Civic Engagement Principles for Transatlanic Cities:
Inspiration from the Dialogues for Change Initiative 2013-2015

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STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

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ABOUT THE ORGANIZER

G|M|F The German Marshall Fund
of the United States

STRENGTHENING TRANSATLANTIC COOPERATION

The German Marshall Fund of the United States

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) strengthens transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF does this by supporting individuals and institutions working in the transatlantic sphere, by convening leaders and members of the policy and business communities, by contributing research and analysis on transatlantic topics, and by providing exchange opportunities to foster renewed commitment to the transatlantic relationship.

In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has offices in Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Ankara, Bucharest, and Warsaw. GMF also has smaller representations in Bratislava, Turin, Bilbao, and Stockholm.

GMF Urban and Regional Policy

GMF's Urban and Regional Policy Program (URP) supports leaders, policymakers, and practitioners in the United States and Europe by facilitating the transatlantic exchange of knowledge for building inclusive, sustainable, and globally engaged cities.

URP works in selected cities in the United States and Europe that share a set of common challenges and desire to explore solutions through transatlantic exchange. URP actively stewards transatlantic initiatives that explore key issues through high-impact gatherings, peer exchanges, and applied research. URP has an extensive and successful history of working cooperatively with public, private, and NGO leaders to apply these insights to improve local and regional policies and programs. In addition to supporting policy innovation, URP activities also support individual participants in expanding their transatlantic network, growing their policy expertise, and developing their leadership skills.

Partners

Bundesministerium für Umwelt, Naturschutz, Bau und Reaktorsicherheit

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung
im Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung

gíz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

Facilitators

tmi

Introduction

Cities in North America and Europe face many similar issues regarding demographic change, economic development, and social equity. In an effort to create more sustainable urban areas, the focus of urban planning and development projects has become more holistic and integrated within a larger regional or subnational framework.

Dialogues for Change (D4C) was an initiative of The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) that was supported the German Federal Ministry for Building, Transport, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMUB); the German Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs, and Spatial Development (BBSR); and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and its Offices for Policy Development and Research and International and Philanthropic Innovation. D4C grew out of the joint declaration between BMUB and HUD to support transatlantic learning on a variety of urban planning and development topics. **GMF was selected to develop and manage this innovative, international peer-to-peer city learning and exchange network.** D4C was designed to engage local leaders in six U.S. and German cities on strengthening their civic engagement approaches, testing new ideas on active planning processes in their communities, and ultimately finding integrated solutions to complex urban development challenges. While both countries support inclusive planning processes through specific federal policies and requirements for discretionary funding, innovative practices at the local level are lacking. The outcomes of D4C have contributed positively to the evolution of how each of the six cities **— Baltimore, MD; Flint, MI; Memphis, TN; and Bottrop, Leipzig, and Ludwigsburg, Germany —** approached civic engagement in their communities.

Dialogue for Change was a project-based initiative consisting of a series of intensive, peer-to-peer dialogue-based workshops that were built on the participants' professional experiences and the common experiences shared among a transatlantic group of leaders. Workshops were held alternately in the United States and Germany in one of the participating network cities.[1] There were two critical components to the D4C initiative design and learning methodology: learning lab and peer dialogue.

> **Learning lab:** using active planning processes in each city to test concepts and ideas learned through D4C and sharing the results with the network
>
> **Peer dialogue:** facilitating peer to peer learning to break down concepts, share experiences, and apply concepts

In order to successfully carry out the learning methodology, the D4C partners specifically selected cities that were undergoing an active planning process in order to create opportunities to immediately apply and test the information learned at each workshop, report back to the group as part of the homework package, and refine their approach. The project-based, goal-oriented nature of D4C enabled participants to strategically use the workshops to resolve issues, track their progress, and tap into network members' expertise. The type of plans varied by city and not every city was at the same stage in the planning process. Yet, this mixture of type of plans and stage in the planning process created a dynamic environment for peer learning. Furthermore, while not every city started the D4C process with the same civic engagement knowledge and experience, the cities rapidly arrived at common understandings that further contributed to the rich learning environment.

D4C provided participants with the opportunity to step back from their daily work routine and spend time thinking critically about approaches to civic engagement in their city and how to make improvements by addressing challenges through peer input. This group quickly became a unique peer network of dedicated public, private, and non-profit sector leaders that created an environment of trust, experimentation/exploration, and solidarity this pushed participants and encouraged them to try new things. The distinctive environment created through this initiative, aided by the intensive learning structure, contributed greatly to its success.

The Dialogue for Change network embraced several components, tools, and learning modules that influenced its success. First, the participation of city delegates remained consistent throughout the initiative, having very little turnover. This helped in establishing trust and a sense of solidarity among participants which in turn created a distinctive learning environment. Second, participants explored the fundamentals of civic engagement, and not necessarily just the latest and greatest ideas in the field of public participation. Conversations were focused on the basic framework and approaches to civic engagement to set a solid foundation on which to build innovative strategies. Third, participants tested and applied ideas and tools using the current resources of their projects, which iin many cities are very limited. Combined, these components provided the network an opportunity to reflect on successes, challenges, and failures in a supportive environment while solidifying concepts and approaches to civic engagement fundamentals.

Even though system change is a long-term process, this initiative sought to move civic engagement from plan or project-specific activities to a broader conversation in the community. The D4C network and activities highlighted the importance of civic engagement to the development of sustainable, equitable communities in the United States and Germany, and the unique transatlantic learning environment created through this initiative was the single biggest factor in the success of the overall initiative.

