

**JOURNAL
PROJECT**

home and care

📍 Landshut, Germany

TOPIC

Urban poverty

The UIA project "home & care" in the transition from the project idea to the actual implementation - JOURNAL 2

[See on UIA website](#)EDIT 27 FEBRUARY 2023
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The "home & care project" aims to support single mothers and their children by securing employment opportunities and tackling social exclusion as well as child poverty. In 2017 there were 1.5 million single parents with minor dependents in Germany. Based on information from the Landshut job center, 394 single parents in the City of Landshut received state transfer payments. Of these, 240 have one child and 111 two children (status September 2018). The group of single parents thereby represents 21% of all benefit recipients. At the same time, around 100 single mothers in nursing, healthcare and care professions could immediately find employment in Landshut, if child care was available in the necessary hours. Taking into account that working hours in care, health care and child care professions are very often outside the traditional opening hours for child care centers, the main challenge lies in providing tailor-made child care so that employment and training opportunities for single parents can be expanded. By approaching this challenge, an important first step shall be made in removing the specified groups of individuals and their children from the poverty trap.

Partnership

- City of Landshut
- Kinderstiftung "Zukunft für alle Kinder" - NGO
- Heilig-Geistspitalstiftung Landshut - NGO
- ZAK e.V. Landshut - NGO
- Klinikum Landshut - private company
- LAKUMED - private company
- University of Applied Sciences Landshut
- Fachakademie für Sozialpädagogik der Schulstiftung Seligenthal - Training center

Executive Summary

Since the beginning of the project, we have been working towards this goal. After the long preparation phase, the new home has now been built. All the difficulties in the planning and realization of the new building have been overcome and with the move-in of the new residents this important part of the project has come to a successful end. A sufficient number of people declared their willingness to take part in this new way of living and working together. Many questions concerning the construction, the financing, the finding of suitable residents and the organization of the living together were addressed. It is evident that there is a high demand among single mothers,

- for affordable housing,
- for childcare services, and

- for the possibility to better combine professional care work and flexible childcare outside the usual opening hours.

Before the new residents could move in, many challenges had to be overcome. These affected all levels of the project and could only be overcome with the combined efforts of the entire network. Global economic developments during and after the pandemic made construction costs more expensive, and construction was repeatedly delayed due to disrupted supply chains.

In short, however, it can be said that the central project goal was achieved with the completion of the new home & care building. The other big question, whether people would take up this offer, could be answered just as positively. Walking through the building, it quickly becomes clear how great the need is for affordable housing for people with low incomes and how urgently new solutions are needed, especially for single parents, to consider jobs, housing, and childcare together. In this respect, home & care provides a stimulus for reflection, a stimulus for new solutions and a place to learn from people who under difficult conditions want to be good mothers. People who want and need to combine being a mother with the demands of the working world in order to be able to provide for themselves and their children.

State of the Art

Introduction to the challenge addressed

With the completion of the new building, the moving in of the residents and the start of the various forms of childcare, a new phase has begun. For the residents, this move to the home & care building means a complete change. It is not only a new apartment, but also the beginning of a new way of living. In addition to the new apartment and new way of living together, for some it is also the beginning of a new job in nursing or elderly care. For the children of single mothers who are not of school age, it is also a new form of care in day care or with a childminder during working hours when the mother has to work late shifts. It is now also possible to observe the extent to which childcare services are being used.

For the home & care coordination team and the participating partners of the UIA network, the phase of giving professional advice and support to this new form of living, working and childcare as well as learning from the experience gained now begins. It is necessary to master the challenges of living together and to recognize conflicts between the residents at an early stage and to solve them in a participatory manner. There is still the responsibility to further develop the qualifications of the childcare staff, as there is still a high demand for skilled workers in childcare.

Where does the project stand in December 2022?

The new home & care building is currently home to 20 families, i.e., 20 single mothers with 24 children. There are 16 only children and 8 with brothers and sisters. In terms of age, the children can be divided into:

- 7 children of crèche age,
- 5 kindergarten children and
- 12 children attending school.

15 families have a migration background. At home & care 32 childcare places are offered by childminders, so that 10 children are cared for who also live there and an additional 22 children from the neighbourhood are accepted for care by childminders. The integration of children from the neighbourhood is a very important aspect for the sustainability of the project. Success depends not only on how the cooperation and coexistence within home & care works, but also on the acceptance of the facility by the people who live in the neighbourhood. Home & care is in the midst of the challenge of integrating the new building and the new residents into the neighbourhood and ensuring the opportunity of the new residents to meet those who have lived there longer and vice versa. This is to counteract any form of stigmatization and to ensure that the new home & care centre is perceived and accepted as part of the provision of social infrastructure in the district.

UIA Implementation Challenges

The table below displays an overview of the UIA challenges in this second journal and what they mean in the context of the home and care project, by means of a traffic-light color code.

Challenge

Observation

Leadership
Challenge level



The city of Landshut runs the project with a fully staffed project coordination team, the fully established structures and some political backing. The city administration's unclear perception of the project management and lack of leadership has an effect on project in the sense of unclear sustainability.

After a suitable structure for project implementation was developed in 2020, the subsequent focus was put on developing meaningful processes that could ensure the success of the project. In a comprehensive process, the project coordination team found its own role in the process and coordinated the project in a participative manner with the other project partners. Increasingly, this coordination function is also recognized by the other project partners.

