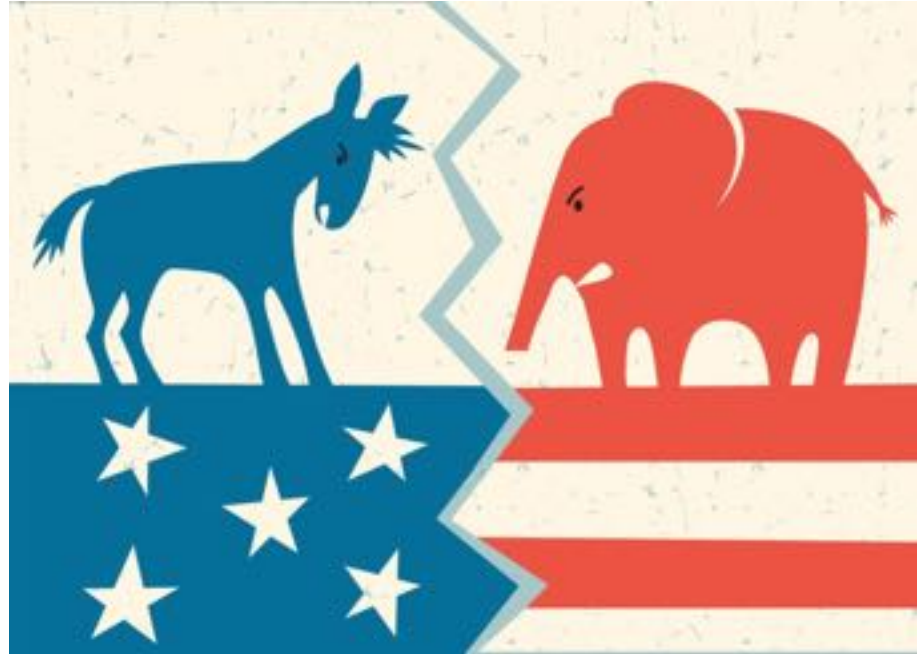
Yet federal government funding almost always covers a significant percentage of the costs and has incentives to build 'green'. Why then is there often local government opposition?

Panic Zone

Begging this question is the climate crisis which, with its threats to human health, livable cities and the natural world, seems a powerful incentive in everyone's interest to take a smart ecologically informed approach.

Sustainable housing is an investment in the present and the future, yet still too often it is a consideration cast aside by housing advocates and bureaucrats not only in the U.S. but in France, as evident in part by a shortage of articles addressing sustainability in housing in this edition of AC.

In politically progressive states some communities



are easily enraged and scattered by multiple-issues assaults from the political right. They are set into a panic zone with debates further complicated by this 'post-truth' era such that lies and propaganda make rebuttal that much more difficult. Truth is murkier than ever and sanity stuck in the mud.

Meanwhile, in conservative states a different dynamic is at play. Their reasons for marginalizing green construction center around the politics of global warming as a hoax ('fake

news') and environmentalism as a banner waved by the left.

In the face of all this confusion and nonsense, progressives' crave to just do something. Therefore to some a single issue battle seems more achievable than one more complex. Narrowing in on one worthy cause, (affordable housing), to the exclusion of others (environment and public health), is sometimes just the best they feel can be done.

Yet that is precisely how environmental concerns,



Green and affordable housing in Portland. ecobuildingpulse.com

green building codes and other strategies to advance climate change mitigation and preparedness have come into a direct conflict with affordable housing. This, despite the fact that environmental criteria when applied dramatically improve quality of life and health outcomes for residents while lowering monthly costs like utility fees and healthcare expenses. The longer term benefits far outweigh slightly higher upfront costs!

Unfortunately advancing a common sense vision is the

casualty of our times. It is said people are all too frequently acting and voting against their own self-interest.

Local government is the major and biggest player when it comes to allocation of the federal funds and setting policies essential to subsidized housing development in any locality. In many instances local government is functional and assumes a facilitating and sense-making role. Too often though as I have suggested, they serve as

an aggravating force amplifying a lot of the nonsense.

Aggravated enmities

In the unnamed city referenced earlier, some elected officials used this as a wedge issue to fire up their base and cave to building developers who allied with them through campaign donations. The consequence was developers getting away with building under less restrictive zoning and other codes, less costly design requirements such as decreased open space, more leniency around building in flood zones and adjacent wetlands, fewer trees, and lower use of renewables. The results have been higher energy costs for residents and of course, greater profits for the developers.