The following summary of the Dialogues for Change Initiative shares insights on civic engagement based on the experience of the participating cities. It documents the common ground forged between U.S. and German cities as they developed and implemented effective and meaningful civic engagement strategies throughout sustainable development planning and implementation. The summary is not intended as a manual, but as an exploration of how six transatlantic cities worked together to create a set of principles and approaches that were useful and relevant to the unique contexts of their cities. The conclusion of the document offers policy recommendations for strengthening the respective national frameworks for civic engagement via the efforts of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the German Ministry of the Environment.

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[1] The workshops were held: January 15 – 17, 2013, in Washington, DC; April 22 – 24, 2013 in Leipzig, Germany; September 11 – 13, 2013 in Memphis, TN; March 24 – 26, 2014 in Bottrop, Germany; November 17 – 19, 2014 in Baltimore, MD; and March 23 – 25, 2015 in Ludwigsburg, Germany.

Participating Cities
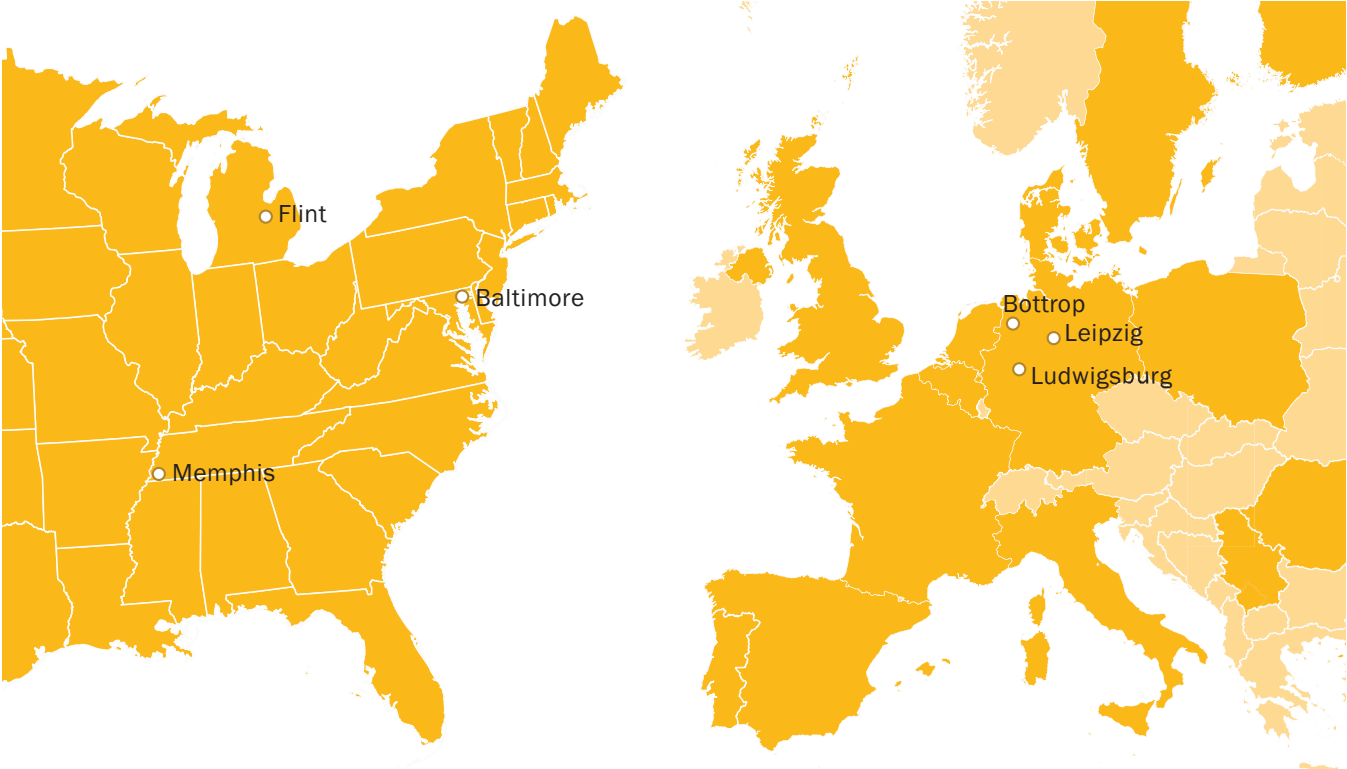
CITY	POPULATION	UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS
BOTTROP	117,311	Winner of the Initiativkreis Ruhr Innovation City Prize
LEIPZIG	502,979	Participant in GMF Transatlantic Cities Network
LUDWIGSBURG	86,139	National best practice in integrated urban planning and governance
FLINT, MI	100,515	HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative Planning Grantee
MEMPHIS, TN	655,155	HUD Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) City; HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative Planning Grantee
BALTIMORE, MD	622,793	HUD Sustainable Communities Regional Planning (SCRP) Grantee

² German city population taken from Census 2011: https://ergebnisse.zensus2011.de/#
U.S. city population drawn from 2012 population estimates: http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/index.html

U.S. CITIES

BALTIMORE

Tom Stosur, Director, Baltimore City Planning Department

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Jackie Carrera, President & CEO, Parks and People

Jenny Guillaume, Growing Green Initiative Coordinator, City of Baltimore

Valerie Rupp, Assistant Director, Community Greening and Great Parks, Parks and People

FLINT

Megan Hunter, Chief Planning Officer, City of Flint

Elizabeth Jordan, Planning Commissioner, City of Flint

Kevin Schronce, Associate Planner, City of Flint Planning Department

Jacqueline Poplar, Councilwoman, City of Flint

MEMPHIS

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Chad Bowman, Aerotropolis Project Manager, Memphis and Shelby County Division of Planning and Development

