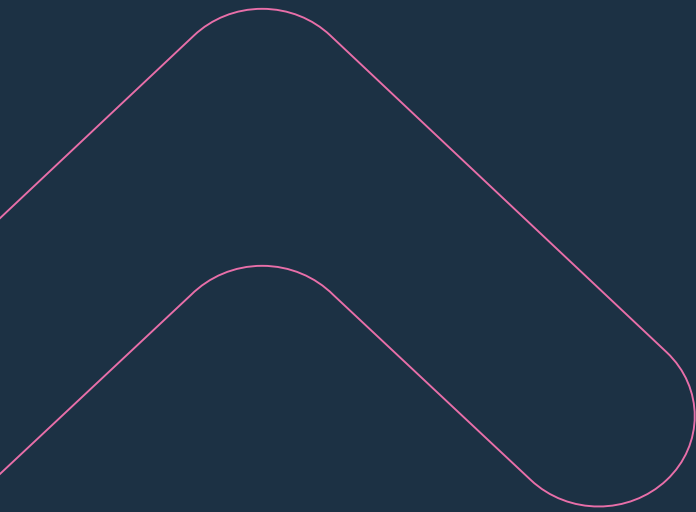




European Capital
of Democracy

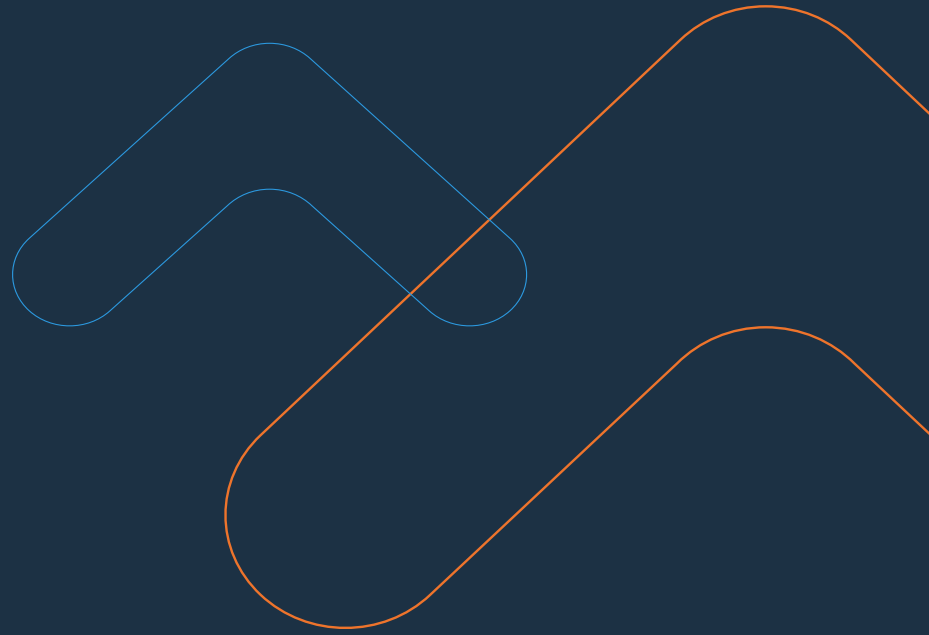


ECOD APPLICATION

Leipzig

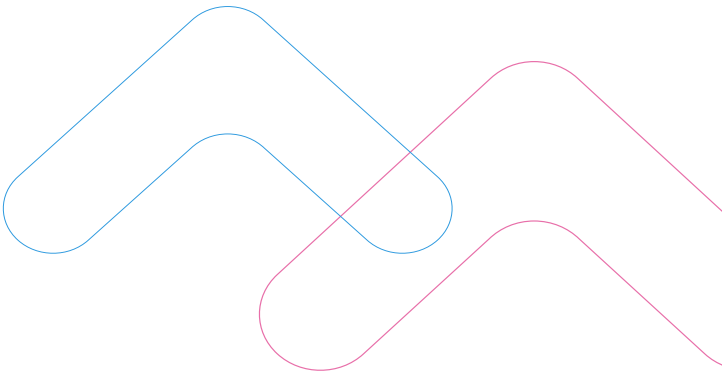
November 2023

Supporting Documents



- [ECoD Compliance Guidelines](#)
- [ECoD Confidentiality Agreement](#)
- [ECoD Data Processing Agreement](#)
- [ECoD Data Security Guidelines](#)
- [Council resolution for participation](#)

