

Title

Dampoort knapt op! (Dampoort renovates!) Dampoort is a low Socio-Economic Status (SES) district in Ghent

Short description

'Dampoort renovates!' is an innovative and inclusive renovation project that aimed to renovate ten houses of 'buyers in need' (i.e., low SES individuals that bought a low quality house but do not have the budget to renovate it) in the district of Dampoort, Ghent, during a period of two years (2014-2016). The goal was to create high qualitative, safe, energy efficient and healthy houses. The participating owners received a financial intervention of 30 000 euros.

This innovative project combined sustainable financial solutions with an extensive guidance of low SES individuals that bought a low quality house but do not have the budget to renovate their houses. 'Dampoort renovates!' provided 'buyers in need' from the same district financial help and intensive social and technical advice to renovate their house. As a result of this project, these participants now live in safe, energy efficient, healthy and comfortable houses. When the house will be sold in the future, the invested budget will return to the government so this budget can be re-used for another 'buyer in need'. This practice also had many other assets: 1) the individual guidance and positive results increased the many quality of life indicators of the 'buyers in need'; 2) the project declined social repression and increased social cohesion in the neighborhood; and 3) it adds to the climate goals by the positive effects on energy efficiency in the houses of the included participants.

Topic

Living – Energy efficient housing

Characteristics (type, level)

Local
Intervention

Country/Countries of implementation

Belgium

Aims and Objectives

Dampoort renovates! is an innovative and inclusive renovation project that aimed to renovate ten houses of 'buyers in need' (i.e., low SES individuals that bought a low quality house but do not have the budget to renovate it) in the district of Dampoort, Ghent, during a period of two years (2014-2016). The goal was to create high qualitative, safe, energy efficient and healthy houses.

The participating owners received a subsidy of 30 000 euros. When the owners sell or give away their house, the funding (+the added value) needs to be repositioned to the government

so it can be re-used to help other 'buyers in need'. In addition, the project provided the 'buyers in need' with an intensive social and technical guidance, as well as community-building.

Specific quantitative objectives were:

- The renovation of 10 houses (30 000 euro/house)
- Maximal use of the Belgian/Flemish bonus system for renovation
- After the renovation, each house should score less than 15 penalty points based on the Flemish living code for houses
- After the renovation, the energy efficiency of the house should be improved
- After the renovation, the houses should be more safe and healthy

Specific qualitative objective were:

- The development of a concept that realizes affordable renovation for 'buyers in need' than can be used in other districts
- The development of a financial model and legal framework
- The development of the necessary tools (regulations, agreements, ...)
- Intensive technical and social guidance for the owners
- Community-building to increase the social cohesion in the neighborhood
- To increase the living quality in the house

Target Group

This project focuses on low socio-economic individuals that were able to buy a low-quality house but do not have the money to renovate their houses. Consequently, these owners are confronted with high energy bills, unhealthy living conditions, etcetera. This project wants to help them with renovating their house.

Status

Completed - follow up plans

Start and Completion dates

The project started beginning of 2014.

Lifestyle and Behavior Change

Dampoort renovates! is an innovative and inclusive renovation project that aimed to renovate ten houses of 'buyers in need' (i.e., low SES individuals that bought a low quality house but do not have the budget to renovate it) in the district of Dampoort, Ghent, during a period of two years (2014-2016). The goal was to create high qualitative, safe, energy efficient and healthy houses. In addition, the project provided the 'buyers in need' with an intensive social and technical guidance, as well as community-building.

Positive effects were found on the participants' lifestyles, health, well-being and on the environment (see also points on evaluation).

Effects on:

Health and Wellbeing	Positive effects were found on the participants' lifestyles, health, well-being and on the environment.
Vulnerable populations	Dampoort renovates! aimed to renovate ten houses of 'buyers in need' (i.e., <i>low SES individuals</i> that bought a low quality house but do not have the budget to renovate it) in the district of Dampoort, Ghent during a period of two years (2014-2016).
Environment	Positive effects were found on the participants' lifestyles, health, well-being and on the environment.

Initiated and/or implemented by

The discovery of the Community Land Trust model by a workgroup of the City of Ghent and the Public Center for Social Welfare (OCMW) was the starting point of this initiative. In 2012, the Flemish Government on Living and Social Economy gave the assignment to this group to conduct a CLT-feasibility study.

Subsequently, the Public Center for Social Welfare (OCMW) focused on the 'buyers in need', the low SES individuals that buy a low quality house but do not have the money to renovate it. As this group often falls between the cracks, for example they cannot afford the renovation bonuses as this often includes advance financing. At the end of 2012, the OCMW suggested a rotating fund for 'buyers in need' of 300 000 euros.

T

he current project only includes three of the four principles of Community Land Trust: 1) support for the inhabitants (in this case buyers); 2) community building; and 3) re-use of subsidies. As they focus on low SES individuals that bought a low quality house, they do not implement the principle to separate the land from the house.

Stakeholders and sectors involved

This project required an intensive collaboration between many actors from construction and social sectors, as well as the government.

- Local authorities: city of Ghent
- Social organisations: OCMW (Public center for social welfare) as coordinator, CLT Gent vzw including vzw Samenlevingsopbouw Ghent, vzw Sivi, vzw Domus Mundi, vzw REGent, vzw VIBE
- Private partners: Belfius Bank, Bouw-unie
- Scientific: KULeuven and Ghent University

Financial support

Public Center of Social Welfare (OCMW) provided the financial support (i.e., the 300 000 euros as rotating fund).

