

ghent: so much city





A 'Commons Transition Plan' for Ghent

1. Research by Michel Bauwens
2. Conclusions of the research
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4. Success factors



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**Research by Michel
Bauwens**

The Commons Transition Plan

What is a 'Commons' ? !

- A commons: **shared resource, which is co-owned or co-governed by a community of users and stakeholders, under the rules and norms of that community**
- The commons is independent of the government and the market
- Commons is a new form of organization based around production and consumption with the idea of achieving a more sustainable society.

Context

- A tenfold increase in the Flanders in the last ten years.
- New challenge for the city and the public authorities, for market players, and for traditional civil society organizations, ...
- How can a city respond to this and what are the implications of this for the city policy?
- What are Ghent's many commons projects expecting from the city?
- With this research the city wishes to give further shape to a sustainable and ethical economy in Ghent:
 - How can Ghent become a '*partner city*'?



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Conclusion of the research

Recommendation to the city

Urban commons in Ghent

- **Strengths**
 - Open contribution of time, skills, money, goods, ...
 - Working as a generative market forms that can produce income to sustain them
- **Weaknesses**
 - Commons-based economy is still relatively small
 - Movement is very fragmented and not enough collaboration

Recommendations to the city

- 23 proposals:
 - Assembly of the Commons
 - The city has to set up alliances
 - ‘Call for the commons’: instead of having potential developers individually compete to win the bid for the project to build it, the project is rewarded to the strongest coalition of community partners and organizations
 - An annual ‘Commonsfest’
 - ...



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Inspirational commons from Ghent

5 examples

Energy

- 'EnerGent' with REScoop
- A cooperative that invests money from the partners in projects of energy saving and renewable energy



Heritage

- ‘Buren van de Abdij’ = ‘Neighbors of the abbey’
- Neighborhood residents collectively manage the Saint Baafs abbey
 - Organization of cultural events
 - Social cohesion by collective management



Food & social cohesion

- ‘Het Spilvarken’
- ‘Het Spilvarken’ uses pigs in the city center of Ghent to process waste in the city and promote social cohesion in the neighborhood



Mobility

- 'Partago'
- Platform/app
- Users cooperation for electrical car sharing in Ghent



Former library building turned into a temporary urban commons lab

- 'NEST' (=Newly Established State of Temporality)
- An urban experimental commons project
- Community center with meeting and event spaces by different community organizations
- Contributory rent arrangement





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Success factors

Personal reflections

Key stakeholder

- Researcher & trust figure: Michel Bauwens
- Study commissioned and financed by the City of Ghent:
 - Support of mayor Daniel Termont and the political coalition of the city
- Officials: a support group of officials from different area's (food, mobility, housing, energy, ...)
 - Direct connection with Michel Bauwens
- Commons projects
 - Importance of a trust figure

Key breakpoints/important steps

- We're still facing key breakpoint:
 - The organization of a representative group of commoners
 - January 2018
 - The organization of 'the Assembly of the Commons' and a 'Commonsfest'
 - Spring 2018 (?)
- Set out an action plan to start implementing
 - The end of 2018

Conclusions

Opportunities created by supporting the commons:

1. Solving ecological and climate change challenges
2. More active participation of inhabitants in co-constructing their cities
3. In creating new forms of meaningful work at the local level



You can find the Commons
Transition Plan here:

<https://stad.gent>

- Ghent International
- City Policy
- Ghent Commons City