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GERMAN CITIES

BOTTROP

Christina Kleinheins, Head of City Planning Office, City of Bottrop

Klaus Müller, Center for Information and Advice, InnovationCity Management GmbH

LEIPZIG

Stefan Heinig, Head of Urban Development Planning, City of Leipzig

Fritjof Mothes, Urban Planner, Leipzig City Lab

Karolin Pannike, Department of Urban Development Planning, City of Leipzig

LUDWIGSBURG

Albert Geiger, Head of Sustainable Urban Development, City of Ludwigsburg

Eberhard Daferner, Deacon, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Württemberg

Fabian Knobelspies, Department of Sustainable Urban Development, City of Ludwigsburg

Tobias Grossmann, Department of Urban Development, City of Ludwigsburg

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CITY PROJECTS

CITY	PROJECT	DESCRIPTION	Status (as of fall 2015)
BOTTROP	InnovationCity Ruhr Master Plan http://www.icruhr.de/	The aim of this project was to cut CO_2 emissions in half while also improving quality of life through measures ranging from simple behavioral changes to heavy financial investments. At the start of the process, broad-based citizen engagement efforts were being carried out, but the goal for the city was to introduce new formats for engagement and reach relevant stakeholder groups.	Complete, implementation ongoing
LEIPZIG	Leipzig Weiter Denken (Leipzig Think Ahead) http://www.leipzig-weiter-denken.de/	A 10-month grant-supported project that discussed future-oriented questions on city development. Citizens and stakeholders engaged in evening events, workshops, and online forums to discuss and generate new project ideas for urban development. The goals for this project were to implement an audience response system by testing the polling system in one workshop/meeting and developing concepts for implementing different kinds of civic engagement in the future.	Complete, implemented
LUDWIGSBURG	Oβweil STEP District Development Plan http://www.ludwigsburg.de/,Lde/start/stadt_buerger/step_ost_ossweil.html	The goal of this plan was to use citizen participation and civic engagement to analyze the spatial, social, and economic integration of the district with respect to the city-wide objectives for urban development. Goals for the initial phase of this project were to implement the objectives of the City Development Plan in the Oβweil district, find solutions for the current local questions, and present the draft of the engagement strategy to the administration.	Ongoing
MEMPHIS, TN	Aerotropolis Master Plan http://www.memphischamber.com/Economic-Development/Aerotropolis.aspx	A comprehensive planning process funded by HUD to devise strategies for redeveloping the 50 square mile area around the Memphis International Airport, the second busiest cargo airport in the world. This area was haphazardly developed without consideration for the opportunity to highlight key assets such as the proximity to the airport; accessibility to intermodal distribution channels through air, rail, roadway, and river; the proximity to major tourist attractions; and the stability and economic viability of the local neighborhoods.	Complete, implementation ongoing
FLINT, MI	Imagine Flint Master Plan http://www.imagineflint.com/	A comprehensive Master Plan for the City of Flint, the first since 1960. The City of Flint Master Plan is a blueprint for the future, guiding development and investment in the city for the next 20 years. The Master Plan also articulates a vision of what the community wants to become in the future. The plan is focused on the following themes that came out of the Vision and Goals Workshop: social equity and sustainability; reshaping the economy; quality of life; adapting to change; youth; civic life.	Complete, implementation ongoing
BALTIMORE, MD	Growing Green Initiative (GGI) http://www.baltimoresustainability.org/growinggreen	A city-led effort to use sustainable, innovative, and cost-effective practices for stabilizing and holding land for redevelopment and reusing vacant land. The goals are to create greener neighborhoods, reduce storm water runoff, grow food, and create community spaces that mitigate the negative impacts of vacant properties and set the stage for improving the City of Baltimore.	Complete, implementation ongoing

Overall D4C Outputs:
The Co-Creation Process

D4C was not a process of teaching participants about civic engagement; it was a process of discovery, sharing, learning, and practice as the representatives from participating cities developed their own unique approaches to engagement. During the workshops, participants were exposed to expert presentations on different aspects of civic engagement, followed by a series of exercises in city groups or mixed city groups to apply the learning, address challenges of applying the learning, and share related good practices. Groups and individuals reported back to the larger group on their findings and engaged in a dialogue with new insight and ideas. The major learning themes addressed in the D4C workshops can be found in the table below.

Over the course of the D4C process, participants discovered for themselves the key factors that illustrate the fundamental principles of engagement. Through project-specific work, participants had the opportunity to test out ideas in real time and report their experiences to the network. They shared their successes with the group and worked through their challenges. Since these principles were derived in a transatlantic learning environment, their universality is further strengthened. They strongly correlate to the core principles of engagement espoused by several well-known and respected engagement and public participation organizations, and represent the necessary elements of a good, successful civic engagement program framework. The D4C universal principles are meant to provide guidance and structure to engagement processes, but they are also flexible and context-dependent.

THEME	DESCRIPTION
Inclusion and Equity in the Engagement Process	• A theoretical presentation grounded the discussion and outlined the importance of inclusion as the foundation of effective civic engagement processes. • Cities reflected on what diversity means in their communities and how inclusive their current planning initiatives are. • Cities completed stakeholder mapping exercises to identify key groups and their level of power and influence in the planning process. • Discussions incorporated research by James Surowiecki and Robert Putnam to explore the claim that the higher the diversity of a community, the less trust exists within that community.
Designing Successful Community Engagement Processes	• Discussions included a theoretical presentation on standards and good practice of civic engagement. • Peer-to-peer discussion on personal experiences in civic engagement covered common mistakes and challenges. • Network co-created a list of key components for civic engagement that would guide the network over the course of the initiative.