Not only were housing initiatives inadequately conceived in terms of environmental

■ *Unfortunately advancing a common sense vision is the casualty of our times. It is said people are all too frequently acting and voting against their own self-interest...*

sustainability criteria, but enmities within city government and amongst citizens have been further aggravated. These unnecessary and destabilizing conflicts divide and erode community. Some causes can be boiled down to a few words - one or a combination of the following:

- incompetence
- lack of curiosity or intelligence
- history of being polarized politically
- climate denial
- manipulated by special interests
- influenced by campaign donors
- ...some combination or all of the above!

What about the central/federal government in Washington assuming a mediating role? After all, in other countries the central

government drives many such initiatives. Well, in the US a big share of funding for public housing though derives from the federal level, their ability to mandate details of implementation is very limited. It is at the state and city level where authority really resides, and that is precisely where we see so much conflict.

What to do? Though increasing citizen action and organizing is essential, so much power resides in elected officials that hope for improvement resides in government change in two essential areas:

- diminishing reliance on campaign donations to fund local electoral campaigns
- better training of public officials to navigate complexities and mediate those with conflicting opinions towards compromise and win-win

That would be a start anyway. I'm sure readers have other thoughts and questions. Send them our way!

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Samusocial of Paris

Interview of Mrs Vanessa BENOIT – General Director

<https://www.samusocial.paris/>



By Roland DAVAL

In 1993, faced with the increase in the number of homeless which had been mounting since the 1980s, Xavier EMMANUELLI - head physician at the Nanterre Hospital Reception and Care Center and co-founder of Médecins sans Frontières - proposed to Jacques CHIRAC, then Mayor of Paris, creation a social emergency service. The idea was to act together and pool skills to reduce

exclusion. The Samusocial de Paris is a Public Interest Group (GIP) which, since its creation, has been devising innovative responses to unaddressed needs. It has been mobilizing public and private partners, visiting marginalized people and developing a global approach combining health promotion and social inclusion. Its board of directors includes





Samusocial Paris

Photo Charlotte Gonzales - Samusocial de Paris night outreach teams criss-cross Paris 365 days a year.



Housing for the Poorest



Photo Charlotte Gonzales - Night outreach team

members of state government, the City of Paris, the Compagnie Nationale de Chemins de Fer (Railroad), the Compagnie des Transports Parisiens, and the Paris Hospitals. In Paris, homeless people take refuge in the metro, in train stations and also in hospitals.

Samusocial's mission

Samusocial implements public policies that combat exclusion, as defined by the Code of Social Action and Families, based on three essential values: equality, solidarity and dignity.

Its operations are structured

around the following main areas

- **Regulation:** the homeless, or unhoused as they say in the US, can call the emergency number 115 to find accommodation. As of December 31, 2022, 16,834 people were on the waiting list for a place suitable for their situation, of which 5,280 were without accommodation.
- **Accommodation:** Samusocial manages 8 Emergency Shelter Centers (CHU) which are social establishments whose main missions are

the reception, accommodation and social and professional reintegration of homeless people and Homeless people. This represents more than 600 places for men, women and families. It also runs two day and night shelters, a welfare center for very socially excluded women, and a boarding house for people who have spent a long time on the streets (28 flats).

Through its Delta service, it is responsible for booking and managing the regional social hotel offer.

- **Outreach:** Day and night mobile outreach teams go out to meet homeless people or those without housing. These teams seek out and encounter, initiate relationships and travel to the person's location to assess their needs and provide support.
- **Care:** Samu Social manages nearly 200 beds in residential care facilities. Two mobile

Samusocial implements public policies that combat exclusion, as defined by the Code of Social Action and Families, based on three essential values: equality, solidarity and dignity.

teams work with first-time migrants and combat tuberculosis.

- **Social observation:** Like all operators, Samusocial de Paris has the responsibility to contribute to the public debate on the fight against exclusion and stereotypes, to make people aware of the difficulties they face, and to highlight the successes of public policies. To enrich the debate, Samu Social also conducts research.

Organization and financing

To carry out its missions, Samu Social relies on approximately 1,000 professionals: 700 are full time employees and 300 temporary workers.

The hotel budget amounts to 360 million euros and the operating budget to 66 million euros. 90% of the financing comes from public funds including the state, the regional health agency (ARS) and the city of Paris. Samu Social also appeals to public



Photo Julien Jaulin -The Saint-Michel establishment houses a day care center and a health care service

generosity so individual donations and sponsorship is an important source of revenue.

