



# Glos sary

of urban  
development  
for the  
common  
good





# Glossary

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for the common good

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# The common good as the driver of a co-productive urban development policy

## 1

Cities are subject to constant change. Their development always reflects the social and political signs of the times. Currently, the effects of globalisation and digitalisation are leading to a rediscovery of the idea of the common good. Affordable housing for everyone, mixed-use districts for young and old, diverse social and cultural offers – these topics need to be discussed differently today than in the last century. More and more frequently, people are demanding a greater say in the design of their municipality and are promoting the common good in their cities through practical activities: They run libraries and swimming pools that can no longer be financed from a municipal point of view; they develop collective ownership models to dedicate spaces and places to the common good on a long-term basis; they create real estate for many as inclusive meeting places in neighbour-

hoods and make important contributions to the provision of public services.

Beyond thinking in terms of responsibilities, municipalities, businesses and civil society jointly develop solutions for a diverse life together in the city. This cooperation is also called “co-productive urban development”, where city residents become “city-makers”. The impact of such projects surpasses their obvious, practical value: Beyond a purely economic and profit-oriented benefit, they “build” the common good.

But what is the “common good” anyway? The welfare of all? That would mean that everyone would be able to agree on common aims in regard to certain challenges. However, this runs the risk of causing different and even contradictory interests – that simply happen to exist in a diverse society – to disappear. Thus, when we speak of the common good, when it is to be determined (by whom, actually?), we need to consciously examine the different perspectives and possibilities within a society.

The “common good” is a difficult term to grasp. This vagueness provides the opportunity to remain in dialogue with each other. This glossary reflects on what the common good means and what the term can achieve in daily negotiation processes between individual freedom and collective needs. The appealing thing about the concept of the common good is that it does not have just one clear-cut

definition and can therefore develop. It can change with society. The continuous negotiation of the concept of the common good can accompany the sustainable development of neighbourhoods, cities and regions, thus promoting a more cohesive society.

As a cornerstone of co-existence, the common good can thus always be compared with current societal trends and filled with new specific, relevant content. Without claiming to be exhaustive, this glossary acts as a snapshot, presenting some of the components that, from the point of view of the players involved, are of central significance for the design of an urban neighbourhood for all. It is, therefore, also a guideline for urban development for the common good. It fits into the formulation of the New Leipzig Charter adopted during the German EU Council Presidency, which is also dedicated to the transformative power of cities for the common good.

This glossary aims to contribute to a common understanding of terms and thus to a factual understanding between new and old urban development practitioners, between experts and laypeople, as well as between theory and practice. It is intended to intensify the exchange of urban development policy practitioners at all levels and to strengthen common goals as well as specific implementation ideas of urban development for the common good.

The glossary includes not only the basic definition of terminology but also methodology, instruments and tools. Using detailed texts and explanatory tables, four overarching themes provide an urban development framework for the common good. In order to provide ideas for imitation in own on-site projects, inspiring reference projects are presented in addition to the definitions of terms. Four in-depth essays on the topics of justice, narratives, processes and transformation offer supplementary content.

#### About the legal basis of the term “common good”

As the cornerstone of our shared existence, in many ways the common good is anchored in German law. The German Basic Law states that “Property entails obligations. Its use should also serve the common good.” (Article 14 para. 2) The Building Code takes up this thread and spins it further: Urban land-use plans should “safeguard [...] socially equitable utilisation of land for the general good of the community” (Section 1 para. 5). Bavaria even goes one step further. The Bavarian Constitution states that the “Any increase of the value of the land which arises without special effort or capital expenditure of the owner shall be utilised for the general public.” (Article 161). References to the common good can also be found in many municipal ordinances.

# Crowdsourcing and common comments

## *On the production of the glossary*

### 2

This glossary was developed in a multi-stage collaborative process with the aim of creating a common vocabulary of a co-productive city oriented towards the common good. The idea goes back to the call for project proposals “Shaping the City Together! New Models of Neighbourhood Development” from the National Urban Development Policy, a joint initiative of the federal government, the states and the municipalities. The federal government regularly invites initiatives and communities that have participated in the call, as well as other urban development practitioners, to various exchange formats. One of these workshops was dedicated to developing a common vocabulary as part of the “Conference on the Future of Space in Our Cities”, which took place in Dresden in summer 2019. The Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) invitation included a request to submit suggestions for a planned glossary.

This resulted in a collection of around 110 terms for which the BBSR developed initial definitions. During the workshop, these prepared terms were edited, commented on and supplemented by those attending. The following participants were involved in the process:

- anstiftung, Munich
- Bläue Blume e.V., Friedrichshafen
- B-side gGmbH, Münster
- Clubcomission Berlin e.V., Berlin
- Erlebe was geht gUG, Altenburg
- Evangelischer Friedhofsverband Mitte, Berlin
- Fachbeirat für integrierte Stadtentwicklung, Bad Münstereifel
- Freiraumgalerie, Halle (Saale)
- Gesellschaft +, Hannover
- Hand in Hand für Geflüchtete e.V., Wuppertal
- Hansaforum, Münster
- Helden wider Willen e.V., Leipzig
- Institute GTAS, TU Braunschweig
- Institute of Urbanism and Urban Studies, TU Dresden
- Kolaps eG, Cologne
- Interessengemeinschaft Hallen Kalk, Cologne
- Kalk-Kaleidoskop, Cologne
- Konglomerat e.V., Dresden
- City Planning Office, State Capital Dresden
- Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development, Dresden
- Netzwerk Immobilien
- Niehler Freiheit e.V., Cologne
- Plattform e.V., Erfurt
- Platzprojekt e.V., Hannover
- Quartier:Mirke, Wuppertal
- Kollektiv Raumstation, Weimar/Berlin/ Vienna
- Stadt Mensch, Altenburg
- Planning Department, City of Halle (Saale)
- STADTRAUM 5und4 e.V., Cologne
- stadtstattstrand, Munich/Berlin
- Stephanus-Stiftung, Berlin
- Terra Libra Immobilien GmbH, Berlin
- Utopiastadt e.V. & gGmbH, Wuppertal
- UrbanUp, Bergische Universität Wuppertal
- Urban Lab gGmbH, Nuremberg
- Die Urbane Liga
- Verein zur Förderung öffentlicher Kultur e.V., Hamburg
- Wall and Space e.V., Halle (Saale)
- Werkstatt Wunderburg e.G., Bamberg
- ZUSammenKUNFT Berlin eG, Berlin

In a second step, the stadtstattstrand team (Laura Bruns, Konrad Braun, Leona Lynen) was commissioned by the BBSR to review and condense these annotated terms and add additional definitions. Based on the existing texts, comments and alternative suggestions, the content and language of the terms were edited with the BBSR and transferred into a first draft of the glossary. With the aim of creating a common understanding for the glossary, a dialogue phase took place before the final editing. Numerous experts were asked for critical comments. Two people reviewed, critiqued and, if necessary, supplemented the terms, which had already been edited and complemented with examples. Involved in this process were:

Frauke Burgdorff (Head of Planning, Construction and Mobility, City of Aachen)

Roberta Burghardt/Dagmar Pelger (coopdisco, Berlin)

Johanna Debik (Montag Stiftung Urbane Räume, Bonn)

Roberta Burghardt/Dagmar Pelger (coopdisco, Berlin)

Bernadette-Julia Felsch (Münchner Forum für Stadtentwicklungsfragen/Münchner Initiative für ein soziales Bodenrecht)

Mona Gennies (Netzwerk Immobilien, Berlin)

Silke Helfrich (Commons-Institute, Berlin)

Magnus Hengge (studio adhoc/Bizim Kiez/Stadtprojekte/LokalBau/Stadtodenstiftung Berlin)

Sascha Kullak/Leonie Nienhaus (B-Side/Hansaforum, Münster)

David Matthée (Stiftung trias, Hattingen)

Fridolin Pflüger (Konglomerat/#Rosenwerk, Dresden)

Cordelia Polinna (Urban Catalyst, Berlin)

Viola Schulze Dieckhoff (Technical University Dortmund/Die Urbanisten, Dortmund)

Renée Tribble (Renée Tribble Const\*ellations/PlanBude Hamburg)

Elisabeth Voß (NETZ für Selbstverwaltung und Selbstorganisation, Berlin)

In this multi-layered process, the following also became clear: The common good is not a concept that can be defined conclusively. It must be continuously negotiated, taking conflicting perspectives into account. Complete agreement cannot be achieved. The first edition of the *Glossary of Urban Development for the Common Good* is now being presented. The definitions formulated here will be adapted to new findings or developments in the future and supplemented by additional terms. All readers are invited to contribute to the ongoing development of the glossary by making suggestions and proposals to the BBSR.

# Gamut of the common good

## *The spectrum of issues*

3

This publication aims to help new and established practitioners in their daily work and contains a comprehensive collection of terms that can be significant for negotiating the common good in developing an open city. Many terms are directly related to each other; others are generic.

In developing the glossary, four thematic clusters have emerged: *Urban policy, new land policy, collective capital and collaboration*.

### **Urban policy**

This cluster is about new forms of cooperation, the active participation of numerous residents and local politics capable of listening and learning.

### **New land policy**

Through the interaction of existing legal instruments, land and spaces can be secured for the benefit of the common good.

### **Collective capital**

An overview of tools and strategies for using the social and financial power of many to initiate new projects.

### **Collaboration**

Organisational models help to create internal decision-making structures and to develop an institutional framework to build agency.

# Urban policy

The city is a construction site that is always in the making and can never be handed over to the urban society on a turnkey basis. It is an erratic expression of different and also contradictory social, economic and ecological interests. Its public parks, spaces and streets are essential venues of diverse democratic **↳engagement**. These include every day and informal kinds of **↳participation** such as **↳civic engagement**, **↳production of wishes** and **↳city-making**; together with demonstrations and protests, they are an expression of the needs of a city's inhabitants.

Along formal lines, residents' enquiries, draft resolutions or citizens' petitions open up further opportunities to influence political decision-making in city parliaments. In recent years, new forms of cooperation have emerged (**↳governance**). It is no longer a matter of distinguishing between top-down or bottom-up, but rather of working together for a co-productive designing of the city (**↳co-production**). Civic initiatives work hand in hand with politics and administration and contribute their experience from everyday work to urban policy (**↳municipalism**). This interaction between the active engagement of the many and a local policy that listens and learns forms the basis for socially responsible urban development.

Only through the involvement of all can affordable (**→affordability**), common good-oriented (**→common good**) and **→open cities** be restored, in which land is distributed fairly (**→fair distribution of space**) and mutually supportive cooperation (**→solidarity**) is the focus. **→Responsibility** for our social and civic lives does not begin with politics, it begins with each and every individual. Elected representatives are tasked with taking into account the interests of the city residents. Means and tools of **→cooperation** enable collaboration on equal footing, in which municipalities set a binding framework for cooperation between politics, administration and civil society with neighbourhood contracts, **→round tables** or cooperation agreements. Urban policy in **→open cities** is thus characterised by a variety of actions and offers, negotiation processes and alliances.

**Protest****→ Appropriation**

Protest action to draw attention to certain deficiencies and non-existent involvement in decision-making processes in urban development.

**Critical Mass**

A form of action in which cyclists meet in a seemingly random and disorganised manner to show their concerns and rights with regard to motor traffic by riding together on the road.

**Demonstration**

Gathering of many people in a public space to point out deficiencies and to address decision-makers through chants, posters and speeches.

**Urban policy hearing**

Instrument for pluralistic opinion-forming, important information and communication channel to present the concerns and demands of initiatives to politicians.

**Networking advice**

Event at which a network of civic initiatives is formed and the foundations for productive and purposeful cooperation or guidelines for all practitioners are developed.

**Core election issues**

Enquiries from initiatives and interest groups to parties standing for election to influence political decision-making or to obtain confirmation and clarity about political goals of parties.

**Impulse****Draft resolution**

Action plan for city parliaments, putting consequences of findings from different bodies to the vote.

**Citizen deputies**

Citizens with expertise who have the right to vote in the work of the committees of the city parliaments and who have access to the correspondence relating to the committees.

**Citizen's request**

In all matters on which city parliaments pass resolutions, the residents of a city have the right to make recommendations or to put forward demands to the city parliament.

**Citizen's Q&A**

Offer from politics and administration to urban society. Here, citizens have an opportunity to take a public stand on important (and overriding) issues.

**City planning committee**

Decision-making body in city parliaments in which future building plans, the awarding of urban planning contracts or decisions on development plans are discussed and decided.

**Popular petition/Referendum**

Enables citizens to introduce a bill into a parliament or a binding, direct-democratic factual voting of the electorate on a political matter.

Reaction	Cooperation
<b>Milieu protection</b> In these areas, the demolition, alteration or change of use of built structures requires special approval.	<b>↳ Co-city protocol</b> A methodical guideline with which different practitioners develop a model of future cooperation in six successive steps and draw up a binding action plan.
<b>Urban preservation statutes</b> The urban character of an area is protected by means of specifications on building heights, roof shapes and façade structures.	<b>Coalition agreements</b> The parliamentary groups of a governing coalition agree in writing on common goals to define future government work.
<b>Urban redevelopment measures</b> Urban redevelopment measures are used to eliminate urban development deficiencies in the area of residences and workplaces.	<b>Cooperation agreement</b> A declaration on the goals and framework of a future cooperation between participants from civil society, politics, administration and industry in urban development.
<b>↳ Urban development contracts</b> Urban development contracts regulate the cooperation of the public sector with private investors by transferring the costs of development, infrastructure or a share of affordable housing for a building plot to the owners.	<b>Tenants' Advisory Council</b> A democratically elected, voluntary representation of tenants' interests vis-à-vis housing associations and private housing companies.
<b>↳ Socialisation/expropriation</b> The complete or partial expropriation of land or buildings to achieve urban development goals or to eliminate deficiencies.	<b>↳ Round Table</b> A specifically selected group of people with equal rights consults on solutions for precise issues that are particularly conflictual. The aim is to reach a consensus.
<b>↳ Right of pre-emption</b> If a property in a "statutory area" is for sale, under certain circumstances, a community has the right to purchase it instead of a private investor.	<b>District contracts</b> Legal agreement between politics, administration and civic initiatives to set binding common development goals in the areas of transport, building, climate and social infrastructure.

The table does not claim to be exhaustive.

# New land policy

A city oriented towards the common good, in which community, **►solidarity**, **►engagement**, self-determination and personal responsibility are core features, begins with land management. It is about a transparent development of land for construction and real estate, which combines their economic goals with a focus on added social value for the benefit of the district and its residents. We refer to all those activities that use existing building law as a tool to promote social land use as the “new land policy”.

There are various instruments for this: Instead of selling public property to the highest bidders, municipal land is assigned thorough **►concept tendering**, **►pre-sale option** and **►heritable building rights**. This helps committed people compensate for lack of equity capital with good ideas or gain time for project development. By setting up so-called “revolving land funds”, cities and municipalities can invest the **►revenue** generated from land sales in the purchase of new land for **►land reserve policy**. Private developers can be obliged by **►urban development** contracts to contribute to infrastructure construction costs or to realise a certain share of affordable housing. By defining preservation statutes or neighbourhood preservation areas, housing can be protected, lux-

ury refurbishment can be averted and thus, the **character** of a neighbourhood can be maintained. The exercise of the **right of pre-emption** in these areas even goes one step further, increasing the municipal property portfolio in the sense of **socialisation**.

Through the targeted application of existing instruments, an **open city** for the many will emerge, instead of an exclusive city for those who can afford it. At the same time, a new land policy should contribute to making cities more sustainable and resilient to crises and unexpected events.

**Public services****↳ Land reserve policy**

A municipality buys land and real estate in advance to either develop later or to allocate it with conditions.

