

SHIFFT Co-Creation Webinar

April 4th 2020

Minutes & Report

This is a summary of the cross-border co-creation webinar focused on the sustainable heating transition on April 3rd 2020, organised by Delft University of Technology and University of Exeter. The webinar was part of SHIFFT (Sustainable Heating: Implementation of Fossil-Free Technologies), an Interreg 2 Seas project, running from 2019-2022, to assist cities in the development of low carbon heating strategies. The webinar covered insights from collective heating pioneers and neighbourhood platforms, as well as several ongoing pilot projects. The webinar also focused on how co-creation can be applied in times of social distancing, by using novel online tools, such as participatory value evaluation, developed at Delft University of Technology.

With 78 registrations and at times 64 participants, the webinar was very well attended.

Because of the packed webinar program there was not enough time to address all questions raised by participants, nor to conclude all the main take-aways from the 'break-out sessions'.

Following documents were to be circulated to the participants post the webinar:

- minutes of the webinar (small webinar report);
- sharing of PowerPoint slides presented during the webinar;
- an edited recorded webinar and screenshots;

- **09:30 to 09:45 AM**

Welcome note and introduction by *Anatol Itten* (TU Delft)

----- KEY-NOTE SPEAKER : 1 -----

- **09:45 to 10:24 AM**

Heating Pioneer: ThermoBello, *Gerwin Verschuur*

- **How Resident involvement is operationalised with ThermoBello:**

- Participants are mostly retired residents – those who had experience in working in technical jobs;
- 2 of them volunteers, 2 of them paid but their roles are low-profile and back-end;
- ThermoBello comprises **2 legal entities**:
 - 1 limited company;
 - 1 cooperative
- In the cooperative there are 60 members of category A, the rest are association of residents where everyone living in that region becomes a member (about 300 members at present). The cooperative is 100% shareholder, with 2 types of membership: individual & collective.
- Aim: licence to operate heating services: by, for and from the residents.
- Limited company = 42.750 euros shares.

● **Lessons learned in residents involvement and proposed suggestions for future prototypes:**

- Utilise the capacity of people in the district;
- Move step by step;
- Seek resistance to improve, especially during the planning stages;
- Be detached from results;
- Seek dialogue, postpone judgement;
- Be Transparent in what we do:
 - Every year in general assembly, people can discuss budget, costs, Income structures etc.
 - People who invested on risk capital got dividends only after 9 years;
 - District heating is a service not for shareholders, but as a social company for its residents' benefits
- Dutch government : we need decrease dependencies on natural gas;
- Coincided with the earthquakes in the north of Netherlands where they were extracting natural gas;
- Over 500 cooperatives in the Netherlands (NL) now, which have strategic plans for achieving full natural gas phase-out by 2050

● **Why is it important to mobilise home owners?**

- Because governments take political risks if they push too hard;
- But they have to push because of the Paris agreement;
- Markets do not have an attractive offer to convince homeowners;
- Homeowners are viewed as voters by the government and as customers by markets;
- These entities find it difficult to cooperate with collectives/citizens

