Senior Living Together – a handbook about how to create and live in a housing community.

Many seniors have begun to think about how they can live well when they are older. More and more seniors are coming together in groups to create their own accommodation while they are still healthy and strong. But the process is unfamiliar, both for the senior groups and for the house builders, consultants and municipalities. Tools and techniques for group projects are lacking.

The aim has been to produce a handbook that can be used by seniors who want to create a senior cohousing, and by professionals in the housing companies, municipalities and consultants as well as by construction companies. The handbook provides knowledge and inspiration and functions as an aid in discussions regarding design and implementation. The handbook gives suggestions for group project time-plans, including key milestones, risks and opportunities. Emphasis will be placed on social content and the common parts of the community housing.

With the support of this handbook, seniors themselves will be able to discuss and formulate what is important, in order to work collaboratively to create their living, based on their own needs, wishes and dreams. A range of new options and models will thus be able to develop.

The handbook is based on the work experiences of both the Living in Community research group, and the cohousing association Framtiden, who are engaged in planning new collective houses for "the second half of life." There are additional contacts who have provided experiences include: the cohousing association Boihop in Gothenburg which works in a similar way to Framtiden, Cohousing Now (a nationwide association for all collective housing in Sweden) and Seniorhusföreningen in Karlskrona as well as personal contacts with completed and ongoing projects.

Fourteen existing senior housing communities are described from different aspects.

Denmark provides attractive experiences and examples of information aimed directly at seniors through the organization Ældre Sagen. Tutorials/handbooks are also available in Germany, the Netherlands and the United States. Conclusions are drawn from those and from research on group projects and collaborative housing for seniors.

The Living in Community research group is responsible for the development of the handbook with architects Ingela Blomberg and Kerstin Kärnekull as researchers and authors. The handbook will be published by AB Svensk Byggtjänst 2013.

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