Housing first: A strategic choice

Ms. Vanessa Benoit recalls that when she worked in the United States from 2018-2021 her task was to identify vulnerable, homeless or unsheltered people and to direct them to associations that would house them as well as help them to remain in housing. She believes that for everyone, it is essential to first have a "home" as a

prerequisite allowing our agencies to work on the other difficulties whether it be employment, health, isolation... When direct access to housing is not possible, emergency accommodations should be offered but under conditions that are as close as possible to those of conventional housing.

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Housing the invisible in the heart of the city

<https://atherbea.fr/>



Pantxika Ibarboure. © Crédit



Interview of Mrs. Pantxika Ibarboure, by Alain Dewerd

AD - Hello, Mrs. Pantxika Ibarboure, you are the director of the Atherbea Association situated in the Basque Country¹. Your agency welcomes vulnerable people in great difficulty, offering them many basic services and support in very diverse forms. You provide housing accommodations and welcome centers with specific reception for asylum seekers, health care facilities, space for workshops, orientation and integration services, emergency accommodations and day

care services. Given all this I would like to talk with you about the practices of inclusive housing and to open with a rather revealing anecdote that you confided to me recently. You told me that people, who live on the street and are usually invisible, suddenly became visible during the period of COVID-19 lockdowns when everyone stayed at home and then, paradoxically, in a few days you obtained housing solutions that had been refused to you for years.

The lockdown paradox

PI - Exactly. We found ourselves in a completely paradoxical context because the lockdown forced everyone to stay at home, so all the people who didn't have a home suddenly found themselves visible in the public space. It was an image made all the more powerful because it happened in 24 hours. To push the paradox a little further, they found themselves ticketed by the police because they did not respect the lockdown. Moreover, the associations that normally received them in day care were forbidden

¹ The Basque country is located in the western Pyrenees, straddling the border between France and Spain on the coast of the Bay of Biscay).



photo : Bertrand Lapègue

to open their doors to them. The situation was becoming ubiquitous. So we had to find places to fall back on, places from which they could not leave, even though these people needed to move around and some also had addiction problems.

Inventing new practices

We had to invent new practices to keep these places as peaceful as possible, to envisage an accompaniment towards care accepting that addictive substances be permitted in the center. This is an ongoing debate yet we

had to deprogram our thinking that we had learned well: We used to believe that, "for the good of the person, substances remains outside.." It's amazing because we ask them to acknowledge their addictions and go to care while denying the existence of this product in the very place where we welcome them, which is a place of life. The confinement forced us to change our attitude. But then, it also occurred through the effort of peer groups of residents since setting one's own limits is a lot to ask of only one person.

AD - You mean you can't offer a person housing and support without taking into account all the people around them who are in a similar situation? That the individual taken in isolation would be an abstraction?

The person's environment

PI - What is abstract is to ask him to make this effort alone when it creates a conflict of loyalty. What has been one person's strength at a given moment should not become a negative fate long term. The peers

themselves at some point are even happy if there is a person, one of their own, finally has an apartment that works out well. It is a question of taking into consideration the environment of the person, recognizing that he is part of a group, before seeing him as a singular subject. The person who comes from the street is a member of a group. He thinks and he is by the group.

AD - Whereas sometimes the common outlook holds that 'the street is the jungle', yet you tell us that they are the ones who teach us lessons on solidarity?

PI - Without going that far, we simply look at their life dynamics. These people live in a collective dynamic with modes of communication, rhythms and rituals that are different from ours, and we have to understand this whole process without judgment. If we want to welcome a person in a home, we have to take their living environment as it is. It doesn't solve everything, but it's the only thing that works at the start.



AD - But how do you manage to do that in Bayonne when even people who have sufficient means are forced to live far from their place of work because the downtown housing is too expensive?

The « Tiny Houses » project

PI - Yes, they also don't want to lose their living environment. If we want to enable the social inclusion of people in marginal situations, the first condition is not to uproot them from the environment in which they have established their first and only reference points. We must offer them the opportunity to remain part of the place where they already live.

This is why, in the "Housing First" project, a call for proposals was announced and we were selected to set up "tiny houses". These are semi-collective modular dwellings, small wooden chalets of 17m² with living space, bathroom and toilet, kitchenette, terrace, that we have set up on two

plots of land, one in Bayonne and the other in Biarritz with 5 dwellings each.

We started at the end of 2021. We work every day with the group of peers/inhabitants who may have a tendency to kind of invade the place, to make a mess of it, but also with the neighborhood, in order to allow everyone to set their own limits. We are permanently in this subject/group/group/subject relationship with permanent back and forth dialog whereby each person progressively develops their own defense mechanisms and sets their own limits.

