

1<sup>th</sup> DASH REPORT  
Introduction to & training in transdisciplinary research

WP2  
***Copenhagen, Aalborg University***

27.02 – 01.03.2023

# “DASH”

Deliver sAfe and Social Housing



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## Introduction

*Background of this training and notes on deliverables D2.1 and D2.2.*

This training was organized as part of the EU MSCA-funded Network: DASH. It was the first workshop within the funding period, hosted by Aalborg university in Copenhagen.

Deliver sAfe and Social Housing - DASH is a EU funded project under the scheme of HORIZON-MSCA granted for 48 months. It centers around safe and social housing as an important point of reference for an improved livelihood and a more socially sustainable future.

Recent decades have seen increasing social inequalities, more diverse demographic patterns, and changing preferences for many cities across Europe, with growing regional differences in housing needs across Member States. Overall however, the existing housing systems and housing types are challenged. Therefore, this secondment program seeks to investigate new and innovative ways of delivering safe and social housing across four countries: Germany, Denmark, Serbia, and Portugal. The four national Consortia includes representatives from academia, municipality and civil society (DK: Aalborg University, Himmerland Boligforening, Aalborg Kommune; DE: University of Stuttgart, Universitätsstadt Tübingen, Dachgenossenschaft Wohnen Tübingen e.V.; PT: Instituto de Ciencias Sociais, Camara Municipal de Evora, Cooperative Integral Manga CRL.; SRB: Geografski Institut Jovan Civic SANU, Gradska Stambena Agencija, Udruzenje Urbanista Srbije)

The main objectives of this first meeting were 1) internal coordination and methodological frame on how to jointly do transdisciplinary research. All participants participated in a joined training and reflective workshop. Here the aim was to provide a joint understanding of the methodology in the project; through lectures and training partners shared and improved their skills for the co-productive approach as well as other empirical methods (D2.1). And 2) To get to know each other as a new consortium. This report is in fulfillment of the deliverable D2.2. The training was hosted by Aalborg University in Copenhagen and facilitated by University of Stuttgart in fulfillment of WP 2.

## *Agenda of the Workshop*

### **Agenda**

#### **27/2:**

- 13:00 Welcome /Lunch at Aalborg University (see location below/more details will follow)
- 14:00 Info about DASH
- 15:00 Get to know each other
- 16:00 **Input:** What is a transdisciplinary approach? What does it imply (Knowledge/skills)? Interdisciplinary / Intercultural/Outlook of the trainings during this meeting
- 17:30 End
- 19:00 Joint dinner
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#### **28/2:**

- 9:00 **Training 1:** Joint problem framing (working in country groups/mapping the problem around delivering safe and sustainable housing.)
- 11:00 **Input:** Affordable housing
- 12:00 Lunch
- 13:30 Excursion/ Walk
- 15:00 **Training 2:** Building a common vocabulary/understanding around delivering safe and sustainable housing -> Overview of the next steps in DASH.
- 17:00 End
- 19:00 joint dinner
- 

#### **01/3:**

- 9:00 **Training 3:** Bridging different knowledge and interests / Knowledge co-production
- 12:00 Wrap up
- 13:00 Lunch and good bye

## Workshop Results

DAY 1 – Introduction to DASH and to transdisciplinary research (a methodological framework).

As a first step, the EU Project Officers and the local staff introduced the rules for the MSCA program in general and for the DASH secondments more specifically. This raised a couple of structural challenges that need to be solved in terms of distribution and accessibility to the received funding.

- ➔ It was decided that the PO and the Danish team will develop and circulate a suggestion on how to solve this challenge after the first workshop.

As a second step, Josefine Fokdal facilitated a first get to know each other exercise targeting the different lived experiences, disciplinary backgrounds and expectations to DASH.

Finally, the first thematic **input** on what a transdisciplinary approach is and what it implies was given by Josefine Fokdal. The aim of the presentation was to set a common understanding of what a transdisciplinary approach is and how co-productive processes may look like. This was especially important due to the intersectoral DASH consortium including representatives from local municipalities, for civil society and from academia.

- ➔ The presentation was shared among all participants as a common reference frame. Also first ideas of how to collaborate under a joint methodological framing within the DASH program were discussed.

## DAY 2 – Joint problem framing and building a common language

### Training 1 (facilitated by University of Stuttgart): Joint problem framing

The aim of the first training session is to establish a joint problem framing within the national consortia and to share that with the rest of the participants within a common learning process where focus is on getting to know the different contexts and identifying cross cutting issues.

Each of the national consortia worked separately in order to identify the most pressing challenges to their local context in relation to delivering safe and social housing and to priorities which main challenges to focus on within DASH.