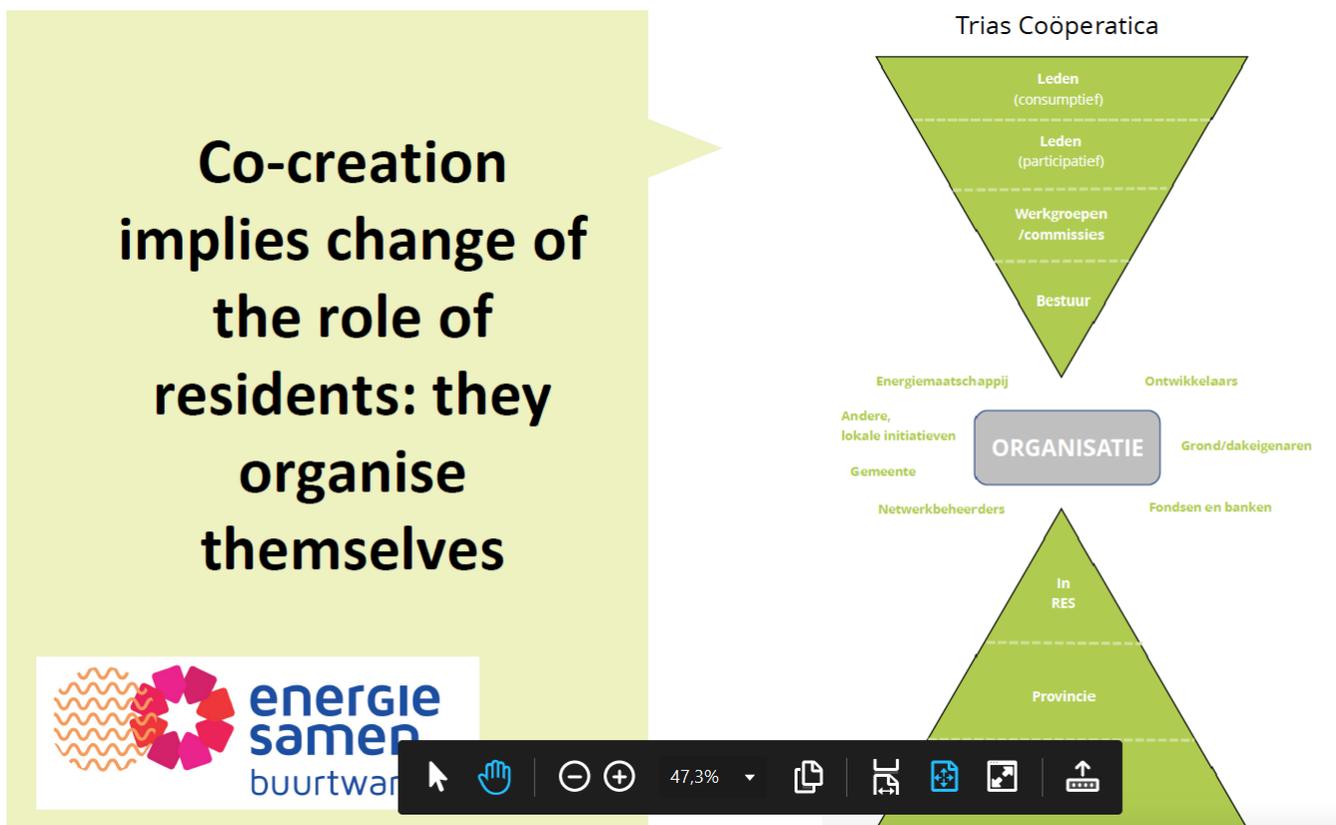
● **Co-creation can accelerate the heating transition.**

- Proposes a three pillars model: Homeowners, governments, markets;
- Homeowners are empowered to organise themselves to find solutions for natural gas phase-out and to develop, construct and exploit district heating networks

- Following spaces are identified for self-organisation :
 - Moral space
 - Admin space
 - Financial space
 - Political space
- It is not possible for home owners to voluntarily participate- they need to be invited and a space needs to be created & designed to encourage that

- **Co-creation implies change of the role of residents: they organise themselves.**

- There is a pyramid structure. With two pyramids branching out:
 - Local communities define themselves in relation to governments and markets.

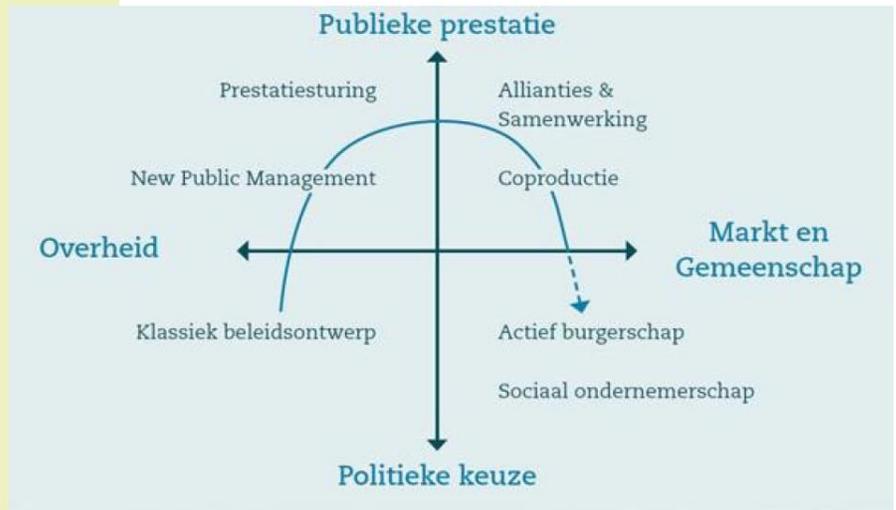


- **Co-creation implies change in role of government.**

- Where governments change roles from traditional action roles;
- To more responsive/participatory roles, working together with social enterprises;
- Challenge for governments now: they need to become ready for these new roles

- But even while they are being responsive, they also need to achieve Paris targets that require some top-down action; therefore they need to balance these roles.