AD - So you are constantly working with two groups, the peers and the neighborhood, so that everyone becomes inclusive and feels included?

Not next door to me

PI - We try to do this, but we are also confronted with the diversity of human sociology. It works more or less.

The first act is to associate the close environment to the project and to the meeting, so that these slightly strange people who are confused in their self-image of homelessness can become faces, people, names, not only people who make noise at night, who scream on Sunday afternoon when others are taking a nap.

So from the start of the project we are not all alone. The people in front of us have to accept this. And when the neighborhood accepts the situation there are no more problems. Now we even see some of them getting together regularly, to mow the lawn, to share a moment of conviviality, ...

But there are also neighborhoods that do not want this encounter. In December, we went before a judicial mediator because there are people who do not accept the homeless. We try to approach these people, to explain how there are also women among them... We

Making inclusion a real project for society means considering that the social networks must be built by sharing with notions of tolerance towards each other.

have sent them beautiful articles about life in a tiny house, to try to reach out to their humanity, to touch their soul, but it doesn't always work. The dogs should not bark anymore they say, they should be tied up and muzzled. The municipal police came because the people in this neighborhood were complaining that the dogs barked a lot, but they accused them without proof, even though these dogs bark very little. We even thought of making a recording to prove it to them. But there are prejudices that you can't overcome.

We are confronted with deep convictions. You can't have a successful inclusion project with people who think that there are people who don't deserve to be included. It is difficult to fight against irrationality: people are convinced that homeless people should not be housed in the city center, even in the absence of real nuisances, they develop imaginary nuisances. When all



possible strategies have been attempted, there are dimensions of this that unfortunately just cannot be managed.

AD - Everyone agrees on the principle of making accommodations for the homeless, but "not next door to me." These are two conceptions of society that clash and make inclusion a political issue, that of how to live together?

PI - Yes, and local political decision-making and action can be an excellent regulator. We saw this when we opened a migrant reception center.

Making inclusion a real project for society means considering that the social networks must be built by sharing with notions of tolerance towards each other. I understand that elderly people need peace and quiet, but also that young people need living spaces, and that people in precarious situations who occupy public space do not always do it in a very conventional way but can still be welcomed into the heart of the city.

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Housing advocacy for the disadvantaged

By Bernard DEVERT,
President of the High Committee for the Housing of
Disadvantaged People

The High Committee for the Housing of Disadvantaged People was created on December 22, 1992 by François Mitterrand, then President of the Republic.

The Right to Housing

In 2007, the High Committee, under the impetus of one of its members, Mr. Paul Bouchet, produced a singularly innovative piece of legislation, a first in France, placing an obligation on the Nation to achieve results, hence its name, "Droit Au



Bernard Devert

Logement Opposable" (Right to Acceptable Housing), now well known by its acronym DALO. This body, with the very strong support of its Secretary General, Bernard Lacharme, prepared this law



based on two reports presented to the President of the Republic, one in 2002, 'Towards an enforceable right', and the other in 2003, 'Right to housing: building responsibility'.

Blatant injustice

The incessant calls of Abbé Pierre¹, Paul Bouchet's pleadings underline the blatant injustice of a society that allows women, children and men to suffer the tragic and often life threatening violence of the absence of a



roof over their heads, which is, in fact, a form of existence denial. Sans toit il n'y a pas de soi (Without a roof there is no self). While the act of living cannot be reduced to the fact of being housed, it is one of the conditions for existence. Where there is no place, there is no link; in other words, nothing can take place.

Substandard housing

These two men, of very different sensibilities, were imbued by the same urgency to bring to life the spirit that alone raises creative energies. Both of them viewed as spiritual the act of building which privileged the care of the most vulnerable. With the Right to Housing, people

who are at risk of being evicted from their homes are protected.

Unfortunately, the drama of substandard housing not only continues to this day, but is getting worse. The State has made a major effort to open accommodations for the homeless, but the cost of housing the most vulnerable is too tightly correlated to the market. The SRU law - Solidarity and Urban Renewal - revised in 2006, has fortunately maintained the mandatory quota of social housing in each city. This is how Habitat et Humanisme was able to create housing for the most disadvantaged in the 15th and 16th arrondissements of Paris, the most affluent areas in the city. However, the cause of social housing requiring 25 to 30% of the housing to be built is not without its impacts on the middle classes. Indeed, some costs that cannot be supported within the framework of social

¹ Henri Grouès, known as Abbé Pierre, born on August 5, 1912 in Lyon and died on January 22, 2007 in Paris, was a French Catholic priest. He was a resistance fighter against the German occupation during the war and then a member of the French Parliament. He is known as the founder of the Emmaus movement, a non-denominational organization that fights against exclusion and includes the Abbé-Pierre Foundation for the housing of the underprivileged and many other associations



Housing for the Poorest

financing to the 75 to 70% levels within many housing complex settings, leads to an increase in the cost of other housing.