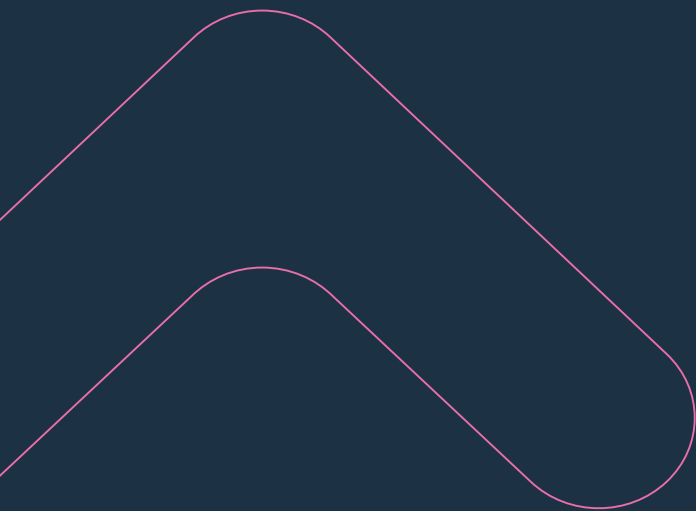
Content



Project Idea 3 – Smart City Lab Leipzig 37

ECOD APPLICATION LEIPZIG

Mission Statement



Mission Statement

Our Answer to a “Crisis of Democracy”? More Democracy!

Teaser

As the City of the Peaceful Revolution and of the workers and women’s rights movement, Leipzig is shaped by an active civil society. Facing multiple crises and the growth of political, even democratic disenchantment, populism and sense of insecurity, we need to live and strengthen our local democracy. As a European, cosmopolitan and open city, our answer to a crisis of democracy is: more democracy!

Summary

The biggest challenges for our democracy are not conspiracies or extremists. It is part of the democratic system to have adversaries – it is even one of its key features. The biggest challenge for our democracy is ever larger groups of people who seem to have lost interest in democracy. Therefore, we must make it our task to reverse this trend. To do so, we need to train democratic dialogue: to enter into processes of negotiation with people of different opinions.

As the City of the Peaceful Revolution, Leipzig is shaped by an active civil society and a vivid democratic process. We actively encourage citizen engagement by having installed neighbourhood and district councils and budgeting, having integrated the Youth Parliament into the city councils session, having enhanced public consultations and forms of direct dialogue. Citizen’s neighbourhood festivals are another element to strengthen community involvement and local democracy. To create room for exchange we foster “third spaces”: In our cultural facilities, we provide rooms to be freely used by groups or single persons away from gainful employment and private environments. Testing and evaluating new formats like citizens’ assemblies, digital and gaming tools such as on-line platforms, as well as a Smart City Lab we strive to enable broader participation and gather diverse perspectives, searching to include those, who usually remain silent and do hardly participate.

To enable a fair dialogue, we increase transparency: Providing accessible and comprehensive information about government activities, policies and projects ensures transparency in decision-making processes. The “Year of Democracy” set a special focus hereon in 2018. Through means as the CUT Project (<https://www.connectedurbantwins.de/en/>), we establish mechanisms for public access to government data and encourage proactive disclosure of information. The great support from the people of Leipzig in times of municipal challenges, such as the care of arriving Ukrainian refugees, shows that our

Mission Statement

Summary

citizens want to engage and stand together in times of need. Together with our citizens, we will therefore make our city crisis-proof and develop a Blackout-Management-Plan. Making our citizens part of the concept of how our city will act in a crisis scenario, we will increase social cohesion and build up resilience. Inspired by our rich history of democratic and civil rights activism, we will strengthen local democracy and democratic values by a large number of current and future projects. Leipzig's successful transition to a democratic society can serve as a model for other cities and regions striving for democracy.

By displaying our experiences and achievements while addressing the challenges we are facing, Leipzig can contribute to strengthening democratic values, institutions and practices throughout Europe, foster European integration and promote cultural diversity and innovation.

Democratic Ambitions

Our response to a „crisis of democracy“ is more democracy! It is in our cities and communities where we can rebuild trust in democratic institutions. Understanding democracy as more than a mere obligation to vote every few years, we emphasize dialogue, participation, and addressing the issues that shape society. Although sometimes exhausting and slow, only democratic processes can achieve long-term success and bring about the structural changes our societies require to confront present challenges.