A repressive factor is the unclear perception of the "home & care" project management by the higher management of the city of Landshut. For example, the city leadership failed to be present in a meeting with the UIA contact person on site. There is a lack of strategic leadership. The project management can currently only be expected to answer the most pressing questions in the course of the process. It would be desirable for the "home & care" project management to be more involved in related administrative procedures to provide impetus and to act as a gatekeeper to various areas of administration and politics that are dealt with in the project. The coordination effort within the project management team is high. This creates uncertainties in the coordination team and vis-à-vis the project partners. For example, the concrete strategic direction of the city of Landshut with regard to a sustainable use of the project results is unclear so far.


Public procurement
Challenge level



With the completion of the "home & care" building, the public procurement process is complete.

The construction of the home & care building played an enormous role in the past process steps, public procurement is by and large completed with the completion of the building. It became apparent that for this type of project, under the conditions of public procurement and the resources of local authorities, it was not possible to find a contractor who was prepared to take on all the services in the sense of a general contractor. It is unclear whether this is due to the local conditions in Bavaria or the current economic upheavals, or whether it is a general phenomenon regarding public construction projects. The local response was a move away from a single-source solution and the associated division of the overall contract into several subcontracts. These specific tenders in turn led to the desired success of finding bidders who were then ultimately able to fulfil the subservices.


Cross-department
working

Challenge level 

The conceptual plans for cross-department cooperation between the project management and other departments involved have so far only been partially successful.

In discussions with the project coordination team, it becomes clear that there is, positively seen, a functioning cooperation with parts of the administration. For example, cooperation works very well with the Youth Welfare Office, for example, in the question of how to organize childcare. In other areas, it is much more difficult for the coordination team to establish effective cooperation as the "home and care" staff unit is located outside of the regular structures. In the assessment of the cross-department working there is in part an administrative fear of decision-making and a diffusion of responsibility, that is complicated by the deficiencies in city leadership as described above. For example, when it comes to clarifying the amount of rent and drawing up rental agreements, major challenges arose as to who is actually responsible for this and who takes on the technical responsibility.


Participative approach

Challenge level 

There have been major positive changes in this area. The involvement of project partners is now much less conflictual and more goal-oriented. Concrete agreements between the partners are very useful. The involvement of the target groups continues to be a challenge.

Contrary to the negative assessment in the last journal, there has been a clear change for the better in this area. The project partners have succeeded in seeing themselves as a network and the project coordination has succeeded in bundling different interests and opinions in the project partnership. A major success is that employers and social organizations involved in the project were able to resolve conflicts in the project development in such a way that a common understanding could emerge and trust could be built. The way in which partners in the project work together, who would otherwise never have engaged in such cooperation and in such a structured way, is to be emphasized in a particularly positive way. Involving the residents in the organization of the day-to-day living is still an existing challenge. There is a clear need to develop an organizational structure that enables the participation of residents living and working in the "home & care" house. Likewise, a strategic participation of the people who are neighbors of the "home & care" house should be established. In some cases, neighbors have children that are looked after in the "home & care" house. The people in the neighborhood are enormously important in the task of anchoring the house as part of the neighborhood.

Monitoring and
evaluation

Challenge level 

There has been a lot of progress in this area. The difficulties with scientific monitoring have been solved and integration into the "home & care"-network is now working.

After a change in personnel in the scientific monitoring team, a working cooperation was established with the Landshut University of Applied Sciences in which the agreed procedures can finally be implemented. The cooperation is perceived as useful by the project partners and enables the establishment of an atmosphere of trust. The frequent personnel changes in the scientific support team had a negative effect, making continuity in the cooperation more difficult.

Communication

Challenge level



Comprehensive communication channels have been established by the project management team. Internal communication within the project partnership and public relations take now place on a regular basis.

With the filling of the communication position in the coordination team, a functioning communication was established. An internal newsletter from the coordination team to the project partners was set up. Likewise, instruments such as small video clips were developed to provide information to the public and to attract the target groups, for example.

Upscaling

Challenge level



With further progress of the project, first lessons learned for upscaling can be drawn despite this being a continuous challenge. Whether the home and care house can exist in this form beyond the end of the project is still open.

With the increased cooperation of the project partners, the project network came together more strongly. Previous difficulties in cooperation, for example between the interests and expectations of the employers of the single mothers and the social agencies that supported the mothers in coping with their social challenges, could be solved through intensive discussions. Now all project partners emphasize that they were not only able to broaden their own experience as the project progressed, but also learned to better understand the other partners through regular exchange about the possibilities and limitations of the other project partners. A new quality of cooperation has emerged. Here, the city administration and local politics could learn a lot in order to solve existing problems in other topic areas as well as through networked communication and intensive cooperation.

Conclusive perspectives

After the successful opening of the "home & care" house in September 2022 and the residents moved in, the creation of a strong bond between residents as well as the improvement of the functioning of the day care center for children is the next step. Every form of cooperation and coexistence generates conflicts. It remains to be seen whether the complex project can successfully address these conflicts. In addition, the challenge to equally involve and facilitate between all involved parties - the people who either live in the new house, work there or live in its neighborhood- remains. The city of Landshut has not yet sufficiently recognized the value of this project and does not use the lessons learned to improve its own administration and to create new opportunities for childcare and for disadvantaged people in Landshut like the target group of single parents. If the lack of strategic leadership in the project management is not remedied, it remains unclear how the results will be sustainably used in the future.

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