Kept away from the heart of the city

As a result middle class people are often forced, especially in large cities, to look for housing further outside the city. This pattern is not without serious social consequences. The middle classes, like the poorest, should not be kept away from the heart of the city. It is therefore necessary to introduce measures which limit the freedom of the market in order to avoid such blatant social injustices. What measures though? This freedom should stop at the point where the most fragile are swept into the abyss - the street - while hundreds of thousands of housing units remain unoccupied.

One proposal is imposing a tax upon the second year of vacancy and onwards, with the proceeds going to

subsidize social housing. We must also encourage further investment to reduce poverty.

Not to observe but to fight

The capitalization of investment vehicles such as the Livret A² which is currently more than 500 billion euros . This financial capacity must be invested to reduce poverty caused by the burden of housing for the most vulnerable.

To refuse poverty is not to observe it, but to fight against it along with the injustice in which the poorest are trapped. It is not a question of being vigilantes or lecturers, but of taking the risk of meeting the "survivors" of a society and allowing ourselves to be surprised by their capacities, and not to despair.

Refusing misery is a reminder that forgetting the dignity of the person is the surest way for a society to lose itself. Understanding that every being has an

inviolable space - whatever his or her history - one that must arouse insurrection of the spirit the moment lives are ransacked and bruised.


To refuse misery is to say "no" to misfortune and to fight for the emergence of this common good. What else can we do? let us abandon the taste of chaos and become smugglers of a civilization within which being oblivious to the plight of the most miserable would become an offense. Who can object to such an approach? Let us join together as builders of these necessary social connections now, such is the urgency.

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² The Livret A is a regulated savings account, exempt from tax and mandatory deductions. It is the most commonly used investment form in France.

Habitat et Humanisme

<https://www.habitat-humanisme.org/>

 by Mrs. Marie-Annonciade PETIT, Public and Media Relations Officer

M-A P - Bernard Devert, you are the president and founder of this Movement, what presided over the birth of Habitat et Humanisme?

BD - Leading to the creation of Habitat et Urbanisme was an encounter that deeply moved me. I was a common real estate developer, albeit a little original since I had made it my mission to facilitate social diversity. It was then that the City of Lyon asked me to manage a

building occupied by people in considerable difficulty in that their building was dilapidated and had to be demolished. In order to ensure these people would be housed, it was necessary to rebuild what we describe as a 'social building'. 'Public housing' may be another apt translation to English. Upon the announcement an elderly resident of this building in a condition of reduced mobility and living alone without children and

without financial means made a suicide attempt. Her neighbors informed me of this, and I went to see her in the hospital. I still remember her first words: "You're going to find me a place to live where there are all the comforts and which is adapted to my mobility situation, but in an area that is far from where I've lived for 70 years. With your money, you can afford to move people, but you're going to place me in a setting where I won't have any relationship with all the people who have made it possible for me to live happily in this neighborhood."

As I left the hospital, I thought to myself that this woman was right: the important thing was to care for people's needs beyond just housing. So I thought my business could be not just building buildings but building places where connections would make richer lives possible. This led me to sell my real estate development company. I then invested the money creating Habitat et Humanisme, an association whose mission is to build



fraternity and promote equal opportunities.

Today, we see how dramatically such equality of opportunity has broken down. On the one hand there are those who are lucky enough to have a home. On the other hand, there are many who are content with only 'housing machines', to use Le Corbusier's word, and there are also people who have only a shelter. The distinctions between these forms of habitat, housing, machines and shelter, are extremely important.

In terms of equal opportunities, there are entire neighborhoods that seem lost to the Republic, with men and women who say that this society will never be theirs, that they are discriminated against and set apart. All our work is focused on ensuring fewer impoverished neighborhoods and to see that more socially balanced neighborhoods open their doors for those who have seen them as closed until now.

M-A P - Céline Beaujolin, Executive Director of the Movement, what is Habitat et Humanisme doing today?

CB - With the creative genius of Bernard Devert, founding president of the Movement, our guiding principle has always been to respond to the exclusion and isolation of people in difficulty by supporting housing integration and the recreation of social ties. With the support of volunteers and social workers, we offer personalized or collective support to encourage the recreation of links and social integration for those living in our boarding houses, our intergenerational housing or in housing spread throughout the city. To achieve this, Bernard Devert and his teams have developed economic tools with a social mission such as solidarity real estate companies or real estate agencies with a social mission.