**Planning value compensation**

Investors contribute to the costs of public infrastructure if the creation of planning law generates added value for the locality.

**Revolving land funds**

The revenue generated from the sale of municipal land is invested in the purchase of new land.

**↳ Urban development contract**

With the help of urban development contracts, private stakeholders can be made to share in development and infrastructure costs or be subject to surcharges.

**Speculation inhibitors****Construction order**

Possibility of requiring owners to build on a plot of land within a reasonable period of time.

**Urban development measure**

A municipality acquires large contiguous areas of land at “development-free” (usually agricultural) value to be able to quickly and cheaply create housing, workplaces and shared spaces.

**↳ Right of pre-emption**

If a property in a “statutory area” is for sale, under certain circumstances the community has the right to purchase instead of a private investor.

**Asset freeze**

Prevents a building or land from being sold. Can be determined e.g. in the articles of association of a limited liability company and additionally secured by heritable building rights or an associated company that prevents privatisation.

## Tendering processes

### ↳ Pre-sale option

A plot of land is awarded to an actor for a certain period of time, during which time they work out the financing and planning. Can be prepared through concept tendering.

### ↳Heritable building rights

A plot of land or building remains the property of a municipality, foundation or other owner, but can be built on and used for a very long time against payment of an annual interest.

### Direct award of municipal properties

Award of a plot of land at a fixed price subject to conditions such as the provision of affordable housing.

### ↳ Concept tendering

It is not the highest price but the best concept that wins the contract for land and real estate.

# Collaboration

Whether a neighbourhood café, an urban gardening project, a multi-generation house, a cultural space or another open space in the city: Anyone who wants to develop long-term and collective projects cannot achieve this alone. In addition to a functioning team, **→cooperation** with politics and local government is a success factor that should not be underestimated. Especially in projects where many people from different areas, with different competencies and varying availabilities, come together, finding a suitable organisational model is crucial. It provides a framework in which information can be shared transparently and decisions can be made without restricting the capacity to act flexibly. This framework should also make it possible to maintain the motivation of those involved. Usually, city-makers' projects start as a small group, without any organisational structure whatsoever. Over time, both the internal team and the number of participants grow, and hence, the project's demands. Target goals are jointly negotiated and defined. For **→cooperation** to work in everyone's interest, all those involved should be prepared to give up a certain amount of control and invest trust. Everyone should have enough room to develop and implement their own ideas, because only

those who can actively participate in shaping the project will enjoy working on it and contribute the necessary commitment. Therefore, the focus of many initiatives is on forms of decision-making and transparent organisation. During a project, however, organisational forms must be repeatedly reviewed and adapted to changing requirements. In project groups, decisions are usually made according to the models of **do-ocracy**, **sociocracy** or the majority principle.

Collaboration		DECISION MODELS	
Model	Principle	Decision making	Cooperation
→ Do-ocracy	Just do it	Whoever acts decides, but also bears responsibility.	fast and agile
→ Sociocracy	Consent	The decision is made when there is no longer any justified opposition.	discursive and grounding
Majority principle	Voting	Widespread decision-making rule through ballots and elections. The alternative that receives the majority of votes wins.	practised

The table does not claim to be exhaustive.

In addition to the choice of appropriate decision-making, a formal organisational structure is equally relevant in cooperative urban development processes for city-makers. It has an impact on collaborations with partners and on the likelihood of receiving funds, signing contracts as a legally competent organisation or taking out insurance. Instead of the usual structures, the following page lists alternative organisation models that are common among German city-makers today.

## Types

## Features

registered association  
(German: e.V.)

Smallest form of company. Seven people, articles of association, minutes of incorporation and entry in the register of associations with a notary public are required for foundation. An association can apply for funding and take out insurance policies. Certification as a non-profit organisation makes it possible to be exempt from corporation and trade tax, among other things.

↳ Cooperative  
(German: e.G.)

The focus here is on joint management through a joint business operation. By subscribing to cooperative shares, ownership belongs to all members. The executive board and supervisory board are liable.

Cooperative company

At the moment, a kind of "small cooperative" is being discussed. It would be exempted from compulsory membership in a cooperative auditing association, which is perceived as cost-intensive, as long as a certain number of members, turnover level and balance sheet total are not exceeded.

Non-profit limited liability company  
(German: gGmbH)

If the income of a limited liability company is used for charitable purposes, the company can be exempted from corporate and trade tax. The majority decision-making of the shareholders gives the gGmbH greater flexibility than an association.

Civic foundation

An independent, autonomously acting, non-profit foundation by and for citizens with the broadest possible foundation purpose. It is committed to the local community and civic involvement.

Citizen shareholding company

Private individuals support founders of new businesses. The degree of the participation can be decided individually. At the same time, shareholders have a say in the development of the company. The annual report and the annual accounts are explained at the general meeting.

Tenement syndicate

Investment company for the joint acquisition of houses: The "Tenement Syndicate GmbH" establishes a "Home Owner GmbH" together with the respective house association to acquire a property. This creates an asset freeze, i.e. a security system to prevent a later sale. The individual houses are self-governing.

# Collective capital

When an initial idea for a collaborative city-making project becomes a concrete undertaking, it's not long before the question of funding arises. However, [\*\*immovielien\*\*](#) and other projects, which are created collectively, rarely fit into existing financing and funding options. In addition, many “conventional” funders such as banks and other credit institutions demand collateral such as equity capital or a completed profitability calculation. Urban development programmes, with which the federal and state governments support urban development in neighbourhoods with special problems, are also still strongly oriented towards the [\*\*public services model\*\*](#). Although special contingency funds, which the public decides how to use, have emerged as a source of funding for city-maker projects, the focus is still on municipal measures. Therefore, various needs-oriented approaches have arisen to raise the necessary capital and engage in projects in recent years. These forms of financing can be summarised under the term “collective capital” because the investments are not aimed at making a profit but rather at adding value to co-existence and strengthening social and cultural diversity.

The new economic concepts are as diverse as the projects themselves. Financial bottlenecks are compensated

by creatively mixing public funding programmes, donations or **↳direct loans**. However, some initiatives also rely on **↳cooperation** with a **↳land trust**. They organise capital, acquire land and, by allocating it with **↳heritable building rights**, ensure that those involved can set about scaling the existing approaches with a secure, long-term perspective.

In everyday life, a lack of financial resources is often compensated by participants themselves. Their high level of commitment creates added value through the deployment of knowledge and manpower. These **↳muscle mortgages** are supplemented by personal conviction: Committed city-makers often fully dedicate themselves to the project and perform a wide range of both time-consuming and unpaid work. This represents an asset that should not be underestimated. In operation, solidarity-based funding systems froms **↳cross-subsidisation** can be employed: Economic uses, such as gastronomy, fund the public or social uses that are not financially self-supporting.

**Cornerstones for the acquisition of property****Bank loan or bank credit**

If there is not enough capital available, a bank can lend money and receive an agreed interest rate in return. Repayment is usually made in monthly instalments.

**↳ Land trust**

A plot of land or a property is acquired by a foundation to subsequently pass it on to an initiative in heritable building rights.

**Crowd investing**

Many private individuals invest smaller or larger amounts, thus jointly financing a project. This is usually transacted via an online platform.

**↳ Direct loans**

The term "direct loan" is used in different ways. Here in the glossary it is understood as a private "infusion of capital" that serves as collateral for a bank loan.

**Subsidies**

Private individuals or companies provide funds without asking for anything in return. Can be claimed against taxes.

**Cooperative shares**

Cooperative shares are company shares, e.g. in a housing association. Buyers become members who contribute the share capital of the cooperative. In most cases, the shares earn interest.

## Elements for everyday operation

### Funding/Sponsoring

Third-party funds can be raised for cultural events and formats from private individuals, companies or institutions. In return, these are mentioned publicly (e.g. on flyers).

### Half the rent for the neighbourhood

Part of the rent usually incurred is replaced by an hour of time, competence, work or knowledge invested in projects and activities in the neighbourhood.

### Institutional funding programmes

The federal, state and local governments support the sustainable development of cities through various urban development, economic and cultural promotion programmes.

### → Muscle mortgage

Personal contribution of manual skills, e.g. when building a house, to compensate for a lack of capital.

### Letting and leasing

Areas and rooms are made available for an agreed "rent" for a fixed period of time. Special rental models, such as staggered or pay-as-you-go rental systems, are interesting for city-maker projects.

### → Cross-subsidisation

To enable a diverse mix of uses in, for example, a house project, higher-yielding uses can co-finance lower-yielding ones.

### → Civic engagement

Voluntary, unpaid work that benefits a project or cause. Can take on very diverse forms.

### Business plan

A reliable business plan can determine whether a project succeeds or fails. It also helps everyone involved to understand where the funds are coming from and what they are being spent on.

# The vocabulary of common good-oriented **4** urban development



# Accessibility

## On the threshold of the open city

Something is accessible if it can be reached without much effort, if it can be used by many and if everyone understands what it is about. This principle can also be applied to spaces: If a space cannot be seen from the outside, the barrier to entering it is greater than if what is going on inside is visible through a shop window. If a space cannot be entered at all, because it is separated from the **public space** by a fence, borders are erected and accessibility is reduced. The same can be applied to language: The more complicated a call is for a project proposal, or complex flyers or websites, the fewer people can understand the message. Accessibility and thus inclusion mean that people are only required to have a low level of prior knowledge and do not have to travel long distances or overcome hurdles. This low threshold plays an important role in ensuring the broadest possible **participation** in urban society and **engagement** in public life. Accessibility can be facilitated by choice of language, location, time of appointments and distribution of information. In all striving for openness, the need for demarcation and protection should also be considered. Not in terms of states, but in terms of individual needs, vulnerable groups and the functioning of **commons**.

**Freimfelde, Halle an der Saale:** An industrial wasteland is being transformed into a citizens' park with the support of the Montag Stiftung Urbane Räume. The creative scope is diverse: Newly interested and already active people meet on the market square, plant and harvest in the kitchen or herb garden, learn on the playground, play football on the pitch or bake together in the large clay oven. [www.freimfelde-ev.de](http://www.freimfelde-ev.de)

**Spreefeld eG, Berlin:** The Spreefeld cooperative property in Berlin has no fences. The section of the riverbank that was heavily frequented before the development is thus still accessible to the urban community.  
[www.spreefeld-berlin.de](http://www.spreefeld-berlin.de)

# Affordability

## The city is for everyone

A city should equally offer all residents space for their life, work and cultural activities. Rent increases have steadily led to a shortage of affordable living and working spaces in recent years. And many **↳public spaces** are also oriented towards consumption. But affordability in particular is a prerequisite for a diverse and **↳open city**: Only through the possibility of creative **↳appropriation** as well as trying out and testing (**↳experiment**), alternative approaches to collective working, economic activity and co-existence can space for the new emerge and, as a consequence, the respective **↳character** of our cities be promoted. To maintain a social mix in a city or district, instruments such as legally anchored tenant protection, the establishment of milieu protection areas or other instruments of the New Land Policy are becoming increasingly important. Municipalities can promote free offers in public spaces.

**Prinz-Eugen-Park, Munich:** A new district on a former military site in the north-east of Munich, offers space for around 1,800 flats. Fifty per cent of the flats were built as subsidised housing. When allocating the building plots, attention was paid to a diversity of different occupants. The active housing co-operatives, joint building ventures, construction companies and the Jewish community have joined together to form a consortium with the aim of developing a lively, liveable neighbourhood. In addition, spaces for shared use are co-financed by all investors in certain proportions. [www.prinzeugenpark.de](http://www.prinzeugenpark.de)

# Agora

## Origin of democracy

The central market and meeting place in ancient Greece was the agora. This is where business was conducted, the concerns of the city and the state were discussed and policies were made. Even if this is often forgotten today between consumerism and entertainment: A city's central squares also serve as a place to exercise democratic rights and promote urban life. Most recently, with the Arab Spring (2010) or Occupy Wall Street (2011) revolutions, there is a new awareness of the political potential of urban public space. This was also evident in the worldwide Fridays for Future or Black Lives Matter protests. The idea of the agora, the central meeting place, as a place for political discussion is used as a symbol in various **participation** formats: A collectively built and variably usable amphitheatre made of podiums, on wheels or a flexible forum that stimulates discussions and negotiations.

**Fliegendes Forum (Flying Forum), Kollektiv Plus X:** The self-constructed mobile amphitheatre is used by various initiatives and associations as a meeting point for democratic negotiation processes.  
[www.kollektivplusx.de/fliegendes-forum](http://www.kollektivplusx.de/fliegendes-forum)

**15-M – Puerta del Sol, Madrid:** During the protests in Spain on 15 May 2011, the central Puerta del Sol square in Madrid became an agora where people talked about everything that interested them: The job market, the environment, education, etc. A public space was created which was not only accessible for representatives from politics and the press but for everyone. Decisions were made collectively and visible to all.

# Appropriation

## Responsibility and protest

The deliberate and regular use of a place within or also outside the applicable rules is called appropriation. The definition of appropriation combines the terms “empowerment”, “occupying” and “using” in that the users themselves determine how the place is normally used. Appropriation often means more than protesting or making demands. Those who appropriate something consciously decide on an action, actively commit themselves, assume [\*\*responsibility\*\*](#) and invest time and effort. Appropriation is a special form of [\*\*participation\*\*](#) in the shaping of the city and also plays a central role in the discussion around the [\*\*commons\*\*](#). In a spatial context, one also speaks of “micro-intervention”, “socio-spatial appropriation” or “wild urbanisation”. A lively and [\*\*open city\*\*](#) should offer numerous opportunities for appropriation, because this is a central feature of our democracy. At the same time, the question arises of how inclusive appropriation is ([\*\*accessibility\*\*](#)). For appropriation can and is used by (small, undemocratic, exclusive) groups to attain the prerogative of interpretation.

**Freiraumfibel, BBSR:** The Freiraumfibel (open space fibula) is a manual that provides information on the legal strategies and framework for the creative use of open spaces in simple, clear and easy-to-understand language. It can be obtained online and free of charge as a printed copy from the BBSR. Download available at [www.bbsr.bund.de](http://www.bbsr.bund.de)

# Character

## The soul of the city

The self-built rafts on Berlin's River Spree, the colourful hollyhocks lining Zurich's streets or the internationally acclaimed surfer wave in Munich's Eisbach River – all are examples of the special features that make a city unique. They emerged from the visions and **civic engagement** of individuals and through the everyday **appropriation** of the city by its inhabitants. When a city has character, we identify with it and feel comfortable and at home there. It must be promoted, otherwise, cities will become more and more similar in function and design in light of increasing globalisation.

# Circular economy

## Returning resources to the cycle

The circular economy model is inspired by the ecosystem: It renews itself and is thus fundamentally sustainable. The goal is to gradually decouple economic activity from the consumption of finite resources and to avoid waste (**→post-growth city**). The material range of tomorrow is already being created today by designing, constructing and producing products so that they can be reused (**→sharing and swapping**). What sounds conclusive on paper still needs to be proven in reality. Critics note that the principle cannot be extended to any group of goods. Moreover, the introduction of the technologies would initially involve considerable investment in production facilities and logistics. For the renewal of the construction sector, Germany's largest waste producer, there is incredible potential in circular action: By reusing existing building components, existing districts could be repurposed and further developed in a resource-saving approach. Building circularly means thinking backwards. The materials found, their dimensions and properties determine the architecture – not the other way around.