Evidence-base

Based on the principles of Community Land Trust. However, the current project only includes three of the four principles of Community Land Trust: 1) support for the inhabitants (in this case buyers); 2) community building; and 3) re-use of subsidies. As they focus on low SES individuals that bought a low quality house, they do not implement the principle to separate the land from the house.

Main activities

Dampoort renovates! is an innovative and inclusive renovation project that aimed to renovate ten houses of 'buyers in need' (i.e., low SES individuals that bought a low quality house but do not have the budget to renovate it) in the district of Dampoort, Ghent, during a period of two years (2014-2016). The goal was to create high qualitative, safe, energy efficient and healthy houses.

The project included five crucial components:

- 1) The **selection of a certain quartier** in the district of Dampoort, a low SES neighborhood in Ghent. In order to create social capital and cohesion among the participants, it was necessary to renovate houses that are close to each other. Moreover, this quartier should also accommodate an office of the project partners so they can be easily consulted.
- 2) OCMW provided a rotating fund of 300 000 euros that could be used to renovate ten houses (30 000 euros per house). To efficiently use financial means, the project used

a system of **subsidy retention** instead of the classic subsidy system. When the owners sell or give away their house, the funding (+the added value) will be repositioned to the government and re-used to help other 'buyers in need'. Via this help, owners do not need to pre-finance for the existing renovation bonuses which is often a problem for these owners.

- 3) To create **a renovation plan tailored to the specific house**. The project starts from the individual needs and problems from the owners and house. Together with the construction organizations, a tailored renovation plan is developed. The basis for this plan is a detailed screening of the houses, including a screening of the living quality and energy performance. The project focuses on both the living quality as well as the energy efficiency to suggest renovation priorities.
- 4) **Community-building**: The project also focused on bringing together the inhabitants of the targeted neighborhood to create more social cohesion and provide opportunities for this: via gatherings of the owners to share their experiences.
- 5) An **intensive guidance during the renovation period**: based on the tempo, needs, desires, living situation, and social environment of the owners. The goal is to unburden the owners regarding issues like administration, procedures, regulations, etcetera but also to strengthen and support the owners to take their own decisions and create ownership for the renovation too. The guidance was not limited to the renovation aspects, the owners were also advised and supported regarding other issues.

The project worked out a specific action plan with five phases: 1) the development of the general framework; 2) selection of the 'buyers in need'; 3) the subscription and preparation of the renovation; 4) the implementation of the renovation; and 5) the follow-up care. Details regarding this action plan are available in the attachment (in Dutch). No further details are included in this document.

Evaluation

Nine of the ten houses were renovated during the project. One house experienced delay because of collapse danger and was not included in the evaluation.

The evaluation consisted of pre- and post-measurements regarding the objective measurable safety and health risks, as well as the energy performance.

Impact of empowerment, energy awareness, health, neighborhood were assessed via interviews after the renovation.

Main results

Quantitative results:

- Safety and health risks: in 9/10 all risks regarding CO-danger, fire danger, damp were gone. At the start 70%, 60%, and 100% of the houses had respectively problems with CO-danger, fire danger, and damp. This was reduced to zero for CO-danger and damp, and to 10% for fire danger.
- Living quality: before the renovation the houses scored a mean of 51 penalty points based on the Flemish living code, afterwards they scored a mean of 11 points.
- Energy score: before the renovations, the EPC-value was on average 519 kWh/m² for the ten houses, after the renovations it was 244 kWh/m² for the nine houses.

- The project realized a reduction in total CO₂ emission of 47%, from a yearly emission of 13810 kg/year to a 7318 kg/year.
- In total, 82 415.15 euro was collected via renovation bonuses.

Qualitative results:

- Empowerment: the interviews indicated that the individual knowledge; technical, practical, social, and administrative skills; self-esteem; more adequate problem solving skills; and general welfare was increased because of the project
- More awareness regarding energy efficiency
- Health: less respiratory health problems and stress, and a better mental and general health were indicated by the participants
- Neighborhood: the participants mentioned an increase in the social cohesion of the neighborhood

Key success factors and barriers

- The combination of the subsidy retention (i.e., pre-financing for the renovation), the intensive guidance and community building. The combination of those three made this project very strong.
- The process of selecting the ‘buyers in need’ was not easy, the creation of the regulations for this selection was difficult.
- In addition, the vulnerability of the target group made the process also very difficult. The many issues and problems on other life domains could create a relapse in the behavior of the target group. Therefore, the follow-up care after the project is also very important and should be implemented in the actions plans to assure the sustainability of the changes.

INHERIT Perspective

‘Dampoort renovates!’ has been included because of its positive effects on health, climate, and equity. This innovative project aims to renovate houses of ‘buyers in need’ (i.e., low SES individuals that bought a low quality house but do not have budget to renovate it). The goal is to create safe, energy efficient and healthy houses. The project includes the following components: 1) 30 000 euros renovation subsidy (i.e., rotating fund), 2) community building strategies, and 3) intensive guidance. This project has a clear emphasis on changing both BEHAVIOR and PHYSICAL HOME ENVIRONMENT, and increasing social cohesion and empowerment among participants.

More information

A report of Dampoort renovates! (in Dutch) is added in attach.

Contact

Ann Van Hoof, vzw Sivi, ann.vanhoof@vzwsivi.be