To enhance participation and dialogue, we continually explore new approaches by creating and evaluating novel forms of involvement for key city issues. We strengthen local civil society and support youth engagement. Collaborating with civil society organizations, community groups, and grassroots initiatives, we provide funding, resources, and training to actively involve them in the democratic process and contribute to local governance. As part of the CUT-Project Network, we embrace digital innovation, leveraging technology to augment citizen participation, improve service delivery, and enhance transparency. Our digital platforms facilitate public consultations, allowing citizens to contribute their ideas. Additionally, we extend our commitment to democracy to urban planning. At the historical site Matthäikirchhof, the birthplace of Leipzig and former seat of the GDR state security, we plan to establish a unique Campus of Democracy, bringing together museums, archives, and civil society. This campus will attract global visitors while fostering new forms of local civic participation and cultural life.

We promote interaction between the city and suburban neighbourhoods to empower local communities. Our citizen survey on democracy reveals diminishing support for democratic values and interest in local politics in suburban neighbourhoods.

Mission Statement

Democratic Ambitions

Consequently, we focus on implementing projects and encouraging participation in these neighbourhoods to foster stronger community networks. Our goal is to motivate residents to actively shape local policies, and services that directly impacts their communities.

Facing local and global crises such as war, refugee influx, climate change, and high energy prices, we strive to make our city crisis-resistant together. In times of crisis, uncertainty and fear grow, providing fertile ground for conspiracies and extremist ideologies. When people feel excluded from the decision-making process, they tend to feel powerless and distrust politicians' ability to make sound choices. However, recent support for Ukrainian refugees in Leipzig demonstrates people's willingness to engage and stand together in times of need. Therefore, collaborating with our citizens, we will develop a Blackout-Management-Plan, ensuring their input on how our city should act in a crisis scenario. Together, we will enhance preparedness, foster social cohesion, and create a sense of security and trust in our collective strength in times of uncertainty.

Achieved Successes

In October 1989, a broad alliance of opposition groups, environmental organizations and churches brought tens of thousands onto the streets of Leipzig, starting the Peaceful Revolution that led into the end of the GDR and German Reunification. In Leipzig, world history was made. Proud of the heritage of the Peaceful Revolution, each year the people of Leipzig actively cultivate this remembrance in the "Lichtfest" (Festival of Lights: <https://www.lichtfest.leipziger-freiheit.de/home.html>) all over the city. Moreover, the "Leipziger Freiheits- und Einheitsdenkmal" (Leipzig Monument to Liberty and Unity) will be realized including a broad participation process to keep the force of those people standing up for democratic values alive.

After the German reunification, Leipzig went through a challenging time of depression and decline, marked by high unemployment and dramatic population loss. A policy fostering collaboration and partnerships between public, private, and civil society sectors facilitated coordinated efforts in urban planning, economic development, and community engagement and contributed to Leipzig's revitalization since the early 2000s. Today, the city has grown again to over 625,000 inhabitants, disposes of a dynamic cultural life and a stable economy and is one of the fastest growing and most popular cities in Germany. This multi-stakeholder approach and the importance of civil actors is still key to understanding Leipzig: For people who want to get involved, there are also countless associations and institutions that are socially active. The city helps and advises people in the city office and online who want to volunteer.

Mission Statement

Achieved Successes

There are also over 70 committees and advisory boards in which city councillors and experts are heard on specialist topics such as urban planning or youth welfare. To strengthen our vivid culture of strong civil activism and alliances, from 2024 the city biennially will award the "Robert-Blum-Price of Democracy" as a reward to a person of the public for extraordinary commitment to civil disclosure, democracy and peaceful change.

Looking at our very active civil society, we have to face the fact, that also in Leipzig this active group is only parts of the society in total. To meet this challenge, Leipzig developed a functioning structure of local neighbourhood councils and bodies and initiated citizens' and neighbourhood budgets. Since 2015, the Leipzig Youth Parliament is elected to represent our city's young people towards Municipality and in the city council. To get a broader range of opinion, we initiated a citizens' assembly on a key question: the common good in Leipzig. A diverse group of people discussed and passed a letter of recommendations to the city council for further discussion. Linking the assembly to regular structures, we strengthened political responsiveness and political trust and integrated a broader range of perspective.