They call on individual and institutional solidarity investors to participate. It is a short term investment with a strong social impact: 1 € invested allows to mobilize 3 to 4 € in subsidies and loans



Céline Beaujolin

which produce integration housing. On the other hand, we have more than 4,000 "solidarity landlords" who provide housing rented below market rates. The management is ensured by the 9 Social Housing Agencies participating within the Movement.

Today, the movement has 58 associations covering 87 departments in France, as well as in Belgium and Luxembourg. It brings together some 5,000 volunteers and 2,000 employees, and has more than 10,000 social housing units and 50 retirement homes for low-income people. In all it has enabled more than 32,000 families and single people in difficulty to find a home and a future.

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Today, the movement has 58 associations covering 87 departments in France, as well as in Belgium and Luxembourg...



In the lively center of Nantes, Habitat et Humanisme, via the EHD real estate company, is involved in the renovation of the former Saint-Augustin clinic to create an innovative living environment with 66 intergenerational and inclusive housing units.



Participatory housing

<http://www.habitatparticipatif-france.fr/>



By Claire CERNIAUT - Communication and Networking Manager

Thanks to the mobilization of many civil society actors, participatory housing ('cooperative housing' in the American context is a parallel) was officially defined and recognized by the Law for Access to Housing and Urbanism Renewal (ALUR Law) of March 24, 2014 as follows:

"Participatory Housing is a citizen approach that allows individuals to associate, where

appropriate with legal entities, in order to participate in the definition and design of their housing and spaces intended for common use, to build or acquire one or more buildings intended for their housing and, where appropriate, to ensure the subsequent management of the buildings built or acquired."

Beyond the legal definition the law also introduces a





twelve residents of the La Bigotière eco-hamlet, in the commune of Epiniac (Ille-et-Vilaine).



« Les Quatre Saisons » participative housing, Rouen (Normandy)

major step forward for participatory housing in France, by recognizing two specific legal statutes that explicitly allow groups of inhabitants to organize themselves, to carry out the construction process as well as the operations management. Following are the statutes of the residents cooperative and the self-development business:

- The residents' cooperative allows for

the collective ownership of housing: the cooperators are both partners in the company (owners of shares) and tenants (paying a monthly fee). Ownership is collective in the sense that the cooperator holds shares in the company and not only in his or her dwelling. They are therefore the bearer of both collective and participative values.

- The attribution and self-development company allows several people to join together. The members make the necessary contribution to the acquisition of the real estate which is a "collective property" of which the members have the use of their lot (private housing and common spaces) or will have the attribution in property after the construction phase.

Habitat Participatif France, as an association under the French law of 1901, was born in 2013 with the main objectives of promoting and developing participatory housing in France, but also to change the law so that it is finally recognized and made accessible to the greatest number.

- The ALUR law has introduced, through specific articles of law, a certain number of "safeguards" which ensure the legal protection of the individuals and legal entities concerned. In particular, by limiting the liability of associates for social debts to third parties to the amount of their contributions or by introducing a completion guarantee, making it possible to verify whether the necessary funds are available to complete construction.

Presentation of Habitat Participatif France

Habitat Participatif France, as an association under the French law of 1901, was born in 2013 with the main objectives of promoting and developing participatory housing in France, but also to change the law so that it is finally

recognized and made accessible to the greatest number.

Habitat Participatif France is the heir of several militant movements which, emerging in the 1970s, were advocating for another way of understanding housing and living collectively. These include the Movement for Collective Self-Managed Housing (founded in 1977).

From 2009, ten participatory housing associations working on cross-cutting themes and distinct territorial perimeters joined forces to advance the movement.

In 2014, with the inclusion of participatory housing in Chapter 47 of the Alur law, the general interest of this form of housing was finally recognized but many steps remain to be taken so that it is more easily implemented, applicable and genuinely accessible to all.

Habitat Participatif France

Promotes a participatory vision of housing. While sharing one's living areas is already a huge step for many reasons, understanding it as genuinely "participatory" is another big step. By putting the inhabitant at the heart of the conception and decisions around one's housing, participatory housing addresses the needs of each individual among a group of inhabitants.

On a day-to-day basis, living in participatory housing means having common spaces (common room, guest room, garden, laundry room, etc.) and individual housing. To understand it in a participative way, it is to take charge of the management of a collective housing, to maintain it, to make it evolve according to the intended uses, and to share a lot of solidarity within not only their home, but also on the level of territory or district. The association Habitat



Les Colibres - Ecological housing in Forcalquier

Participatif France also relies on strong common values of citizen participation and cooperation, ecology and popular education.

