




NATIONALE
STADT
ENTWICKLUNGS
POLITIK

The magazine of the National Urban
Development Policy's pilot projects
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stadt:pilot 13

- ▶ Where encounters take place
- ▶ What brings people together
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National Urban Development Policy:
A Joint Initiative of Federal, States and
Municipalities



In July 2017, the Schauspiel Köln theatre's pilot project "Seeing the City from the Other Side" culminated in its grand finale. A festival held under the title "The City of Tomorrow" brought all the processes and activities started over the project term together and dared to take a peek into the future. The focus here was on the project location of Mülheim and specifically on the Mülheim Bridge.

For four days, this was the location of the festival centre where locals, musicians, artists and urban planners engaged in discussions, partied, cooked together and mulled the question how the space of possibilities around the Mülheim Bridge could be redefined in the future.



Photo: Ana Lukenda

Introduction



Dear readers,

While more and more citizens in our country are leaving rural areas for the city, many people move here from all parts of the world. The make-up of the population in our cities and communities is changing. We are tasked with designing cities that are open, inclusive and socially equitable, where everyone can live contentedly and safely. This is all about the built environment, affordable housing, good school buildings and attractive public spaces. But perceiving cities in terms of their structures will not suffice alone. A school will not make for a good education all by itself, and a beautiful square won't solve all social contradictions.

The people living together in our cities and communities are of various ages, come from various backgrounds and pursue all manner of lifestyles. Getting along well is conditional to many things, including options for encounters and exchanges – be they in the physical or digital realm. Our neighbourhoods need meeting points and places of encounter where people feel comfortable and congregate, where new links and communities are established, where one can argue.

The pilot projects of the National Urban Development Policy from the "Living Together in the City" call for projects have been dedicating themselves to local social interaction for the past three years with a host of ideas. They have succeeded in establishing connections and bringing people together with creative and original solutions. They impressively highlight that urban development can connect people, and how administrations and civic groups contribute to the common good on a local level.

I wish you a good read.

Robert Kaltenbrunner

Dr. Robert Kaltenbrunner

Deputy Director of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR)

Where encounters take place

The pilot projects in the "Urban Energies – Living Together in the City" call for projects started in the beginning of 2015. Now, almost three years later, they are just entering the final stretch of their project terms. In the last year of the funding period, important milestones are still outstanding in some projects, while others have already been able to celebrate their first success stories. What all the pilot projects have in common is that they brought people together who might not even have met otherwise.

"Salt & Soup": establishing a city-wide dialogue in Stuttgart by cooking together

The summer saw a cooking group realize its idea of a street festival that is organized by the neighbourhood itself. Local residents old and young came together for the festival, joined by friends and supporters from other parts of the city. The joint discussions, laughter and celebration carried on right into the night.

Photo: Frieder Hartung



"Urban Interventions": initiating citizen-driven urban development in Osnabrück

The conclusion of the project is marked with a panel discussion, followed by a cycle tour of the project locations. This not only serves to address the achievements; the discussion also concerns what a citizen-driven urban development could look like in Osnabrück in the future.

Photo: Projektteam UI



"KEBAP": new sustainable use for a vacant bunker in Hamburg

The "Community Day" involving associated projects and initiatives, musicians from the district, guided tours, workshops and joint cooking and baking takes place in the autumn. The talks with politicians and the administration about purchasing the bunker continue in the meantime.

Photo: KEBAP e. V



"Growing Together": integration of refugees by voluntary guides in Essen

Many voluntary services such as consultancy and translation are now being provided by refugees who want to give something back. A number of mentorships have turned into friendships. The refugees and people involved with the project meet to prepare dinners together, amongst other activities.

Photo: Simon Kleff

"New Hamburg": improving relations between all residents of the Veddel district in Hamburg
More than 60 different nations live together in Veddel. Making this work calls for an engagement with a great variety of topics. This is what the "Summit of the Many", dedicated to the exchange between all nations, was initiated for.

Photo: Christian Bartsch



"Dortmund all in": promoting exchange between the Nordstadt district and other parts of the city
The campaign devoted to bringing people from various districts together for special experiences at interesting locations is nearing its finale: a festival in the Nordstadt district to which all participants so far and all Dortmunders are invited.

Photo: Martin Eder



"GÖ does it": seniors come into contact with adolescent inmates of an open prison in Göttingen

A stone sculpture workshop provided the juvenile offenders and participating seniors with an opportunity to let their creativity run free. The joint work of the unusual tandems made for plenty of exchanges and new perspectives.

Photo: Hartmut Wolter



Food assembly, heroes and the circle of trust

A visit to the Honorary Hotel

Four years ago, a group of young Leipzig residents acquired two buildings in Hildegardstrasse to the east of the city. They refer to themselves as "Helden wider Willen" (involuntary heroes) and have set their sights on reviving the culture of encounter. Together with their neighbours, they are establishing a spirit of camaraderie, realizing construction projects, overcoming borders, and discussing the importance of helping one another..

Things are happening in the east of Leipzig. I notice this immediately on my walk from the main station to the meeting point. I have opted for walking and shunned the tram despite the slight



drizzle. I am visiting a neighbourhood project today and would like to see and feel this neighbourhood for myself; I want to gaze into its shop windows, observe people's everyday life and get a feeling for the place. What I see is a district in transition. My route is lined by buildings from the late 19th century. Many stand empty, but almost all of them are clad in scaffolding and

currently being renovated. The street is relatively narrow, with a tram clattering along its middle. A colourful mixture of residents is waiting at the stops – mothers with prams, noisy young boys, a pensioner with a shopping bag and Zimmer Frame. An Aldi has moved into an old theatre building. The area still shows traces of the neglect in recent decades. At the same time, one notices from the freshly renovated facades that a lot has changed here, and that more is still certain to change in the future.

I turn into Hildegardstrasse and promptly stand in front of the Honorary Hotel. This is where I have an appointment with Ariane Jedlitschka. She is a co-founder of the "Helden wider Willen" association which has initiated this project. Ariane invites me for a coffee to explain exactly what is behind the Honorary Hotel. She had already warned me that "it's complicated" on the telephone. The history of the Honorary Hotel started in 2011. This was when the association and associated initiatives asked the Leipzig Housing and Building Association about their low-threshold development and use of a block of seven vacant buildings in Eisenbahnstrasse. The buildings were ultimately able to be taken over in the autumn of 2013. They became residences and workplaces for 130 people. Ariane and her fellow campaigners moved into Hildegardstrasse 49 and 51.

It quickly emerged that the acquisition of the buildings would consequently entail relocating to Leipzig's eastern parts. The buildings were thus reconditioned with a substantial amount of their own resources and now also house the association's premises, as well as studios and offices of other cultural initiatives, alongside flats. The local project team consists of three people. In addition to these are association members, interns, scholarship holders, the 30 residents of the two buildings, and further supporters. The work done

by all those involved is most of all addressing the needs of the neighbourhood. The Honorary Hotel is especially active in the areas of art and cultural education. The annual "help* Festival" banks on a varied culture programme. This is primarily about the elaboration and implementation of very specific assistance measures for the community.

"Helping is the basis of the neighbourhood's social life" is how Ariane underscores the approach. But in an era of individualization, it may not be all that easy to recognize what up-to-date help actually looks like at times, she adds. The last thing anyone wants to do is patronize people, after all. "Thinking, building, developing and trying out things together, showing each other understanding" is how she summarizes the ideals of the Heroes. This basis also enabled most backyards in the block backing the Honorary Hotel to be opened and interconnected. Even the owner of a neighbouring building that isn't included in the acquired package allowed himself to be enthused by the idea and also tore the fences down. The result is a huge common space where the neighbours can casually bump into each other and interact. The dividing lines between "us" and "them" become porous. "This circle of trust is the basis of our activities", emphasizes Ariane.