Co-creation implies change in the role of the government



- Empowerment of self organisation of residents in district heating. The neighbourhood process consists of:
 - Community building;
 - Business case and technical design;
 - Stakeholder management
 - With grid operators, with homeowners;
 - Resident associations, local governments
 - Organisation development.
 - When the small start-up gains an identity and grows into a more professional organisation;
 - When it gets funding to implement projects
- Neighbourhood process is proposed to be conducted in 4 phases. The four phases proposed are:
 - Initiation, design/development, construction, operation
 - **Community development: Not everyone is mobilised to the same degree at all times;**
 - It's like throwing a stone in the lake and different ripples of involvement emerge, such as pioneers, active persons and the more passive/consumer roles

- **10:25 to 10:40 AM**

Q&A by Gerwin Verschuur, moderated by Anatol Itten.

Not all the questions were able to be answered in great detail due to time constraints. But those that were not answered, were noted down and sent directly to him for further follow-ups.

Following are questions asked by both panellists and participants:

Questions asked during Questions and Answers session: <many were not addressed>

- Q1: How did ThermoBello experience the relationship with the local authority?
- Q2: How did you experience the relationship with the DSO (distribution service operator) (Nuon)?
- Q3: What were the most significant barriers and setbacks ThermoBello encountered?
- Q4: What in your view should local authorities do to empower local heating cooperatives like ThermoBello?
- Q5: What was the base to approach the citizens.. Was it to introduce renewables? or was it the reduction of the heating costs? or introduction of the element of co-governance?
- Q6: Can you tell a bit more about the district and the (energy performance of the) buildings? A low temperature heating network is very challenging in existing neighbourhoods with the majority of homes < 1970 and thus poor energy performance.
- Q7: What are the three/four key elements needed to achieve good and constructive cooperation between members of the local community and with external stakeholders (e.g. DSOs, municipality)?
- Q8: How much of the heat produced is produced by renewables? What is the heat production efficiency on a yearly basis? What are the heat losses of the district heating system? How do the homeowners produce domestic hot water when the temperature of the district heating system is only 20°C in summer? What is the price the people pay?
- Q9: From your experience with ThermoBello, what values do local members willing to initiate and/or support the formation of heat cooperatives usually hold ? And those that show more resistance?
- Q10: How many initiatives is Energie Samen Buurtwarmte currently supporting? Do you know of similar services that exist outside the Netherlands (e.g. Flanders, with mainly the two largest energy cooperatives Beauvent and Ecopower that are also active in district heating projects).

Key points from the Q&A discussion:

- **Importance of acknowledging resistance:**

Resistance can be an expression of both fear and knowledge too. If you take resistance seriously, you get a lot of knowledge. ThermoBello organised themselves into a development organisation team. Their goal to establish became a feasibility study. People were very sceptical to be part of an association to structure their participation. But because they feared stupid decisions will be made otherwise, they continued to participate. Others wanted to participate in an explorative manner to see how this is going to work out.

- **Different stages saw different levels of engagement of residents:**

People were very active in the feasibility study phase - there were a lot of questions to be

answered. When it was clear that it was feasible, **participation dropped already!** Because after that, negotiators had to do their job and other nitty gritty things - where people felt they couldn't contribute anymore. All these processes needed to run a business - people didn't participate there. But they attended general assembly meetings- to pitch in ideas. **People were active observers**, rather. Through the different phases, the participation changes, as the level of professionalism needed also changes.

- **What are the conditions in your opinion to achieve co-creation of this sort?**

- Most districts don't have residential associations, so we are special because we already had a rudimentary organisational setup.
- There were people willing to take the initiative.
- Sometimes the problem is too technical for a new organisation to take up. So you always need a group of people who are already excited about taking up an idea of this sort. It helps if there is already an organisation, but in my opinion it has to be built-up according to the theme needed- energy, in this case.
- It is also important to identify what are the values of people in the district.
- If there is a huge diversity of values, it is difficult to come to an agreement.

Relationship to government:

- We don't consider ourselves against the norm/autonomous or anything.
- We just have found a way of participating with each other that has worked.
- It is a model that can be spread to tell other people that there is a need for people to cooperate for anything to happen.
- Basic question is - do people feel the urgency to cooperate? People should feel the need to work together to get somewhere.

- **10:42 to 11:01 AM**

Co-Creation: State of the Art Report key highlights & learnings of the report shared by Dr Fionnguala Sherry-Brennan

- Followed by a Q&A.