Future Challenges

The people of Leipzig who courageously took to the streets in fall 1989 initiated a democratic transition through peaceful demonstrations. However, the transition after 1989 and the radical change of the political, social, economic and cultural life brought dramatic challenges for every family in Leipzig and led to an ambivalent view of those developments.

While there was freedom of choice, of speech and the right to travel on the one hand, many lost their jobs, their everyday life, but also their friends and family and with them their identity. Much has healed over time, but the frustration and distrust towards political institutions run deep. The challenges we face are immense and complex: energy supply, securing prosperity, climate catastrophe, environmental protection, the ongoing work against fake news and conspiracy telling – these are also important issues for our city. Local surveys state that also in Leipzig trust in political institutions diminishes while at the same time, people want to get involved more.

We need to make democracy and its benefits more visible. Not only politicians and administrators, but also each and every citizen puts democratic decisions into practice. In Leipzig, we create this link with our neighbourhood budgets to bring about a perceptible connection between residents ideas, local democratic decision processes and visible results. As a city administration, we are only beginning to discover and use the benefits of digitalization not only for civil services but also for supporting democracy and participation. We need to learn how to position ourselves digitally and thus easily accessible for our citizens without neglecting cyber security or getting lost of those who are not yet part of the digital world.



Mission Statement



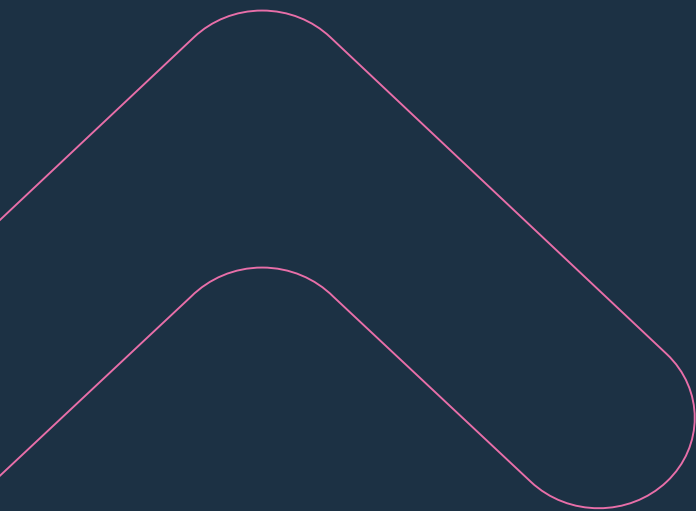
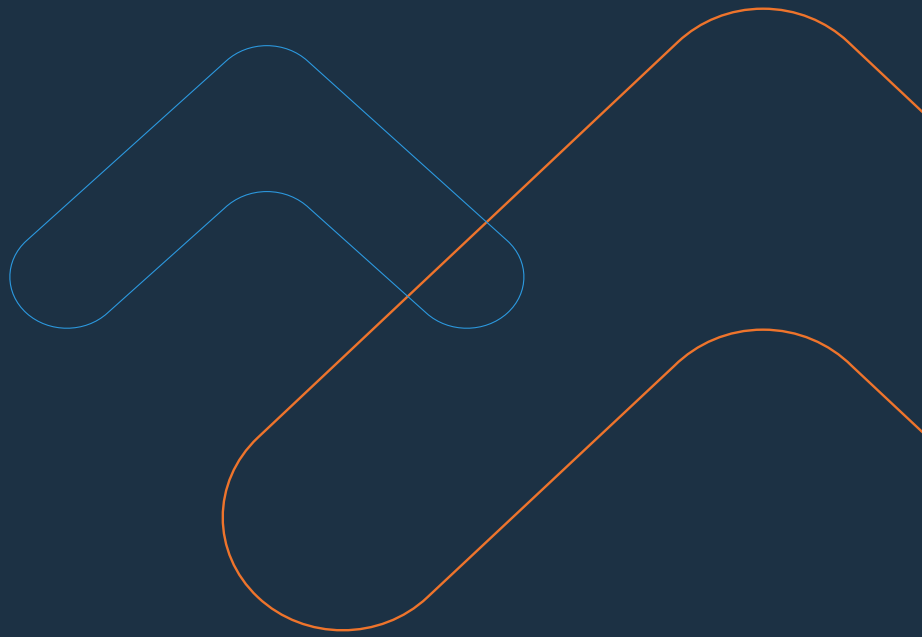
Future Challenges

We see these challenges as chances: chances to involve people more, listen more, explain actions more transparently and convince the people of Leipzig to participate. We rely on dialogue between the population, politics and administration. It is hard to shape the future together if we disagree about the past. That is why we need to combine political education, historical reflections, active remembrance and new approaches of civil engagement to meet the topics of the future. The best way to do this is through close exchange – with the people of Leipzig and our neighboring European cities.