What sounds so easy here can be really hard work. "We are permanently caught in the field of tension between people from various disciplines and cultures." Her joy about this involvement is written all over Ariane's face. She beams when she says sentences like that. "But sometimes it can also be difficult to get life, work and culture under one roof", she adds then. The boundaries between private life and public activities become blurred sometimes. But her husband and the three children are now firmly rooted in the district nonetheless, or perhaps exactly because of this.

Similar districts, as in eastern Leipzig, can be found all over Germany. They are often described as problematic neighbourhoods in the press. Ariane accordingly attaches little value to a broad public for the association's projects. The visibility to the inside is much more important, she thinks. In cooperation with other initiatives, the Heroes have hence founded "Leipziger Ecken" (Leipzig Corners), a digital district magazine for networking local residents with key actors and initiatives in the quarter.

There is a farmers' market in the afternoon. The Honorary Hotel also doubles up as an issuing point for the "Marktschwärmer" food assembly platform. Customers can order regional and organic food on a website and pick it up once a week from specific places. The products on sale in Hildegardstrasse come from a beekeeper, water buffalo farm and a coffee

roaster, amongst others. "The greatest thing about this is that we get to know people we would never meet otherwise. They order online and then come to pick the stuff up from us", is how Ariane explains her motivation to take part.

A worker is ambling over to us from a nearby building site and asking about the food in broken German. He has obvious difficulties understanding the system. Seeba, a local girl who fled



Photo: Ralph Niese

from Iraq with her family and lives in the house opposite, helps out and fluently translates into Turkish after a short communication. "I learnt this at the camp in Turkey. We lived there for two years". She explains to us that the construction worker is actually looking for a snack bar for his break. Laughing, she takes him by the hand and leads him to Eisenbahnstrasse.

People pass by again and again, neighbours and acquaintances. They stop, greet one another and talk about the latest developments in the quarter. New groups are constantly forming. A boy from the neighbourhood is celebrating his birthday, everyone congratulates him. There is chocolate and gummy bears. The pavement is getting

quite cramped at times. Perhaps this is the moment in which I come to understand the elementary role of the Honorary Hotel for the people here. The many projects, terms and components are most of all backed up by one thing: a place of encounter. The Honorary Hotel is a meeting place for social togetherness. It offers plenty of room for exchange – in the figurative sense, but also a very real one in the backyard, project offices and on the street. "The Honorary Hotel is more. But we aren't even sure yet what that more actually is", as Ariane put it in the course of the day. An apter summary would be hard to find. fh

Get to know people you would never meet otherwise

What communal living could look like in the future

Living together in Cubity

A student residence in Frankfurt am Main demonstrates on a small scale what future housing could look like. Sharing is the order of the day here, with private spaces minimized and communal areas maximized. This not only reduces the energy consumption, but also heightens the satisfaction of the residents. Cubity puts common ideas of comfort and space requirements to the test.

Measuring 16 x 16 m, the cube has been accommodating a special kind of student hostel in the Niederrad district since the end of 2016. The inside of the six-metre-tall, half-timbered structure features twelve cubical apartments, arranged around a "market square" on two levels. Each of these flats, which are referred to as cubes, is occupied by a student. It offers them room for their bed, a desk, storage space and a small bath, including a shower, in as little as 7.2 square metres. The structure serves to find out what life is like in a building totally geared to the community for a period of three years. Cubity does this with a contrast between the generous communal areas and the minimalistic private spaces. The market square is supplemented by a kitchen, lounge and outdoor terrace with adjoining garden. The residence was designed by 45 students of TU Darmstadt under the guidance of architecture professors Anett-Maud Joppien and Manfred Hegger. Starting from the question "How do we want to live?" the students developed a residential concept that tries to strike a balance between energy efficiency on the one side and the housing needs of today's students on the other. An ambitious undertaking.

I was initially sceptical when I visited Cubity for the first time last autumn. Can the residence really meet all these disparate requirements? Are 7.2 square metres of private living space

enough? I was surprised to find out that the small cubes make for better accommodation than I expected. The residents also appear to be satisfied: "Ever since living in Cubity, I have discovered that I actually don't need that much space to live. The little space we have here is more or less enough", says Yannic, who studies politics. The fact that nobody feels cramped despite the very reduced private spaces also has something to do with the large communal area offering enough space for many activities



Photo: Moritz Fedkenheuer



Photo: Moritz Fedkenheuer

in over 200 m². From my cube, I can watch the everyday life of the residents. It feels similar to looking into the courtyard of my residential building in Berlin. The division into private, semi-public and public spaces realized in Cubity is actually typical for the historic sections of European cities. Shared courtyards

Cubity was developed by architecture students of TU Darmstadt. The starting point for the Nassauische Heimstätte (NH) housing and development company's interest in the project was an exhibition at the German Architecture Museum on the subject of "Communal Living and Housing". In a discursive process with the museum, the NH examined the potentials of jointly funded housing projects for creating affordable living spaces.

Cubity offered a good opportunity for testing the gained knowledge in practice. The NH is funding the housing experiment in cooperation with Deutsche Fertighaus Holding AG – with the former providing the property and the latter the fabrication and installation.

The residence is managed by the Frankfurt Student Union and the research funded by the Hesse Ministry for Science and Art and Hesse Ministry of Economic Affairs, Energy, Transport and Regional Development.

Many assumptions underlying the design actually appear to be confirmed in practice. The reduction of the private in favour of the collective is not perceived as a limitation, but as an enrichment. By promoting togetherness, the building's architecture fights anonymity and improves the quality of the indoor environment. "In other residences, the students often live side by side in separate apartments without even knowing each other. We may only have small rooms here in Cubity, but we are a community and I love that", says architecture student Francesca. But Cubity and communal living harbour special challenges all the same. The everyday lives of the other residents are always ubiquitous here. "In Cubity, I find it difficult to really unwind and get some peace – there is something happening all the time", adds Francesca. Especially where everything is geared to the community, the individual place of retreat is therefore vested with a special importance. "As much as I enjoy living together, I am still glad to have my own realm in my cube that only belongs to me", says Rebecca.

Even with the housing experiment still having some time to run and a systematic evaluation of the data still pending, one tendency

emerges that could be exemplary for the housing of the future. Individualized living but still together – what sounds like a paradox at first typifies the housing requirements of many people. The wish for community often takes equal place with the need for individual self-fulfilment at home. In contrast to the communal housing experiments of the 1970s, the private is not to be abolished, but supplemented by a semi-public meeting area. Students have often served as seismographs for social change in the past, and Cubity offers a good opportunity for studying the housing of the future. I am looking forward to my next stay with excitement, and to whatever else I will learn about good housing.



Photo: Moritz Fedkenheuer

served for exchanges between neighbours, as a playground for children, for commercial uses and as a housekeeping space. This allowed for random interaction. The market square in Cubity meets a similar function. Although all residents stick to their own residential rhythms, unplanned meetings happen here. Even more important for generating a community spirit than the market square is the kitchen. Resident Leonie notes: "You don't really need your own kitchen. I am glad that I am sharing it with others as I always have company when I cook or eat this way. This is our meeting area, I like that."



Photo: Lia Darjes

Moritz Fedkenheuer is a sociologist at TU Darmstadt and co-responsible for the research accompanying Cubity. To find out how the concept is accepted by the residents and what effect it has on their wellbeing and everyday living, he measures their subjective residential experience with the help of interviews, questionnaires and group discussions. Once a month, he spends

several days in a cube reserved for research purposes. When not staying in Cubity, he lives and works in Berlin.