THEME	DESCRIPTION
Exploring the Community Engagement Toolkit	• Discussions included a theoretical presentation of different ways stakeholders can be engaged and reviewed the importance of choosing the right tool for each stakeholder group and the right stage of the process. • Discussions presented a showcase of innovative tools — both tactile and electronic — that could be used in the cities. • Participants developed a typology of tools and how they can be used: gather information; share and discover; start a conversation; and create and collaborate. • Participants brainstormed regarding how different tools could be incorporated into their engagement process.
Innovative Media in Civic Engagement	• Guest expert Paul Schutt presented on how media can create new narratives that document transformation and growth in cities. • A group exercise brainstormed the stories that the participants want to tell about their cities or the planning. • Discussions explored the role of media in creating culture of engagement in cities.
Creating a Culture of Participation	• Guest expert Julian Petrin, urban planner and communications specialist of Nexthamburg, illustrated how cities can think about creating a culture of engagement. • Participants discussed participatory citizen planning movements and platforms for more sustained engagement about general city issues and not specific projects.
Refreshing the Engagement Strategy for Different Stages of the Planning Process	• Discussions included a theoretical presentation on how civic engagement approaches should shift with the evolution of the planning process. • Group exercises explored re-doing the stakeholder mapping for their plan based on the current stage of the planning process. • Participants discussed how to understand and manage stakeholder hopes and fears for the planning processes and underwent group role play and improv exercises to test out ways to manage communication.
Innovative Implementation Tools and Strategies	• Discussions included an overview of innovative implementation tools and strategies that feature community involvement. • Participants saw a presentation of interesting and successful case studies in the United States and Europe.
New Method of Problem-Solving: Design Thinking	• An introductory presentation explained design thinking methods and the benefits of using human-centered problem-solving techniques. • Participants used the design thinking process to solve a problem related to their own work.

Prioritize Diversity and Inclusion: Incorporate diverse stakeholder groups to acknowledge the needs of the community and demonstrate commitment to the participation process.

Why it's important

Including input from all stakeholders is imperative to achieving sustainable results from any engagement process. In many cities, there is a deep-rooted history of exclusionary planning practices, but by purposefully planning diverse and inclusive processes, trust can be reestablished and outcomes will be more sustainable.

Through the Dialogues for Change process, cities in the United States and Germany learned both similarities and differences between their understanding of diversity and inclusion, as well as the challenges they face with regard to these concepts. In Germany, the term "inclusion" is used to refer to including disabled people more fully into society through better transportation, housing, and access to jobs, but in the United States, the most common understanding and use of this term applies to racial or ethnic groups. The rich environment of transatlantic exchange created an opportunity for discussion of these terms to broaden their overall meaning and application.

Despite the difference in the meaning of the terms, the cities of Flint and Bottrop shared similar histories of exclusion in their cities and they face the challenge of including certain disenfranchised groups in the engagement process. By broadening the common understanding of the terms diversity and inclusion, participants realized how many different groups had been previously left out of engagement processes and became more aware of creating fully integrated and accessible processes.

What they learned:

- Stakeholder-mapping exercises helped identify key groups and their level of power and influence in the planning process;

- Conversations about diversity and inclusion were grounded in ideas from prominent thought leaders (James Suroweicki, Robert Putnam);

- Keypad polling technology was successful as a data collecting tool.

Example from D4C network

The City of Flint struggles with longstanding issues of distrust within the community and as they embarked on their first master plan in over 60 years, the city used this process as an opportunity to breakdown walls and start to build a more trusting, open, and transparent planning environment. The city's strategy for civic participation throughout the planning and implementation process was focused on representing the community demographics in all public participation activities.

The City of Flint used keypad polling during their master planning process to collect demographic information on participants and compared the results to the most current Census figures to evaluate participant turnout in relation to the composition of their community. Based on the results of keypad polling, participants in the March vision and goals workshop closely approximated Flint's census demographics in terms of gender. The workshop was under-represented by African Americans (43% compared to 56% in the census) over-represented by Whites (46% compared to 38%). There were not as many young adults and low-income individuals as are in the community as a whole, but marked improvements were made compared to prior master planning meetings.

Furthermore, the City of Flint used multiple channels of communication as well as available community resources to act as multipliers and encourage participation of historically underrepresented groups. By broadening their understanding of inclusion, the city provided sign language interpretation and asked if anyone needed other accommodations on the registration materials that were sent out prior to the events. In order to focus their outreach on under-represented groups, the city used the stakeholder-mapping tool as well as their steering committee members to expand their reach. The city also worked with community groups and faith-based networks to spread the word about the engagement process. The Imagine Flint master plan process won the Michigan Association of Planning's 2014 Excellence in Community Engagement Award, the Daniel Burnham Award for a Comprehensive Plan by the Michigan Chapter of the American Planning Association; and, the Macinac Prize by the Michigan Chapter of the Congress for New Urbanism.

Design Comprehensive and Thoughtful Processes: Designing civic engagement activities that not only meet basic standards and legal requirements, but also meet the unique needs of the community and are tailored to specific cultural contexts.

Why it's important?

Historically, public participation activities have consisted of basic activities that satisfy a municipality's legal requirement or appease an appeal from the impacted community. However, thoughtful and holistic planning about the types of engagement, as well as the timing, location, and stakeholders, are critical to building trust and creating diverse and inclusive processes.

By taking time to understand the stakeholders that are, or should be involved, in the engagement process, the Dialogue for Change participants were able to think more holistically about their process design and tailor the process to specific needs and situations. For example, upon realizing that a certain group of individuals was unable to attend meetings because of their restrictive circumstances, participants developed new ideas, such as neighborhood meetings, walking tours, and one-on-one information exchanges.

