

OUR MISSION

SHIFT is a not-for-profit business that develops and promotes student housing projects designed to be affordable and innovative. We are mostly active in the province of Quebec, Canada, where we also work to promote the need for more student housing.

We believe that if one segment of the population deserves quality at an affordable price, it is the students. Keeping the life expenses of the most precarious as low as possible is for us a valuable task.

That's a shift in priorities.

BOTTOM-UP
DEVELOPMENT

WHO WE ARE

SHIFT (or UTILE, Unité de travail pour l'implantation de logement étudiant) is a creative, multidisciplinary team of designers, professionals and students hailing from Montreal, Canada. We are social entrepreneurs inspired by the startup model.

Our organization aims to develop business and knowledge exchange relationships worldwide to bring the best of the world's student housing to Quebec - and the opposite.

We are a new type of actor in student housing for North America. This is... 

OUR VISION

Here at SHIFT, the students are not only considered in the design process - they are also involved. As an organization staffed mostly by students and striving to develop projects *for* and *by* students, we choose to align to the principles of participatory design. For every project we develop, we work in close partnership with local schools, student organizations and community groups. That's a cultural shift.

INNOVATION ON
EVERY LEVEL



SHIFT

Time for a change
in student housing...

STUDENT
HOUSING
INNOVATION AND
FACILITATION
TASKFORCE

 **SHIFT / UTILE**
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THE SITUATION

Traditionally, student housing in Quebec has been developed by the public sector, with colleges and universities building and generally operating their own residential complexes. The private sector has made a timid appearance but only in select lucrative areas. The catch is very low student income and limited parental support, which offer limited for-profit development opportunities. In the current situation, where the involvement of universities in real estate development is questioned and student housing production, slowed, there exists a need for new, creative methods of development everywhere in the province. This is the shift in practices that we are working towards.

OUR APARTMENTS



OUR RESEARCH

In addition to project development and architectural R&D, our team focuses its energies on bridging the knowledge gap that separates Quebec from elsewhere, and on producing new studies and documents that showcase the need for student housing.

We have developed a significant amount of knowledge on the **urban, economical and social benefits** of student housing. SHIFT also explores international **best practices** in regards to public investment and co-operative and affordable development.

OUR APPROACH

By involving those we work to house - the students - SHIFT has also managed to secure important resources in research. Our organization collaborates with scholars and graduate students to further develop knowledge in the sector of student housing. More specifically, urban planning and economy students and researchers work with SHIFT to study the local market, identify trends and foster innovation.

THE POTENTIAL

Only 2 percent (2%) of college and university students in Quebec live in student-specific housing. The rest either live at home with their parents (about half) or must find housing on their own. Year after year, over 200 000 students that have moved away from home are in need of housing.

While some very few of these turn to existing student housing, there remains a massive need for affordable, student-specific housing, that can compete with low rent prices on the private leasing market.