**Insitu, Basel:** The Swiss construction office deals with the deconstruction of building components and their reuse in architecture. It is currently expanding a warehouse in Winterthur, using materials recovered from demolished buildings. [www.insitu.ch](http://www.insitu.ch)

**Kunststoffschniede, Dresden:** In the open recycling workshop, plastic waste can be turned back into raw material and processed directly into new products. The Kunststoffschniede team also provides advice and takes on orders for prototype development, toolmaking and production.  
[www.kunststoffschniede.org](http://www.kunststoffschniede.org)

# City-making

## Just do it yourself

For many, the options for participation within the framework of formal **participation** are not enough. They are interested in standing up for their own needs in urban space, developing their own projects in open and cooperative processes and advancing political debates. In this process, a piece of the city is shaped in a self-determined way and on one's own initiative or the city is "made" in **cooperation** with politics and administration. In a city of city-makers, housing projects, **cooperatives**, collective community gardens and self-organised cultural venues, spaces of opportunity and places of encounter (**third places**) are created beyond the interests of economic exploitation. It is precisely such bottom-up projects that contribute to the **character** of our cities and are important sources of identity. City-makers fight for the preservation of social structures in their neighbourhoods, initiate political debates or demand more opportunities to participate in political decision-making processes. The diverse initiatives and stakeholders are a driving force in designing **open cities**. Through their work, quality of life is created, diversity is preserved, community is made possible and, ultimately, a discourse on how we want to live is opened up in everyday actions. The urban society of informal and civic city-makers can thus shape the **future** of our cities as a decisive actor alongside the state with politics and administration, but also alongside private developers or owners.

# Civic engagement

## Cornerstone of urban co-existence

There are many synonyms for civic engagement: Volunteerism, voluntary work, self-help and voluntary or civic commitment. Unlike state action, it is characterised people becoming active on their own (**→responsibility**). Commitment is based on personal motivation. With their enthusiasm and wealth of ideas, people develop immense energy that benefits other people.

The Enquete Commission on the Future of Civic Commitment from the German Bundestag developed criteria for the content of the term as early as 2002: Civic engagement is voluntary, not aimed at material gain, oriented towards the common good, public or takes place in the **→public space** and is usually carried out collectively. Commitment can contribute to political learning, highlighting political and social challenges, identification with one's living environment, and promoting social cohesion. However, it must not be seen as a cheap alternative for the provision of municipal services. Those involved must be shown appreciation and their added value for our social co-existence must be clearly highlighted.

**→City-making** can be seen as a form of civic engagement. However, it should be noted that once certain projects have reached a critical mass, they will need greater investments of time and financial resources and will have to become professionalised – purely voluntary commitment will then no longer be sufficient.

# Co-city protocol

## Rules of the game for a city as commons

Co-city protocol is a method that originated in Italy and helps city-makers to shape “their” city themselves or supports them in creating more **commons**. The co-city protocol defines the interfaces for the **cooperation** between administration, science and civic initiatives. The process flow (protocol) consists of six successive steps that form a co-city cycle. First, there is “just talking” to identify problems and challenges. The process continues with a joint search for potential commons and the visualisation of local networks and practitioners. In the third phase, the testing phase, a “collaboration camp” is organised in which the participants can define common interests and try out new forms of cooperation. The following “prototyping phase” focuses on a reorganisation of **governance** to best support self-organised and common good-oriented projects. After a test phase, a model for the future **commoning** is finally formulated. A co-city protocol is thus both an action plan and a tool.

# Common good

## Between collective needs and individual interests

There is no final, forever fixed definition of the common good. What it is that constitutes the common good is a question bound to local culture and community. However, what is certain is that a common good-oriented and **→open city** for many is based on values such as **→solidarity**, community, self-efficacy and **→engagement**. At its core is the question of how the well-being of every individual can be ensured within a community. The “well-being of the community” sometimes suggests that everyone wants the same thing. However, since an urban society is always made up of diverse people, milieus and cultures, it requires a continuous process of negotiation that reveals different perspectives and makes different and even conflicting interests heard. City-makers and other stakeholders have put this negotiation process back on the agenda and are collaborating to redistribute resources, say and power. In the process, many long “forgotten” instruments are “rediscovered”. And it is becoming clear: The common good is weak when it remains merely a concept. It must be underpinned by the practical actions of many and by long-term, secure, affordable access to spaces (**→affordability**).

Common good-oriented urban development is no longer a task of politics and administration but of society as a whole. It requires **→cooperation** between the various participants, whether in parliament or in the neighbourhood. The common good must be continuously developed. Cooperatively, diverse and permanently.

# Common use

## Rules of the game for a city as commons

Co-city protocol is a method that originated in Italy and helps city-makers to shape “their” city themselves or supports them in creating more **commons**. The co-city protocol defines the interfaces for the **cooperation** between administration, science and civic initiatives. The process flow (protocol) consists of six successive steps that form a co-city cycle. First, there is “just talking” to identify problems and challenges. The process continues with a joint search for potential commons and the visualisation of local networks and practitioners. In the third phase, the testing phase, a “collaboration camp” is organised in which the participants can define common interests and try out new forms of cooperation. The following “prototyping phase” focuses on a reorganisation of **governance** to best support self-organised and common good-oriented projects. After a test phase, a model for the future **commoning** is finally formulated. A co-city protocol is thus both an action plan and a tool.

# Commoning

## Balancing togetherness

Commoning describes the collective use and/or self-organised production of material and immaterial goods for the benefit of all. No matter whether land is jointly cultivated or houses are built, whether furniture is designed or knowledge is shared: Commoning stands for the search for a self-determined life beyond the market and state. It is about an understanding of solidarity that aims at democratic **engagement**, collective use of resources (**sharing and swapping**) and cooperative structures. Principles such as the balance between give and take, voluntary action instead of order and coercion, fault tolerance, **solidarity** and **cooperation** play an essential role. The city as **commons** emerges from many places of commoning. For all those who want to follow the path of commoning, the following questions arise: What needs to be maintained, built up and used? How will the maintenance, extension, use and management of this thing or process be organised? Who belongs to the community of commoners? Only those who participate in it or a wider circle?

**Solidarity farming:** In solidarity farming, farms join forces with private individuals to form a community. In return for their financial contribution, the members regularly receive a share of the harvest. In addition, they help out in the fields from time to time and can jointly negotiate which types of fruit and vegetables are grown. The basic idea behind this is that the farm receives planning security and risks are borne in solidarity by the community and not by the farm alone. [www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org](http://www.solidarische-landwirtschaft.org)

# Commons

## Neither public nor private

Commons belong to everyone and no one. They are neither public nor private but are always accessible to the general public and ensure more democratic **engagement** in city life. What sounds complex is actually a challenge. Because there are no commons without constant negotiation processes between individual freedoms and collective needs (**commoning**). Natural resources such as air and water can be used as commons just as much as collectively developed resources such as self-managed energy networks, areas for collective gardening or real estate. Commons – whether in the city or the countryside – are thus characterised by self-determination, self-organisation and the collaborative shaping of the social and physical environment. Commons are never finished but are continuously in the process of being created.

**Campo de Cebada, Madrid:** A group of architects and people from the neighbourhood revitalised a wasteland and created a public cultural centre. Decisions affecting the space are openly discussed by the largest possible number of interested project participants. Everyone is encouraged to participate, contribute and change the project. [www.elcampodecebada.org](http://www.elcampodecebada.org)

**Polyclinic Veddel, Hamburg:** The Polyclinic Veddel understands health as commons. In addition to medical care, the district health centre also focuses on the social conditions of health, such as rent increases, low income, precarious employment, racism or poverty in old age. [www.poliklinik1.org](http://www.poliklinik1.org)

# Community spirit

## Basis of the common good

Community spirit radiates something fundamentally positive and means thinking about what is also good for others and thus for society – in other words, the inner basis of a common good-oriented way of thinking and acting. This is not a claim that only civic initiatives can make. Rather, all individuals and companies – especially in their capacity as an owner or proprietor – have a duty to develop community spirit and consider and strengthen the **common good**. In line with the principle of social integration, the welfare of minorities must also be taken into account. This requires constant negotiation and balancing of interests and values.

The spatial reference framework must be defined: Does community spirit apply to one's own family, neighbourhood, state or global humanity? In times of increasing social polarisation, community spirit – for example, climate protection or open borders – can be more pronounced and unifying globally than at the local or national level. Global phenomena such as the spread of a pandemic can, in turn, promote local or national community spirit.

**Fridays for Future:** The movement stands for universal rights and climate protection goals to be observed or enforced globally. It is supported worldwide, especially among students committed to the community beyond their immediate environment. [www.fridaysforfuture.de](http://www.fridaysforfuture.de)

# Concept tendering

## Idea over offer

In concept tendering, the land is assigned with the aim of creating a lively and stable neighbourhood for as broad a section of the population as possible for the long term ([↳ permanence](#)). The aim is to find the best concept according to the criteria of design quality, architecture, sustainability, affordable space and social use, creating more affordable housing, more mixed uses or space for marginalised groups. For this purpose, plots are not awarded to the highest bidder, but a “competition of ideas” takes place in which a wide variety of actors, such as property developers, investors, building associations, [↳ cooperatives](#) and private individuals can participate. The concept that best fits the city's goals will be awarded a piece of municipal land. The purchase price (or the amount of a ground rent) plays a subordinate role here. The conditions proposed in the concept can become part of a purchase, [↳ heritable building right](#) or [↳ urban development contract](#). Small-scale neighbourhood development with concept tendering of individual building sites is more costly and less profitable than allocation to individuals in the housing industry, but it is worthwhile ([↳ urban return on investment](#)). Vibrant, diverse and robust districts are created, with a typological diversity of housing types and a heterogeneous resident population.

# Conflict

## Friction generates heat

Our shared experience consists of diverse, sometimes contradictory, needs, demands and perspectives. Thus, when it comes to land use, conflicts of use and thus protest and friction are inevitable. Often, individual interests and property rights stand in the way of the common good. This is evident both in the densification of existing neighbourhoods with affordable housing or the construction of wind turbines. It is also seen in monofunctional new buildings that lack added value for the surrounding neighbourhood or in the creation of subcultural biotopes. Ultimately, it is a question of how we want to live together. This “we” must be able to cope, mediate and negotiate with divisions, conflicts and opposing interests. The task of mediating is not least assigned to planners who seek to balance differing demands in the interest of the **common** good while also taking future generations into account. Used productively, conflicts offer an opportunity for new beginnings and unconventional constellations of participants – because crises demand a new look at situations, the renegotiation of entrenched patterns and the forging of new alliances. This is the only way to create spaces for **experiments**, **cooperation** and **social innovation**.

**Gängeviertel, Hamburg:** Born out of a protest against Hamburg's urban planning practices, the Gängeviertel is exemplary for the productive power of conflicts that seem hopeless at first. After years of struggle and creative protest actions by numerous activists and a large circle of supporters, the municipality was persuaded to buy back the privatised area. This laid the foundation for permanently secured, cooperatively-run spaces for art, culture and socially acceptable housing. [www.das-gaengeviertel.info](http://www.das-gaengeviertel.info)

# Cooperation

## Strategic alliances

Cooperation is defined as a strategic and time-limited collaboration in clearly defined fields between persons with equal rights. The idea is to achieve a goal that one party cannot achieve alone, or cannot achieve as effectively. Unlike [co-production](#), the processing of specific tasks does not take place together, but in parallel in different subtasks. Especially where two or more participants are dependent on each other, new ways of regulating a shared concern can be found through cooperation. However, cooperation does not say anything about the quality of cooperative work. Successful co-operation between politics, administration, business and civic initiatives is a prerequisite for the city's collaborative and democratic design. In this way, the knowledge and needs of all participants can be incorporated into the planning and development of projects. A successful cooperation allows new [commons](#) to emerge, as the different possibilities of social balance, from formalised and informal processes to different forms of knowledge in administration and civil society, can complement each other. Cooperation is a learning process in which all who contribute are recognised as experts in different fields and with different knowledge horizons. Curiosity, appreciation and mutual trust are the basis here.

# Cooperative

## Strong together

A cooperative is a group of people who want to do business together. Cooperative shares, the amount and quantity of which are defined in a statute, can be bought and sold, which offers the members a great deal of flexibility. In addition, cooperatives often enable a high degree of **participation**, self-determination and **self-governance** for their members: Through cooperative shares, each member is at the same time the owner and has direct voting rights in the general meetings. The registered cooperative as a legal form for community housing projects has come back into focus in times of rising rents, because building cooperatives strike a balance between renting and owning. They stand for socially acceptable rents (**affordability**) and lifelong residence rights. Some cooperatives even pay their members dividends on their deposits.

Thus, the cooperative is not only a model of self-organisation but also an investment option that can be subsidised by the state. Sometimes housing cooperatives also expand their activities into the surrounding neighbourhood and create offers such as children's day-care centres, neighbourhood meetings or collectively run restaurants. However, cooperatives are not automatically committed to the **common good** rather exclusively to their members.

**Kulturquartier Schauspielhaus eG, Erfurt:** The cooperative has set itself the goal of saving the former Schauspielhaus theatre in the heart of Erfurt, which has been vacant since 2003, and creating a vibrant cultural quarter. A total of 5.5 million euros is needed to purchase and redevelop the area. Following the cooperative idea, the 1000x1000 campaign was launched. A total of 1000 shares of 1000 euros each are to be issued to engaged contributors, which corresponds to a co-payment of one million euros.  
[www.kulturquartier-erfurt.de](http://www.kulturquartier-erfurt.de)

# Co-production

## Collaboration at eye level

Co-production is about the shared fulfilment of tasks. Unlike [co-operation](#), the partners or teams involved do not work on parallel but different subtasks, rather they actively contribute their own strengths to achieve a common goal. By combining different talents and approaches, better solutions to existing challenges are developed as a team. The result is always the sum of the joint activities. Co-production should take place at the beginning of a project but can also continue into the utilisation phase, for example, in the form of a shared organisational form. [Responsibility](#) for the whole is thus also formally shared in the long term. In co-productions, the conflict between formal and informal urban development is resolved. If civil society, politics and administration enter into such a partnership, this can also be called a “civic-public partnership”. In co-production in a city oriented towards the common good, initiatives and investors, banks, residents, municipalities and creative people all look towards the [future](#).

# Cross-subsidisation

## Solidary use of space

Many social and cultural uses cannot generate monetary **revenue**, even in the long term. However, these projects are of outstanding importance for preserving social structure, orientation towards the common good (**common good**) and social cohesion. To secure their existence in the long term (**permanence**), the uses can be cross-financed through tax relief as well as urban development funding for community facilities or through economically robust members of the community. For example, revenue from business activities can support cultural uses in the same project. **Engagement** in a residential or commercial project can be based on the income of the tenants: Those who can, pay more. This facilitates **accessibility** for people with less income and promotes the goal of a socially diverse city. Increasingly, the creation of affordable housing is also based on revolving financing strategies: A portion of the monthly rent is permanently paid into a solidarity fund without no return and made available for the start-up financing of new social housing projects.

**Mehr als Wohnen, Zurich:** To realise a balanced and lively mix of trade, crafts, gastronomy and neighbourhood spaces, the rents for the ground floors are cross-financed from the residential rents and high-yield commercial rents.  
[www.mehralswohnen.ch](http://www.mehralswohnen.ch)

**Jack in the Box e.V., Cologne:** In recent years, the non-profit association Jack in the Box has developed various models to support job seekers. In the areas of upcycling, metal and wood crafts, as well as event organisation, the association offers opportunities for professional re-entry. Commercial events finance their social commitment. [www.koelnerbox.de](http://www.koelnerbox.de)

# Direct loans

## Investment for you – promotion for me

If a group of city-makers is given the opportunity to acquire its own property or land, then the purchase price and the costs for upcoming construction and renovation measures must be raised. Many initiatives collect the necessary equity capital for the bank loan through direct loans. Direct loans are individual amounts of money that are lent directly to the initiative by private individuals. They offer the possibility of a transparent, local, socially and ecologically sustainable financial investment. But this is more of an investment in the sense of a savings account than a lucrative real estate fund.