What they learned:

- Participants reviewed different ways stakeholders can be engaged, focusing on the importance of choosing the right tool for each stakeholder group and at the right stage of the process;

- The participants co-created a list of key components for civic engagement to guide the network over the course of the initiative;

- A typology of tools were developed and categorized by use, such as tools to gather information; share and discover; start a conversation; and create and collaborate;

- Innovative tools — both tactile and electronic — were showcased that could be used in the network cities.

Example from D4C network:

BOTTROP The City of Bottrop, in Germany's Ruhr Area, has made great strides towards rebuilding their post-industrial economy and creating a more inclusive community. Recognizing their struggle with migrant populations and inclusion, the city emphasized the importance of creating civic engagement activities that are tailored to their specific cultural context. One way they accomplished this was through the use of data. In designing engagement activities for the Master Plan process, the city used data as the basis for developing their citizen workshops. It helped in understanding the population and its needs and how to best tailor their engagement process. For example, by using data to plan informative workshops, one person recognized that there was district heating on her street, something the person did not previously know. In addition, the use of data helped city officials plan engagement processes that worked for and with the community to best reach the necessary populations. It is important to not rely solely on data when planning engagement processes, but it can certainly provide important insights and direction to process design.

Work Towards a Culture of Sustained Engagement:
Moving civic engagement from one-time, project specific activities to more sustained and continuous conversations around general city issues and future city development.

Leipzig weiter denken

Why it's important?

It is easy to engage people around an issue that they are against, but much more difficult to engage them in more holistic and meaningful conversations about the future of their city. Creating a culture of engagement is important to building a relationship based on trust, transparency, and respect. Often, the relationship between elected and appointed officials and their constituents can be combative, or strained at best. Creating a culture of open and honest dialogue between these officials and citizens is a critical step in illustrating their commitment to the community.

Current engagement paradigms in both the United States and Germany involve getting project specific input. The community is engaged when there are major projects to undertake or major issues to address. D4C participants noted, however, that in the US, engagement is more confrontational. In many communities, this has resulted in reactive engagement processes. However, thinking more about proactive processes can start to turn the tide towards developing a culture of sustained engagement where stakeholders maintain open dialogues about their city and its future.

What they learned:

- Julian Petrin, guest expert urban planner and communications specialist of Nexthamburg, illustrated how cities can think about creating a culture of engagement;
- Participants explored the role of media and storytelling in creating a culture of engagement;
- Participants discussed participatory citizen planning movements and platforms for more sustained engagement about general city issues rather than specific projects.

Example from D4C network:

LEIPZIG
The ultimate goal of all of the D4C participating cities was to eventually achieve a culture of sustained engagement in their cities, where conversations about future city development are not held in a piecemeal fashion and on a case by case basis, but as regular parts of the civic, democratic process. The City of Leipzig was able to make observable progress toward this end by working to incorporate civic engagement into civil society.

When the city first started in the D4C initiative, they were focused on the Leipzig Weiter Denken (Leipzig Think Ahead) plan. City participants learned new tools and approaches to civic engagement to apply to this plan, but also to their future work. Throughout the course of the D4C initiative, city participants took their knowledge back to the city and shared their learning with their colleagues. Heads of other city department began asking D4C participants about their experience and what they had learned and were eager to know more about creating more integrated civic engagement processes. Consequently, the city of Leipzig now holds public participation forums with greater frequency, that are less focused on urgent, acute issues, and more focused on overall future city development.

Communicate Impact and Action:
Share feedback and successes with community stakeholders in response to their ideas and input to illustrate the importance of their participation in the engagement process towards achieving positive change.

Memphis: America's Aerotropolis™
Where Runway, Road, Rail & River Merge™

Why it's important?

Many participants of civic engagement processes experience planning fatigue where they become disillusioned by the processes because it seems never-ending and it takes too long to see any results. Furthermore, because stakeholders are continually asked for feedback and reactions to ideas, but never receive any recognition that their idea was received, considered, or heard, they become disinvested in the project. Due to these common reactions of stakeholders towards traditional engagement processes, it is important that planning staff and political officials communicate frequently with the public about the impact of their input to encourage further participation. Acknowledging the time, effort, and ideas of the public is critical to building a trusting and open relationship to further collective action toward creating more sustainable cities. Dialogue for Change participants noted that respect for the participation process, particularly among political officials, is quite low, resulting in the marginalization of engagement activities as well as a lack of follow up and action based on the community's input.

What they learned:

- Paul Schutt, Issue Media Group, presented on how media can create new narratives that document transformation and growth in cities;
- The participants learned an important lesson from Nexthamburg: "there are no no's";
- Group engaged in dialogue on the importance and methods of celebrating successes.

Example from D4C network:

MEMPHIS
After receiving a HUD Community Challenge Grant, the City of Memphis embarked on a huge undertaking — the creation of a master plan for the Airport City and surrounding areas. The Aerotropolis Master Plan was an ambitious task accomplished among a diverse group of cross-sector stakeholders. However, getting everyone on the same page and remembering to communicate results to the community, was not always easy. The city worked hard to identify influencers and key stakeholders to champion the plan as a keystone component in communicating impact and action.

Once the Aerotropolis Master Plan was complete, the city held meetings with private business owners, school operators, and residents that were interested in getting the plan adopted. These dedicated individuals also approached their elected officials to champion the Aerotropolis Master Plan adoption. Throughout this process, it was important to take time to communicate the accomplishments and not to dwell on what was not accomplished. For example, the Elvis Presley Hotel, Cold Chain, and Dollhouse Projects, as well as other goals, were all completed even before the plan was officially adopted by the legislative board.

MEMPHIS AEROTROPOLIS
Airport City Master Plan

Be Transparent and Flexible:

Communicate goals and expectations clearly at the start of the process and provide space for reflection to learn from mistakes and modify the approach moving forward.

LUDWIGSBURG

Why it's important?