A parish opens up to the quarter

The Q1 neighbourhood centre in Bochum

The West End of Bochum is diverse. The quarter is the city's oldest steel workers' housing district, with the industrial past visible all around. Long-standing residents are joined by many migrant groups in the district. Vacancies and low rents have additionally attracted a great number of students, creatives and culture professionals in recent years.

Right in the middle of the quarter at Halbachstrasse stands the Q1. Already clearly visible from the outside through the large glazed facade, a small group of women is sitting inside in the cafe section. Mr. Rehbruch is welcoming a young man as a new visitor in the entrance area. Michael Rehbruch works at Q1 as a host: he makes sure that new visitors find their way, and that everything runs smoothly in the cafe section and open kitchen.

The Q1 has been serving the West End as a neighbourhood centre since 2015. "The Q1 arose from an expansion of the Friedenskirche church, which has been standing here since 1965", reports pastor Holger Nollmann. "Once the even older parish hall had been abandoned in the year 2000, the church was also up for discussion in the end." What was needed was a reorientation of the shrinking church community. So the Protestant parish started to work on a neighbourhood center concept with IfaK, an association for multicultural child and youth welfare and migration work, which had already been active in the West End for decades. At the same time the city authorities of Bochum started in 2007 the redevelopment of the urban quarter and approached the local actors there. Those eagerly joined the unusual alliance." This was three matching things coming together: our openness to a new approach, the IfaK association's need for space, and an urban redevelopment process that we were actively involved in right from the start and that offered us room for manoeuvre", recounts pastor Nollmann. The Q1 idea was thus born from an intensive exchange with the authorities: "We had been aiming for more than a double clubhouse for IfaK and us right from the start. We wanted to create a place of encounter, a space of possibilities that is tailored to the residents' ideas and needs, a centre that is open to the district." This appears to work well so far. The cafe section is busy, the ladies from the Protestant women's group are drinking tea together, and many

people come in for the IfaK services offering several language, integration and other education courses, as well as consultancy, every day. Everyone can come here with their problems or just for a coffee or to use the premises. "If people approach me and want to hold a cooking course in our kitchen, they are welcome to do so. The only condition is that they cook a little more so that all the visitors present at the time can also have some", says Mr. Nollmann, laughing. Apart from offices and group rooms, the Q1 also offers two citizens' halls that are used for movie nights, Iraqi engagement parties, Sacrifice Feast breakfasts, public involvement and many other events. The spiritual centre of the Q1 is the Friedenskapelle (Peace Chapel), also referred to as the "Room



Photo: Dorothee Schäfer



Photo: Dorothee Schäfer

of Silence". Services are held here, but the chapel is meant as a place of retreat and tranquillity for people of all confessions. The construction of the Q1 was financed by the urban redevelopment program for the west. It has been jointly operated by the Protestant parish and IfaK association ever since its inception. Apart from the association and parish staff, there are also two jobs now



"In our understanding, the Church no longer merely serves to satisfy the 'members of the club' today, but to improve the quality of life and participatory opportunities enjoyed by all the people in the quarter irrespective of their confession."

Pfarrer Holger Nollmann, Protestant Parish of Bochum

then. Ca. 25 of the 120 children here are Catholic or Protestant, the rest a colourful mixture: Sunni, Yazidi, Buddhist, Alevi and a lot more.

The Q1 is a pioneering location in several respects; operated as a true joint venture between the IfaK association and Protestant parish, it makes for an unusual collaboration between two institutions. And the parish's perspective of understanding itself as an important player in the quarter is still quite new, too. This is also the reason for the Q1's inclusion in the "Church finds City" pilot project as a pioneering location. This project served the two major Christian Churches and their welfare organizations to study innovative approaches where the church cooperates with new partners in district development. The objective resides in a greater opening of the church organization's engagement for

the social space, and in working with other actors to improve the housing and living conditions. Seventeen other pioneering locations were studied across the nation, apart from the Q1, and analysed for transferable insights into new forms of cooperation. Pastor Nollmann notes that the Church of today is tasked with improving the quality of life enjoyed by all the people in the quarter in cooperation with other actors.

While a sculpture course is starting in Dorothee Schäfer's studio, the employees of the children's and youth club next door are just arriving in the cafe section and joining the day care centre staff who are already sitting there. "The Q1 is a microcosm where all the diver-

from an employment office scheme, "Social Participation in the Labour Market", such as the host.

The women's group in the cafe section is slowly getting ready to leave. Before they do, they cast a glance into the "Aquarium". This is how they refer to the glazed studio of Dorothee Schäfer, another important element of the Q1. Ms. Schäfer is its artist in residence and works as a sculptress for and with the district. She is currently preparing a new exhibition to be shown at the Q1 at the weekend. The women watch the artist at work for a while before saying goodbye to Mr. Rehbruch and Mr. Nollmann with a wave. "Even with the chapel as its spiritual centre, our cafe section is the Q1's secret heart", says the latter. "It is a place of encounter and exchange between all age groups, nationalities and walks of life in the quarter." The children from the "Kinder-villa Pfiffikus" day care centre opposite also drop by now and

sities meet, but also the quarter's lines of conflict. This is where they are negotiated, deliberated on, and also thought through spiritually sometimes or simply discussed in the encounter", describes Mr. Nollmann. "The Q1 will hopefully also experience continuous change in the future, given that it is shaped by the needs of the district", he then adds before sitting down with the group in the cafe. This has meanwhile been also joined by the general manager of IfaK, Friederike Müller, and her colleagues. They have come together for the team meeting where all current plans and topics of the Q1 are discussed. The latter also with an eye on the developments in the district, which they also want to help fashion in the future – in cooperation with the local authorities. This makes the Q1 resemble a kaleidoscope, reassembling in keeping with the directions of the district's development, just as the groups of visitors in the cafe section keep on reassembling, new and colourful, over the course of the day.



Photo: Dorothee Schäfer

Theory and practice in the urban neighbourhood

A stroll with thinkers and doers

Are our public spaces important learning fields for tolerance? Or are we idealizing their social value as places of encounter? To find answers to these questions, we are taking a stroll through a socially and culturally diverse quarter of a city somewhere in Europe. We start out from the central square in sunny autumn weather. *stadt:pilot* is accompanied by Jane Jacobs, the sociologists Richard Sennett, Hans-Paul Bahrdt and Wulf Tessin, the social psychologist Gordon W. Allport and spatial artist Benjamin Förster-Baldenius

contacts on the sidewalk. It grows from the people standing next to each other at the bar drinking beer, from the conversations with the grocer or news agent; from the chit chat in the bakery and the greeting of children drinking their lemonade on the door steps. Most of these contacts are decidedly trivial, but the sum of all contacts not in the least. The leeway for great differences between neighbours – differences that often reach much deeper than colour differences – this leeway, this tolerance is only possible and normal if the streets in a city integrate options permitting mutual strangers to live in peace and polite, but absolutely respectful and reserved, contact with one another.



stadt:pilot (s:p): Mrs. Jacobs, you have repeatedly pointed out that public spaces, most of all the streets and sidewalks, serve an important function for encouraging contact and exchanges between city dwellers, and are therefore of great importance for a tolerant coexistence in everyday urban life.

■ **Jane Jacobs**, still busy with a text message on her mobile, but then preparing for an axiomatic statement: The streets and their sidewalks are the most important public spaces of a city; its most vital organs. The trust in a major city is formed from many, many

As unimportant, unintentional and random sidewalk contacts appear to be, they are still the small change able to serve as a base for a thriving public life in the city.