Mission

The mission of Habitat Participatif France is defined in three main areas:

1. To promote participatory housing for the greatest number of people,

because yes, it is possible to build your own participatory housing with several people and to live there collectively, in a more united and ecological way. HPF promotes the citizen, solidarity and ecological character of participative housing, improvement of the living environment, inclusion and social mixing across rural and urban areas. Specific

programs for senior citizens and working-class neighborhoods have been set up by the association since 2022.

2. To federate and represent a movement of inhabitants and actors of participative housing in France as a dynamic experience with sharing, networking and mutual assistance.
3. To defend the interests of participatory housing

before the public authorities: to have participative housing recognized as a third way of housing, more virtuous and united, and as a social innovation to be supported and encouraged.

Membership

Habitat Participatif France wishes membership which is open to all and everyone can participate. The governance of Habitat Participatif is based on two pillars: the first given to the inhabitants and second to naturally entrusting responsibilities to the invested members.

Habitat Participatif France with the Oasis cooperative, has set up an "observatory for participatory housing in France". In the form of a collaborative map, it makes it possible to list the participatory habitats, planned, in progress or installed, throughout the French territory. As of April 2023, there are about a

thousand projects in France with 770 in progress or already installed.

Today, in order to face the crisis of substandard housing in France, it is urgent for the public authorities to produce housing. Participatory housing puts the inhabitant and the collective back at the heart of housing production. This approach is essential for a profound reformation of how many of us live. Participatory housing offers better living conditions, since it is the product of consultation and design between and by the inhabitants. It also induces deep reflection on our ways of living and "being housed" while favoring more ecological and cost effective approaches.

Habitat Participatif France calls for participatory housing to be embedded within public housing policies across France and for it to be truly recognized as a third way of housing. Therefore it is urgent that


land, building rights and buildings under rehabilitation be reserved for participatory housing. The specificities for this "third way" must also be taken into account under the application of common law. It is essential that national support mechanisms (notably non-speculation laws) be put in place to better encourage participatory housing for and with those of modest means and/or isolated fringes of the French population.

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Intergenerational cohabitation

One roof, two generations

<https://www.untoit2generations.fr/>

 By Saverio MONFERRATO, research and project manager/
manager of Un Toit 2 Générations - GROUPE SOS Séniors

When, why and how was "Un Toit 2 Générations » (One Roof 2 Generations) created?

Un Toit 2 Générations was created in October 2008 with the aim of promoting the development of intergenerational housing by organizing the sharing of housing between an elderly person living alone and a young person looking for low-cost housing.

The high point of this

reflection was the 2003 heat wave (15,000 elderly people died), which revealed for some the isolation and even abandonment experienced by many elderly. At the same time, the precariousness and the difficulty of housing young people in big cities are both a major social issue and a political issue of increasing urgency. After conducting a study, an intergenerational cohabitation service was



proposed, which aims to organize the sharing of housing between a person living alone and a young person looking for housing at a reasonable cost.

What is the mission of the association?

The association Un Toit 2 Générations aims to promote the development of intergenerational housing by organizing the sharing of housing between an elderly person living alone and a young person looking for a place to live at lower cost. As

The association « Un Toit 2 Générations » aims to promote the development of intergenerational housing by organizing the sharing of housing between an elderly person living alone and a young person looking for a place to live at lower cost.



stated in article 117 of the ÉLAN law, intergenerational cohabitation allows anyone over the age of 60, whether owner or tenant, to house a young person in exchange for an allowance and/or a commitment to be present in the evening and at night.

How is it organized, how does it work and what resources does it have?

The association is a member of the COHABILIS network,

which brings together nearly 40 housing complexes that implement shared housing solutions such as intergenerational solidarity housing. Its expertise makes it a reliable representative and promoter of solidarity as a lever for social inclusion.

What are the steps to put seniors and young people in touch with each other; what follow-up and support is needed?

We meet each senior at his or her home, in order to answer their questions and

present the association and how it functions. This meeting also allows us to visit the living space and to ensure that the furnished room made available to the young people corresponds to the criteria of the association. We then ask the young people to follow a free registration procedure. The young people must send us :

- Response to a questionnaire intended to help us get to know them better and evaluate their needs



Housing and Living Together



- Letter of intent describing their background and plans.
- Photos that we will present to the landlords.
- Copy of an identity card.