The interest rate is usually between zero and 1.5 %, regardless of the amount invested. The term of the direct loan is agreed upon individually. Whoever grants a direct loan directly supports alternative ownership models. As an alternative to the direct loan, the sale of cooperative shares ([cooperative](#)) can also be a basis for equity capital accumulation.

# Do-ocracy

Those who act, decide

In a do-ocracy, roles and tasks, and thus **↳responsibility** is determined by group members instead of being delegated. Not because there is a reward for doing so, but because they recognise the necessity, there is room for development, they enjoy doing it and receive social appreciation. Thus, do-ocracy contrasts sharply with **↳sociocracy**, in which all fundamental and framework decisions are jointly made. Therefore, the focus is on the practical implementation of projects or the design of urban spaces. Many urban policy initiatives, which are often characterised by voluntary engagement (**↳civic engagement**), use this approach because it usually motivates the active participants to work autonomously and in a self-governing manner. Prerequisites for successful application are shared values, strong trust in the team and a transparent flow of communication.

**PlatzProjekt, Hannover:** The group around the container village has transferred the principle of do-ocracy to the place and content and constantly developed it further. The overarching goal is to provide space for projects and ideas that would not be realisable in the city under normal conditions – and thus to demonstrate the need for such spaces. [www.platzprojekt.de](http://www.platzprojekt.de)

**Chaos Communication Congress:** An event by the international hacker scene, hosted by the Chaos Computer Club (CCC). The congress is dedicated to technical and socio-political topics and is considered a meeting place for the subculture and a breeding ground for innovation in Germany. In the self-organised sessions, guests are asked, in the spirit of do-ocracy, to submit their own programme parallel to the presentations on the main stage.

# Economy for the common good

## Responsible business practices

Increasing material prosperity does not necessarily make people happier. Currently, the economy is designed for ever-increasing growth and many companies direct much of their energy towards generating higher profits. While this secures jobs and dividends for shareholders, the profits rarely benefit society as a whole. To remain competitive, many companies choose to produce as cheaply as possible. Environmental costs and other adverse effects incurred are “outsourced”, i.e. passed on to other people or nature. The economy for the common good is an alternative economic model in which companies commit to implementing values such as human dignity, human rights, ecological **↳responsibility** and democratic co-determination in their concrete economic activities. Essential features are environmentally friendly production, fair distribution of profits among employees, democratic structures within companies and cooperation with sustainable banks. With the help of a so-called “common good balance sheet”, points are awarded for each of these values to make the common good benefits of companies comparable. With the **↳neighbourhood index for the common good index**, an attempt is currently being made in Münster to transfer this model to urban development as well.

**Municipality of Kirchanschöring:** Municipal self-governance lies per se with the municipalities, which are also committed to the common good. Kirchanschöring is an Upper Bavarian municipality that has verified and transparently presented this claim with a comprehensive common good balance sheet by systematically presenting its actions. In addition to ecological sustainability, social justice and other aspects, the balance sheet also measured the degree of democratic co-determination within the municipality.  
[www.kirchanschoering.info](http://www.kirchanschoering.info)

# Empowerment

## Agency through knowledge

Empowerment means self-qualification and self-authorisation, strengthening agency, autonomy and self-disposal. The term comes from the American civil rights and women's rights movements in the 1960s, when many would not put up with the existing power structures (any longer). A proven empowerment strategy can be found in the joint production and sharing of knowledge (**↳co-production**). The aim is to grow a breeding ground for participation in decision-making processes and the independent shaping of the local environment. The goal of empowerment is enlightened, emancipated people who stand up for their own interests and those of the underrepresented and underprivileged. The resulting friction (**↳conflict**) is essential for a diverse urban policy.

**Quartier U1, Nuremberg:** The pilot district of the National Urban Development Policy aims at the participation of many in a future fit for generations to come. In an "Office for Ideas", projects are discussed and supported with project development tools: Guides, flow charts and knowledge sheets for the first steps are available on the internet. [www.quartieru1.de](http://www.quartieru1.de)

**Anstiftung, Munich:** The non-profit foundation has set itself the task of strengthening the garden movement and produces or shares knowledge – freely accessible to all via its website or in regular workshops and networking meetings. [www.anstiftung.de](http://www.anstiftung.de)

# Enabling culture

Creative solutions instead of bureaucratic dead ends

Enabling culture means thinking flexibly and solution-oriented rather than focusing on problems and restrictions. City-makers approach urban development with an open mind and expand spaces based on specific needs and circumstances. Since some of the projects push the boundaries of legal grey areas, a permissive attitude on the part of politicians, administrators and property owners is a prerequisite. ➔Planning law gives the administration certain discretionary powers to approve temporary use of the ➔public space under certain conditions. Even the processing of unusual applications in the responsible authorities calls for an open attitude towards new ideas and a certain willingness to take risks. In the administrations, therefore, there is a need for people who discover potential and design courageously. Likewise, supportive colleagues (➔space agents) are a must. This enabling culture can begin by expressing itself during project visits and consultation meetings. The city council can support the administration by formulating clear mandates to the administration and providing funds for corresponding human resources (as well as corresponding competences). Without circumventing legal requirements, in many cases, pragmatic approaches which to allow new ideas to emerge and promote ➔pioneer uses can be developed.

# Engagement

## Inclusive and diverse

Engagement refers to the participation of all people – regardless of culture, age, (social) gender, sexual orientation, disability or ideology. An **→open city** enables the greatest possible **→accessibility** for people of different origins in its diverse spaces. Experimental engagement formats (**→production of wishes**) and concrete on-site action can also empower people in planning processes (**→empowerment**) who would otherwise not be heard. Ideally, this contributes to the emergence of diverse cities that are closely oriented to the realities and needs of a heterogeneous society.

# Experiment

## City on trial

Everyday practice in the development of **→open cities** is characterised by “trial and error”. Through the **→appropriation of spaces**, ideas can be tested and surprising insights gained. Model projects have often emerged from such adventurous and uncertain experiments. They test new forms of living and working, the initiators deal with climate and mobility innovations or explore the potentials of **→circular economy** and sustainable food supply. Trial and error open up new perspectives for the design of the built environment and adopts the unpredictability of the **→future as a principle**. Experimentation could also play a greater role in administrative action. For example, the role of experimental spaces is currently being discussed in **→planning law**. However, it is still unclear how the claim of planning law to pursue a forward-looking and balanced development of the entire municipal area fits in with situationally negotiated use experiments.

# Fair distribution of space

## The equity of space

How is the distribution of space in an [open city](#) decided? How much space do individuals need to live? How can ecological changes to traffic policy towards more space for walking and cycling succeed? Creative actions such as Parking Day or pop-up bike lanes draw attention to potential alternative uses. City-makers are developing new models for using shared project, event and workshop spaces in housing communities or commercial facilities ([immovielien](#)). Increasingly, initiatives are calling for the establishment of a public real estate register. This would disclose comprehensive information on the location and intended use as well as social and ecological qualities of land and buildings of cities and municipalities. It thus represents an essential foundation for a transparent real estate policy. At the political level, municipalities try to ensure a fair distribution and a necessary increase in affordable residential and commercial space with the instruments of the New Land Policy.

**Kalkbreite Cooperative, Zurich:** The cooperative impresses with its innovative and flexible use of space: The residents who live here have an average of thirty-two square metres of living space and benefit from ample shared space, guest flats, meeting rooms and a boarding house in the building. They are willing to move to a smaller flat if there is under-occupancy, for example, after children have moved out, and are committed to maintaining a diverse mix of inhabitants. [www.kalkbreite.net](http://www.kalkbreite.net)

# Governance

## United rather than divided

The term governance is used for contemporary forms of social negotiation and decision-making. It points out that the sovereign steering and governing of the state (government) is only one possible form of decision-making. In the reality of cities, many different negotiations take place in public, on the side, and behind closed doors; some of them wanted (**↳tolerance**), others unwanted (corruption). The term governance thus describes that the regulation, perception and financing of public tasks is changing. It focuses on a distributed **↳responsibility** for urban action. Therefore, the term governance raises many questions about the distribution of power in urban development processes. The governance perspective is helpful in understanding urban development processes in which the state as "helmsman" is eclipsed or even replaced by diverse **↳cooperations** of society and state. Governance manifests itself in processes in which many participants coordinate and organize regulations. The interfaces multiply, translations become necessary and new participants emerge as mediators (**↳space agents**).

# Heritable buildings rights

## Separating use from the land below

With heritable building rights, ownership and use of a plot of land are separated: Instead of selling a plot of land, the owner grants the right of use. A developer pays a regular rent ("ground rent") and is allowed to build on the land and use it on a long-term basis (**→ permanence**). However, the land remains the property of the municipality, church, foundation or private individual. The ground rent is determined from the type of use and the value of the land (**→ revenue**) and set out in a heritable building rights contract. This can also include conditions for socially responsible use related to municipal needs such as affordable housing, daycare places for children or school sports facilities. On average, after thirty years, the land price is refinanced by the long-term rental income. For creative city-makers, this means that they can be active on the property without having to buy it (**→ affordability**). This lowers the financing costs for the project and saves time in raising external capital. A win-win situation for owners and city-makers alike. The ground rent can even be waived entirely if the **→ common good** is promoted in return.

**Zentralwerk Dresden:** As the owner, the Stiftung trias granted the ZENTRALWERK. Kultur- und Wohngenossenschaft Dresden eG a heritable building right for ninety-nine years in 2015. In addition to the usual contractual components, the contract contains an earmarking clause. This secures the long-term provision of inexpensive space for people working in the arts and culture sector as well as for small craft and commercial enterprises located in the arts, culture and creative sector. [www.zentralwerk.de](http://www.zentralwerk.de)

**Samtweberei, Krefeld:** The city of Krefeld has granted an old factory, which has been vacant for many years, to the foundation Montag Stiftung Urbane Räume free of charge by way of heritable building rights. In return, the foundation has committed to donating all revenue from the complex to the district. In this way, the social and cultural development of the district is to be promoted and a "disconnected" neighbourhood will gain appeal. [www.samtweberviertel.de](http://www.samtweberviertel.de)

# Immovielien

## Immovielien – real estate from many for many

Immovielien – real estate (*Immobilien*) from many for many (*viele*) – are one possible solution to numerous current challenges in urban development. They combine different uses under one roof and create synergies: Housing, education, social services, culture, commerce and nature complement each other to become important venues of urban life. Immovielien remain permanent and withdraw the land on which they stand from the speculative market (e.g. with **heritable building rights**). Organised in different legal forms (e.g. non-profit limited liability companies, cooperatives, tenement house syndicate) and financed from many sources, they are anchors of coming together in cities as well as rural areas. In the process, they generate diverse **revenue**: Surplus money, surplus space and new resources for the surrounding neighbourhood thanks to long-term commitment.

# Impact

## The visible result of our actions

The importance of civic initiatives and socio-cultural projects for a lively urban culture is gradually becoming visible in all areas of society: They influence neighbourhoods, offer opportunities for contact and encounters and establish diverse neighbourhood networks. The experience of self-efficacy is a positive factor here: Seemingly incidentally, those involved qualify themselves by doing and trying things out. In the process, city-makers are often role models for others and actively share their knowledge as advisors (**↳space agents**). Especially for new initiatives looking for opportunities for **↳cooperation** or supporters, it is important to be able to communicate the intended or already generated added value of their actions. In terms of non-profit work, one always speaks of impact when a measure leads to changes in the target group, in their living environment and society as a whole. Instruments such as the **↳urban return on investment**, the social return on investment (SROI) or the social report standard (SRS) aim to create awareness and **↳legitimation** for projects oriented towards the common good and clarify their positive effects on society. Nevertheless, the attempt to measure impact is also viewed critically by many activists, who fear that social commitment is viewed too much in terms of efficiency and profitability.

**Social Return on Investment (SROI):** Social Return on Investment SROI is known as Sozialrendite in Germany. It is an approach to assessing the social added value generated. Similar to ROI – Return on Investment, a key figure is calculated. The SROI indicator reflects generated environmental and social values in relation to the invested costs.

**Social Reporting Standard (SRS):** The Social Reporting Standard enables initiatives to report on their commitment according to a predefined structure. It makes the social value of the commitment visible and thus increases the attractiveness of a project for potential funding partners.

# Improvisation

## Dealing with uncertainty

Our cities are complex entities with different stakeholders. Planning is essential to discussing the [future](#) and creating a framework for ongoing development. However, this framework must not be too narrow, it must allow for renewal and reactions to the changing conditions of an [open city](#). A resilient urban development keeps areas or options available for all in which they can develop for the good of the general public ([common good](#)), and, if possible, future generations. Improvisation can be a simultaneous gap filler and strategy for confidently dealing with the unplanned and spontaneously finding creative solutions to problems that arise. Existing buildings can also be improvised and offer interim solutions until the final form or use is found. Improvisation can also become a useful strategy in response to the uncertainties of social developments and the structural impossibility of planning a city. Not as a temporary solution, but as a way of shaping urban change processes. In this way, the city can be spontaneously experimental and at the same time quick to react to changes.





# Justice

By Tatjana Schneider

In recent years, there have been increasing calls for a just city. But what exactly is a just city? What does justice mean, specifically in terms of urban development, the use of spaces, existing and emerging architectures? What does spatial justice look like?

In order to somewhat narrow down this expansive field, it is helpful to take a broader view, which can also be seen in the current climate emergency – but more on that later. First, I would like to start with questions directly addressed to the planners of “our” future: Who are these people who have been entrusted with the planning of cities, with the design of living environments and the built future? What other factors play a role in shaping futures? And who, in the words of Lucius Burckhardt, does the planning that makes design and urban development processes possible in the first place? In the search for a just city, we will, therefore, first have to deal with who plans for whom or with whom. This “for” or “with” points to different approaches. At this point, it is already highly complex. For these approaches speak of more than assumed responsibility – on behalf of whom? – in shaping the spaces in which we live. So, this is also about responsibilities and with whom they may be anchored. Societies around the world have been sensitised to these issues since before the beginnings of the Occupy movement.

Hardly anyone today would claim that urban development – speaking in general terms – is truly inclusive.

Many of the large-scale visions from the last decades speak of a world longed for and implemented by the visions, power and capital excesses of the “few”. Visions that were not really aligned with the needs of the “many”. This led to increased talk of exclusionary urbanisation processes, i.e. planning fed by private economic logic but that is not inclusively conceived or constituted. Statistics make this visible. We can see this in the ever-widening gap between rich and poor, which depicts a direly unequal world. But the realised spaces in which we live speak even more clearly than these dry statistics – spaces that we know personally and those conveyed to us through images and reports. We all know that some – very few – people benefit greatly from global opportunities, global money flows and global trade connections. Many others do not have these opportunities. But it is these global profiteers who shape spaces to suit their own ideas and in their own (certainly also monetary) interests. Thus, such spaces in which we are only allowed to stay if we pay for them proliferate. Other spaces, on the other hand, publicly accessible and free to use, are slowly but steadily disappearing from around us. But these “for pay spaces” are not simply spreading. They also have the habit of displacing the other spaces. All of this often happens under the premise of “upgrading”; a seemingly innocent word for the thoroughly violent processes that go hand-in-hand with it. However, it is becoming increasingly difficult to disguise the processes with these terms. In other words: urban structures are changing – sometimes slowly and insidiously, sometimes quite rapidly. And the space for those who don't have so much is dwindling. Justice, says the chorus, looks differently!