Something's ringing from Jacobs' jacket pocket – her mobile. She interrupts herself and withdraws to take the call. The group sets out on its walk through the streets of the quarter.

s:p: Mr. Tessin, you are known to be rather sceptical that public spaces contribute to direct contact and exchange between the various people and groups in a city. How did you get to this point of view?

■ **Wulf Tessin** *briefly clears his throat and finds clear words:* The establishment of verbal contact in an urban public, i.e. between strangers, is the most unlikely and rarest public behaviour of all. The conduct in public spaces is primarily – to put it bluntly – a continuation of private behaviour. You talk to your friends and acquaintances, your life partner, read a book, take the dog for a walk, eat an apple, sunbathe, listen to music, sit around, hurry to the tram stop, and indeed observe what people get up to in the square or park – but everyone for themselves. The behavioural norm in public is precisely not addressing or looking at others. 'Please don't disturb' and/or 'leave me alone' is the highest civic duty in public spaces, and exactly not approaching and contacting!

■ **Hans-Paul Bahrtdt** *dodges two skateboarding youths and adds:* A large part of the contacts established only serves to let everyone go their own way undisturbed.

We are turning into a narrower side street. There's loud honking, Hans-Paul Bahrtdt has run afoul of a car driver while crossing the road.

■ **Hans-Paul Bahrtdt** *angrily:* The streets o ■ **Richard Sennett** *agrees:* The cityscape is increasingly shaped by a type of architecture that also objectively manifests this subjective 'interaction ban'. The social function of the public space is replaced by other functions. The public space becomes a function of locomotion.

s:p: *There is obviously some agreement here that the utilization for transport purposes has deprived some public urban spaces of their meaning as places of encounter.*

Affirmative nodding from the group. The side street leads to a small square where we find ourselves in a mixture of people with a wide range of backgrounds and languages.

s:p: *Mr. Sennett, you have always emphasized that the streets and squares of a city are important spaces for directly experiencing the diversity of today's societies. If we didn't encounter unfamiliar people and lifestyles this way, we would run a risk of becoming ever more intolerant and prejudiced towards others.*

■ **Richard Sennett** *looks around inquisitively, visibly stimulated by the diversity in the square, and responds with the accustomed eloquence:* Unknown things and strangers can upset old familiar ideas and handed-down truths; unknown terrain serves a positive function in the life of the individual. Sameness stultifies the mind; diversity stimulates and expands it. The city can help people develop a richer, more complex sense of themselves.

s:p: *But will encounters with social differences always provide productive stimuli for the own self? Mr. Allport, shouldn't you come to a different conclusion, if we understand your writings about the effect of casual contacts on preconcep-*

tions correctly?

■ **Gordon W. Allport** *gives up his temporizing:* Such contacts do nothing to change prejudices; they rather appear to reinforce them.

Allport stops short because we are now drawing closer to the Kitchen Monument, a pneumatic sculpture that Benjamin Förster-Baldenius has just inflated and which is quickly arousing the curiosity of passers-by.

s:p: *There is still no end to the attempts at providing good public spaces by urban development, at turning them into venues for encounters and exchange.*

■ **Benjamin Förster-Baldenius:** These urban development approaches alone will not create places of encounter! What is needed here is another attitude to the city, against its social and spatial overdeterminacy, an ephemeral, soft, playful, event-like idea of urban space. This bubble, the Kitchen Monument, is an 'urban generator' that doesn't cost much and immediately produces what is emphatically referred to as 'urban life' wherever one puts it up. Once it is inflated, even a motorway bridge will turn into an inviting place, with the public space turned into a collective kitchen.

■ **Wulf Tessin** *confirms:* It takes very special events like disruptions of the normal mode of public life, for what urbanists consider the actual behaviour in public to happen: establishing verbal or non-verbal contact with one another.

Förster-Baldenius has built a grill from a rusty metal drum with some youths, and the coal in it is already glowing. While the men slowly gather around it, Jane Jacobs is also finally joining us again. She has rehearsed one of her 'sidewalk ballets' with a post-migrant theatre group, and the afternoon draws to an end with its performance on the district square.

The stroll through a central European urban quarter documented above unfortunately never took place. It is a text collage based on various sources, moderated by Lars Wiesemann and Stephan Willinger.

Gordon W. Allport: *The Nature of Prejudice*, 19

Hans-Paul Bahrtdt: *Die Moderne Großstadt*, 1961

Benjamin Förster-Baldenius (raumlabor berlin): *acting in public*, 2008

Jane Jacobs: *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 1963

Richard Sennett: *The Fall of Public Man*, 1977

New capitalism, new isolation: a flexible city, 2001

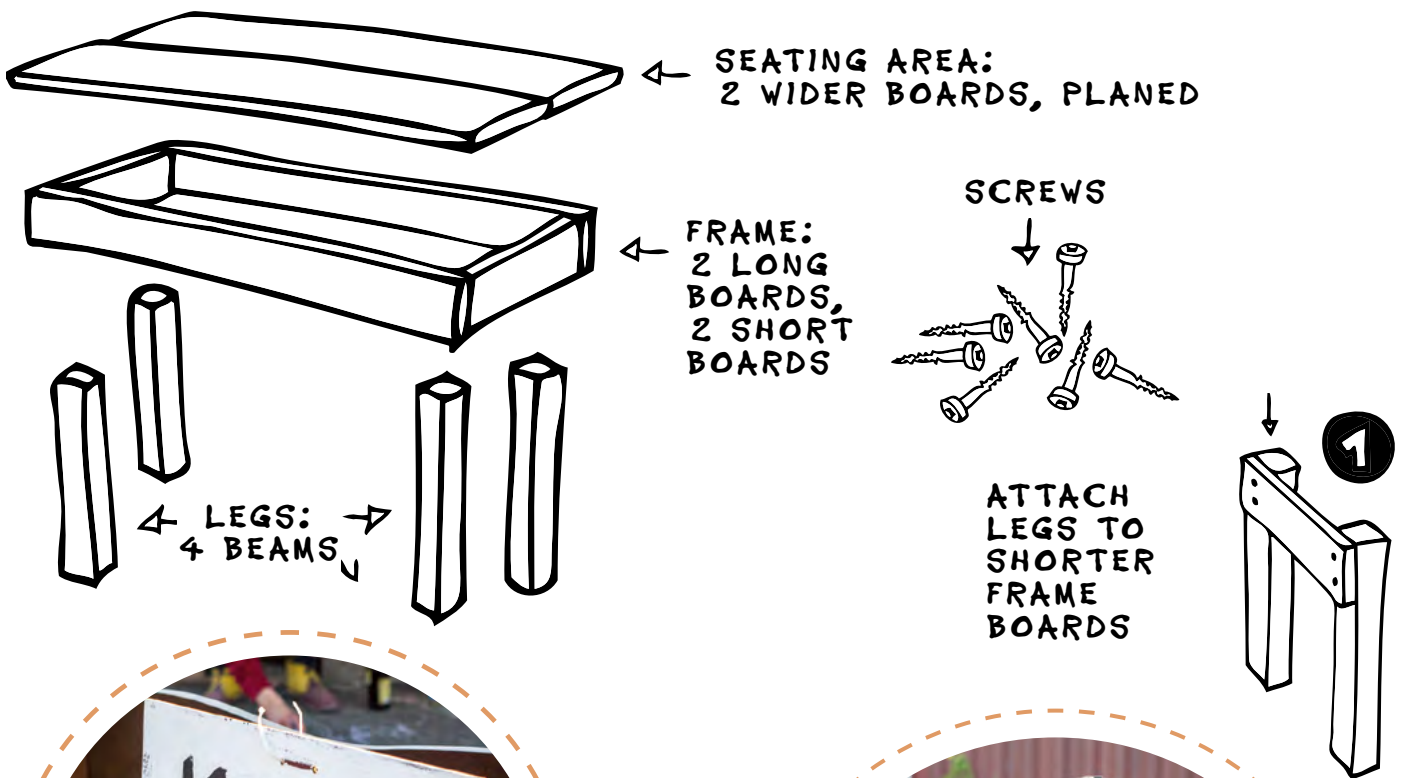
Wulf Tessin: *Freiraum und Verhalten*, 2004

