

Strengthening Community Networks for Older People

<u>Organisation(s):</u>	Consortium of Retirement Homes in Vienna; Häuser zum Leben	
<u>Country:</u>	Austria	
<u>Contact:</u>	policy@esn-eu.org	
<u>Theme:</u> Choose at least one option	☒ Ageing & Care ☐ Asylum & Migration ☐ Young People ☐ Support for Children & Families ☒ Community Care ☒ Integrated Care & Support ☐ Co-Production ☐ Disability ☐ Housing & Homelessness ☐ Artificial Intelligence ☐ Digitalisation ☒ Quality Care	☐ Labour Market Inclusion ☒ Social Inclusion ☐ Technology ☐ Workforce and Leadership ☐ Social Benefits ☐ EU Funding ☒ Social Services' Resilience ☐ Mental Health ☒ Person-Centred Care ☐ Research & Use of Evidence ☒ Management & Planning ☐ Other, please specify:
<u>Principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights:</u> <i>Which principles does your practice cover? Check the 20 principles here.</i>	☐ 1. Education, training, life-long learning ☐ 2. Gender equality ☒ 3. Equal opportunities ☐ 4. Active support to employment ☐ 5. Secure and adaptable employment ☐ 6. Fair Wages ☐ 7. Transparent employment conditions ☐ 8. Social dialogue ☐ 9. Work-life balance ☐ 10. Healthy, safe work environment	☐ 11. Childcare and child support ☒ 12. Social protection ☐ 13. Unemployment benefits ☐ 14. Minimum income ☐ 15. Old age income and pensions ☒ 16. Health care ☐ 17. Inclusion of people with disabilities ☒ 18. Long-term care ☐ 19. Housing and assistance to homeless ☒ 20. Access to essential services
<u>Current status of the practice:</u>	☐ Concept and Design Phase ☒ Testing or pilot phase ☐ Temporary practice that has terminated ☐ Temporary practice that is ongoing and has a termination date ☐ Established and ongoing practice ☐ Scaling Up and Transformation Phase ☐ Other (please specify):	
<u>Summary:</u> <i>Please summarise the practice in maximum 3 sentences. This will be the disclaimer of your</i>	Häuser zum Leben, Vienna's largest public provider of long-term care and social services for older people, extends its infrastructure beyond residential care by opening facilities and services to local neighbourhoods. Through partnerships with community organisations, accessible social spaces, and neighbourhood-oriented activities, it promotes social inclusion, strengthens community networks, and supports people to live independently for longer. The initiative demonstrates how	

project on our website. Example here.	public care infrastructure can become a shared community asset that enhances resilience, wellbeing, and social cohesion.
<u>Context/ Social issues addressed</u> Please explain the problem you attempt to solve with your practice.	Population ageing, social isolation, fragmented service provision, and unequal access to community resources can limit opportunities for independent living and social participation. Traditional care services are often viewed as separate from neighbourhood life, reducing opportunities for social connection and intergenerational engagement. Häuser zum Leben addresses these challenges by integrating care and social service infrastructure into local communities, creating inclusive spaces, improving access to services, and strengthening collaboration between social services, public authorities, and local stakeholders.
<u>Objectives:</u> Please provide a maximum of three objectives in bullet points.	1. Strengthen community networks and social cohesion by opening care and social service infrastructure to local neighbourhoods. 2. Improve equitable access to social services, community spaces, and support for people of all ages. 3. Foster resilient and inclusive neighbourhoods through cross-sector partnerships, shared resources, and intergenerational activities.
<u>Activities:</u> Please describe the activities put in place to achieve the objectives (maximum 400 words).	Häuser zum Leben operates 30 care homes and 135 senior clubs across Vienna and uses this extensive network as community infrastructure serving both older people and wider neighbourhood populations. The organisation provides low-threshold access to multifunctional spaces, activities and subsidised meals, making services accessible to diverse population groups. Through its neighbourhood-focused initiatives (<i>Grätzöffnung</i>), care facilities and community spaces are opened to the neighbourhood and community organisations, encouraging participation and shared use of public infrastructure. Close collaboration takes place with schools, youth organisations, migrant communities, social service providers, district authorities, and municipal administrations. These partnerships help identify local priorities, co-design activities, and ensure services respond effectively to community needs. A range of social, cultural, and intergenerational activities is delivered through joint efforts within the care home facilities and local neighbourhoods. Shared use of spaces and resources helps create synergies between care, social, and administrative services while maximising the value of existing public infrastructure. Social space analyses are undertaken when facilities are developed, renovated, or adapted to ensure that the physical environment and services reflect local demographic trends, community needs, and urban challenges. Facilities are positioned as welcoming neighbourhood hubs that connect generations, services, and communities while contributing to broader goals relating to inclusion, quality of life, and community resilience.

<u>Outcomes:</u> <i>Please explain what the results were/are so far and how you evaluated this (i.e. statistics, a study, or feedback)</i>	Although no formal evaluation has yet been undertaken, early experience from the implementation phase suggests that the neighbourhood-oriented initiatives have improved access to community support and increased opportunities for social participation: • By opening care homes and senior clubs to the wider public, Häuser zum Leben has expanded opportunities for community members to use spaces, activities, or subsidised meals that were previously associated primarily with long-term care services. • These initiatives have helped position care facilities as welcoming community hubs reducing barriers and prejudices and creating more opportunities for interaction and exchange between care home residents and people in the neighbourhood. • The focus on collaboration between social services, public administration, and local organisations strengthens coordinated planning of activities. Social space analyses carried out during the development and renovation of facilities have supported better alignment between local needs and the services provided, helping to maximise the community value of public infrastructure. Potential indicators for measuring longer-term outcomes include increased use of facilities by diverse neighbourhood groups, greater participation in community activities, increased uptake of low-threshold services and subsidised meals, growth in the number of local partnerships, and higher levels of shared space use by external organisations. Qualitative measures include improved perceptions of accessibility and inclusion, reduced feelings of social isolation, a stronger sense of belonging among community members, and greater recognition of care homes as open and integral parts of neighbourhood life.
<u>Funding Source</u>	EU Funds: ESF+ ☐ INTERREG ☐ ERDF ☐ ERASMUS ☐ RRF ☐ other ☐ ☐ National Government Funds ☐ Regional Government Funds ☐ Local Government Funds ☐ Private Sponsorship / Public-Private Partnership ☐ Financial contribution of People using Services ☒ Other, please define: Existing organisational resources (designed to be largely cost-neutral).
<u>Links to supporting documents:</u> <i>e.g. project website or report of the practice, articles</i>	Welcome to the good new times! - Pensionist*innenklubs Welcome to our Häuser zum Leben! - Häuser zum Leben
<u>Comments and tips</u> <i>i.e. for people willing to implement your</i>	Community Care is a cultural change within residential care facilities. It is essential to involve residents and staff from the beginning, to address concerns and to communicate clear and tangible benefits. We must build acceptance before

<i>Practice in their service</i>	expansion. Community Care succeeds when residents and staff feel safe and experience positive outcomes themselves.
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