Meaningful public participation requires engagement towards a specific goal, but throughout the process, goals may change and the process has to be flexible enough to accommodate these deviations. Civic engagement processes may result in unintended, yet important outcomes and city officials and leaders need to be willing to respond. Alternatively, engagement tools and methods may need to change based on participant turn-out, comfort levels, and level of engagement. A flexible process can adapt to changing situations and new information and a transparent process helps build trust, both of which can encourage future engagement by creating a positive and responsive environment. Because of the way current processes of engagement are structured, stakeholders often have few opportunities to discuss issues of concern and may use any venue possible to voice their opinion. While this may interrupt the current participation activity, it is an important step in moving towards a culture of engagement, by providing a safe space for discussion and building an environment of trust.

What they learned:

- Civic engagement approaches should shift with the evolution of the planning process;

- Group exercises allowed participants to re-do the stakeholder-mapping for city plans based on the current stage of the planning process;

- Participants discussed managing stakeholder hopes and fears during the planning processes;

- Participants tested out ways to manage stakeholder communication via role play and improv exercises.

Example from D4C network:

LUDWIGSBURG The city of

Ludwigsburg, in the region of Stuttgart, has had a department of sustainable urban development since 2004 that is tasked with ensuring a holistic and comprehensive approach to planning in the city. A major component of this initiative was instituting a new culture of active and intensive citizen participation. The city holds regular citizen engagement opportunities, and has also hosted a series of "Future Conferences" for the community. Throughout the D4C initiative, program participants noted the frequency with which engagement processes are diverted by a stakeholder with a different agenda and the City of Ludwigsburg was no exception. To accommodate these situations, and mitigate any potential negative impacts, they felt it was necessary to always provide room for venting. Venting was a technique that the City of Ludwigsburg felt strongly about encouraging and employing. They were very mindful to allow for venting among city participants, colleagues, and city councilors during the planning engagement process. Including the time and space for venting meant that the city's engagement process was flexible enough to provide room for reflection and to modify their process as necessary to respond to stakeholder needs and priorities. And ultimately, providing the citizens with this opportunity created a more relaxed and safe working environment.

Create a Shared Purpose and Collaborative Leadership: Encourage

collective processes among stakeholders to advance ideas for the community.

GROWING GREEN INITIATIVE

Why it's important?

All stakeholders need to buy-in to the project by encouraging collaborative processes via a shared purpose; otherwise, the process will stagnate in favor of conflicting viewpoints. While not all stakeholders will be involved in the engagement process in the same way, they do all need to coalesce around a common understanding of the outcomes to be achieved. Civic engagement processes need to become less top-down and allow for collaborative visioning and leadership. Not only is it important for stakeholders to feel invested in the process, but on a more practical level, collaborative leadership can ease the burden on city staff.

Dialogue for Change participants observed that Americans are more individualistic in their thinking; while this characteristic has perhaps contributed to American culture in many ways, it is a trait that may effectively hinder planning and engagement processes. Collaborative and collective decision-making around a shared purpose however, will contribute to a more sustainable outcome.

What they learned:

- Stakeholder mapping exercises taught participants how to map the level of interest and influence of participating stakeholder groups and how to engage different groups and individuals during the planning and/or implementation process;

- Participants agreed on the importance of managing expectations of all stakeholders;

- Participants discussed managing stakeholder hopes and fears for the planning processes;

- Participants shared strategies for effectively communicating goals, building champions, and achieving buy-in.

Example from D4C network:

BALTIMORE In undertaking

the planning for the Growing Green Initiative (GGI) in the City of Baltimore, officials sought to make the process inclusive and collaborative. Recognizing the importance of establishing a shared purpose and encouraging collective leadership, the city employed innovative methods of engagement during plan implementation that enabled collaborative action. However, the city also noted the importance of allowing all parties to have a unique vision within the scope of the plan or initiative. For example, enabling community groups to effectively plan open spaces by giving them access to resources, while simultaneously maintaining their roles within the overall initiative, can be empowering. Participants first noted that establishing the role of stakeholders and incubating leadership around shared goals was critical. Applying these concepts in practice meant partnering with foundations to distribute funds and awards as well as partnering with community organizing experts. The success of these activities depended greatly on the ability of all stakeholders to coalesce around a shared goal as well as delegating leadership responsibilities to use all resources to the fullest extent.

Strengthening Local Civic Engagement Frameworks in the United States and Germany

Civic Engagement in the National Context

Dialogues for Change focused on exchanging strategies and tools for integrating civic engagement into sustainable development processes — from visioning to implementation. The term civic engagement is used here to suggest a conversation about developing sustainable communities that occurs between individuals and groups representing a range of different stakeholders and sectors. D4C also explored moving local engagement beyond project (or plan) level community dialogues, to a broader, continuous discussion about the future of inclusive and sustainable cities. With the United States and Germany facing similar shifts in demographics, fiscal constraints, and increasing pressure to reinvigorate urban cores, there is a strong need to build local capacity to have a sustained and meaningful public dialogue around the impact of these changes and how to manage them effectively.

In both the United States and Germany, civic engagement is critically important to ensuring equitable and sustainable approaches to urban planning and development decision making and is a topic ripe for transatlantic and peer to peer learning. Current civic engagement practice in the United States grew out of a tradition of civic advocacy and community organizing. Civic engagement is considered an important standard practice in U.S. urban planning and is part of the code of ethics for the American Institute of Certified Planners. Many local governments have adopted policies requiring civic engagement for major plans and investment decisions. The U.S. federal government has also adopted requirements for engagement; specifically, the three agencies that form the Partnership for Sustainable Communities[3]

require civic engagement to be a core element of any project receiving grant funds associated with the initiative. Despite this, there are differing views on how to conduct civic engagement that creates meaningful dialogue with stakeholders. While there is no "one size fits all" approach, a common critique of many civic engagement processes is that only minimum standards are met with little incentive to encourage innovative and more inclusive practices. Unfortunately, public participation or civic engagement is often an after-thought in the planning process and not an integral component to plan development or implementation.