Lend a hand and take a seat

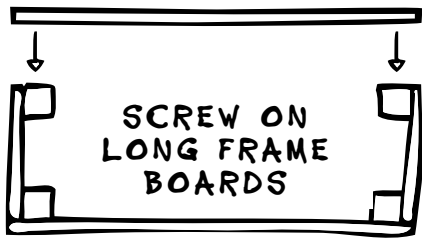
NEIGHBOURHOOD BENCH

TOOLS: CORDLESS SCREWDRIVER • DRILL • CHOP SAW • BRACKETS

What does it take for a good place of encounter? Sometimes no more than initiative, some free space and building materials. Assemble the neighbourhood bench as a team, put it up in a free district space, sit down, invite passers-by and strike up conversations – have fun!

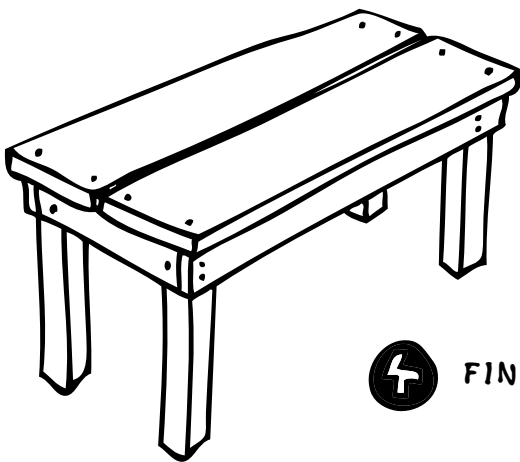
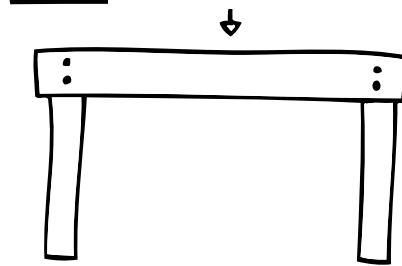


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3

SCREW DOWN SEATING AREA PROJECTING CA. 2 CM



4

FINISHED :)



The "City on Wheels" pilot project in Nuremberg is dedicated to cities being vitalized and designed by their residents. This is also why the team has developed construction plans for urban furniture enabling residents to beautify and spruce up their own neighbourhood, such as the neighbourhood bench, but also book exchange boxes, skater ramps, cycle tyre air stations, insect hotels, flower pots, rocking lounge chairs and a lot more. All construction plans are available at www.baudirdeinstadt.wordpress.com.
 Tip: Making things with your neighbours is even more fun (and makes more friends)!

Photos: Simeon Johnke!

City on Wheels

How freestyle enlivens neighbourhoods

Well-functioning centres usually have specific qualities in common: commerce, culture and relaxation as occasions for visiting, and a network of public spaces. One will look for this in vain in many districts, however. And where there is a lack of meeting places, stimuli for an active exchange between residents will be few. This is the challenge addressed by City on Wheels in Nuremberg.

The project studies whether such meeting places can also be created without major investments and for a limited period in cooperation with local residents. It is currently putting in an appearance in the southern parts of town, in the northern garden of the Z-Bau as a part of former barracks in Frankenstrasse. "The road cuts the district in half and there is a large wasteland behind the Z-Bau. There is no central place here for everybody, little initiative and networking", relates Chris Herrmann from Urban Lab. Together with Sandra Engelhardt, he is now offering the northern garden to the neighbourhood as a new DIY place of encounter. "Having worked in the Muggenhof district last year,

with this, but also "freestyle" with a saw, handheld grinder and cordless screwdriver, based on the construction plans also elaborated by the project. The team offers an open construction event every Wednesday. Neighbours and interested parties from the district are invited to turn the northern garden into a liveable oasis, either on their own or with instruction, or to simply sit there and watch. Some visitors have already arrived in the sunny weather. On the agenda today are decorations and a Hollywood swing, amongst other items. "The visitors have already created a lot; the northern garden has become really beautiful with furniture, a grill, graffiti wall, open-air kitchen and other things. The open construction meetings are turning into a real event!" says Chris Herrmann delightedly.

The visitors are a colourful mixture. Anton, a pensioner and native of Nuremberg, had already arrived early with his walking frame. He likes to repair things or simply sit there. Lisa is building raised beds for tomatoes, Uli is looking after the fish in the aquaponics system, Sophie is creating hanging lamps. A man in a grey shirt is lying in a hammock and reading. Anton is also meeting the sprayer Noke and the girls' choir today. "People who can't or don't want to actively build things can also simply play boules or ping pong, watch or have a beer. We intentionally keep the threshold low and are delighted when people become active here. The City on Wheels is meant to enable and facilitate after all. But we learnt from our work last year that not all our visitors who do take part can be turned into initiators", explains Sandra Engelhardt.

The Muggenhof project has succeeded in creating permanent formats by and for local residents. Initiated by a mobile kitchen building workshop, the Culture Kitchen now serves for intercultural cooking every Monday and the mobile kitchen is also used in the district again and again. The team thinks that ensuring identification and integrating key actors and initiatives from the quarter are decisive factors for mobilizing citizens and their long-

term involvement. Evening is slowly descending on the northern garden, and the end of work is near. There will be joint eating, drinking and gossiping under the strings of lights now.

we started with our container here in April." Besides an office, the container also houses a second room with a milling machine for furniture. Key elements of a meeting place can be created



Photo: Jeanette Niqué

Voices from the 11th Federal Congress in Hamburg

What makes for a good place of encounter

The Federal Congress of National Urban Development Policy, which is celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Leipzig Charta this year, is always worth a trip. To us, it is an ideal place for encounters. This is where we always meet key actors from the pilot projects and other project organizers, colleagues, planners and urban developers, people from the large urban development community. For this *stadt:pilot*, we are going in search of good places of encounter there.

We already run into the first conference guests on the shuttle boat from the jetties to the harbour island where the event venue is. Floating past the Elbphilharmonie building and

an answer: "A city where I can live and work in peace". This is also thematized by the Danish urban planner Jan Gehl, who describes the liveable European city in his keynote speech the next day. His eyes are on the people who live in the city: "Making the people happy is a main point of city planning."

In the break we visit the project fair showing pilot projects of the National Urban Development Policy and other initiatives. At the stand of our project, "Salt & Soup", we talk to Ms. Gröger from Südlicht, who finds "a good place of encounter is where the food and drink are right. That is the principle of Salt & Soup here, by the way, which is really outstanding." At the fair we run into some students from Kassel who delved into the neo-European city in a winter school and reflected on the Leipzig Charta for this. One of them thinks that "places are always beautiful if they are blue and green, have plenty of green areas, but also water."

Prof. Detlef Kurth from TU Kaiserslautern explains to us in a conversation: "A good place of encounter is a square that is well-framed by urban structures, has good shops and cafes on the ground floors, where there are many residents, a high-quality surface, a bordered space for staying, where there is designed greenery and you can meet nice urban citizens." The spatial planner Frauke Burgdorff places another emphasis and thinks that "a good place of encounter offers room for various ways of establishing contact with one another. Not only by talking, but for example also while doing crafts, dancing or cooking. This because classic conversation is not everyone's favourite way of meeting people. We should keep this in mind."