----- *BREAK-OUT SESSION : 1* -----

Session on Housing Associations

Moderated by: Dr Thomas Hoppe (Co-Creation Work-Package Leader, TU Delft)

● **11:06 to 11:10 AM**

Pilot Project 1: Places for People (PfP) (United Kingdom)

Speaker : Corne & Derek

- Co-creation is “in DNA” of PfP;
- Several motivations to engage tenants in co-creative processes;
- Information on running a co-creation pilot project for displaced persons home.

● **11:11 to 11:25 AM**

Pilot Project 2: City of Breda (The Netherlands)

Speaker : Paul & Coen

Discussed how the City of Breda is co-creating the process of heating transition along with its residents.

- Uses policy management and working groups.
- Several topics including CO₂ and cost of ownership calculation.
- Lots of information for extra measures.
- Developing CO₂ roadmap, also taking into account energy infrastructure – Top 3 for each real estate.
- It is not easy to enlarging the DH (district heating) system. Total cost of ownership are clear, but housing associations value other things. And homeowners are also involved. They ask local authorities to take new roles. Big discussion are in place to take the right direction. Breda now makes a dashboard to support this process and to focus on combining options (to save expenditures).
- Also discussion in groups with tenants and housing associations. 17,000 homes to be addressed in Breda. BRES energy cooperative is also involved to mobilise citizens in Breda.
- Greenhopper tiny house (from Interreg Triple A) to make citizens aware and inform them about possibilities for energy renovation.

----- *BREAK-OUT SESSION : 2* -----

Co-creation with scarce resources

Moderated by: Dr Anatol Itten (TU Delft)

● **11:25 to 11:34 AM**

City of Bruges (Belgium)

Speaker : Lies

- Their approach is focused on mobilising young families. The city organised two brainstorming sessions in 4 neighbourhoods.
- Currently: they have looked at barriers perceived by citizens and the risks they feel in making the transition to sustainable heating.
- This was the process of the co-creation plan:

- **Step1: Citizens/residents were asked some questions:**
 - What did you already do in your house to reduce CO₂?
 - Why would you renovate your house?
 - What were the problems that you didn't already do renovation?
 - How would you convince a neighbour to transition or do energy retrofit?

The participants are now more aware of the problems and potential in the neighbourhood.

- **Step2 (in progress):**
 - The city plans to organise an information market with several planners, construction companies to explain the strengths and weaknesses of different technical solutions.
 - The NH are not near cities. They are in the French area of Bruges. In the city centre, they are looking for a DH feasibility study.
 - After the information market, they want to group citizens together so that they can look up solutions by themselves, with the city and energy providers as facilitators.
- **Step 3 (in future):**
 - The next step would be to then get those households that have reduced CO₂ significantly and make them ambassadors to convince other households to do the same;
 - They are also considering being part of a subsidy program - for climateneighbourhoods. This will be a good opportunity to help other neighbourhoods to transition as well.

Resources: <https://omgeving.vlaanderen.be/projectoproep-klimaatwijken>

General Comments:

- Difficult to reach different target groups and get them involved.
- Several participation processes are ongoing. Several meetings have already been organised. Enquiry among homeowners about energy renovation. This is the start of a local citizen action plan.
- Informed by neighbourhood characteristics and information from meetings. Next step is organising an evening with all citizens from the city. Delay due to Corona. Information market in several neighbourhoods in collaboration with several construction companies.
- Feasibility study just started. Citizens scan sites themselves (or grouped). Experienced cities work as ambassadors to persuade citizens in other neighbourhoods. Local authority supports neighbourhoods initiatives.

- **11:35 to 11:41 AM**

City of Fourmies (France)

Speaker: Marie

- Fourmies activates citizens for co-creation events primarily via the internet. Moreover, lots of information is displayed in popular city venues (in shops, for example). The city values its good networks via citizen associations and public officials which are well integrated with the residents. They are ambassadors in the city.
- Two methods tried and worked and are not that expensive:

World café:

- Every 45 minutes the topic changes. People feel free to discuss things and query each other. The

selection of the people for the world café is done randomly and as per the voluntary wish of the participants. We do have criteria for the number of total people, age groups etc. We contact the associations which help us to develop the group. And we do make sure to have people from all age groups participating in the co-creation activities

Press conference of the future:

- A serious game, in which students play journalists and citizens in 2050.
- Afterwards, students write articles and they are published in the local press. Marie also participates in the process herself. It's a nice way for young adults to understand climate issues like this.
- One important thing to note about making co-creation processes successful and create citizen engagement: It is very important to explain to them that we are all residents on an equal level, whether we are elected officials or scientists. When people understand that, people find the energy and power to collaborate.