The perhaps justified objection here is that the past was not entirely rosy either. That the processes described

here are not new. That displacement may be called gentrification today but that nothing else has changed. And yes, that may be so. That said, the resistance that is stirring and the protests that are massive and growing louder – they are special. The city must be made differently, according to the persistent call. It must be planned, constructed, built and managed so that it is not only luck, favourable circumstances or financial means that decide on a possible life in the city. The right to the city must be absolute.

When we read books on the subject, this right is often linked with the right to clean water, clean air, housing, adequate sanitation, mobility, education, health care and democratic participation in decision-making processes. However, it is also – according to Peter Marcuse – about social justice, which includes the right to individual justice but goes far beyond it. It is about the city, and here again, I refer to Marcuse, as a place for a heterogeneous and complex society that offers equal potential for all. Even today, many who deal with these questions and thoughts refer to the French author and philosopher Henri Lefebvre, who wrote this still so relevant book on the right to the city in 1968. At the time, Lefebvre's work helped formulate criticism of capitalism and the institutionalisation of life more generally – and it can still be read the same way today. But Lefebvre (and this is another reason why this text, which is over fifty years old, will remain relevant) not only articulates criticism, he also elaborates – at least according to the reading of some – exactly how this other, this just city must be designed. The principles mentioned here are about self-organisation through participation, about self-determination and appropriation. They are manifestations of collective demands postulated by active city residents but have to be

negotiated again and again. Often, Lefebvre says, these demands are the result of political struggles.

Lefebvre outlines how the just city would have to be organised, how it would have to be managed, and – perhaps even – what it would have to look like. He is not, it quickly becomes clear, concerned with the minor transformation and reformation of the apparatuses and mechanisms that drive our existing cities. Neither the state nor capitalism have a place in his model. The just city must escape the control and disciplinary mechanisms of these systems because it is substantiated by fundamentally different values. Lefebvre thus opposes the violent, exploitative, exclusionary, instrumentalising city with another imaginary, which almost comes across as a “formless” construct – but is nevertheless not just a shell. It has to be negotiated, to emerge together and be inclusive without forming rigid “communities”.

To put it another way: justice, even at the spatial level, cannot be achieved by signing one, two or more petitions from within the comfort of one's own four walls. The systems that make our existing cities run so seemingly smoothly alienate and marginalise – implicitly as well as explicitly. It is, therefore, necessary to reclaim this alienated space. We need to reclaim space that has been taken away from the common good and the community by neoliberalising principles into other social and communalised networks of relationships. In doing so, we cannot fall back on existing (state) structures but must think, design and implement new systems, new institutions.

So, all this does not speak of temporary interventions, which may well always have their usefulness and, therefore, their justification. But the right to the city cannot be a travelling circus. To appear briefly, only to leave

(hastily) again before too many traces are left behind – that is clearly the wrong approach. It would also be wrong to look only at the rights of individuals in demanding other principles – not least because it is precisely this focus on the individual that has produced whatever state of emergency we find ourselves in at the moment. Instead, everyone must fight again and again, more and more vehemently for collective rights (to clean water, clean air, affordable housing and much more) to be anchored in the long term so that the great challenges of our time can finally be met with the seriousness they deserve: First and foremost, the global climate emergency, which is hurtling towards us at a dizzying speed without triggering any significant political reactions.

I will not conclude by presenting formulas for the just city. I will not present a toolbox from which we can draw. Nor will I suggest that we try out a design thinking recipe that tempts us with innovation. Nor do I have an exercise ready that could now produce suggestions on how we could extricate ourselves from this tricky situation. Even the questions at the very beginning have only been touched upon tangentially in the course of the text. Others have, quite deliberately, been left completely untouched, because my suggestion here is to use the questions as a starting point for one's own work and actions. Together with the other statements, they can be understood as a barometer, a weather glass, perhaps even a pressure indicator. With these questions, assessments can be made, they can be used to point out unequal developments and design other systems.

But even if the just city does not come as a simple recipe – because justice must be negotiated cooperatively – there are nevertheless things that can be postulated

in general. Once again, I draw on Peter Marcuse for assistance, who says that there can be no justice in neoliberal systems. The just city must, therefore, set its focus on alternatives. Existing neoliberalising systems and mechanisms, Marcuse says, must be fought. What does this mean for the just city? And what does it mean for the act of planning itself, if that is what it is still called in the future? Marcuse proposes the following: He calls for, in the first instance, analysing, making visible and communicating the roots of contemporary problems. In a second step, these analyses can be used by all those who create space, with the inclusion of critical theory, to develop other proposals; and then, probably most importantly, he demands: politicise, politicise, politicise.

Well aware of the danger of repetition: Marcuse's principle is not a magic bullet either, of course. The just city is and remains a process of negotiation, is and remains a shared project and can only be implemented with an immense effort from all of us – to be negotiated again and again, planned anew and questioned anew. Only one thing is clear: things cannot and must not continue as they are. There is too much at stake.

Don't: produce islands that no one can get to and from; circus events; common cause with exploitative systems.

Do: join networks of solidarity; think through the effects of planning on and for others; invent diverse ways of co-designing and inventing other systems; finally confront the great challenges of our time with serious proposals.

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# Land reserve policy

## Purchase for reservation

The portfolio of publicly owned land ready for construction has steadily declined in many municipalities in recent decades. Many plots of land and buildings have been sold to manage debts and tight budgets. To regain agency in the area of land development, some German cities are pursuing an active land management reserve policy. So-called “revolving land funds” use the [↳revenue](#) generated from the land for the purchase of additional land. Some municipalities prefer to create building rights ([↳planning law](#)) for land in their ownership. In this way, only the municipality benefits from the increase in value. It can therefore actively control land prices and successfully participate in creating affordable residential and commercial space.

# Land trust

## Removing land from speculation

Non-profit foundations ([↳non-profit status](#)) are obliged to permanently increase their assets and use the [↳revenue](#) from the assets for non-profit purposes. In the case of a land trust, the assets consist primarily of land. These are assigned in [↳heritable building rights](#) for uses oriented to the common good as much as possible. In this way, these foundations pursue the goal of removing land from market mechanisms and, at the same time, generating a moderate return. The idea of a land trust is becoming increasingly relevant because, as a consequence of the 2008 financial crisis and the European Union's low interest rate policy, a significant proportion of global capital flows into the purchase of land and speculation on future increases in value is reflected in the leases and rents for this land. By defining the purpose of a foundation, land trusts can permanently secure land for socially equitable uses across legislative periods and majority political structures and control it by the formulation of heritable building rights ([↳permanence](#)).

**Gängeviertel, Hamburg:** Born out of a protest against Hamburg's urban planning practices, the Gängeviertel is exemplary for the productive power of conflicts that at first seem hopeless. After years of struggle and creative protest actions by numerous activists and a large circle of supporters, the city was persuaded to buy back the privatised area. This laid the foundation for permanently secured, cooperatively run spaces for art, culture and socially acceptable housing. [www.das-gaengeviertel.info](http://www.das-gaengeviertel.info)

# Legitimation

## Licence to decide

When it comes to the future development of fallow land or the new bicycle lane in front of the building, the question often arises: Who has the authority to make the decision about use and design? Is it the politicians, the administration, the neighbourhood concerned? Or even all of them together? How democratic is the decision-making process on housing project X or road extension Y? Increasingly, new building projects are critically questioned by initiatives and interest groups, attention is drawn to complex consequences and there is a demand for transparency in the decision-making process. There are often fears of a deterioration in the quality of life, justified by the loss of green spaces, playgrounds and car parks, the increase in pollution and noise, or the intensification of social **conflicts**. Through various forms of **participation**, jointly supported decisions can be developed in planning and future workshops, online dialogues or **round tables**. The aim is to reach agreements between different and opposing groups that prepare and legitimise a decision by the democratic bodies of local politics.

# Municipalism

## Collective and self-governing

The “new municipalism” is about filling strategic administrative posts at the local level to achieve fundamental political changes at the municipal level. Various city residents, initiatives or small parties join together in cross-network and activist election platforms. The experiences of city-makers are thus transferred into politics and alternative **→governance** is established. Radical democratisation and (re-) municipalisation are two of the central themes. In this way, the new municipalism seeks to transform how politics are conducted: For example, through regular district assemblies in which horizontal decision-making structures are established. The question of ownership also plays a key role. With the **→commons** theory, the aim is communalisation (e.g. transformation of private property into communal property), and also self-organised management of important goods and spaces (**→self-governance**).

**Barcelona en Comú:** The platform, which has provided the mayor of Barcelona since 2015, pursues a new kind of urban politics by, on the one hand, remaining a civic movement and, on the other, systematically involving the city's population in the policy-making processes. For example, an ethical code was drafted in multi-stage participation and crowdsourcing processes, from which common structures and the party programme were developed openly and collectively. The process is not considered complete. [www.barcelonaencomu.cat](http://www.barcelonaencomu.cat)

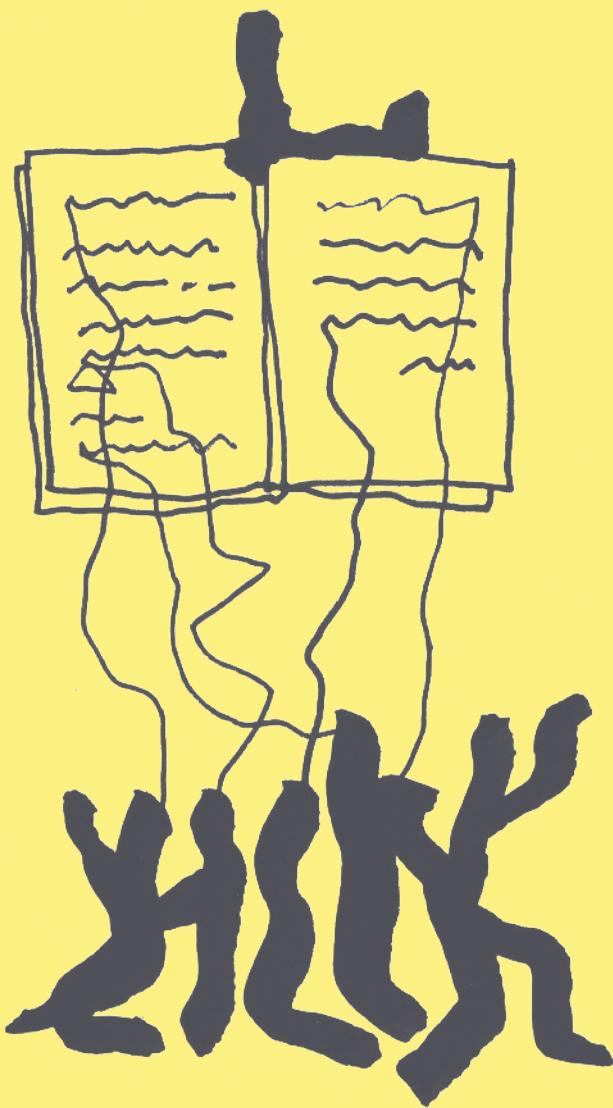
**Rojava, Syria:** In Rojava, the Kurdish autonomous region in northern Syria, Kurdish women are building feminist and assembly-based models of stateless democracy despite everyday war and oppression.

# Muscle Mortgage

## Tackle it yourself

A muscle mortgage is the colloquial description of a personal contribution of manual skills by city-makers in construction or purchase of a property. A muscle mortgage can, for example, consist of the re-use of building materials ([↳circular economy](#)) or doing one's own construction or repair work. In many projects, it replaces lacking funds or creates the framework to organise non-monetary support for the project and the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, muscle mortgages are paradoxical in that participants must invest a high level of commitment, free time, basic knowledge and, to a certain extent, a secure economic livelihood.





# Narratives

By Stephan Willinger

Language is more than just a means of describing reality. It is the medium through which one gives meaning to the world. The ways we talk about the city reflect our self-image, our view of urban society and our approach to urban development. In this sense, there is a fundamental difference between talking about the city as a series of planning procedures or as a colourful mosaic of civic activities. If stories are told again and again because they sound plausible to many, then narratives emerge. This term is used to describe meaningful stories that convey values and emotions. It is also a term we use as a reference and can fall back on without thinking. Conversely, they also shape the way we perceive the world – and thus our consumer behaviour, mobility, energy consumption, engagement in urban development processes and sense of belonging to places, cities and landscapes. So more than space itself, it is these stories that determine urban development.

If we take a closer look at this field, we see that narratives provide urban actors with a repertoire of worldviews, interpretive patterns, motives and myths that they can use as a framework for their perceptions and actions. In professional circles, such narratives are known as “guiding principles”. Thus, anyone who labels their planning concept with the terms “sustainability” or “mixed use” can count on tacit agreement, since they follow the dominant narrative.

Nevertheless, stories change, and the narrative of urban development is not static at all; rather, it is subject to constant transformation. Before the sustainability nar-

rative, there was the modernity narrative – and perhaps we are currently transitioning to something entirely different. For social controversies about problems, desires and solutions constantly give rise to new narratives that compete with established ones. This mutability contains an activating moment: in the act of narration, every citizen can become an actor in urban development policy only by raising his or her voice.

Narratives about the city must therefore always be thought of in the plural. They have a political dimension, legitimise power relations or question them. They can deceive or enlighten, block or activate. Some compete with each other; others co-exist. More powerful stories prevail. In these stories, leading roles are assigned, separated into villain and hero. And stories are told about who should win in the end. By choosing themes and methods, urban planners also tell very specific stories, as Richard Sennett, for example, describes: “if you see the density sheet, made of single-coloured dots, mapped over a figured-ground sheet (...), you tell one kind of story; overlay the density sheet on a map of the wealth of people in the buildings (...) and you tell quite another.”<sup>1</sup>

Until now, urban development and urban planning have been talked about in a rather technocratic way, because city administration and politics limited communication with citizens when it came to involvement in planning procedures. Urban development thus often appeared to be a book with seven seals, pretending to deal with construction lines, types of use and zoning categories, and excluding, as much as possible, questions of forms and spaces of social co-existence. But today, this can no longer be sustained in the face of well-informed and self-confident urban publics. Therefore, dialogues about urban develop-

ment must open up. Just as citizens' groups are increasingly "critically mapping", storytelling has long since taken on a life of its own and can no longer be controlled or even steered by city administrations.

In recent years, suggestions for a more open design of urban narratives have increasingly come from the widely received projects of "informal urbanism", which has become a motor for creative ideas and new urban rituals with temporary interventions. From these projects, new stories emerge that bear alternative ideas for urban development. "Like the guerrilla zebra crossing in Baltimore, which was painted on the asphalt with cheap paint by some citizens in the spring of 2012 because they finally wanted a safe crossing. It was quickly removed by city authorities – and yet led to public discussion of the pros and cons that went on for so long that an official pedestrian crossing was finally created."<sup>2</sup> Or like the conversion of an underground stop in the Ruhr region into an opera stage and boxing arena, undertaken by raumlaborberlin a few years ago. Or the current work of the Stadtlücken initiative on Österreichischer Platz in Stuttgart. There, uses are being tested for the previously invisible space under a traffic intersection, unexpected experiences are being created that are quickly passed on by word of mouth. So quickly, in fact, that the project won last year's competition "European City: Change and Values". Traffic intersection = urban development? This is certainly not how such a project would have been described a few years ago. How quickly narratives change!