Leipzig's successful transition to a democratic society can serve as a model for other cities and regions striving for democracy. With our democratic heritage and many ongoing democracy projects, we feel a strong European responsibility. Therefore, Leipzig is also an active member in the EURO CITIES network. Currently presiding EURO CITIES, our engagement for freedom and democracy would perfectly twine with the ECoD title.

ECOD APPLICATION LEIPZIG

Projects



Leipzig – Project 1

BEST PRACTICE | PERMANENT

[HTTPS://JUGENDPARLAMENT.LEIPZIG.DE/](https://jugendparlament.leipzig.de/)

Youth Parliament Leipzig

Brief Description

The Leipzig Youth Parliament, also known as the „Jugendparlament Leipzig or short JuPa“ is a representative body that provides a platform for young individuals in Leipzig to actively participate in local decision-making processes. It serves as a democratic institution designed to engage youth, typically between the ages of 14 and 21, in shaping policies and initiatives that directly affect them and their community. The JuPa consists of 20 young representatives, directly elected by the young Leipzig citizens. Through the working committees and groups, all young people interested in participating in local politics can get engaged.

Detailed Description

The idea was born by a group of young people, supported by a civil society organisation in 2011. After years of planning and negotiations, the parliament was founded and first official elections were held in 2015. Since then, elections have taken place every two years.

The Youth Parliament aims to promote civic education and empower young people to become active citizens. It serves as a bridge between young individuals and local authorities, facilitating meaningful dialogue and collaboration. Through their involvement in the Youth Parliament, young people have the opportunity to voice their opinions, concerns, and ideas, allowing them to contribute to the development of Leipzig. The structure of the Leipzig Youth Parliament is modeled after a parliamentary system, mirroring the principles and procedures of democratic governance. Members of the Youth Parliament are elected through a democratic voting process, where young individuals have the chance to choose representatives who will advocate for their interests. The Youth Parliament holds regular meetings, providing a space for discussions, debates, and the exchange of ideas. Members have the opportunity to propose initiatives, draft resolutions, and work together to address key issues affecting youth in Leipzig. These initiatives can cover a wide range of topics, such as education, environment, social justice, cultural activities, and more.

Leipzig – Project 1

Detailed Description

The Youth Parliament actively collaborates with local authorities, policymakers, and organizations to ensure that the voices of young people are heard and considered in decision-making processes. It provides recommendations, input, and feedback on relevant policies and initiatives, fostering a stronger connection between the youth and the local government.

It successfully initiated a range of council resolutions addressing important issues, such as the implementation of a complaint management system in accommodation facilities for asylum seekers, support for young people in stationary youth accommodation facilities, construction of safe bike lanes or declaring a status of climate emergency for Leipzig to name only a few.

In addition to its role as an advocacy platform, the Leipzig Youth Parliament also focuses on promoting civic education and youth participation. It organizes workshops, training sessions, and educational programs to empower young individuals with knowledge and skills related to democracy, leadership, public speaking, and teamwork.

Overall, the Leipzig Youth Parliament serves as an important avenue for young individuals in Leipzig to engage in civic life, learn about democratic processes, and contribute to the development of their community. It plays a crucial role in empowering youth, amplifying their voices, and fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility towards their city.

Contribution

The project actively addresses young people to become part of the local democratic system. It works towards a more diverse, more inclusive society. Having young people represented in all aspects of local policy making, enriches discussions, enlarges perspectives and fosters negotiations processes. Young people are part of our society and as such, they should have the means to partake in the way we shape it.

Target Groups

The project focuses young people as the main actors. As active members of the local democratic system, these members affect policy making. It therefore indirectly targets the city as a whole. The JuPa members foster international exchange to young people from other countries. The project can well be applied in other regions.

Leipzig – Project 1

Collaboration

The JuPa continuously works on becoming more inclusive. The city administration supports this by providing a colleague as pedagogic support for the young people as well as barrier free rooms. The homepage has a reading function and if young people with handicap wish to participate in the sessions all kinds of support can be applied for. The young people as well as the administrative staff are in good contact with surrounding regions. However, the project only focuses young people in Leipzig.

