

Inequality and Poverty Assessment on Affordable Housing in Austria: A Comprehensive Perspective on SDG 1 and SDG 10 (UniNetZ Project)

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Abstract : Social and environmental pressures in our times bear threats that often cross-border in scale, such as climate change, poverty-driven migration, demographic change as well as socio-economic developments. One of the hot topics is prevailing in many societies across Europe and worldwide, concerns 'affordable housing' and poverty-driven international and domestic migration (including displacements through gentrification processes), focusing here on the urban and regional context. The right to adequate housing and shelter is one of the recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and as such considered as a human right of the second generation. The decreasing supply of affordable housing, especially in urban areas, has reached dimensions that have led to an increasing 'housing crisis'. This crisis, which has even reached middle-income homes, has an even more devastating impact on low income and poor households raising poverty levels. Therefore, the understanding of the connection between housing and poverty is vital to integrate and support the different stakeholders in order to tackle poverty. When it comes to issues of inequalities and poverty within the SDG framework, multi-faceted stakeholders with different claims, distribution of resources and interactions with other development goals (spill-over and trade-offs) account for a highly complex context. To contribute to a sustainable and fair society and hence to support the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the University of Salzburg participates in the Austrian-wide universities' network 'UniNetZ'. Our joint target is to develop an options report for the Austrian Government regarding the seventeen SDGs, so far hosted by 18 Austrian universities. In this vein, the University of Salzburg; i.e., the Centre for Ethics and Poverty Research, the departments of Geography and Geology and the Department of Sociology and Political Science are focusing on the SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Our target and research focus is to assess and evaluate the status of SDG 1 and 10 in Austria, to find possible solutions and to support stakeholders' integration. We aim at generating and deducing appropriate options as scientific support, from interdisciplinary research studies to 'Sustainability Developing Goals and their Targets' in action. For this reason, and to deal with the complexity of the Agenda 2030, we have developed a special Model for Inequalities and Poverty Assessment (IPAM). Through the example of 'affordable housing' we provide insight into the situation focusing on sustainable outcomes, including ethical and justice perceptions. The IPAM has proven to be a helpful tool in detecting the different imponderables on the Agenda 2030, assessing the situation, showing gaps and options for ethical SDG actions combining different SDG targets. Supported by expert and expert group interviews, this assessment allows different stakeholders to overview a complex and dynamic SDG challenge (here housing) which is necessary to be involved in an action finding process.

Keywords : affordable housing, inequality, poverty, sustainable development goals

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