One could thus sense a new narrative in recent discourses and practices, which can be outlined with the terms post-growth and common good, and which describe a new distribution of roles in urban development. Based

on this narrative, new political alliances are forming, collective actions and social movements are emerging. Via concepts and model projects, the narrative is slowly penetrating the urban planning offices. And there, ears are slowly starting to listen to the “other” stories that are (and could be) told about cities and to the possibilities of using them in planning.<sup>3</sup>

If narratives are intended to be more than the advertising slogans of real estate developers and the empty formulas of planners, they must relate more closely to the everyday lives of residents. They should centre on the so-called large-scale projects of the so-called professional urban developers, but on the many small projects with which creative city-makers develop cities every day. In the words of Leonie Sandercock: “Let us liberate and celebrate and think about the power of story. Let us appreciate its importance to the twenty-first century multicultural planning project, as a way of bringing people together to learn about each other through the telling of stories.”<sup>4</sup>

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1. Richard Sennett: *Building and Dwelling. Ethics for the City*. 2018 (p. 248.).
  2. Hanno Rauterberg: *Wir sind die Stadt! Urbanes Leben in der Digitalmoderne*. 2013 (p. 35 f.).
  3. Cf. Stephan Willinger: *Narrative Urbanism – 15 tips for your practice*. 2019.
  4. Leonie Sandercock: “Out of the Closet: The Importance of Stories and Storytelling in Planning Practice”. In: *Planning Theory & Practice*. 1/2003.



# Neighbourhood index for the common good

## In which neighbourhood do we want to live?

The neighbourhood index for the common good is a collectively created directory that maps what is important to residents in their neighbourhood. It is determined during a neighbourhood meeting and is the guideline for future on site developments. Depending on the situation and problems, the neighbourhood index for the common good can be used to formulate common goals for the creation of meeting places (**→third places**), for socially just housing, for the redesign of green spaces as well as for climate neutrality, inclusion and improvements in public transport or much more. The aim of the neighbourhood index for the common good is to make the **→impact** of the community-oriented activities visible so that they are taken into account in the implementation and financing of projects. The neighbourhood index for the common good is regularly revised as a living system to reflect neighbourhood developments and the changing population over time.

**Hansaforum, Münster:** The Hansaforum initiative in Münster, a pilot project of the National Urban Development Policy, developed the first neighbourhood index for the common good in Germany in 2019. With randomly selected people, goals for ten fields of action were formulated during a convention. These are now the binding basis for decisions on the allocation of funding. Projects and ideas that strengthen the common good in the neighbourhood receive between 25 and 25,000 euros. Project guides support the common good projects in their development and implementation. [www.hansaforum-muenster.de](http://www.hansaforum-muenster.de)

# Non-profit status

## Tax privilege for community service

City-makers promote the democratic state system by creating spaces where people actively engage in (urban) political debates. Their active participation in shaping their living environment and new forms of **cooperation** with politics and administration are suitable antidotes in times of increasing political disenchantment. To support these valuable civil society and entrepreneurial initiatives, the tax office can grant exemption from corporate income tax, trade tax, property tax or inheritance tax. They are also entitled to raise tax-privileged donations. In return, they undertake in their statutes to follow the objectives defined in § 52 of the German Fiscal Code. These include many aspects of common good-oriented urban development, as projects and initiatives are often active in the fields of environment, climate, culture, sports, social affairs, civil rights, education and science, development co-operation or humanitarian aid.

# Open city

## City of opportunities

An open city offers space for **appropriation** for all city residents. It offers space for newcomers, **experiments** and the unplanned. Because: the open city invites participation, it relies on **cooperation** and social togetherness. According to the English urban sociologist Richard Sennett, it is incomplete and does not develop (solely) according to a fixed plan. City residents of an open city do not consume their living environment rather they co-produce it (**co-production**). An open city wants to offer niches in which alternative forms of living together can be developed and tested. In this way, an open city creates meeting spaces for a discursive public (**third places**) in the sense of an **agora**. The added value for society and the **common good** take precedence over private and economic interests.

# Participation

## Welcome to the participation circus

The introduction of citizen participation in urban development took place in the 1970s in response to the desire of many people to democratise planning. The term “involvement” is often used synonymously. This usually refers to procedures in the sense of formal participation. Formal types of participation are prescribed by law. These include, for example, the presentation of plans to the public in accordance with Section 3 of the Building Code and offering an opportunity to discuss and comment on them. Democratic elections and the freedom of association in Article 9 of the German Basic Law can also be considered forms of planning participation. Sometimes procedures of direct democracy such as popular votes and referendums are also included. In the best case, participation processes can enable **→engagement**, stimulate **→cooperation** and thus create real **→legitimation** for planning by involving those affected in planning decisions at an early stage.

Participation processes are often the result of (urban) political **→conflicts**, in which those who feel structurally excluded from political decision-making processes make their voices heard. In the worst case, municipalities use citizen participation to add cosmetic impulses from the population to already decided plans and thus legitimise them. Administration, private companies or politicians sitting in the city council then remain the formative parties.

These formal procedures are increasingly complemented by informal and civil society-initiated forms of engagement. These bottom-up processes, which call for concrete engagement and active **→city-making**, aim at improved **→access** for many, orientation towards the **→common good**, **→cooperation** and **→self-governance**.

# Permanence

## Come to stay

Without permanent security, countless valuable civic projects remain in a state of interim use (**pioneer use**) with uncertain prospects. However, many city-makers want to permanently strengthen the **common good** with their programs and need a secure basis for doing so. Binding legal foundations enable planning reliability, thus creating the basis for developing land with consistent prospects (**future**) and reliable guarantees. In addition to **affordability**, permanence is, therefore, one of the fundamental factors for involving city-makers in urban development in the long term and safeguarding land from privatisation and private skimming of profits.

**Netzwerk Urbane Gärten (Urban Gardens Network):** The Netzwerk Urbane Gärten calls for the permanent safeguarding of neighbourhood gardens and urban agriculture as important green, open and natural spaces for cities. One model for such a safeguard is the Berliner Dauergartenvertrag, a permanent garden contract. [www.netzwerkurbanegaertenberlin.org](http://www.netzwerkurbanegaertenberlin.org)

**Bellevue di Monaco, Munich:** Bellevue di Monaco is a newly founded residential and cultural centre for refugees and interested parties in the heart of the city. In need of renovation, the buildings had acquired a reputation beyond the city limits through the protest actions of a citizens' initiative to preserve the adjacent football field and a guerrilla renovation campaign. In April 2016, the State Capital Munich leased the houses to the social cooperative for forty years. [www.bellevuedimonaco.de](http://www.bellevuedimonaco.de)

# Pioneer use

## Incubator for the city of tomorrow

Interim uses have long since left their informal niche existence and have become an integral part of urban planning. What began as an improvised and not always intentional **appropriation** of abandoned spaces is now a cornerstone of the continuously changing **open city**. In many cases, these processes have contributed to a fresh look at the value of intermediately used land. However, qualities and increases in value generated by the interim users are in danger of being exploited by enterprising third parties during displacement movements. As a result, the original interim uses are displaced and thus become victims of their own success. On the other hand, pioneer uses seek more **permanence** and thus the preservation of the **revenue** generated by them. By enabling pioneer uses, vacant sites and brownfields that are to be redeveloped can be opened up to try out procedurally on site what is to be created later on a large scale and in the long term. In this way, the **character** of the uses is tested on site and tagged in the buildings or spaces at an early stage. Some uses remain temporary, others become permanent and thus become project anchors. Pioneer uses try out new things – not least by shaping the process together and finding new ways of making a city together.

**Haus der Statistik, Berlin:** During the planning and construction phase of the model project, numerous so-called pioneer uses enliven the building complex's ground floors and open spaces after eleven years of vacancy. They are part of the broad engagement of the urban society and a central aspect in the cooperative development of the model project. Through the pioneer uses and the people behind them, both long-term use clusters and a transparent organisational and decision-making body are established. [www.hausderstatistik.de](http://www.hausderstatistik.de)

# Planning law

## Ordering the present and the future

Public building law includes planning law and building regulation law. Planning law regulates the use of an area. The instruments for this are land use plans and development plans, intended to increase the [common good](#). Land use plans describe structural development for an entire municipality or city area. Based on this, development plans for individual sub-areas of the city establish rules for housing, commerce, trade or industry. Among other things, building heights, the number of storeys or the degree of building coverage are defined here. In addition, a local development plan provides detailed information on areas of public use such as schools, cultural uses or traffic areas. The city council then adopts the plans. To legitimise these determinations ([legitimation](#)), municipalities and communities are obliged to adequately involve the public by submitting comments and suggestions ([participation](#)). In principle, planning law in Germany guarantees a transparent and democratic planning culture. However, it is often blind to the importance of city-making projects for urban development. This requires a new understanding of the role of planners and more flexibility in the interpretation of planning law through an applied [enabling culture](#) within the administration.





# Planning processes

By Melanie Humann and Cordelia Polinna

It took almost a hundred years to redesign the Piazza della Signoria in Florence in the fourteenth century. This extremely protracted planning and realisation was due, above all, to the fiercely fought conflicts between various interest groups and the unfavourable ownership conditions. Yet, it was also because of the interests of political careers and a considerable administrative apparatus. Even then, it became clear that working on the city is a process that is as multi-layered as it is discursive.

Throughout its history, urban planning has been shaped by radical upheavals triggered by changes in social structures and political systems, new technologies, economic structural change or other cultural and social changes. Urban paradigm shifts are a central driver of innovation in planning.<sup>1</sup> They are often accompanied by great uncertainty about how best to deal with upheavals.<sup>2</sup> In the 1960s and 1970s, for example, the challenges of reconstruction and housing shortages were met primarily with a “strong state” and welfare state principles. This paternalistic approach presupposed a clear division of roles between the state, the market and civil society, the boundaries of which became very blurred from the beginning of the 1980s due to an increasingly neoliberal urban development policy.

In addition to the municipality, private project developers and investors, foundations, community-based stakeholders, cooperatives, civic initiatives and an interested general public are today also strongly involved in the development and production of the city. These new practitioners

in the urban realm are often characterised by goal-oriented pragmatism, a high degree of self-organisation and inventive financing models. With their diverse approaches to collaborative space production, they enable themselves and others to participate directly in urban development processes. In the face of an increasingly unleashed real estate market, development by local participants is establishing itself as a stabilising model of sustainable and (more) socially just urban development. Instead of short-term economic interests, long-term goals based on a sustainable value system are being targeted. Urban development is supported by the many instead of the few, and global market interests take a back seat to local cycles.

Communicative approaches that take into account the multi-layered interests of this very heterogeneous landscape of participants are therefore becoming increasingly important in planning processes. The providing state is being replaced by an “activating” state,<sup>3</sup> which understands planning as the “strategic management of development processes”<sup>4</sup>. Thus, planning is becoming project and process oriented. In terms of working on the city, this means, above all, that we need open and inviting planning processes that give the various participants room to manoeuvre, take public needs into account and flexibly adapt to changing conditions. It is no longer just the cities and municipalities themselves that provide the impetus for planning processes, but increasingly also an active civil society and its committed initiatives.

The new understanding of joint “city-making” initially raises the question of whether and how participants without a professional planning background can have a say in spatial planning processes. Above all, the co-creative design approach, which provides for the joint development of spa-

tial situations in teams, comes into focus. The teams consist of planners, residents, owners and other stakeholders. Originally, the term co-creation described a collaborative management approach in which companies involve their customers directly in product development and design. In the context of urban development as a task for society as a whole, the approach is seen as a way to involve civil society participants comprehensively and directly in urban development processes.

Co-creative processes begin with a joint search for the appropriate questions regarding the respective location. Since a quantitative approach with rigid planning specifications – such as spatial programmes and specifications for building masses and open spaces – cannot depict essential factors of space production, co-creative planning primarily addresses the following questions: What qualities and values characterise the future neighbourhoods and open spaces? Who are the future users and what are their needs? What framework has been set? What is the goal of planning project and which rules apply in the process?

The advantage of defining a common goal is obvious: In the process, different interests with regard to the future of a space become visible and grouped. Negotiating the “target corridor” creates trust and a shared foundation for the next steps. This creates a cooperatively developed scope in which different ideas can be further developed into plans that then have to be measured against the jointly agreed specifications. The method of participatory elaboration of the reference terms also makes potential conflicts of objectives visible at an early stage, for example when the interests of the city as a whole in the re-densification of neighbourhoods meet residents’ so-called NIMBY (not in my backyard) attitudes.

The basis of co-creative urban development is not only the joint elaboration of goals, but also the design of the entire planning process as an actor-based, open process. In this respect, open planning processes link at least three levels: public dialogue, process design and spatial planning. Within the framework of public dialogue, information is prepared, communicated and discussed in a way that is comprehensible to "non-planners". The various participants exchange knowledge, needs and ideas in interactive format of creative cooperation, such as city walks in which residents tell planners their stories about the respective places. The dialogue-oriented planning instruments include, in particular, walkable urban models on a scale of 1:50, which provide a better understanding of planned structural interventions, or 1:1 prototypes in the urban space, which enable a direct on site impression and exchange. Apart from that, digital tools allow insight into future scenarios and open access to the spatial dimension of urban development for "non-planners". The results of the public dialogue are included into the spatial design, which can then develop iteratively and take into account possible conflicting goals.

At the level of process design, the planning initiators meet with representatives from politics and administration, experts and other stakeholders to set the necessary course for the administration or with other process owners and, if necessary, to readjust process contents.

However, for all the advantages that co-creative and co-productive approaches offer, it must always be taken into account, that urban development is often strongly influenced by particular interests. Unintentionally, tendencies towards a one-sided preference for individual needs or ideas can be reinforced, especially when interest groups have special means or opportunities to skilfully present them-

selves to the public. To ensure that public concerns and the needs of under-represented interest groups do not fall by the wayside, it is incumbent on those responsible and planners to draw attention to these interests in the process and to help represent them. They thus take on this important task – entirely in the sense of Lucius Burckhardt – as “experts in the service of society”.<sup>5</sup>

The shift towards an actor- and process-oriented planning culture is now well advanced in urban development. From the superordinate, strategic level of guiding principles and goal development to urban development projects and actor-based individual projects, planning is carried out as an inviting process. Many projects show that the strengthened and active role of civil society in planning processes can make urban development more democratic, accountable and transparent.

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1. Cf. C. Polinna, *Towards a London Renaissance, Projekte und Planwerke für den städtebaulichen Paradigmenwechsel im Londoner Zentrum*, Detmold 2009.
  2. Cf. U. Altrock, “Das Ende der Angebotsplanung? Instrumente der Planung im Wandel”, in: P. Küpper, et al. (eds.): *Raumentwicklung 3.0 – Gemeinsam die Zukunft der räumlichen Planung gestalten, Arbeitsberichte der ARL 8.* 2014.; H. Becker/J. Jessen/R. Sander, *Ohne Leitbild? Städtebau in Deutschland und Europa*, Stuttgart u. a. 1998.
  3. Cf. G. Hutter, “Strategische Planung. Ein wiederentdeckter Planungsansatz zur Bestandsentwicklung von Städten”, in: *RaumPlanung* 128, 2006.
  4. Cf. S. Löb, *Problembezogenes Regionalmanagement*, Hanover 2006.
  5. Lucius Burckhardt, “Wer plant die Planung?” in: *Wer plant die Planung? Architektur, Politik und Mensch*, Berlin2000.

# Post-growth city

## Liberation from abundance

Further, faster, more...?! Economic growth has become the symbol of prosperity and the goal of corporate and political action. However, the climate crisis, planetary boundaries and social injustice increasingly call into question this concept of perpetual economic growth as a guarantor of the common good. For it does not seem possible to preserve our natural landscapes and living areas with continued growth. The “post-growth city” describes a concept that sees the city more as an ecosystem in which every action causes another. It calls for a fundamentally necessary change in our ways of thinking, living and producing, and for a comprehensive cultural transformation. The vision of a post-growth city looks like this: Instead of accumulating private property, economic activity shifts to **commons**: **sharing** and swapping, giving and lending, and collective ownership. This changed understanding of the economy, which also takes greater account of social and ecological aspects, gives rise to new guiding principles closely linked to values such as self-determination, **solidarity** and the assumption of **responsibility** for shaping one's environment. A possible approach to this is offered by local urban counter-drafts such as solidarity-based agriculture, open workshops, **commoning**, **common good economy**, **circular economy** or the introduction of neighbourhood councils.