A similar story can be told in Germany with both federal requirements for certain urban planning and transportation investments (e.g. Building Law of 1976), as well as local initiatives to encourage civic engagement. Germany also faces similar challenges managing public participation events, utilizing public input, and the degree to which innovation is encouraged at the local level. The German federal government is encouraging civic engagement innovation as part of its National Urban Development Policy. Of the six focal points of the National Urban Development Policy, the first is focused on engagement:

> *"Neither government nor industry can master the current processes of social and urban change by themselves. A crucial prerequisite for a just, socially inclusive urban society is that the citizens get involved in their cities. Without civic engagement and private sector initiatives, public sector urban development projects and schemes often peter out. Social and urban development policies set a framework that has to be fleshed out by private sector stakeholders….. By strengthening civil society, responsibility is placed in the hands of those who are best placed to assume it — with the aim of implementing ideas and commitment on the ground."[4]*

The federal government directly invested in new ideas and innovation in local public

participation by supporting thirteen pilot projects. Although the D4C initiative was not one of the pilot projects, it achieved similar goals for advancing civic engagement among the participating German cities, most notably through transatlantic peer exchange with their American counterparts.

Civic Engagement in the Transatlantic Context

The transatlantic aspect of D4C was not merely in the composition of the participants, but also in the policy and political underpinnings of the initiative. D4C was launched in October 2012 at the Ministry's Urban Energies Conference, an international gathering held in Berlin, Germany. A core element of the conference was demonstrating international support for the Urban Energies Memorandum — "Urban Energies — Urban Challenges". The memorandum was developed in collaboration with national and international partners from the private sector, academic institutions, civic organizations, and multiple levels of government. It outlines the requirements necessary to achieve sustainable urban development via innovation, creativity, political engagement, and civic engagement. Signed by both HUD and the Ministry, the memorandum outlines a political and policy framework that GMF followed in conceptualizing the D4C initiative.

The memorandum notes that citizens are experts of their own environments and situations therefore making their participation in developing sustainable cities extremely critical. According to the memorandum, citizen participation and co-decision making is crucial to policy transformation and development of cities and regions. Since citizen engagement is the core value of the D4C initiative, the outcomes and lessons learned will help contribute to sustainable city development in both national and international contexts. The cities in the D4C network have demonstrated the importance of

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[3] http://www.sustainablecommunities.gov/ Formed in 2009, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities is a joint initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to help communities nationwide improve access to affordable housing, increase transportation options, and lower transportation costs while protecting the environment.

[4] http://www.nationale-stadtentwicklungspolitik.de/cln_030/nn_246684/EN/NationalUrbanDevelopmentPolicy/KeyIssues/KeyIssues.html

civic participation through their project outcomes and city-wide changes.

Although it is the responsibility of the public sector to raise the public's awareness of its responsibility and role in sustainable urban planning processes, the Urban Energies MOU suggests that there is a need to involve and support citizens in both traditional volunteer activities as well as project-based and temporary civic engagement activities. Based on the learning and outcomes of the D4C initiative however, supporting and fostering a culture of engagement in cities to help move engagement beyond the temporary, project-based activities to a sustained dialogue on the future of sustainable cities is also critically important. Many cities successfully engage their citizens during temporary planning processes, but long term engagement through plan implementation and beyond, is much more difficult to achieve. Creating a culture of engagement will not only help raise the public's awareness of their role in sustainable urban planning but will also instill trust and demonstrate the value of public engagement to these processes.

Transatlantic learning is a pillar of the work of the German Marshall Fund. Similarly, the Urban Energies memorandum notes the importance of international, national, regional, and local alliances that are stable, reliable, and transparent. The *Dialogues for Change* initiative represents an important example of an international alliance between city and civic leaders working towards a common goal.

Common city-wide challenges of civic engagement before involvement in the *Dialogues for Change* initiative:

- Lack of awareness among city stakeholders about the plan and how to get involved

- Lack of trust within the community

- Being inclusive of all stakeholder groups in the community

- Using outcomes of engagement to drive decision-making process

- Low-level of engagement of city and civic stakeholder groups

Changes to civic engagement as a result of involvement in the *Dialogues for Change* initiative:

- Visible transformation in the number of participants at meetings

- The use of new tools encouraged broader citizen participation and helped reach a diverse segment of the population

- Tied specific feedback from the community to vision and guiding principles in the plan

- Greater knowledge of how to meaningfully involve stakeholders as active participants

- Better understanding of how to use different methods to involve diverse stakeholder groups

Policy Recommendations

The unique nature of the Dialogues for Change initiative was instrumental in creating a set of policy recommendations for both local and federal governments in Germany and the United States. Program participants focused mainly on addressing local level civic engagement and provided insights into their experiences at the city level. Throughout this process, insights and ideas emerged to address how federal governments can encourage and support local government engagement.

In addition to the principles developed through the D4C process, GMF recommends the following policies to support a sustained culture of engagement at the local and federal levels in the U.S. and Germany.

Creating and supporting a sustained culture of engagement at both the local and federal levels is critical to moving civic engagement beyond a project specific activity. Rather, civic engagement should be a continuous dialogue. As cities develop sustained cultures of engagement, an environment of openness and trust will replace an atmosphere predicated on voicing opinions only when community members feel strongly about a project or plan. The intent is that citizens can take a more active role in driving the creation of more sustainable cities rather than simply reacting to decisions made without their input. As such, we felt that providing city and federal governments with a set of basic policies to create and support sustained cultures of engagement, was a critical outcome of this initiative.