Communication

The project is communicated via the municipality's usual channels (website, social media, press statements). The JuPa members themselves built their own website and social media channels (see instagram @jupaleipzig). Information on the project and how to participate is also regularly sent to schools. Members of the JuPa can be part of delegations if the city pays a visit to a befriended city or attends a conference - within Germany and abroad.

Project Setup

Within the city administration mainly the office for municipal affairs focusing on the administrative / internal tasks as well as the office for democracy focusing on the pedagogic accompaniment are charged with supporting the JuPa. During election years, like for every other election, the office for statistics and elections as well as the communications office join the team. In addition to this administrative background, the JuPa has four main sections to manage its daily workload: Firstly, the Parliament itself, with all 20 elected representatives. Out of this circle, a group of spokespersons is elected. The parliamentary work is prepared in working bodies and committees on different topics. To connect the youth parliament also legally to the city council there furthermore is a youth advisory board, in which members of the city council are represented alongside the youth parliament representatives. The spokespersons of the board take part in the city council sessions.

Description

The initiative to the project resulted from a civil initiative. The Youth Parliament itself keeps a close contact to civil society organisations and try to actively include their positions. They are not, however, involved in operation of the project.

Leipzig – Project 1

Budget

Operating Costs	staff members within the administration to support	4,000€
Communication Costs	young take over communication, elections are supported by the city, project as a whole is communicated via city platforms	2,500€
Total Budget		6,500€

Funding

N/A

Programme Year Integration

The JuPa will be invited to be part of the preparation as well as the operation of the programme year. The work of the parliament will be displayed in events and the campaign during the year and its members and their positions will deliver valuable input in framing the programme year. The year also offers a great chance to connect our JuPa members even more internationally and strengthen European youth networking.

Democracy Dimension

Empowerment

Leipzig – Project 2

EVENT | PERMANENT

[HTTPS://WWW.LEIPZIG.DE/BAUEN-UND-WOHNEN/FOERDERGEBIETE/MOCKAU/INTIGRA-REALISIERTE-PROJEKTE-IN-MOCKAU](https://www.leipzig.de/bauen-und-wohnen/foerdergebiete/mockau/intigra-realisierte-projekte-in-mockau)

Colourful Mockau Summer – a Meeting Place for Everyone

Brief Description

The „Colourful Mockau Summer“ is a festival in the district of Mockau, a district with many challenges. In 2023, it has been organised for the fifth year in a row by approx. 30 institutions and operators. The event is organised by the City of Leipzig together with the district-related network INTIGRA. The objective is creating a cross-generational and cross-cultural meeting point to supplement the locally lacking cultural offers. The event is strengthening social-cultural offers, bringing in temporary offers to Mockau and is aiming to stabilise said offers in the long term in the district. The programme includes cultural and artistic offers (live music, exhibitions, workshops), community strengthening and identity of the district (community breakfast, exploration of the district), a day across schools in the district (football tournament, creative offers, political education) and participation, as well as information to relevant topics (flight and migration, district development).

Detailed Description

The “Colourful Mockau Summer” is a district festival in the district Leipzig-Mockau. It will take place for the sixth year in a row in 2023 for four days (Friday to Monday). It is organised by approx. 30 institutions and operators. The concept for the “Bunte Mockauer Sommer” was created in 2018 within the INTIGRA network which combines the efforts and offers of different municipal offices, social organisations, schools, library, associations, Jobcenter Leipzig and political representatives for the district of Mockau. The main objective of the festival is to create a low-threshold meeting place for all residents of Mockau which was lacking so far. The few already existing socio-cultural and informative offers create the framework for facilitating contact and exchange between neighbours as well as between different population groups. At the same time, already existing offers of numerous institutions and association from this community are made more widely known and new offers are created by the participants. In addition, the event fosters social dialogue and participation culture by offering a platform for participation formats and offers taking up socially relevant topics.

