

Transnational Innovation Program on Homecare and Community-based Services

Germany; Bosnia and Herzegovina

This initiative is part of the Transnational Innovation Program within the Caring Communities project.

Shared Homes and Lives – SHAL

An intergenerational co-living model that connects generations through everyday life and turns simple housing into a community.

What it is and who it serves

Across many communities, two challenges often exist side by side but rarely meet: older people living alone with increasing care needs and young people struggling to access affordable housing.

Shared Homes and Lives (SHAL) is designed at the intersection of these realities. It creates a model where young people and elderly individuals share a home - not just as a practical arrangement, but as a structured form of mutual support. In exchange for affordable or non-monetary housing, young people provide daily assistance, companionship and a sense of presence that can make a critical difference in the lives of older residents.

What makes SHAL distinct is that it is not positioned as a single service, but as a framework that enables communities to organize these arrangements safely and sustainably. It transforms informal ideas of “living together” into a coordinated, supported and replicable model for intergenerational co-living.

Organization details

SHAL is being developed as a transnational initiative between partners in Germany and Bosnia and Herzegovina, combining different social, institutional and community-based perspectives.

The model is designed for implementation at the municipal level, bringing together public authorities, social organizations, educational institutions, volunteers and community stakeholders. This multi-actor approach ensures that co-living arrangements are not left to informal agreements, but are supported through clear structures, coordination mechanisms and institutional backing.

By bridging policy, community engagement and practical implementation, SHAL creates a system that is both adaptable to local contexts and grounded in a shared procedural framework.

Development stage

SHAL is currently in the ideation and development phase and has not yet entered implementation.

Results achieved so far:

The initiative has focused on building a strong foundation before moving into practice. A detailed procedural model has been developed to guide municipalities in initiating and managing intergenerational co-living projects.

This preparatory phase included the identification of key stakeholders and the definition of their roles, responsibilities and coordination mechanisms. Municipalities, social organizations, educational institutions and community actors have all been mapped as essential participants in the system.

At the same time, the core elements of the model have been outlined. These include legal frameworks, financial planning structures, trust-building mechanisms between participants and approaches to monitoring social impact.

An initial implementation pathway has also been defined, covering stakeholder engagement, local needs assessment and the structured setup of pilot initiatives in selected communities. Together, these elements ensure that SHAL is not only conceptually strong, but operationally ready for testing.

Future plans

The next step for SHAL is to move from model development to pilot implementation through the launch of intergenerational co-living projects in selected municipalities. This phase will test how the procedural model functions in real-life settings - from matching participants and establishing living arrangements to coordinating support structures around them.

A key priority during this stage will be building trust. Clear contractual frameworks, transparent expectations and well-prepared participants will be essential to ensuring that co-living arrangements are both safe and sustainable. Training for volunteers and coordinators will play an important role in supporting this process.

In parallel, the initiative will continue strengthening cooperation with municipalities, social organizations and community stakeholders, ensuring institutional support and alignment with local legal and social systems.

In the longer term, SHAL aims to scale the model across regions and countries, adapting it to different local contexts while maintaining its core principles. The ambition is to establish SHAL as a transferable approach that addresses not only ageing and housing challenges, but also broader questions of social cohesion - demonstrating how living together can become a structured and supported solution, rather than a coincidence.

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