City Level

1. **Establish city-wide principles and guidelines:** Based on broad public input, establish core principles and baseline standards for outreach and engagement that provide consistency of practice across the government. Principles should reflect the city's values of engagement and offer clear guidance to citizens about its role in the decision making process. Guidelines should capture any federal, state, or local legal requirements or procedures, but also be framed as the starting point for developing unique strategies for each process.

2. **Require public engagement plans or strategies:** Prior to the start of a plan or policy development process, the lead agency or organization should engage local stakeholders to develop a public engagement plan or strategy; co-development of plans is highly encouraged as it increases the sense of ownership and accountability of the process. The plan should build on the city-wide guidelines, but be adaptable to unique needs and preferences of the community. Plans should include also a monitoring and evaluation approach to assess the effectiveness of the engagement and its impact on the final plan.

3. **Recognize and reward innovative practice:** Incentivize innovation by recognizing and rewarding efforts to break new ground and go beyond baseline standards in engagement. From competitions to social media campaigns, the field of civic engagement is constantly evolving. Local governments and civil society organizations should explore mechanisms to lift up innovators and celebrate best practices both inside and outside of government.

4. **Create a local community of practice:** Connect civic engagement activities led by different actors in the public and private spheres to bolster civic pride and support for robust engagement, as well as provide opportunities for learning across sectors and neighborhoods to connect citizens to share ideas and best practices. Methods such as creating local champions and a city brand can get people excited about their community and foster a sense of civic pride. Example — Austin's Conversation Corps (http://www.atxtalks.org/)

5. **Institutionalize what works:** Innovation and experimenting with new strategies is critical to refreshing an engagement strategy, but cities should also institutionalize good practice by revisiting core principles and guidelines on a regular basis. If every city department and agency adheres to the same basic principles of engagement, creating a culture of engagement will naturally flow out of project specific activities. By developing city-wide principles and guidelines, local governments can begin to institutionalize what works.

Federal Level _____

1. **Create a national community of practice:** At the federal level there is an opportunity to foster dialogue and exchange across the country focused on inclusive urban development. Federal government has power in convening local and state actors in virtual or in-person peer learning communities either using existing thematic networks or developing new networks focused on civic engagement. These networks must be stewarded, have a common purpose, and have clear outcomes or benefits from participation. However, federal agencies don't necessarily have to be in the drivers' seat of these exchanges. They can provide structure and a supportive environment for communities to pursue inclusive urban development strategies.

2. **Continue to support pilot projects and competitive grants that enable innovative practice:** While federal governments may not have the resources to support specific civic engagement projects, they have incentivized good practice by supporting pilot projects (Germany) and required civic engagement in activities supported by federal grants (U.S.). With continuous pressure on resources it is critical that these mechanisms continue to be supported and if possible expanded.

3. **Recognize and disseminate innovative practice:** Celebrating successes is an important component of any engagement strategy. It illustrates the power the community has to effect change in their communities. Federal governments can make concerted efforts to recognize and distribute innovative practices through national awards, conferences, dissemination activities, and social media outlets. These ideas should be spread beyond the local community of practice to other audiences. Example — HUD's Innovation of the Day (IOD) (http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/innovationoftheday)

4. **Innovative community of practice within federal government:** Federal governments can lead by example and innovate within and among departments to create more open and consistent channels for dialogues. They can be incubators for new and innovative engagement concepts and develop good practices to be translated to local communities. Example — White House Office of Public Engagement (https://www.whitehouse.gov/engage/office)

5. **Encourage dialogue between different levels of government:** Vertical government hierarchies exist in both Germany and the United States. If Federal governments endeavor to collaborate with local governments to make policies and recommendations, they also need to encourage a dialogues between local — state — and federal governments. Each level of government will have a different experience with civic engagement, but through a dialogue, core principles can be distilled and promoted as good practice. It is critical to incorporate local input into planning and policy processes.

Appendix

Resources

- Engagement Global (http://www.engagement-global.de/)

- HUD Exchange: Civic Engagement: Mapping Tools to Process (https://www.hudexchange.info/resource/4570/civic-engagement-mapping-tools-to-process/)

- The National League of Cities (http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/city-solutions-and-applied-research/governance/civic-engagement)

- City Examples from the National League of Cities (http://www.nlc.org/find-city-solutions/city-solutions-and-applied-research/governance/civic-engagement/city-examples-in-civic-engagement)

- International Association for Public Participation (http://www.iap2.org/)

- IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.iap2.org/resource/resmgr/imported/IAP2%20Spectrum_vertical.pdf)

- The National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (http://ncdd.org/)

- International City/County Management Association (http://icma.org/en/results/management_strategies/leading_practices/civic_engagement)

- The Deliberative Democracy Consortium (http://www.deliberative-democracy.net/)

- Citizens at the Center: The Case Foundation (http://casefoundation.org/resource/citizens-center/)

- Bright Spots In Community Engagement (http://www.knightfoundation.org/media/uploads/publication_pdfs/BrightSpots-final.pdf)

- Participatory Politics Foundation (http://www.participatorypolitics.org/whats-needed-for-civic-engagement/)

- Engagement Commons: The Knight Foundation (http://knightfoundation.org/blogs/knightblog/2012/1/11/engagement-commons-new-tool-empower-civic-engagement/)

- The Sunlight Foundation (https://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/2013/01/04/creating-tools-for-civic-engagement-and-proving-a-home-for-activists-and-hacktivists/)

- CivicLab (http://www.civiclab.us/)

- Code for America (https://www.codeforamerica.org/practices/engagement/)