Leipzig – Project 2

Detailed Description

The continuity of the event strengthens and enable local actors to take on more tasks and by doing so assume ownership for the “Bunte Mockauer Sommer” in a medium-term process. This promising trend is emerging more and more. The target groups are children and adolescents, families, senior citizens and the inhabitants in their entirety regardless of their social or educational status, migrant background, age, religion, etc. Children and adolescents are addressed by the day across schools as well as by creative and cultural offers (e.g. theatre offers, Mini workshops, interactive exhibitions). Due to constructions works on the old venue of the “Bunter Mockauer Sommer” which started in 2022, the event moved to another open area in the district where it can profit from the proximity to the construction playground Fuxbau opened in 2022 (joint activities, temporary interlocking of both areas). The area is provided at no cost for the duration of the district festival by the “Leipziger Wohnungs- und Baugesellschaft (LWB) (municipal housing company). Many other actors do their part by providing their time and material resources. The milestones for implementing the event are organisational planning, public relations and development of the event programme as well as reflection and evaluation. The event is funded from various sources and depends on municipal funding. The leading Department of Residence, Building and Urban Development uses city funds and subsidies from the Urban Development Support programme, the cultural department supports the event with city funds and the participating actors’ own contributions are another important part in financing the event. Mockau is defined as a focus area for integrated urban development in the updated integrated urban development approach (INSEK). The district festival contributes significantly to the goals defined in the INSEK for “Social issues, education and culture”. In February 2022, an urban development concept (STEK) for the district of Mockau 2030+ was resolved and it also includes promoting cultural offers located nearby, stimulating the district with mobile and temporary offer as well as anchoring and linking social, (inter-) cultural and social cultural offers.

Contribution

The Mockau Colourful Summer creates a meeting platform for a highly diverse group of people in a in a focus district with many challenges. The project will also take part during the programme year. It serves as a beacon for community work, as it was mainly created by the people of the neighbourhood, who, working closely together with the city administration, manage to bring people together. The festival and the networks formed around it, create a basis for further communication, engagements and project planning.

Target Groups

The project targets all the districts’ residents, regardless of the social or educational status, migrant background, age, religion, etc. Selected offers target (young) adults and/or senior citizens especially.

Leipzig – Project 2

Target Groups

Children and adolescents are addressed by the day across schools as well as by creative and cultural offers. In total, there are about 1,500 attendees. The project profited from the experiences with city workshops in Ukraine and can be implemented in other regions.

Collaboration

To make sure it is an inclusive and fair project, all inhabitants are offered a low-threshold access. The event offers are at no cost in order to reduce financial barriers and help everybody to participate. In addition, variety and inclusivity are a focal point during the planning process. A number of cultural, musical and intergenerational offers are prepared to cover the most interests and needs. This makes people from different backgrounds and ages feel invited and helps them participate. Cooperating with different actors and institutions from the INTIGRA-network (e.g. schools, library, associations, social institutions, departments, political representatives) offers a wide participation and inclusion of different perspectives. The project is implemented in the Mockau district which is defined as a focus point for urban development in the integrated urban development approach "Leipzig 2030" due to its socio-economic challenges.

Communication

The project is communicated analogously and digitally. Leaflets and posters are distributed two months out. Two weeks before the event, leaflets with the detailed programme are distributed in district institutions and to approx. 2,000 surrounding households. The social media channels of quarter management INTIGRA share regular updates and institutions within the INTIGRA network also share information on their own channels. Event announcements are printed in the citywide magazine "Kreuzer" and in the local magazine. Posters on site fences and on prominent places in the city promote the event as well. In addition, the event is advertised in different topical or district-related networks. The visitor number and feedback are collected for monitoring and evaluation. Surveys and evaluations in the INTIGRA network are used to determine actor satisfaction and potential for improvement. Analysing social media activities as likes, comments and share measure the outreach and response.

Project Setup

The project is implemented by the INTIGRA network. The project team consists of employees of the Department of Residence, Building and Urban Development and of the quarter management INTIGRA+. The Department of Residence, Building and Urban Development is leading the project. The office partnership Gauß & Volkmann (bgh.) in their role as supporter of INTIGRA+ coordinates the preparation of the event and the application for subsidies. The INTIGRA network includes different municipal departments (e.g. Public Health, Migration/Integration), social institutions, schools, library, associati-

Leipzig – Project 2

Project Setup

ons, Jobcenter Leipzig and political representatives. The actors of the INTIGRA network are responsible for the preparation of their own offers and help with finding supporting programme points, acquiring partners, public relations and assembly and dismantling.

Description

It is a project mainly supported by civil society actors, see project setup.

Budget

Planning Costs	approx. 250 working hours local actors	7,000€
Operating Costs	Costs for operating the festival	13,500€
Communication Costs	Advertisement	1,500€
Total Budget		22,000€

Funding

N/A

Programme Year Integration

The project will also take part during the programme year. As a beacon of community work in a very challenged district, it will provide the chance for international exchange.

