Solidarity action in refugee housing: an example from Leipzig, Germany

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- H2020-funded to explore current expressions of solidarity in Europe from an inter-disciplinary approach
- 14 research teams from 12 countries in Europe
- Understand drivers and barriers of solidarity practice related to different state and policy sector traditions

Channelling solidarity actions

– third sector and social economy (TS/SE) organisations as transit zones for successful solidarity actions by way of collaboration with public actors and agencies in the fields of employment, education, health and housing

- combining co-production (as collaboration) and social and solidarity economy approaches, introducing reciprocity as additional layer in the understanding of solidarity

- Understanding the production of reciprocity as intertwined with political and institutional context, adding a democracy perspective

Research interest

–How does collaboration between public sector and TS/SE affect the promotion of personal autonomy and social justice?

–What is the nature of collaboration:
  • TS/SE as initiator/ co-designer/ co-implementor?

–Changing patterns of collaboration due to crisis?
  • drivers and barriers

Third sector/ social economy organisations

- Institutionally separate from government, a high degree of self-governance, TS/SE pursue a social mission. Profit-redistribution is significantly limited (Defourny & Nyssens, 2017)

- Hybrid orgnisations pursuing both market and non-market activities promote internal democratic mechanisms and interact strategically with their institutional environment (Nyssens & Petrella, 2015)

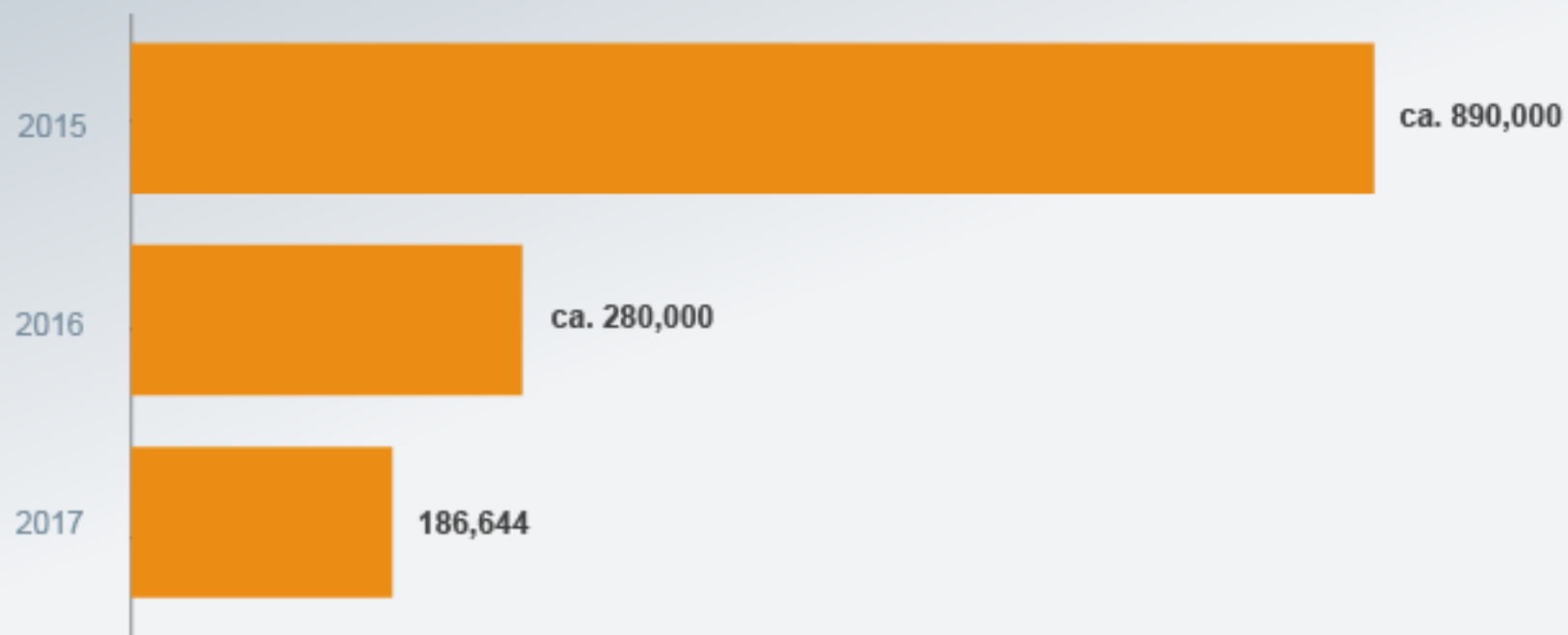# Social and Solidarity Economy approach

1. **Political dimension:** organisations voluntarily engaged in public action for common good, raising public awareness for problems and solutions, filling gaps left by welfare states – moving towards states enabling horizontal collaboration (Hulgård & Laville, 2016).

2. **Economic dimension:** self-managed and self-organised activity using multiple sources of income - redistribution, reciprocity, earned income, linking economy to autonomy in terms of changes in people's reality (Laville & Salmon, 2015).

3. **Social dimension:** activities to enhance the quality of life through recognition and inclusion, mobilising voluntary action (Enjolras, 2015).

Case Study: Kontakstelle Wohnen

- Initiator, co-designer or co-implementor: collaborative relationship
- Resources and contributions: democratic, economic, social
- Drivers and barriers

Number of registered asylum seekers in Germany

2015 — ca. 890,000

2016 — ca. 280,000

2017 — 186,644

Source: Stadt Leipzig, Sozialdezernat

History, Mission, way of working

Refugees in collective accommodation
(by year):
March 2018: 2.219
April 2017: 2.651
Januar 2016: 5.383

- Founded in spring 2016 by young left-wing and religious group
- Finding flats for refugees in Leipzig and region (805 as of September 2018)
- Fighting housing discrimination
- Staff and volunteer-run (70—100 'mentors')

Democratic dimension: Governance and collaboration

Governance:
- All staff part-time, some refugees, same salaries
- Federal Volunteer Service staff same voting rights
- Volunteer round-tables

Collaboration:
- Working with job center and social service
- Access policy round-tables and political parties
- Access to housing associations and landlord lobby groups

Economic dimension: Resources and outputs

Resources:
- Public and foundation funding (redistribution)
- Volunteers and networks (reciprocity)
- Award money

Outputs:
- Housing as spring board for education, employment and social integration

Social dimension: transformation at individual/ community/ societal levels

Individual level:
'I am not allowed to work, I am not allowed to move ... this is torture. Everybody was just depressed. Having my own place gave me more power to support others.'

Community level:
'Usually there is scepticism towards each other, but that's really a shame, as we see pretty good synergies. Each side has different contacts. I'd say, it's a reasonable marriage'

Drivers and barriers

Drivers:
- City needed help at peak of refugee arrival
- Coalition of multiple actors
- Easy mobilization of volunteers

Barriers:
- Hierarchical relationship with public administration, no trust relations
- Increasingly competitive housing market and discrimination
- Bureaucracy and short term project funding
- City contracts for collective accommodation

Conclusions

- *Kontakstelle* as initiator of a service
- Cross-sectorial relationship remains hierarchical
- Short-term funding and contract culture increases bureaucracy and hinders long-term collaborative planning
- Fundraising efforts deflect from social mission
- Collaboration must be win-win situation for public administration
- Positive recognition an feedback by most political parties
- Fostering individual autonomy through cross-departmental and cross-sectorial collaboration

Thank you

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