



Best Practice: Urban Planning to Support Seniors

REPORT UPDATED: MAY 18, 2010

CITY: VIENNA

POLICY AREA: SOCIAL SERVICES

BEST PRACTICE

In 2005, the Municipal Department for Urban Development and Planning (MA 18) of the City of Vienna took the lead in developing a research project entitled "sALTo" to study how the City can assist residents in growing older with dignity and independence in their local neighborhoods. The information gathered has enabled the City to formulate urban plans and policies, as well as preventative health programs for mobile seniors.

ISSUE

The sALTo project was developed to direct attempts to research new political and social approaches towards how individuals and society as a whole can cope with aging. The focus was placed on elderly residents who were still mobile.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The stakeholders' goal was to develop, implement and evaluate exemplary measures to address issues of demographic change at the community level. The measures were discussed in terms of how they enable the elderly to mentally and physically age in a self-determined and healthy way. The long-term goal was to identify standards for integrating aspects of health and demographic change into urban planning.

In developing social policies and programs for elderly residents, the City of Vienna set out to answer the following questions:

- How can the city help support elderly residents live independently in their neighborhoods for a longer period of time?
- What do residents and immigrant residents need in order to lead an active life as they age?
- What programs and activities are critical for the seniors to achieve the highest quality of life possible?

IMPLEMENTATION

The project name, "sALTo," refers to a combination of the German words "sal" which means "to flip" and the word "alt" which means old.

sALTo was conducted in two Vienna neighborhoods - one with approximately 21,000 and the other with 10,000 residents. Both neighborhoods have a relatively high percentage of residents 60 years old or older. The neighborhoods were selected based on a comprehensive survey conducted by the City of Vienna in 2006.

In 2005, 30% of the first neighborhoods' residents were 60 years and older; by 2020 this percentage is expected to decrease to 22%. In the second neighborhood, the percentage of residents 60 years and older will rise from 16% to 24% between 2005 and 2020. The average percentage of residents 60 years or older in Vienna is 22% both in 2005 and predicted for 2020.

The sALTo project was developed based on the concept of "Vitalbilanz" or "life balance" and included the development of the following two structural components:

- A "Vitalbilanz" map of the neighborhood highlighting what services and activities are offered in fields such as exercise, nutrition, mental fitness, etc. The map was developed based on an existing tool created by the health department.
- Gender network entitled, "gender star": The purpose of this tool is to visualize the effects of measures on different target groups, making it easier to assess and discuss measures and their potential effects.

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The concept of Vitalbilanz focuses on a holistic approach in which the following five aspects are studied in regard to urban planning: intellect, energy, nutrition, exercise, and the environment. Qualitative interviews with local experts provided insight into the resources and potential of the respective neighborhood. Street interviews and explorative walks rounded off the analysis.

A set of measures was developed and in negotiations with stakeholders, the most suitable measures were chosen and implemented in two phases. The first set of measures were implemented during the summer of 2007. The second set were implemented in winter 2007/2008. All measures took into account gender equality as well.

Working groups were established in which residents and representatives from local institutions and administrative bodies came together to develop ideas for action steps and to form cooperative teams to implement them.

Examples of sALTo measures implemented in the two neighborhoods:

- interactive maps have been used as a tool for analysis and intervention and helps individuals in their everyday life
- sALTo postcards featuring "100 reasons to get out and about"
- "Telephone chain" – at defined intervals, participants call one another in an agreed upon order, to ask how the other parties is doing and what plans they have for that day
- "Generation bench" – benches along the streets for people to sit down and rest or put down their shopping bags make it easier for older or less mobile persons to remain mobile and independent

Research Categories

In cooperation with local institutions and local community based organizations, preventive measures were developed according to the specific needs of the target areas. For example, the project has enabled the use of different approaches to elderly care within the health sector. Special attention was given to differing aspects of gender and cultural backgrounds. The project has achieved increased cooperation between local and strategic stakeholders in the field of inter-generational neighborhood management and has created a number of activities to strengthen the social balance of the neighborhood.

As mentioned, the long-term goal and perspective of sALTo is to collect ideas, quality standards and guidelines regarding demographic change into urban and social planning. To improve the living conditions of elderly people, the outcomes of the action research project sALTo are used to rethink current administrative structures.

The following specific categories have been studied via the sALTo project:

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

- Gender roles and responsibilities
- Gender specific needs
- Women's empowerment
- Access to resources
- Control of resources (Legislation)
- Removing barriers to equity (Ethnicity)
- Social integration (Women's safety)
- Prevention of abuse of immigrants/migrants

Urban and Regional Planning

- Localizing Agenda 21, a United Nations sustainable development program
- Capital investment programming
- Budgeting
- Community-based planning

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- Urban renewal
- Conflict management and mediation
- Consultative processes
- Regional planning (Regional resource planning)
- Metro/urban-wide planning
- Cultural heritage/conservation planning
- Strategic planning
- Planning regulations
- Urban-rural linkages

Older Persons

- Safe/accessible dwelling design
- Participation
- Health
- Employment and financial security
- Multi-generational activities
- Transportation

COST

The project was financed by the Municipal Department for Urban Development and Planning (MA 18) and the administrative group for Public Health and Social Affairs within the Department for Health Planning and Financial Management.

RESULTS AND EVALUATION

Continuous self-evaluation of the activities carried out by sALTo project partners have helped identify transferable lessons on the methodical and the strategic level. Research conducted for the sALTo project revealed the value in offering preventative health measures and programs to the elderly. The continuous application of the gender equality measures ensured the development of gender sensitive programs.

As a result of the sALTo project:

- Cooperation between urban planning and the health planning departments has increased.
- On the local level, groups were formed consisting of participants from different societal sectors (local politics, local organizations and institutions, NGOs, civil society).
- A working committee on inter-generational urban planning was established.
- Project measurements have been developed and implemented by the project team, residents, local institutions, and municipal departments according to the needs and demands formulated in group meetings.
- Residents offered recommendations for activities in targeted areas such as inter-generational games, gardening in public spaces, and restoration of benches in public spaces.
- The sALTo project managers developed the interactive map, intergenerational budgeting, an analysis tool called "gender-star," data transfer workshops, works for scientific advisors, and a web-info desk.

TIMELINE

The project timeframe was from November 2006 to May 2008.

2005 Contracted research team to study the quality of life in old age (providing evidence for pro-active

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measures)

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| 2006 | Established working committee on inter-generational urban planning |
| 2007 | Began dialogue with experts and stakeholders to ensure the involvement of the local response groups, following the establishment of local response groups |
| | Started measuring results and collecting data in target areas (first evaluations) |
| 2008 | Identified good practice elements for a case-book on guidelines (formulation of guidelines as transferable project outcome) |

LEGISLATION

Not applicable.

LESSONS LEARNED

The City of Vienna's sALTo project underscored the value of coordination between the urban planning and health planning departments. Without strong cooperation and the resulting synergies, the project would not have been possible. Finally, without empowering local residents and institutions, the project would not have been successful.

TRANSFERABILITY

The City of Vienna has won several international awards for the sALTo pilot project including:

- European Public Sector Award diploma from the Bertelsmann Foundation in recognition of efforts to modernize administrative structures;
- Recognized as a "Good Practice" by UN HABITAT Dubai Awards 2008;
- Commendation by the Austrian Administration in 2008 in the category of "focus on citizen relations in public administration."

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Facts and figures in this report were provided by the highlighted city agency to New York City Global Partners.