#### Serbia:

To establish joint problem framing, the group from Serbia considered both local (City of Čačak) and national scale challenges and opportunities in delivering safe and affordable housing. As agreed, the findings of the discussion are presented with the help of the SWOT matrix, shown below:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Established city housing agency (Čačak) authorized for social housing provision and management</li><li>• Experience in working with different vulnerable groups of social housing beneficiaries</li><li>• Social housing is mixed with market housing and other functions</li><li>• Long term experience in implementing a variety of housing programs with different beneficiaries, distribution and organization schemes</li><li>• Developed city/municipal housing strategies initiating a bottom-up and trans-disciplinary approach</li><li>• Network of NGOs involved in social housing advocacy and cooperative establishment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mismatch between available social housing units and housing needs</li><li>• Rental social housing is not affordable for the most vulnerable (with low- or no-income); households' arrears on rental payment and utility costs</li><li>• Lack of data and research on housing needs and conditions, including lack of evaluation of social housing schemes implemented so far</li><li>• Urban planning policy sporadically addresses social housing, i.e. zones/locations for social housing are rarely determined by urban plans</li><li>• Lack of horizontal and vertical coordination and weak inter-sector cooperation among actors</li><li>• Private sector is not involved in social housing provision</li></ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Law on housing and maintenance of buildings includes regulation of housing support, i.e. social housing</li><li>• Standards for planning and designing new social housing units advanced compared to average market housing</li><li>• Initiated national programs on energy efficiency to increase housing quality and reduce housing costs</li><li>• International funds available for the most vulnerable (EU-IPA pre-accession)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Extremely low percentage of public housing, around 1% of total housing stock (due to rapid privatization).</li><li>• Lack of national housing policy framework</li><li>• Frail care of the authorities (state and local) in providing housing for people with low and middle incomes; lack of long-term budget lines channeled into the public rental housing</li><li>• Increasing market segmentation and affordability problems</li></ul>

funds, RHP, International development agencies...)

- Small and unregulated rental sector (unsafe for both tenants and owners); difficulties in housing affordability also stem from the scarcity and high cost of rental housing units
- Demographic decline, unbalanced urbanization and asymmetric urban system

### Germany:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• German planning system and legal framework allows for regulation of about 30% of new-built housing</li> <li>• Local bylaws set rules for developers</li> <li>• Established municipal land management processes</li> <li>• Established cooperative development processes for new urban quarters</li> <li>• Strong local project management skills for co-housing projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large existing stock of private non-regulated housing</li> <li>• Very little developable land left in possession of municipality</li> <li>• Housing market cannot be influenced significantly by new-built projects</li> <li>• Municipal tradition of supporting co-housing projects in the form of home owner associations (individual private property)</li> <li>• Little tradition of addressing existing private home owners as part of affordability strategies</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National funding for social housing (rent-controlled and tenant-specific) available</li> <li>• Variety of local housing actors with long-term affordability as objective</li> <li>• Strong local culture of independently or self-organized co-housing projects, including securing private finance</li> <li>• Existing housing stock largely underused due to demographic change (single elderly in large family homes)</li> <li>• Growing need for elderly care offers opportunity for housing swaps/more efficient use of existing homes</li> <li>• Special funding programs allow new establishment of social housing in existing housing stock</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong preference for individual home ownership</li> <li>• high demand for housing allows for steady rent increases by private home owners</li> <li>• Renting individual rooms to students far more attractive than offering affordable rents for families</li> <li>• Rising construction and financing costs make new-built housing unaffordable, even with large social housing subsidies</li> <li>• Inertia of private home owners in regard to moving to new housing with better elderly care</li> <li>• No subsidies to bridge the “rent Gap” when moving to smaller, more adequate new built housing with care elements</li> </ul>

### Portugal:

As suggested, in order to establish a joint problem framing, Portugal’s group briefly discussed, presenting the following SWOT analysis:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
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- Multidisciplinary team looking upon public housing projects
- Good examples on housing associations and cooperatives ( self-organizing for housing production and management with public support at different levels:
  - access to architecture
  - access to land
- local housing strategy proactive attitude approaching all the stakeholders:
  - attempt to a transdisciplinary formulation of strategy
- Tradition of centralized public production and management
- Mismatch between dwelling size and housing composition
- Attempt to develop urgent and reactive response that tackle
- lack of articulation of different actors:
  - national
  - local
- Aiming more vulnerable groups
- Public investment that is entering private market
- New housing projects driven by cost (money) and not quality of living

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding available (PRR - NextGeneration EU)</li> <li>• Consensus at a national level regarding the housing emergency (including middle class)</li> <li>• new national housing law (for the first time!) and a new pack of policies aiming to tackle different challenges</li> <li>• reignite and improve past experiences on cooperative and co-housing</li> <li>• using models that don't allow privatization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short timeline for the housing (PRR - NextGeneration EU - 2026)</li> <li>• not tackling the most vulnerable and supporting just middle class</li> <li>• housing speculation due to tourism policies</li> <li>• lack of available land [bureaucracy (heavy bureaucratic processes to achieve state support)]</li> </ul>