# Pre-sale option

## Time to take a deep breath and plan

The public sector can offer a plot of land for sale to a project for a specified period, for example, one year, i.e. as a “pre-sale option”. During this time, details of the building rights ([↳planning law](#)) and the project's financing can be clarified without fear of the land being sold to third parties. The advantage is that projects with a strong social orientation and extensive coordination processes are also given a chance compared to financially well-positioned project developments.

**Eiermannbau, Apolda:** Through a pre-sale option procedure, the site development of the so-called “Eiermannbau” in Apolda, an icon of industrial building culture, can slowly mature. The IBA Thuringia is testing possible utilisation concepts and sees itself as an interim developer that makes a site accessible, designs it and puts it to exemplary interim use. The long-term goal is to assign the site to a project company via a heritable building right contract to be founded during the site development.  
[www.iba-thueringen.de/projekte/apolda-eiermannbau](http://www.iba-thueringen.de/projekte/apolda-eiermannbau)

# Process orientation

## Planning step by step

The urban development of municipalities and cities takes place within a complex network of relationships. Planning and building are processes in which politics, administration, society and the economy negotiate what the shape and contour of the future city should look like. Urban development presupposes detailed knowledge of the local situation ([↳character](#)) and the concrete needs of the different participants. It is a multi-layered challenge that must meet a constantly changing [↳open city](#). Therefore, informal and process-oriented plans for neighbourhood development are gaining importance. Here, planning processes whose outcome is unknown are designed. Specifications remain flexible until the needs of the neighbourhoods and those involved have been clarified. This openness allows civil society to be more involved in urban development. Public sector-led urban planning is also increasingly moving towards a process-oriented, dialogue-based planning culture. This cultural change is necessary to strengthen the [↳cooperation](#) of very different social groups. An open state of mind and [↳enabling](#) culture helps to bridge the gap between the often conflicting interests and reduce usual frictional losses ([↳conflict](#)).

# Production of wishes

## First wish, then create

When participation procedures are organised by municipalities (**→participation**), the focus is usually on a labyrinth of building lines, densities and other parameters. Although the mandate of local politics usually leaves some leeway for setting goals, the administration quickly sets a narrower framework with its plans. Then, a fundamental preoccupation with the **→future** of an area no longer takes place. The idea of collective production of wishes goes back to the neighbourhood project Park Fiction in Hamburg (1995–2005). The central point here is that the process is not reduced to an arbitrary expression of result-oriented and quantifiable wishes; rather, it is about a creative and playful approach: Visions and the conditions of a future place are developed independently and collectively. The collective production of wishes starts from the potential of a place and not from a lack as in the question of needs. Unconventional (also artistic) planning tools such as test uses, barbecues, the use of modelling clay, a contact point to catalyse conversation on site with a library or “archive of wishes” as well as telephone hotlines for all those who are only inspired at night are of great importance. Portable “planning studios” are also used to reach neighbourhood groups that are harder to involve. The findings can be integrated into planning processes in the further course (**→process orientation**).

**Park Fiction St. Pauli, Hamburg:** Embedded in a neighbourhood network, a “collective production of desires” started in the mid-1990s with the aim of preventing the development of the last free Elbe slope on St. Pauli. Instead of pure protest, actions took place in the area such as planning workshops in a freely accessible container or lectures on topics such as parks and their political backgrounds. [www.park-fiction.net](http://www.park-fiction.net)

# Public services

## Between basic supply and the financial market

The public sector makes an essential contribution to the [common good](#) by providing us with goods and services that safeguard our existence. Tasks such as water supply, waste disposal or the operation of local public transport are considered classic public services. However, it also includes health services, educational, cultural and sports facilities, public service media, postal and telecommunication services or public safety.

In addition, many civic initiatives also contribute to the provision of public services. For example, they join together to form citizens' energy cooperatives ([cooperatives](#)), thus driving the energy revolution forward and deciding on pricing on their own. Committed people establish associations, renovate swimming pools, village pubs or playgrounds and decide what is important for the community to a certain extent. In this way, the provision of public services, which actively shape the [future](#) of our cities through start-ups, active work and crowdfunding, has become more of a shared task for society in recent years. A critical view must be established when citizens are forced to take over public services due to insufficient financial resources of the municipalities.

**SODA, Berlin:** The Sondervermögen für Daseinsvorsorge und nicht betriebsnotwendige Bestandsgrundstücke des Landes Berlin (SODA) (Special Fund for Public Services and Non-operational Necessary Existing Properties of the Federal State of Berlin) aims at a more long-term land policy that keeps certain land in the possession of the city to make it available for educational institutions, theatres or other uses, for example. In this way, land that is currently needed for the Federal State of Berlin is not sold, rather it is held for public services in the long term. [www.bim-berlin.de](http://www.bim-berlin.de)

# Public space

## Place of democratic engagement

Public space is a [commons](#). Formal and informal regulations, as well as design, define its use. Parks, squares and streets – i.e. the city's public spaces – are also decisive for our quality of life. Therefore, the term “public space” refers not only to whether something is privately or publicly owned but also to how it is used. After all, the public spaces of our cities are, on the one hand, carriers of essential urban functions such as transportation or commerce. On the other, they also fulfil social requirements, such recreation, social exchange and encounters. They serve as orientation for and the identification of a district. Democracy and public space form an inseparable combination of terms, because even in the digital age, only a freely usable public space guarantees free expression of opinion and visible protest. How the public spaces of our cities are constituted and how they are used is also a reflection of current social trends and political conditions. Public space must not become a plaything for private interests. It must be protected, well designed and maintained. For the good of all.

**Canary Wharf, London:** An industrial wasteland was acquired by a private developer, who designed it and made it accessible to the public. In times of reduced public budgets, more and more public spaces are being privatised. While this relieves the municipal budget, the new owners can also prevent protests and demonstrations, deny freedom of speech, evict the homeless or ban activities such as making music, cycling or skateboarding, as in Canary Wharf.

# Responsibility

## Taking care of the big picture

An **open city** is not possible if the people do not take responsibility. Be it through the collaborative development of **immovielien**, taking on the care of plot of land founding a community garden. Those who are socially engaged (**civic engagement**) also take on a degree of social responsibility, contribute to a city shaped in solidarity (**solidarity**) and cooperation (**cooperation**) and show that they are an active part of society. In doing so, city-makers ask themselves through their actions who takes responsibility for what, because in the **future**, the implementation of their vision should take the best possible course: The challenge is to do what is necessary and right in each case to avert damage and exclude liability claims. To act as a trustworthy partner vis-à-vis the administration and banks, acquire funding or limit liability risks, it is, therefore, advisable to establish a suitable trusteeship. Since many initiatives do not yet have such a structure, administrations, politicians and banks are initially sceptical about some city-maker projects. Here, the power of the idea, confidence-building measures, a rousing concept and a realistic project development framework must be used to convince all those involved that the initiative will bear responsibility for the future.

# Revenue

## More than just money

A project initiated by civil society can be compared to a business: The result of a private-sector, state or civil-society “enterprise” is a return that can represent both financial and social added value. Urban or private initiatives that seek to develop unused or underused spaces generate a high value for developing an urban district and contribute to the [\*\*urban return on investment\*\*](#) as a result of their activities. How and whether the added values generated can be quantified remains open to critical questioning, since needs do not have a price.

At the same time, considering the expected revenue from a project can be crucial. For example, a use that benefits the public has a better chance of winning the bid to purchase a property if the sale is based on the market value instead of a usual bidding process. In this way, it can be ensured that future uses are more likely to be oriented towards the real revenue of a project intended for the common good.

A similar approach can be applied to calculating ground rent ([\*\*heritable building right\*\*](#)): Tradespeople who have higher income pay a higher ground rent than, for example, youth welfare housing projects financed almost exclusively by public funds.

# Right of pre-emption

## Municipal speculation inhibitor

Municipalities can exercise a general right of pre-emption (§ 24 BauGB et seqq.) in private land transactions to pursue a socially just land use. To realise urban development purposes and thus achieve benefits for the general public, municipalities may, under certain conditions, purchase land such as transport, green, public utility, supply and disposal areas ([↳public services](#)). The right of pre-emption applies, among other things, for public purposes in development plan areas, in reallocation areas, in formally designated redevelopment and development areas, for implementation measures of urban redevelopment and within the framework of a preservation statute.

In particular, the right of pre-emption in social preservation areas can contribute to maintaining the evolved structure of the residential population in a municipality and to avoiding displacement processes ([↳affordability](#)). With an avoidance agreement, the right of pre-emption can be waived if the buyer refrains from converting rental flats into owner-occupied flats and from carrying out luxury refurbishments, usually for about twenty years. The municipality can also exercise the right of pre-emption in favour of third parties (e.g. municipal housing societies, non-profit organizations). However, this is only the case if the common good justifies it (Section 24 para. 3 BauGB). Alongside milieu protection and [↳concept tendering](#), the right of pre-emption is the central tactical planning tool for urban development oriented towards the common good.

# Round table

## A sense of unity and strong solutions

At a round table, representatives of all relevant interest groups meet on an equal footing, without hierarchy, to discuss a controversial topic or problem and, in the best case, find a productive solution. The **participation** of many stakeholders is expressly desired to achieve a result that is as broadly supported as possible at the end of the decision-making process – for example, in dealing with public land or controversial planning procedures. An attempt is made to find a compromise that is accepted by all sides.

A round table is thus an essential tool for **cooperation** between administration, business and civil society and can thus be interpreted as a form of urban **commoning**. For the success of the process, a clear commitment of the decision-makers to the round table and its results, a clear definition of the subject of the negotiations as well as the possible influence of the round table are just as important as the consideration of all stakeholders relevant to the topic. A neutral moderator should accompany the meetings. A freely available and well-structured protocol creates transparency.

**Round Table on Real Estate Policy, Berlin:** Every three to four months, the round table on the realignment of Berlin's real estate policy deals with publicly owned land. A discussion of real estate and land policy issues takes place in which the administration, politicians and various urban policy initiatives and stakeholders meet without rank. [www.stadtneudenken.net](http://www.stadtneudenken.net)

# Self-governance

Those affected decide

The term self-governance refers to the control and steering of, for example, areas and projects by democratically organised groups. Within a given framework, these groups determine which priorities apply and which measures are taken. In Germany, for example, cities and municipalities have the right to self-governance. They can independently regulate their local affairs, such as the structure of local government or urban development.

Many civic initiatives or enterprises also strive for self-governance of spaces, values and property in their projects. Self-governance is then understood to mean that the users can freely dispose of a project's means, values and goods. This can be a self-governed apartment building as part of a tenement house syndicate, a community-run business in the form of a [\*\*cooperative\*\*](#) or an ecological farm in the form of a citizens' joint stock company. What all these forms have in common is that their members have the right and the duty to manage resources on their own by deciding on ownership, organisational structures or investments.

# Sharing and swapping

## Mine, yours, ours

Sharing something is so commonplace that we do not perceive it as a special act: We share the air we breathe ([↪commons](#)), the bus and [↪public space](#). Swapping, on the other hand, means giving one object in return for another. Swapping is, therefore, the limit of sharing. This becomes clear in the sharing economy, where a monetary countervalue must be provided for sharing. Swapping and sharing are practised cultural techniques and the basis of human co-existence. Whether rich or poor, people share and trade all over the world. In Germany, however, sharing must first be practised in society. It is no longer the rule to share things but to own them, even if someone in the neighbourhood already has the same thing ([↪sufficiency](#)). Urban environments create a density that calls for the sharing of spaces ([↪fair distribution of space](#)) and, at the same time, makes it possible ([↪public services](#)). In this way, resources and space are saved and used several times over through joint use, sharing, giving and lending. This is sustainable on many levels. Sharing and swapping are often the foundation of civic initiatives. This is because they usually do not have sufficient financial means to buy tools or means of transport.

**Gesellschaft für außerordentliche Zusammenarbeit, Hanover:** In this society, a pilot project of the National Urban Development Policy, more than 100 neighbourhood participants have joined forces to share spaces, tools and knowledge. The organization's playful use of the word Gesellschaft means both society and corporation. [www.gesellschaftplus.de](http://www.gesellschaftplus.de)

**Pumpipumpe, Switzerland:** Pumpipumpe is a Swiss sharing community initiative. Stickers on the letterbox indicate which items residents have at home and are willing to lend to the neighbourhood. [www.pumpipumpe.ch](http://www.pumpipumpe.ch)

# Social innovation

## Driving social change

Social innovations offer new solutions to social challenges. A social innovation can contribute to the transformation of social relations by improving access to power and resources. The decisive factor for the long-term **→impact** is that an innovation is established and actually leads to a change in social structures or attitudes. Historical examples of social innovations are the introduction of social insurance, multi-generation houses or the cooperative movement (**→cooperative**). Especially nowadays, in times of dwindling resources, social innovations are becoming an increasingly important component of our society: Lending shops and repair cafés are established or food sharing is organised (**→sharing and swapping**). Social innovations question the way a society lives and works together. However, while appreciating such ideas, it should not be forgotten that many social services are part of the **→public services** for good reasons.

**The GoodGym, England:** The GoodGym is a community of runners who combine sport with good deeds. On their runs, the participants make stops, for example, to dig a new sandpit for a nursery or to visit isolated older adults and help them with one-off tasks that they can no longer manage on their own. Thus, doing sports together is combined with social commitment in the neighbourhood. [www.goodgym.org](http://www.goodgym.org)

**Open source movement:** The open source movement makes knowledge, information and tools available to all. The resources can be used freely and can also be changed. In this way, content is not only quickly improved because more knowledge can be incorporated directly by users but also because access is possible regardless of income or social background. The best-known examples are Wikipedia and Creative Commons.

# Socialisation

## Expropriation, remunicipalisation, socialisation

Socialisation is expressly provided for in Article 15 of the Basic Law. Here, it is stated that non-reproducible goods such as land, natural resources or means of production can be transferred into commons. In fact, landowners are expropriated time and again when it is necessary to fulfil public tasks, such as the construction of roads. In return, the public sector pays compensation. In the past decades, however, many cities and municipalities have gone the opposite way: To reduce the indebtedness of their budgets, they have sold land, flats, waterworks or hospitals to private companies. Today, not least under the sign of dynamically growing cities, it is increasingly a matter of regaining the municipalities' ability to act and ensure **public services**. This can be done, for example, by setting up pooled land funds, applying the general **right of pre-emption** or buying back once privatised waste companies or water utilities. It may also be advisable to newly established companies or institutions under public law that manage the **commons** in the general public's interest and, if necessary, repurchase them (remunicipalisation).

**Remunicipalisation of the Berliner Wasserbetriebe (Berlin waterworks):**  
With a successful referendum in 2013, a Berlin initiative initiated the complete buyback of a state-owned company, the Berliner Wasserbetriebe, and returned it to municipal ownership. [www.berliner-wassertisch.net](http://www.berliner-wassertisch.net)

# Sociocracy

## Ability to make decisions together

Sociocracy is about arguments rather than majorities. It is a form of organisation with flat hierarchies that assumes the equal value of all participants. With the help of sociocracy, self-organisation is promoted without losing action and decision-making capabilities. The most important working principle is consent ([→agreement](#)). A decision in the group is only made if no one has a serious objection. Mere rejection is not sufficient: Every objection must be justified and an alternative solution proposed. Consent decisions can be made much faster than consensus, especially in larger groups. Discussion rounds in which everyone talks in turn ensure that everyone contributes and anchors co-determination in the group. In line with the open source idea ([→social innovations](#)) the principles of sociocracy are freely accessible on the internet and offer models for many organisational issues.

