

Sustainability | Individual communication

IC - (21196) - CITIZEN THINK TANKS: CO-DESIGNING POST-PANDEMIC HOUSING FUTURES

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Background and objectives

During the first wave of COVID-19, Swiss residents found themselves spending most of their time in homes unable to accommodate the needs hitherto met by cities. While scholars and practitioners have proposed strategies to mitigate the effects of housing deficiencies on inhabitants' wellbeing, the contribution of all citizens involved in housing production and use cannot be overlooked. Therefore, this research aimed to offer spaces for mutual learning to co-design post-pandemic housing futures.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Two Citizens Think Tanks (CTTs) were organised in spring 2020 as part of the transdisciplinary project Swiss Corona Citizen Science, involving eight to ten participants in two online sessions. The first CTT aimed to discuss housing conditions before and during the confinement. The analysis of the recordings and whiteboards led to the identification of three variables, namely (i) space for oneself, (ii) physical private space, and (iii) space for social interactions, using which we developed possible scenarios for the future of housing. The latter were presented in the second CTT using short stories and images, shaping a shared imaginary. The most desirable scenario was voted on, followed by a collective reflection on pathways to achieve it.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

The scenario 'reinvesting the community', resulting from an increase in personal and social space and a reduction in the physical one, was voted as the most desirable. Obstacles and opportunities that this vision entails included sharing and learning to share; ways of recreating a neighbourhood 'spirit'; designing housing that allows for encounters, welcomes different cultures, and addresses desires for appropriation.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

The CTTs highlighted how different types of knowledge can contribute to the production of strategies to cope with present and future crises, generating questions that open up new avenues of research. They offered an example of how scientists and practitioners can interact with and benefit from the multiple voices of inhabitants.

Palavras-chave : COVID-19, housing, well-being, transdisciplinarity, crises, Switzerland