### Denmark:

The Danish team's swat analysis identified the following points of attention regarding the social housing sector in Denmark:

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Building Fund (ensures new social housing (SH) and maintenance of existing housing)</li> <li>• Social housing for all but with possibilities to help vulnerable groups</li> <li>• Large section: a high proportion of the total housing stock (28% social housing in Aalborg)</li> <li>• Local political support (Social democrats have been supporting in Aalborg)</li> <li>• High housing standards</li> <li>• Still mostly positive attitude towards social housing</li> <li>• Residents' democracy</li> <li>• Flex and combined letting</li> <li>• SH depends on good cooperation between municipality and housing organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard to build SH during financial booms</li> <li>• Local political priorities can hinder new SH</li> <li>• Social problems in some areas</li> <li>• Significant differences in the attractiveness, "price" and location - also related to the year of construction. This creates segregations within the sector</li> <li>• "Parallel Society Law" challenge residents' democracy.</li> <li>• Flex and combined letting</li> <li>• SH depends on good cooperation between municipality and housing organization</li> </ul>

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Parallel Society Law”: tool for regeneration</li> <li>• Becoming of part of the welfare solution</li> <li>• Possibilities for municipality to demand 25% SH in new built areas.</li> <li>• Experimental approaches</li> <li>• Positive stories and international recognition</li> <li>• Diversity funds</li> <li>• Flex and combined letting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Parallel Society Law challenge residents’ democracy.</li> <li>• “Parallel Society Law challenge reputation of the sector</li> <li>• Less funds for housing sector</li> <li>• Affordable social housing occupied by people with funds</li> <li>• Government imposes cuts on municipalities = prioritization</li> <li>• SH too expensive to build in large cities (new built housing is not affordable)</li> </ul>

Each of the workgroups presented their mapping and joint problem framing to the rest of the participants as a kick off for discovering and discussing cross cutting issues.

- ➔ Cross cutting issues identified were:
  - EU regulations are a challenge on the local level.
  - A differentiation between existing housing and new housing needs to be made
  - The quality of housing both on the building scale and the urban scale should be in focus
  - Level of participation / residence democracy is a cross cutting issue
  - Shared understanding that achieving mixed use neighborhoods should be the aim
  - Diverse roles of different actors across the delivery process (Planning, constructing, maintaining, upgrading).
  - We need to answer the question: Housing for whom?
  
- ➔ The common understand that context matters and we need to share knowledge on the different contexts to fully grasp the diversity of the housing challenges represented within DASH.

Following the first training that revealed the diversity of local conditions and understandings of what safe and social housing is, Gideon Bolt delivered an **input** on affordable housing in the Netherlands.

- ➔ The presentation sparked a discussion of what we understand as and how we define affordability.

In the afternoon, the group of participants was first introduced to the local context of Copenhagen during an excursion to the south harbor led by Jacob Norvig Larsen (Aalborg University, Copenhagen). The existing housing stock and surroundings in the south harbor have experienced upgrading during the last decade. In addition to building qualities (existing housing stock and new constructions) more intangible issues like stigmatization and poverty were discussed.

- ➔ A deep understanding of local context increases the potential for creating a common language and shared perspectives on the challenges around delivering safe and social housing.

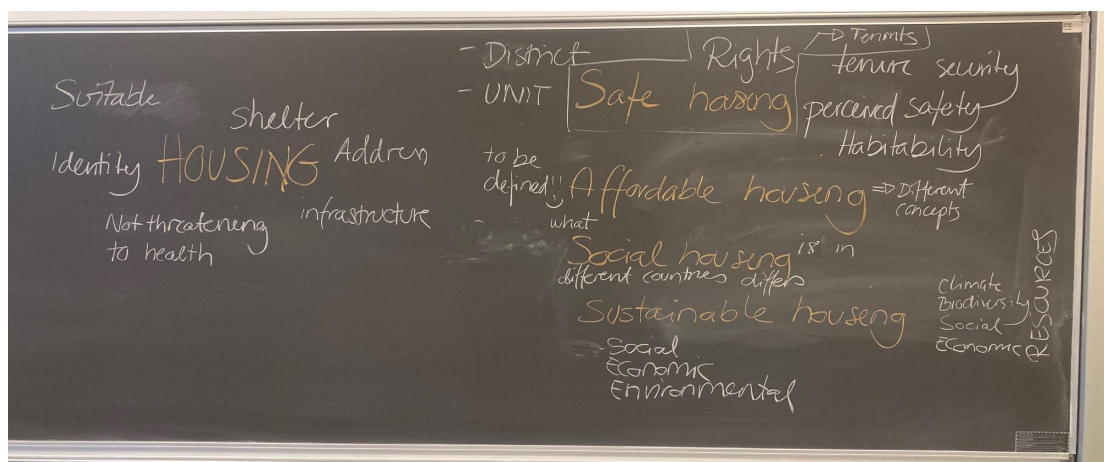
### Training 2 (facilitated by University of Stuttgart): Building a common vocabulary.