On the way to the arenas of the future, I talk to Gabriele Zobel about the role of meeting places for integration. One thing is clear to the project leader of the Lindau pilot project: "Good places are lively places that one can help design, where the users can make a personal contribution: open, central locations with low-threshold access, places with continuity." The "2017 Integration Prize" awarded in the evening also honours two exemplary projects for their particular engagement in residential districts. The two projects in Rheinsberg und Lippstadt create specific opportunities for exchange between refugees and natives and thus contribute to maintaining lively neighbourhoods as places of encounter..

container ships, we strike up a conversation and already have our first, great place of encounter here. Upon our arrival at shed 52, a listed dockside storage shed from imperial times, we are enthused by the atmosphere. "An identity-establishing location", as Olaf Scholz, First Mayor of Hamburg, puts it in his welcome address. Hans-Martin Wolff from the municipal authority of Cologne, whom we meet over coffee, puts it in a nutshell: "Discussing the current progress of urban development policy in such an old building, interpreting the perspectives for the coming ten years here – a good place for communicating with one another."

Then we are off to the urban redevelopment conference, which also asked the question what constitutes the city of the future. Wolf Lotter, co-founder of "brand eins" magazine, has



Photo: Milena Schüssler

Where to encounter subculture

A Souvenir from Österreichischer Platz

Visitors coming to Stuttgart will usually buy a postcard or VfB key fob. But a scarf from Österreichischer Platz as a souvenir? Not an idea many would have. But the square under Paulinen Bridge featured a souvenir shop selling bags, bottle openers, beer mats, scarves and lighters last autumn nonetheless.

Where is this square anyway and what is this all about? The souvenir shop was organized by the Stadtlücken (Urban Gaps) association. The initiative was meant to draw attention to the hardly perceived location and to make citizens think about an alternative use and design that would make the space accessible and usable for the community. Right now, the square is a "non-place" under a flyover, used as a parking space, a place to get through without staying, but also a popular meeting place for adolescents, homeless people and drug addicts. But for two weeks in October 2016, even passers-by had every reason to stop here. Everybody could describe their ideas for the square and buy souvenirs at the souvenir shop. This also served to involve the square's previous users. "The initiative irritated and drew attention to the square. There were also events like light shows, puppet theatres and music, provided by the citizens themselves. Everybody could come forward and contribute something", reported Anna Sauter. She works as a coordinator in the "What'SUB" pilot project for Stuttgart Technical University.

"What'SUB" explores the question how subcultural places can be maintained and reconceived in cities. Alternative cultures and subcultures are important contributors to the image and attractiveness of a city, as the Berlin hype of recent years has clearly demonstrated. As they mostly form temporarily in disordered, underused locations, on left-over or wasteland and in vacancies, they are exposed to a permanent competition for space, especially in growing cities, and at risk of being squeezed out. The urban planning can also deprive subcultures of space with its desire for order. "We are examining

how subcultures can find room in a city like Stuttgart, how we can protect these spaces and how they affect the life together in the neighbourhoods", Anna Sauter continues to explain. "To do this, we observe projects like that by Stadtlücken at Österreichischer Platz."

The urban development is on the one hand tasked with planning unordered intermediate spaces and hence the habitat of subcultures, but should be aimed at maintaining favourable



Photo: FIRU mbH



framework conditions for subcultures on the other, to enable creative potentials in the city. The problem isn't new: artists, creatives and subcultural activists move into derelict industrial warehouses, vacant buildings and wastelands, spaces that may appear not that attractive, but offer favourable conditions. These places become trendy neighbourhoods, alternative,



"Subculture is important for the life together in the quarter as a creative sediment, source of inspiration and catalyst for social development. It is an important part of cities, an urban quality."

Anna Sauter, TU Stuttgart

interim use has been approved by the local authorities, no new uses are meant to establish themselves, and there are other, competing utilization interests for the area in the long term.

In its search for strategies for protecting subcultural uses and offering them space for development, the team has compiled a toolbox. Interim uses, events, meetings and demonstrations are introduced in greater detail as formats. "We show a way through the permit jungle for these formats, explaining which authorities and persons in charge need to be contacted, and which permits are required", explains Martin Holch, whose Department of Urban Planning and Regeneration supports the project. "We also elaborated how the urban planning can support subcul-

tures". To do this, the team reviewed the classic urban land-use planning, framework planning, redevelopment areas with preparatory studies, integrated urban development concepts and the urban development funding, assessing the application potentials for subcultures in each case.

The findings are partly surprising: The existing toolbox actually offers good conditions



Photo: Anna Sauter

innovative. Then the initiatives are pushed out by rising rents, major construction projects, new regulations. Is it in the nature of such places to come and go, be temporary? "At the start of the project we looked at the actual what and how of subculture. This involved talking to many key actors and analysing the urban research. Subculture and alternative culture are often used as synonyms, there not being a generally applicable definition of subculture", explains Detlef Kurth, TU Kaiserslautern, who manages the project with his colleague Christina Simon-Philipp.

How subculture can make a positive contribution to the life together in a quarter, but also encounter difficulties finding room, is demonstrated by one of the team's other study examples. Chloroplast e.V., a charitable association for urban gardening and culture promotion, wants to breathe new life into a vacant plant nursery. The aim is the creation of a cultural and gardening centre that can be used by locals, but also residents from all over Stuttgart. Amongst other activities, the association offered residents of a nearby refugee hostel a contact point for gardening and cultural activities. The statutory provisions exclusively specify an agricultural use for the area. Even if an

and could be toughened up or directly used for the benefit of subculture with small steps. Areas with urban development funding could for example rely on contingent funds for awakening creative potentials by calling for projects that are financed as alternative cultural micro-projects. Another possibility lies in the framework planning. This could permit for development phases providing opportunities for producing creative, temporary spaces. Project developments could define an "off quota" where developers and/or owners are contractually obliged to reserve a specific percentage of the overall space for producing non-commercial spaces.

"At the end of the day, the urban planning has two options: it can either create the framework conditions for subculture by providing spaces of possibility or defer the target-oriented classic planning in favour of enabling self-directed processes. The greater challenge may reside in sensitizing the administration and politicians to the needs of subcultures. A different attitude is required for the small steps", summarizes Christina Simon-Philipp.

Citymaking needs open spaces openBerlin organizes encounter

A building at Berlin Alexanderplatz, right at the city centre, has been vacant for approximately ten years; 40,000 m² are waiting for a future use here. And that at a time when there's no longer any space for housing and places of encounter in central locations. Why not reconceive urban development here, right in the middle of the city, then? Why not demonstrate in one of Berlin's most prominent locations that community-oriented and cooperative urban development is possible? This is the motivation of the openBerlin pilot project.

"The former House of Statistics is not in use at this moment in time. The building is to be demolished in favour of a new urban development project." This is what the website of the Senate Administration for Urban Development and Housing still says now. But lower down one finds a note that new plans are being drawn up for the site, after all. Much is in motion at the Berlin House of Statistics; there are not only deliberations on the part of the local authorities, but also many civic actors with ideas for the area's future development. The building is thus subject to discussions and visions.