As soon as we receive the completed application, we propose an appointment at the association's office or by phone. This presents an opportunity to better understand their character, their expectations, their real motivations and to verify that the young people have the qualities required to integrate well into the program.

During this interview, we define the nature of the voluntary help to be given and anything the young people would like to express in respect of their workload. We then send the young people's application files to the senior citizen who is free to consult the application file contents. When a young people's file is selected by a senior, an appointment is organized at the home of the senior previously visited so that the two parties can meet, discuss the rights and duties of each, the terms of use of the accommodation as well as

more details about the possible arrangements.

This exchange is also intended to help them get to know each other and facilitate a future harmonious cohabitation experience. If both parties wish, the association will take care of drawing up the contract, and the parties will sign an intergenerational cohabitation contract ensuring the smooth running of the cohabitation under the conditions desired by both parties.

Both parties pay an annual fee to the association. This fee will allow us to remain a present and active interlocutor with the members, in order to guarantee a better follow-up and an accompaniment throughout the cohabitation.

It is time to put in place a policy that favors intergenerational cohabitation in solidarity for young people who suffer from loneliness and the lowest standard of living in society.



How many seniors and young people are involved and who are they?

We have signed 80 intergenerational cohabitation contracts concerning :

- Seniors wishing to be of service to young people - Seniors in search of an additional income.
- Seniors looking for a little help in their daily life.
- Seniors suffering from isolation.
- Young people who want to help.
- Young people looking

for economical and quality housing solution.

- Students, trainees, those employed or engaged in alternative work experience, civil servants on transfer...

What is the COHABILIS network?

The network is a pioneer in shared housing solutions. Its expertise makes it a major representative and promoter of solidarity in and through housing as a lever for social cohesion. Members of the COHABILIS network are different from other 100% digital networking platforms thanks to the

support of a local branch of the Social and Solidarity Economy which proposes high quality intergenerational cohabitation for solidarity with these guarantees:

- A systematic and preliminary visit to the senior's home to validate the conditions of reception with regard to his capacities and the decency of his home.
- In-depth interviews to ensure that the mutual commitments are motivated by mutual aid and contribute to social cohesion.



Housing and Living Together



- Respect for the modest nature of financial compensation paid by the young people to the seniors.
- Verification that the young people do not replace any existing care giving professionals
- A mindset of accompaniment throughout the cohabitation.

COHABILIS and its members use digital tools, but they also rely on local support tailored to their needs. Our partnerships with the Retirement Insurance, the National

Family Allowance Fund and with many social and medico-social actors are a guarantee for serious and respectful implementation of the intergenerational cohabitation system as intended by the legislator.

How does the association view French housing policy?

It is time to put in place a policy that favors intergenerational cohabitation in solidarity for young people who suffer from loneliness and the lowest standard of living in society. It is time to promote this solidarity

device more widely by framing it better so that opportunistic entrepreneurs not deviating from its solidarity character and enjoining senior citizens who host young people. This is more vital than ever, especially given the difficulties brought on and illuminated by the pandemic. Note that to charge market prices, or even higher, is not the meaning of the "modest financial compensation" as intended by the legislator.

Intergenerational cohabitation must remain

Odile had been living alone in her apartment in Metz-Queuleu for five years. She wished to have a reassuring presence in her home and also wished to help a young person...

supportive, for young people as well as for seniors. Shared housing must remain a source of hope for the social linkage that occurs and, in particular, to combat excessive solitude. An important measure of success of intergenerational cohabitation is its role in helping young people find a place to live given the exorbitant prices of the real estate market.

Testimonial

64 years separate them and yet Odile and Jefferson have been living together since February 2022. They met through the association Un toit 2 Générations - Grand-Est.

Odile had been living alone in her apartment in Metz-Queuleu for five years. She wished to have a reassuring presence in her home and also wished to help a young person. Odile provides Jefferson with a



furnished room with a bed, a desk and a wardrobe. The pair share the living room, the dining room, the kitchen, and Jefferson can leave his bike in the garage.

Jefferson is almost 24 years old, he is a student at the ENIM University in Metz Technopole, and in September 2021, he left his country, Colombia, to complete a double degree in mechanical engineering in France. He has recently started his 4th year internship: "It's been a few weeks since I got to know the Un Toit 2 Générations program. From the beginning, I was motivated by the idea, and it became

more attractive because I understood that such a program would not only give me the opportunity to share life with someone more experienced than me, improve my French, and bring some of my young people's energy, but it would also support me financially, since I don't have a scholarship, and I can't afford to rent within the student housing system."

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