Aim of the second training session was to start defining and building a common language. This need had become even more urgent as the diversity of contexts, cultures and discourses became obvious throughout the workshop.

Based on the first training and the identified cross-cutting issues, we started out by identify common focal points:

- Cost and funding schemes. What does a financially feasible model look like?
- Focus not only on new constructions but also on existing housing stock
- Investigating alternative ways of delivering affordable housing
  - Tenure
  - Ownership
  - Typologies
  - Facilities
  - Etc.
- Mapping regulations on different levels (including EU) and making a contribution in form of recommendations how to potentially adapt.
- Investigating rights
- Mapping the diversity of actors and understanding power relations
- Addressing quality on the build scale, the urban scale as well as in terms of social services and infrastructure.
- Investigating and comparing which models of distribution of tenants are represented in the different DASH countries.

Following, keywords (e.g., social, sustainable, affordable, etc.) from the presentations in training 1 and from the general discussions were discussed.



- ➔ We will create a common understanding of social housing during the project.
- ➔ Literature review / Survey to be conducted and presented during the next meeting.

## DAY 3 – Co-production of knowledge and wrap up

**Training 3:** (jointly facilitated by University of Stuttgart and University Aalborg) Co-production of knowledge. Here the aim was to focus on what and how we will co-produce knowledge on different levels within DASH. One of the co-productive methods that will be used for the future thematic hubs “future workshops” was presented in the lecture on the first day and further guidelines will be distributed. Based on the previous training and defined common interests, it was decided to work in groups based on backgrounds (i.e. academia, NGOs, and municipalities).

The aim was to define what type of outcomes would be relevant for each of the different groups of actors represented within DASH.

### Academia:

The group of researchers briefly discussed different approaches to research (quantitative/qualitative) and associated data, and then discussed the different interests in the group. These interests are listed below:

#### *Built environment*

- Vacant dwellings
- Urban regeneration (physical, avoiding standardization)
- Urban planning standards for social housing buildings and complexes (land and building norms, social and municipal infrastructure provision)
- Principles and practice of planning and designing environmentally responsible and resource-efficient social housing

#### *Policies*

- Regulation (which must be done at the national level, municipal level tries to tackle what the central level isn't doing, but have very limited power for that)
- Local strategies related to social and affordable housing
- Understanding how practices of social housing may contribute to a wider political project

#### *Living conditions*

- Relative and absolute affordability – how to look at relative affordability
- Housing quality (how to measure, what are the standards)
- Demographic characteristics, social mix and differentiation within broader areas encompassing existing and planned social housing in a comparative framework

#### *Other related questions:*

- How to invert the trends of high homeownership rates?
- How intersectoral cooperation works in practice?

### Municipalities / NGOs:

This exercise was done jointly by NGO's and Municipalities. The group briefly discussed to establish a joint problem framing within the practicalities and constraints of those who work in delivering safe and sustainable housing. The discussion resulted on the following topics:

- Understand better the realities at different sectors and scales
- How can the local level cooperate with NGOs to provide housing, create more sustainable and social housing.
- How to create/ensure a sense of community
- Tackle the need for housing (not exactly new construction) in a limited financed system
- The relationship between the actors (EU, central government, local level, private and cooperative sectors)
- The need for developing a joint understanding of the general workings of housing and land markets, such as the role of land value increases
- Formulating adequate regulatory and funding demands for each level of government, including the EU level.

Based on this exercise, the common question within transdisciplinary research of ownership of data and knowledge arose. Here it is important to define how to deal with co-production of knowledge and data when it comes to delivering outcomes. Especially for early career researchers, who might be in their PhD process, this is highly relevant.

### **Wrap up and overview of the next steps in DASH**

- ➔ Location and date for the next meeting was defined (Denmark, end of August).
- ➔ A joint digital platform will be established by the Danish team, taking into consideration data protection requirements of partners.
- ➔ Future secondments were agreed upon.

### **Concluding remarks and outlook**

Projects partners set a methodological frame of how to jointly do transdisciplinary research, and developed an initial common language und understanding of the project and key concepts. The workshop facilitated internal coordination, offered training and opportunities for joint reflection, and provided spaces for getting to know each other. This has created a solid foundation for starting the secondment phase of the project and co-producing knowledge together. Project partners developed first ideas for secondments, and some secondments starting as early as April 2023 were already agreed upon. Furthermore, work on first internal outputs regarding the methodology and common understanding discussed during the workshop has begun.