----- *BREAK-OUT SESSION : 3* -----

Session on customer journey

Moderated by: Dr Fionnguala Sherry-Brennan (University of Exeter)

● **11:43 to 11:50 AM**

City of Mechelen (Belgium)

Speaker : Ighor

- Households in and surrounding Mechelen need to check whether their infrastructure can work with new high caloric gas.
- Many uncertainties by residents whether their home is ready. What they can do technically (and not). There is a clear need for unburdening.
- In co-creation with citizens, and market operators etc. Mechelen wants to improving services to support citizens, including customer journey.
- Sharing information, getting tailored advice, technical support, opportunities for financial support, user experience, satisfaction check to share positive experiences.
- Mechelen learned a lot from the organisation Buurkracht.
-Current system set up with home renovation coaches, for e.g. thermal insulation. But they have to focus more on sustainable heating transition. Ighor participated as a citizen himself in a customer journey and there is a lot to be improved.

● **11:51 to 12:05 PM**

City of Middleburg (The Netherlands)

Speaker : Tiny and Marleen

- Important issue identified is to elicit participation. In 2018, the local government, decided on a process of identifying key stakeholders. We have a project for 900 houses with social housing companies. The main issues they are dealing with is:
- How to involve those who don't speak Dutch or English?
- There are also people from economically disadvantaged groups and neighbourhoods who think: "Why us? We have bigger problems!"
- Our experience regarding information markets: it's always the same people who keep coming.
- People with low incomes cannot invest in sustainable heating because of the high costs.

Q&A:

Q: Have you made any financial incentives available?

- It's still a business case, to determine whether it is possible to do this or not. An apartment

building is easier to do than building numerous individual family houses. Question is- can it be realised? And If you want to do this, how do you involve people and how to make it clear what is in it for them, in order to get them excited about participating!

Q: What ideas have you had about reaching out to people from the economically disadvantaged groups and those with aforementioned language barriers?

- There are certain partners / organisations who are in touch with communities, so they have to be involved too. With world cafes and info markets, it's possible only to reach the initial actors. It's harder to reach the middle group and those with low incomes.

General comments (the discussion opened up organically to all panellists during interaction)

- PfP is also working with football clubs to renovate neighbourhoods, like in Manchester. In the past Corné's previous housing association build a building where residents can express their culture. It housed over 30 churches!
- Corné Koppelaar (PfP) is very experienced in involving groups from different backgrounds. It is difficult, but possible. Corné mentioned a master thesis about citizen participation in urban renewal projects (the case of Amsterdam South-East).

-----CO-CREATION IN TIMES OF SOCIAL DISTANCING-----

● **12:05 PM to 12:30 PM**

Speaker : *Dr Anatol Itten (TU Delft)*

Discussed how to plan co-creation and interaction with citizens during these uncertain times. He discussed digital tools of mass participation where policy-makers can involve residents in the process with their inputs online.

-----KEY-NOTE SPEAKER 2-----

● **12:30 to 1:00 PM**

Djoera Eerland, Buurkracht (The Netherlands)

The name buurkracht is roughly translated from Dutch to: "*neighbour power*".

ABOUT:

- "Saving energy is a hassle. We are biologically wired to avoid hassle."
- Buurkracht is slowly developing into an organisation that supports neighbours to build a enjoyable NH for themselves. That is why they broke out from the energy grid company *Enexis*. They support about 500 neighbours to take energy measures together.

ROLE:

- Municipalities who want to find active citizens and citizens who want to transform their ideas to action and get support.
- The position Buurkracht takes is that of intermediary. They stand between municipalities and citizens.

OPERATION:

- Ways of working = ambassadors + trust +support = result/citizen participation.

- Active people in the neighbourhood are considered to be their “strong shoulders”. They are heavily dependent on them for exposure. They take away the complexity of adoption from the rest. They put in the time to find the best measures for their neighbourhood, the contractors etc.
- They add trust to the initiative. They are not a company, they are your own neighbours, they don’t have a commercial interest.
- Mobilisation at four levels:
 - **Municipal challenge:**
 - District approach
 - 500–100,000 dwellings
 - Used for complex issues, such as transition to natural gas free future.
 - **Verbuurzamen** (Achieving sustainability through neighbourhood cooperation):
 - Active in neighbourhood (100–500 houses)
 - **Party**
 - Street level at someone's house
 - (Small household groups - 30x8 dwellings)
 - **Buurkracht movement = Divers (1-100 dwellings)**
 - Accessible and autonomous

- **1:00 to 1:02 PM**

Concluding remarks and farewell by Dr Anatol Itten (TU Delft)

-----END OF WEBINAR -----