# Solidarity

## Being there for each other

Solidarity means belonging together and is the foundation of the **common good**. Only those who can integrate other people's interests, concerns and needs into their own thinking, feeling and acting contribute to the functioning of a society based on solidarity. Solidarity is the basic idea of the social market economy and its social security systems with unemployment, health and pension insurance. Those who are well off support those who are worse off. In addition to these state systems, there are numerous civic initiatives such as tenant movements, neighbourhood help or support networks for refugees. It is about using the power of the many to improve a situation or compensate for an imbalance. Particularly in times of crisis, it becomes clear that much can be achieved with togetherness and **civic engagement** across social milieus.

**Gabenzäune (gift fences), Germany:** During the global spread of the coronavirus in January 2020, new formats of a society in solidarity developed. To continue to provide for homeless people during the lockdown, people hung food and clothing donations on fences in the city. This was to cushion the reduced offer of social organizations. At the same time, neighbourly help and togetherness between less affected people and those belonging to a risk group experienced a renaissance.

**Fearless Cities, worldwide:** "Fearless" cities and communities stand up for the defence of human rights, democracy and social urban development. Fearless Cities is an online platform founded after the conference of the same name in Barcelona in 2015. Neighbourhood movements and local politicians work together here to build global networks of solidarity and hope from below.  
[www.fearlesscities.com](http://www.fearlesscities.com)

# Space Agents

## Door opener with knowledge and network key

Young initiatives often depend on the support of experienced and well-connected intermediaries to develop their ideas. For this reason, space agents have emerged in many cities in recent years who, through their own projects, have gathered valuable contacts, experiential knowledge and a great deal of trust on the part of local government and pass this knowledge on to young city-makers. In addition, they act as mediators between initiatives and the city administration or city politics when there is a need for access to space, obtaining permits, or contributing to political decision-making processes.

**ZwischenZeitZentrale (ZZZ), Bremen:** The ZZZ, a pilot project of the National Urban Development Policy, tracks down suitable vacant properties on behalf of the Bremen administration, advises the owners, develops utilisation concepts and accompanies interim use projects. This creates a win-win situation for everyone involved, as many interim uses trigger valuable impulses for their neighbourhoods. [www.zzz-bremen.de](http://www.zzz-bremen.de)

**LokalBau Plattform, Berlin:** The LokalBau Plattform in the Berlin district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg moderates and organises access to publicly owned land for alternative, common good-oriented real estate professionals who want to create affordable spaces with new construction projects. The available space potential in the district is published online on a constantly updated real estate map. [www.berlin.de/lokalbau-fk](http://www.berlin.de/lokalbau-fk)

# Sufficiency

## Less is more

Sufficiency stands for frugality. Against the background of limited natural resources, climate change and the threat of species extinction, sufficiency aims to minimise the consumption of raw materials and energy. Sufficiency is one of three sustainability strategies, along with efficiency and consistency.

In contrast to efficiency, where new technologies produce the same benefit with less energy input, and consistency, where renewable energy sources and recyclable materials are used ([↳circular economy](#)), sufficiency is about consuming differently and less. A sufficiency lifestyle means consumption behaviour that is conscious and reduced without affecting one's satisfaction and quality of life: [↳Sharing and swapping](#) instead of buying, bicycles instead of cars, local instead of global. Numerous initiatives are already making a meaningful contribution with their work. In urban gardens, with repair cafés and lending or "unpackaged" shops, they advocate for collective use and less or plastic-free consumption. To achieve a long-term [↳impact](#), politics and administrations are also called upon to create the appropriate conditions (e.g. ban on disposable packaging, expansion of bicycle networks, etc.).

**Foodsharing:** Surplus, unconsumed food is saved from being thrown away and made freely available to the public at so-called "distribution points". Restaurants and food shops can register themselves on the internet platform of the same name. [www.foodsharing.de](http://www.foodsharing.de)

**Regional currencies:** The best-known and most successful regional currency in Germany is the "Chiemgauer". Regional currencies are supposed to keep at least part of the purchasing power in the region and thus strengthen the regional economy. As a side effect, fewer goods are transported and the environment is protected. [www.chiemgauer.info](http://www.chiemgauer.info)

# Third places

## Just be – without obligation to consume

Third places are open places for everyone. They are neither home nor work and invite people to linger. They are open in their possible uses and offer space for communication and the unexpected. Beyond traditional third places such as libraries, pubs or the village bakery, many socio-cultural projects or [\*\*→immovielien\*\*](#) represent a new category of these third places. The self-made and the personal commitment of many people have an inviting and accessible effect. They enable people of different ages and social milieus to come together – regardless of their social role or status. As places of unplanned togetherness and co-existence, thus third places play a vital role in democratic society. Third places should be created in the interest of the [\*\*→common good\*\*](#), free from exploitation interests and compulsive consumption.

**Leeszaal, Rotterdam:** In protest against the closure of the district library, the actions of many individuals led to a new concept of what a library could do for a neighbourhood. In the rooms of a former hammam, over ninety volunteers aged seven to ninety-two now run a diverse, easily accessible place: Here, one can simply take books and bring new ones, make study appointments or meet by chance, brew a cup of tea or attend events.

[www.leeszaalrotterdamwest.nl](http://www.leeszaalrotterdamwest.nl)

**Kulturhuset, Stockholm:** A culture house and publicly accessible place for everyone. All are invited to play chess on the expansive landings or just relax while exhibitions, dance and theatre are performed next door. High culture meets everyday life. The building's glass facade underscores the idea of shared space and creates a transparent view into the interior at night.

[www.kulturhusetstadsteatern.se](http://www.kulturhusetstadsteatern.se)

# Tolerance

## Try loosening up

Self-organised places for neighbourly activities and cultural exchange often emerge freely according to the motto “everything that is not expressly forbidden, is allowed”. It is often precisely through this creative [appropriation](#) that new spaces for co-creation are produced. Municipalities can support trial uses by dispensing with regular approval procedures and actively tolerating responsible initiatives and their uses. Mobile gardens, self-built boules courts or improvised reading benches, self-sufficient caravan parks and many other projects show the diversity that arises when administrations use their discretionary powers ([enabling culture](#)) to allow new forms of co-creation of [public space](#).

**Gecekondu at Kotti, Berlin:** Gecekondu is Turkish and means “set up at night”. With their self-built wooden house at Kottbusser Tor, the initiative Kotti & Co draws attention to the displacement of low-income, inner-city residents. Built in 2012 without approval from the building inspector, the autonomously organised neighbourhood centre, which offers free legal advice, a tea room and various events, is informally sanctioned to this day by the administration and politicians. [www.kottiundco.net](http://www.kottiundco.net)



# Transformation

By Markus Egermann

The term transformation is used in many societal sectors and scientific disciplines. This often involves a profound change in societal subsystems such as mobility, energy or food. Of societal interest here is how such a change takes place, how it can be influenced and, if necessary, initiated, accelerated or guided in a certain direction such as an orientation towards the common good.

Such a profound, systemic change does not happen overnight. It takes at least two generations (about twenty-five to fifty years, possibly longer) and is not linear. Rather, it is characterised by different phases (e.g. pre-development, take-off, acceleration, stabilisation) with breaks and leaps.<sup>1</sup> Transformation often occurs when an existing system is put under pressure (e.g. through shocks such as Fukushima, crises such as the coronavirus or long-term trends such as climate change) and the previously dominant ways of thinking, doing and organising of the established system are thereby put to question. At the same time, alternative ways of thinking, doing and organising must be available to replace the previously established procedures. These alternatives will remain almost invisible for a long time and will be tested, discarded or further developed through experiments in niches in parallel to the existing structures. They constitute the starting point for the ways of thinking, doing and organising in the dominant system of the future.<sup>2</sup> What exactly is understood by a system and how it is delimited depends on the respective object of observation and

interest in knowledge. Therefore, global transport systems as well as national energy systems, regional food systems or local ecosystems could be the subject of consideration.

Transformation processes must always be seen as an interplay of several spatial-political levels (local, regional, national, international, global) and sectors (politics and administration, business, science and civil society). They are therefore, very complex and fraught with many uncertainties. This is another reason why there is consensus that transformation processes cannot be steered or even controlled in a narrow sense.<sup>3</sup> However, there are plausible considerations on how such processes can be influenced and guided. In this context, particular importance is attributed to, among other things, systemic views of society, far-reaching visions, transformative experiments to co-produce knowledge, and continuous reflection and reorientation in planning processes. In this way, the “transformative capacity” of cities<sup>4,5</sup> i.e. their ability to orchestrate transformative change, can be increased.

With its infrastructures, institutions, actors and processes, a city can be understood as an (urban) system. Cities are often understood as predestined places for sustainability transformations because the negative impacts of prevailing systems accumulate in them and putting them “under pressure”. (e.g. the fossil fuel-based urban transport system). At the same time, cities are described as the places that possess the creative and innovative potential to develop sustainable alternatives. Nevertheless, within transformation research the role of different cities and regions is comparably understudied and theorised, yet.<sup>6</sup>

If one transfers the findings from transformation research to a common good-oriented urban development and follows the observation that many of the currently domi-

nant ways of thinking, doing and organising in our cities can be characterised as systemically unsustainable<sup>7</sup> and not oriented towards the common good, knowledge about transformation processes becomes of central importance for current and future urban development policy. An open city with experimental spaces for common good -oriented practices has a critical role to play, both physically (spaces and buildings), politically (courage), culturally (failure culture) and procedurally (co-design). Likewise, a changed understanding of the administration's role (e.g. urban planning) as an organiser of co-design processes is necessary. This can open up the scope for action for stakeholders from business, science and civil society to test their knowledge and skills regarding sustainable, common good-oriented ways of thinking, doing and organising and to actively contribute to urban development. The knowledge of these actors should be brought together in transdisciplinary and transformative settings (e.g. reallabs<sup>8</sup>) and further developed within the framework of a joint reflection and learning process. Closely connected to this, new narratives about these alternative ways of thinking, doing and organising in a common good-oriented urban development should emerge and directly be linked to the everyday life of citizens. Ultimately, the fields of action and goals of the common good mission of municipalities should be reconsidered and renegotiated in light of the major societal challenges of the twenty-first century and the approaches that already address this purpose.<sup>9</sup>

Transformation processes as described above can often only be recognised and described as such in retrospect. For example, the transition from horse-drawn carriages to the automobile as the dominant means of transport (1860–1930) can be traced.<sup>10</sup> Based on the findings on past trans-

formation processes, however, patterns of current transformations can also be recognised. For example, since its beginnings in the 1980s/90s, we have experienced a transformation of the energy system from fossil to renewable energy sources, which has accelerated since the turn of the millennium and yet will take additional decades as well as impact other systems (e.g. the mobility and transport system). From the perspective of sustainable urban development, it is important to recognise these and other (e.g. digitalisation) transformative dynamics in cities (and regions) and to actively guide them in the direction of a common good orientation.

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# Urban development contract

## Community spirit for building rights

The urban development contract is a means for the public sector to cooperate with private investors. Its application can help to better achieve the goals of common good-oriented urban development. As a rule, urban development contracts (§ 11 of the Building Code) are characterised by the fact that an investor – usually a private investor – assumes certain costs for preparation and implementation in an urban development project that would otherwise have to be borne by the general public. These are, for example, the costs of developing a plot of land with roads, water and electricity lines or similar. Creating social infrastructures, such as children's day-care centres or schools or a certain proportion of subsidised housing and even compensation for interventions in nature and landscape can also be part of an urban development contract. In return, the municipality creates building rights, for example, by drawing up a development plan.

**SoBoN, Munich:** As a transparent set of rules for the conclusion of urban development contracts and agreements, the Socially Just Land Use (SoBoN) has been an important instrument in Munich's housing policy for over twenty years. Investors must partially co-finance the infrastructure if the value of their land is expected to increase, so that the municipality creates building rights. In addition, they have to provide around thirty per cent discounted housing for new developments.

# Urban return on investment

## Social added value for the city

The concept of urban return on investment does not refer to a business profit from renting or selling a building or land but seeks to aggregate ecological, social and societal **revenue** for the city. Examples of these added values are the provision of affordable housing (**affordability**), the emergence of **third places** in the neighbourhood or the positive urban climate effects of unsealing surfaces. Public housing companies introduced the term to resist the privatisation of additional portfolios. The result of urban yield is a key figure that compares the values created with the costs invested. The calculation is complex and includes indirect and consequential returns in addition to business inflows: These can be savings in favour of the city by taking over tasks that would otherwise have to be borne by the municipality itself. But it can also be revenue generated by the implementation of socio-political goals (e.g. attractiveness of the site). Instead of the term “urban return on investment”, the term “urban value” is also used.

**Measurement criteria of urban return on investment, Degewo, Berlin:** The municipal housing company Degewo developed criteria for measuring urban return on investment in 2006. The following formula was used to calculate the urban return on investment:  $(\text{net revenue} + \text{expenditure on social objectives} + \text{subsequent social returns}) / (\text{capital employed} \times 100)$ . [www.degewo.de](http://www.degewo.de)

# What's next?

## Future starts now!

The future is the time that follows the present. Those who design the future are not mere dreamers. Because by imagining the ideal tomorrow, we recognise where things are going wrong in the here and now. Since time immemorial, we have been developing new scenarios for the future of our cities and our co-existence. Some of these utopias, i.e. ideal concepts of a good co-existence, are unrealistic. But that doesn't matter, because only what touches people emotionally will have the power to move them to change. The development of alternative futures should therefore motivate people to act in the here and now to set the right course for the future. Throughout Germany, there are numerous initiatives demonstrating what it looks like when a project does not focus on exploitative economic interests, but on the community. The future of the common good-oriented city has already begun.

**InspirationsQUELLE, Nuremberg:** InspirationsQUELLE is an initiative that has presented a possible vision of the future of the former Quelle mail-order building in 2030 on a poster/website: a successful mix of commercial, municipal and non-commercial projects that work together on the challenges of the twenty-first century with everyday and practice-oriented approaches. The InspirationsQUELLE seeks to be a courage-maker, instigator and, above all, a playful means of expression. [www.heterotopia.blog](http://www.heterotopia.blog)

**Future archive – stories of success:** futurzwei's future archive collects stories of people changing their world by implementing ideas about other forms of producing, doing business, entertaining, etc. They create laboratories and experimental spaces of a society fit for future generations. They do the unexpected because they find it meaningful. In all of this, knowledge is generated that we will need in the future. The Future Archive recommends that readers pass on everything they read there and, even better, to copy it.  
[www.futurzwei.org/zukunftsarchiv](http://www.futurzwei.org/zukunftsarchiv)



# Imprint

With the National Urban Development Policy, the federal government, the federal states and the municipalities offer a platform for integrated urban development in Germany. This glossary is the result of a collaborative process of collecting and editing terms in which stakeholders from across Germany participated in as part of a networking event from the National Urban Development. It aims to establish a shared vocabulary for negotiating the common good in urban development.

Interested initiatives can register for the newsletter and information on further networking events at  
[nationale-stadtentwicklungs-politik@bbr.bund.de](mailto:nationale-stadtentwicklungs-politik@bbr.bund.de)

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The common good is the focus of all efforts to achieve democratic and equitable urban development. At the same time, the “common good” is a difficult concept to grasp. However, it is in this vagueness that there is also an opportunity to enter into dialogue with each other. This glossary reflects on what the common good means and aims to establish a shared vocabulary for negotiating the common good in urban development.