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Climate Active Neighbourhoods

Newsletter N°5

Special Edition: Brest's Approach on Energy Poverty

Overview

Brest Métropole Hosts Conference "Energy Poverty in Europe"	.....	2
Recouvrance - Neighbourhood Climate Action in Brest	.....	3
"It's All About the People" - Energy Advisors in Brest	.....	4
News	.....	5
Upcoming Events	.....	6
Project Facts	.....	6

Brest Métropole Hosts Conference “Energy Poverty in Europe”

In June 2018, partners of the CAN project met in [Brest](#) (France) for a two-day conference on energy poverty. It offered the opportunity to share valuable expert insights and experiences about how to tackle energy poverty at European, national and local level. This issue, that impacts 50 million people in the EU, is mainly caused by three factors: inefficient homes, high energy costs and low household incomes. The energy retrofits carried out in the frame of the CAN project address the first factor, in turn reducing vulnerability to energy poverty for the beneficiaries.



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Various participants of the conference pointed out the effects of energy poverty on health and wellbeing. Living in cold homes can lead, among others, to respiratory illness and mental health issues. In the UK alone, 7000 avoidable deaths due to cold homes are registered every year. Tracy Dighton, from Citizens Advice 1066 (UK), underlined that investments realised in order to improve the building stock would lead to savings in health spending.

The speaker's panel made clear that changing contexts and countries impact the house improvement measures that are taken, so adapting to local specificities is key to successful action. However, making information more accessible, implementing energy advice offers with individual follow-ups and having free energy efficiency measures are considered best practices. Energy poverty is a highly relevant topic for the



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city of Brest, where energy supply has historically always been difficult due to the geographical location of the city. Moreover, most of the city has been destroyed in World War II bombings, and poor reconstruction led to low quality buildings. For that reason, renovation has been a priority policy since 1975, but progress is slow. That's why the CAN project represents a real added-value for Brest métropole: by exchanging solutions with other European local authorities sharing similar climate conditions, it has boosted innovation. Thanks to the financial support of Interreg NWE Programme, Brest has amplified its local actions on energy poverty, such as home visits to reduce water and energy bills and “Tinergie”, a comprehensive renovation platform. Each home visit leads to – on average – 20m³ of water and 105€ saved per household every year.

More information about the conference [here](#).

Speakers at the Conference

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Helen Stockton
National Energy Action, EPOV | • Monica Serlavos
University of Lausanne |
| • Corina Mocanu
EU Commission, Directorate
General for Energy | • Tracy Dighton
Citizens Advice 1066 |
| • Julia Eripret
Interreg NWE Joint Secretariat | • Hervé Fry
Lille City Council |
| • Sandrine Buresi
CLER, Réseau pour la transition
énergétique | • Rob Groen
Arnhem Energiebank |
| • Tifenn Quiguer
Brest métropole, Vice President | • Lucia Fuselli
Urban Innovative Actions |

Recouvrance - Neighbourhood Climate Action in Brest

Recouvrance is one of four targeted CAN-neighbourhoods in Brest. Here local climate action measures are being enabled by a grassroots-approach: Engaging local stakeholders into the process, assessing their needs and encouraging them to be involved in the process of finding solutions towards carbon reduction. Informal meetings and interesting events raise awareness about energy efficiency.

With its naval port opening to the sea and its strategic location on the river bank facing the city-centre of Brest, Recouvrance has always been a working-class district, mainly populated by sailors and naval workers. Compared with the rest of the city, this neighbourhood was spared by the bombings of the World War II. However, Recouvrance and its 6 000 inhabitants today is a district targeted by a public policy aimed at improving the quality of housing. This action plan allows a financial support for owners, under an incentivised approach to refurbish their properties.

Local challenges

Recouvrance is one of the districts with the lowest median income in Brest: here, poverty indicators can be compared to the ones observed in social housing blocks. Regarding its housing stock, a large share of the accommodations are small-sized. Consequently, 67% of the households are single-households and social isolation is a significant issue. In addition to this, 16% of dwellings in Recouvrance are estimated to be vacant and about 30% of inhabitants are newcomers, a very high rate compared to the rest of the city, meaning the population's turnover rate is particularly high.

Several methods of resident encouragement have been conducted, e.g. via the "Chaud Devant" or the "Bricobus". Twelve informal meetings took place to share insights about energy efficiency and energy saving measures. The "Bricobus" offers expert on-site support to residents and helps them to implement low



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threshold repairworks, such as flushes, taps, electric sockets or window glazing.

Bouncing back

Luckily, the vitality of civil society in Recouvrance is a real asset. Under CAN, the cooperation with local associations led to activities tailored to the inhabitants' needs. CAN represents an effective catalyst, which contributes to reversing economic and social decline and allows the emergence of innovative actions offering a new image to the district.

Recouvrance also benefits from a multi-annual urban renewal programme, whose main objectives are fighting against substandard housing; renovating the dilapidated private housing stock; and recreating an attractive urban environment that gives back to the people the desire to live in Recouvrance - and be proud of it.

For more information contact

[Gladys Grelaud](#)

Housing Project Manager

Brest métropole



"It's All About the People" - Energy Advisors in Brest



Cécile Cloarec, Ener'gence
© Ener'gence

CAN partner Brest métropole and its sub-partner Ener'gence together work towards climate action on the neighbourhood level. By raising awareness of energy efficiency in households via various measures, residents can save valuable money on their energy bills.