The potential of the existing building was already recognized by a group of architects, city creators and refugee initiatives in December 2015. The group established the "House of Statistics Initiative" during the workshop process organized by the authorities of the State of Berlin for re-evaluating Alexanderplatz. The initiative aims to develop the House of Statistics into a space that is not subject to the market mechanisms customary in such locations. This because the frequently high development and operating costs keep many groups out of centrally located areas for housing, working, living and participation. A concept for converting and expanding the building into a meeting place for Berliners, artists, creatives and refugees has



Photo: Johannes Dumpe

been elaborated under the guiding principle "ZUSAMMENKUNFT" (get-together/FUTURE). The House of Statistics is to become an open and social space with mixed uses. The initiative meanwhile banks on the potential of the existing building: the solid structural fabric is to be cost-efficiently turned into housing facilities for refugees, as well as workspaces and workshops for art, culture, education and encounter. The venue to be created is meant to provide cultural workers, refugees, social and urban development policy initiatives with development options, and to lend them visibility. The initiative is simultaneously affirming the architectural cultural heritage in the second row of Alexanderplatz by this. With its concept, it is submitting a concrete proposal how the socialist modernist building could be further developed in keeping with the times. Intensive talks about the utilization options provided and how the building can be secured as a public amenity are currently underway between the "House of Statistics Initiative" and the State of Berlin. Before the building becomes available, the "ZUSAMMENKUNFT" concept

Photo: Johannes Dumpe



Photo: FIRU mbH



The House of Statistics

Built in 1968-1970 | 9-11 floors | Uses: Central State Statistical Office (GDR), Federal Statistical Branch Office, Office of the Federal Commissioners for State Security Records of the Former GDR | vacant since 2008 | ca. 40,000 m² of usable space. <https://hausderstatistik.wordpress.com/das-konzept-zum-download/>

is already being circulated in the urban community now. Given that something similar is already being tested in a Berlin emergency shelter by various art and culture initiatives since 2016, a "ZUsammenKUNFT Academy" is also to be experience-able at the House of Statistics. The temporary architecture created for this from scaffolds is flexibly usable and subdivided into various rooms – the public studios. Those consist of transparent cubes and are meant to be further developed by the users over time. An event and production location for ca. 40 people is to be created that documents the current development status of the House of Statistics and develops it further in cooperation with the public. Besides raising public awareness, this can also serve to test the utilization concept in the property.

The public studios are conceived and built by the openBerlin pilot project, an architecture collective with four members. "As long as the House of Statistics is not open yet, we are already making a start here. We want to raise the public awareness for the initiative and the building", is how Rocco Zühlke describes his motivation for becoming involved in the "House of Statistics Initiative". This is also a key feature of the approach pursued by openBerlin. The spatial intervention permits an exchange and dialogue with people who would not normally concern themselves with the House of Statistics, and their enthusing about the project and location. This visibly signals greater co-determination and active participation. "The exchanges and events previously organized with refugee initiatives have already intensified the mutual networking of the actors", says Johannes Dumpe, another member of openBerlin. The idea of an open and

inclusive meeting place and networking location is thus already to be lived at this point in time. This open approach to urban development issues and the direct exchange with the public are essential motives for openBerlin. The four architects understand themselves as a collective. They bank on openness and diversity and do project-based work in changing key actor constellations. "openBerlin is a tool for participative urban development, self-administration, spatial transformation and idea generation", explains Konrad Braun, the team's third member.

An inclusive place for everyone with mixed uses

In addition to this, openBerlin is also active online with a platform where people with co-creative urban development ideas can connect. The website introduces and connects projects and those searching for them, in order to conquer free urban spaces and promote the networking between key actors. To give the ideas and networks room, unused public buildings are presented on the platform, along with information about current and possible uses. "We are rethinking networking in this collaborative platform, jointly implementing the production of city in the urban space", explains Felix Zaiss, team member no. 4. This serves to reinforce the participation in urban development policy decisions, and try out new forms of participation.

The openBerlin platform and House of Statistics Initiative aim to highlight the possibility of a different urban development (policy) which strengthens precisely those civic actors who are typically unable to play an active part at such a location. An exemplary venue for alternative urban development that should set a precedent could thus be created at a prominent location in the city. [ag/sh](#)



Networked neighbours

New platforms for the neighbourhood

Germany is currently witnessing a proliferation of various neighbourhood platforms aimed at digitally networking people in their residential environment and bringing them together locally. But so far, little is known about the effects of these platforms on the living together and political engagement in our cities.

More and more people are coming to feel that neighbourhood is important: be it to maintain and build up contacts, provide

mutual support, or for local political engagement. One indication of this growing need is also provided by digital proposals such as neighbourhood platforms (including nebenan.de, nextdoor.de, lokalportal.de), exchange platforms or Facebook groups that are explicitly oriented towards social spaces.

Civil society has already been relying on social media for a while to effect changes in its neighbourhoods or contribute alternative ideas for district development (e.g. kottiundco.net; st-pauli-selbermachen.de).

The states, municipalities and communities have set their sights on the potentials of neighbourhood platforms as well, and implemented the first projects (quartiersakademie.nrw.de; quartiersnetz.de). While digital

platforms are increasingly used and also receiving targeted funding, there is as yet hardly any empirical knowledge about their effect on the life together. What purposes does the digital exchange serve, then? And how does it affect the encounters? To study this, adelphi and Zebralog started carrying out their exploration study "Networked Neighbours" in autumn 2016 at the behest of vhw, the Federal Association for Housing and Urban Development. The first findings have already become available by way of a nationwide stock-take:

- Digital neighbourhood platforms are primarily a metropolitan phenomenon so far. But they are increasingly also being tried in predominantly rural areas and small towns to improve the quality of life enjoyed in structurally weak regions.
- Digital neighbourhood platforms find application in a great variety of different neighbourhoods with a broad range of population and social structures, urban locations (inner city or edge of town) and political orientations.
- The platforms are mainly used for exchanging and sharing ("sharing economy"), as well as community-related purposes.
- Their focus is not so much on direct political issues and activities so far.

The survey is currently being continued in case study cities. Two metropolitan quarters - Berlin-Wedding and Munich-Neu-pelach - and two smaller cities - Meissen and Paderborn-Elsen - were selected to map the diversity of the phenomenon. Even with the results still outstanding, it is already emerging that digital networking helps to generate personal relationships and encounters in the neighbourhood, instead of replacing them. This also makes potentials available for mobilizing citizens' involvement on a local level that have been paid little attention so far and can serve local authorities to support a lively civic society.



Photo: Madzia71 (iStock)



More information and literature:

- www.vernetzte-nachbarn.de
- Schreiber, Franziska; Becker, Anna; Göppert, Hannah; Schnur, Olaf (2017): Digital vernetzt und lokal verbunden? Nachbarschaftsplattformen als Potenzial für sozialen Zusammenhalt und Engagement – ein Werkstattbericht. In: Forum Wohnen und Stadtentwicklung 4: 211-216



Photo: Anna Becker

Anna Becker is a scientific consultant at vhw – the Federal Association for Housing and Urban Development – and manages the introduced project there.

How art changes public spaces

Dancing in the street, walking on water

von Stephan Willinger

I am standing on the waterfront of the inner harbour in Münster, taking off my shoes and socks. I am surrounded by my children and over 50 other people. I am following my wife's advice to roll up my trouser legs. Then I take a few steps down and start walking. Not on the water surface like Jesus, but actually wading in it up to my ankle. An astonished smile is spreading over my face. My children, still loudly blabbing a minute ago, are also moving forward in an unaccustomed measured manner, accompanied by their fear of sinking. But also by curiosity and a desire to explore this completely unfamiliar space.