Describe your organisation and your intervention area:

Ener'gence operates in the whole 'Pays de Brest' (Brest county), covering 103 municipalities. Under CAN, the focus is on 4 priority neighbourhoods in Brest, which represent different facets of Brest's identity. In Recouvrance, for instance, the programme was particularly enriching. Historically, the right bank has always been known for its strong naval identity and it is something we can still feel today. On the other side, in Bellevue, the social background is completely different. Instead of single-households, we will approach many families and older people, many of them living in this district since its construction after WW II.

What is your approach?

As our 4 districts represent very different local identities, we cannot operate without taking into account the history as well as the social and urban context preceding our actions. Also, just like at the restaurant, we don't serve the same thing to everybody. We never impose a method or a format; we always integrate our actions to the existing ones in the neighbourhood. It is all about our capacity to adjust our actions to the people who are in front of us, to "blend into the scenery", as we say in French. Complementarity and adaptability: these are the key words.



Florent Coquio, Ener'gence
© Ener'gence

Could you describe your first steps?

Our beginnings in the district of Haut-de-Jaurès have been challenging. This area lacks a real neighbourhood spirit and it was not easy to get people to attend our activities. Luckily, the follow-up in Recouvrance has been a pleasure! Local stakeholders are already very active and used to act in complementarity, as a real network. It was an asset for the project as mutual trust was already there.

What are the results of the second round of energy-visits?

As most of our beneficiaries are tenants, they tend to move quite often, which makes one-



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year-after home-visits quite challenging to undertake. However, when we get to the second visit it is fantastic; we are always received as if we were family members! People take the time to explain all the small eco-gestures they've taken up and you can feel they are proud of their small daily efforts.

What have you learnt?

What was really new to us was the exchange with other European partners. First of all, to compare our results: analyses are not the same and some aspects tend to be more or less developed from country to country. Secondly and most importantly, to compare our working methods: to mention a very anecdotal example, we saw a video by our partner in Arnhem and - it's a small detail - but it was very funny to notice that our Dutch counterpart was wearing a shirt during a home-visit! That would never be possible here in Brest, people would probably take us for door-to-door salespersons.

However, while discussing with him we realised that if the 'form' was different, the 'content' of a home-visit and the dweller's problems are extremely similar.

All this has stimulated our curiosity and our will to see how our European colleagues operate on the ground. There is a lot we can share and it allows both parts to adjust and improve their practice, while offering a whole new perspective on our mission.



For more information on the Energy and Climate Agency of Brest, click [here](#).

News

CAN Project-Video – What is CAN all about?



Our project is entering its final phase. A newly released video demonstrates what CAN is all about - without any speech at all it can be used throughout Europe to stir up interest in Climate Active Neighbourhoods. The video also reveals where interested municipalities will soon get more information - the Practice Cube with the exciting results from CAN will not be long to come.

A Look into CAN - Get to know our Partners

Another video has been released, which offers the chance to get to know more about the transnational CAN-Partnership. The project fosters a unique network of colleagues among peers, helps to generate knowledge and insights from different perspectives on the basis of mutual learning and provided several aha-effects already. Take a look for yourself below.



Upcoming Events

Web-Meetings

18 October 2018

CAN Web-Meeting (Energieagentur RLP): "German "tools of trade" for neighbourhood climate action"

CAN Working Group Meetings

25-26 September 2018

Plymouth (UK)

Further CAN-Events

1-3 October 2018, Barcelona (Spain)

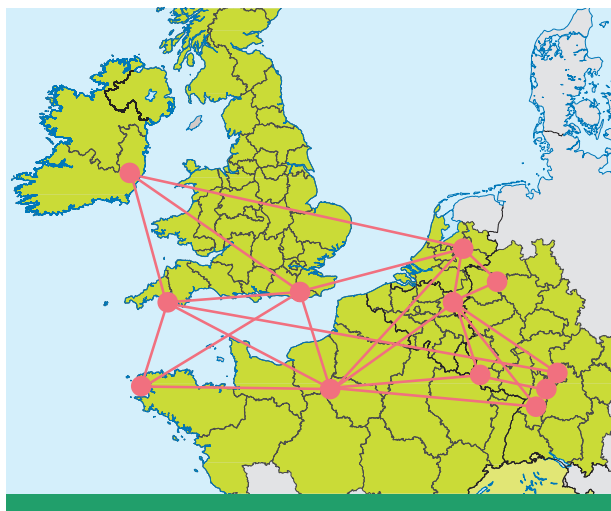
Climate Alliance International Conference, Circle 2 "Connecting with citizens and local initiatives"

13 November 2018, Kaiserslautern (Germany)

Kommunale Klimaschutz-Konferenz des Klima-Bündnis, Workshop "Klimaschutz im Quartier"

Project Facts

The Partners



The transnational partner network of CAN

- Climate Alliance (Lead Partner)
- Optivo with Hastings Borough Council and Energise Sussex Coast
- City of Arnhem
- Brest métropole with Brest Ener'gence
- Energieagentur Rheinland-Pfalz
- City of Essen
- Liège Energie with City of Liège
- Plymouth City Council
- EPAM Seine-Aval with Mantes-la-Jolie
- City of Worms

[Read more](#)

Contact

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Facts

Duration

February 2016 to October 2019

€ 7.8 million total project budget
€ 4.7 million funded via ERDF