You need trust to walk on water. Petrus became aware of this when he doubted and almost sank. Jesus walking on water is one of the New Testament's strongest images. The Sea of Galilee was rather choppy at the time, admittedly, while the harbour basin in Münster lies before us smooth as a mirror. But many visitors still feel nagging doubts if they might not sink after all. Their insecurity leads to contacts. Just like with Jesus, the outstretched hand turns into a performance of practical trust and encounter. Does it take such disconcertion for us to give up our rehearsed distance from our fellow human beings?

How exactly does a city of fruitful encounters come about? As clearly as this could be described in our old spatial image (the European city, the market square, organic broccoli, social boundaries), as blurry does it remain now in the neo-European, the open city. This is also streaked with borders, but – as Richard Sennett describes – these borders have become ambiguous, permeable instead of hermetic. Just like the harbour basin, they are no longer unbridgeable, but membranes letting anyone through who is brave enough to dare to cross them, who trusts in everything turning out right in the end. Such action should be rehearsed.

Later – I'm walking along the Prinzipalmarkt street with my children – a woman directly in front of us gets slower and slower, starts making strange movements, her arms shooting out to the side and then up. Her shopping bag is dancing around her until she after a

little jump jack-knives graciously and contentedly looks at us from a squatting position. I would have probably just walked on, irritated, if my children's enchanted gazes had not induced me to accept the situation. The woman herself said nothing and strolled away. Whereas we are striking up conversations with other passers-by, some suspecting madness, but we are in Münster, in the summer of 2017, and therefore my daughter soon concludes: "That was art!"

The conversation with a curator confirms: In workshops, two artists are giving visitors an opportunity to search for own forms in keeping with their personal idea of sculpture and then perform them at any time, at any place and as often as they like. They interrupt the everyday processes in the city, upset our routines, challenging notions of "correct" behaviour. The encounters enabled this way are hence not pre-determined or restricted by fixed codes. To me, this positive de-routinization looks like another thing that we should make more use of in open cities for a new living together.

"All is art" was how we felt after a day in Münster. Not in the sense of: Not that important! But rather: Everything is possible here! Let us take the children as an example and accept openness, curiosity and trust as traits that should not only play a greater part for movement in an open city, but also in its planning.

Stephan Willinger is project leader for the National Urban Development Policy at the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR). He likes routines and rituals. But he has also learnt by now – from art and his family – that the unexpected makes life richer.

Photo: Henning Rogge © Skulptur Projekte 2017



Whatever happened to ...

Completed as a pilot project, but not ended by any means: some pilot projects from the "Urban Development and the Economy" call for projects are alive and kicking. The support from the National Urban Development Policy is bearing fruit and has lasting effects.

The blossoming continues in Duisburg

The Rheinhausen neighbourhood garden project in Duisburg is a great success. This has encouraged the GEBAG housing company to institute further urban gardening locations. It is now also blossoming in Hochfeld. The new neighbourhood garden is exclusively intended for the ca. 1,200 residents of the City park housing estate. They can do their gardening there in raised beds together. A special proposal here is the parent-child groups for families from immigrant and refugee backgrounds. FlüKids is a programme run by the Youth Welfare Office and German Red Cross. The service is designed to help immigrant and refugee children and their parents start out in their new homeland. And the blossoming goes on – two further neighbourhood gardens are currently in development.



Photo: Petra Valentini

Online City Wuppertal goes into second round

The "Online City Wuppertal" pilot project will be continued. The retailers had already founded the "taIMARKT - Online City Wuppertal" association last year to be able to finance a "carer" and most of all their joint marketing. With subsidies from the North Rhine-Westphalian Ministry of Economics' "Thinking Digital and Stationary Retailing Together" call for projects, further funding is now available for the next two years. The objectives are clearly defined: The number of retailers is to be increased from the current 50 to 100 at least, and that of the offered products from 870,000 to 1.5 million.



Photo: Wirtschaftsförderung Stadt Wuppertal

Offenbach implements

After the master plan's adoption more than a year ago, the progress is clearly showing in individual key projects. The "Innovation Campus" on the site of a former paint manufacturer was included in the funding scheme for redeveloping the western parts of the city, a land-use plan is being drawn up for quarter 4.0 on the site of the former goods station, individual construction projects are being realized in the inner city. The masterplan was introduced, and marketing of commercial areas driven, at the real estate show Expo Real. The implementation is overseen by a masterplan advisory council consisting of the local authority and "Offenbach offensiv" association. The dialogue with the public is also being continued – an annual "Masterplan Day" is part of this.



Photo: Wirtschaftsförderung Stadt Offenbach

My favourite place

Travelling through the hinter-land

Being asked about my favourite place has really got me thinking. This because I am not even sure I've got one right now. But on a cycle tour from Wernigerode to Leipzig, I passed by a number of favourite places of my past. Such as the two-floor tree house on a hollow willow. It used to stand in a green corridor at the edge of the Wernigerode prefab estate "Harzblick", reclaimed by nature in the 1990s. This wilderness made for a perfect playground especially because it appeared unplanned, undefined, and thus gave the imagination free rein.



Photo: Daniel Janko

I am continuing on my bicycle through the Sachsen-Anhalt hinterland through to the Saale River, passing by flowering brownfields, slumbering villages, rotating energy landscapes and also this or that town. For example Aschersleben, turned into a greener, more lively centre with the regional horticultural show. At the end of the route, I am sitting on the kerbstone outside my favourite pub in my favourite street, looking at the unrenovated facades and simple concrete block paving. They don't jar. The atmosphere here lives off the people who are at home here. And although it is only about five minutes away from the inner city on foot, this quarter has been paid little attention so far. But a new development is also showing in this location. My gaze travels across my bicycle and I ask myself whether favourite places aren't always in flux. And if it is not often the everyday, undiscovered and authentic places that we find beautiful..

Daniel Janko is a research associate in the domestic research focus area "Future Habitat City" at Osnabrück University, where he works on the "Urban Interventions" project, amongst others.

Right in the middle of the Palatinate Forest

My home town of Kaiserslautern offers many places at the centre where urban society can meet and engage in exchanges. But for me, a special place of encounter is located just outside town: the Humberg Tower. Many strollers passing through the Palatinate Forest on their weekend walks clamber up the hill to the monument, stay a while and enjoy the view over the city. Some set themselves the goal of conquering the hill with the mountain bike or on foot every week. There are even weddings or other events here.

For me personally, the Humberg Tower is important on various levels. I go on walks through the Palatinate Forest several times a year with friends from various backgrounds. Somehow we often end up at the tower, where we like to share a snack, engage in exchanges about our everyday lives, or simply absorb nature in all its plenitude. For many a new friend from abroad, this peaceful nature is a totally new experience which shows me how valuable such an apparently self-evident place can be after all. I also regularly jog to the Humberg Tower alone or with friends to leave the working life behind and enjoy the essentials. Doing



Photo: Christoph Jung

so, I very often meet kindred spirits and make new contacts. As removed and distant as the tower appears to be from the hubbub of the city, it is still a true place of encounter and exchange for me.

Sabine Herz is an urban planner and lives in Kaiserslautern. If not perambulating the Palatine Forest in her free time, she is professionally looking after the pilot projects in the "Urban Energies – Living Together in the City" call for projects.

Under the title "Growing Together in Essen", the pilot project establishes contacts and relations between refugees and residents of Essen. This is achieved by way of various proposals and events at the project's shop in the northern city, where pro bono consultancy is also provided in Persian, Farsi and Arabic.



The services available besides this include German language courses, homework support, a guitar course, language cafe and much more. There is also joint cooking, as with the soup festival where local residents, friends and refugees met in the City-Nord district, bringing their native soups with them, and struck up conversations about their shared culinary experience.



Photo: Hendrik Rathmann

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