Democracy Dimension

Participation

Leipzig – Project 3

BEST PRACTICE | PERMANENT

[HTTPS://HARDWAREFORFUTURE.DE/](https://hardwareforfuture.de/)

HARDWARE FOR FUTURE (H4F)

Brief Description

Hardware for Future enables kids and family members with economically disadvantaged to have their own IT-devices for free to e.g. take part in homeschooling or other school activities that require hardware. On the other side unused but functional IT hardware is reused as long as possible to foster the concept of circular economy and Leipzig's ambition to become a Zero-Waste City.

Detailed Description

In 2019 the City of Leipzig endorsed the so-called „Climate Emergency“ (Klimanotstand) incl. a set of immediate measures to reduce GHG emissions significantly. One of the measures was „Hardware for Future“ to foster the concept of circular economy by collecting, repairing and redistribution of outdated/ un-used IT-hardware. Especially children and students coming from a difficult social background should benefit from the redistribution. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as of March 2020, all children and parents had to cope with the demands of home schooling resulting from school closures. Unequal (learning) conditions for students from economically disadvantaged families intensified and became more evident in this situation. A decisive challenge was often the lack of a computer (of one's own).

Those challenges are not unique to Leipzig's citizens but can be found in various contexts. This is why there are already numerous projects in Germany that follow the approach of Hardware for Future (see here: <https://heyalter.com/>).

The project is connected to participation, sustainability and technology.

Contribution

The project provides people with the means to partake digitally and therefore reduces barriers as it helps to reach people who are otherwise restricted from participating. It furthermore adds to the aim to increase sustainability and awareness for the advantages of digitalization.

Leipzig – Project 3

Target Groups

Hardware for Future enables kids and family members with economically disadvantaged to have their own IT-devices for free. The idea is and can be applied in other countries or regions, see: <https://heyalter.com/>

Collaboration

Initially, the recipients of the donations were mainly students from schools in socially deprived areas. Technology donations continue to go to Leipzig families who have immigrated. In 2021, there was a cooperation with NGO Caritas and the hardware was distributed via their own family (neighbourhood) centers around town. An additional spending focus in 2022 was families (e.g., from Arab countries) who are taking language courses and trying to meet the requirements for work. Since March 2022, H4F has also been providing assistance to people coming to Leipzig from Ukraine as part of the computer transfer program. In general, the demand (over 8,800 individual requests as of 03/2023) exceeds the number of donated devices (approximately 2,750 devices as of 03/2023) leading to over 2,500 handed out devices (current figures can be found here: <https://hardwareforfuture.de/>). In 2022, the project received the Special Prize of the state-owned Saxon Digital Award.

Communication

We communicate the project via crossmedial communication as well as directly in schools since March 2020.

Project Setup

The association dezentrale e.V. organizes the entire request, processing, and issuing process around the donation technology. The Digital City unit supports the association's activities with funding and by coordinating with the project's other partners. From the very beginning, the Media Education Center/Office for Schools) and Lecos GmbH (IT service provider of the city of Leipzig) have been involved as technology sponsors and partners. The offer to receive refurbished PCs and notebooks was communicated to the schools by the MPZ/Office for Schools. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in summer 2021 to ensure the continuation of the project. The so-called alliance of the willing consists of Heiko Rosenthal as patron, mayor and councillor for the environment, climate, order and sports, the association dezentrale e.V., the Digital City unit of the city of Leipzig, the Media Education Center in the Department of Schools and Digitization, and Lecos GmbH.

Description

See project setup.

Leipzig – Project 3

Budget

Operating Costs

Costs cannot be displayed in separatedly. By the named amount, als costs (planning, communication, operation as well as planned formats during the programme year) are covered.

90,000€

Total Budget

90,000€

Funding

N/A

Programme Year Integration

In the program year of ECoD 2025 in Leipzig, we will organize an H4F community event with courses in coding, hackathons and lectures on digital technologies and digital rights for citizens in Leipzig.

Democracy Dimension

Technology

Leipzig – Project 4

TOOL | ONE-OFF | 20.04.2023 - 31.03.2024

[HTTPS://WWW.LEIPZIG.DE/NEWS/NEWS/BETEILIGUNGSRAT-GEMEINWOHL-ERSTMALS-STARTET-EIN-AUFSUCHENDES-LOSVERFAHREN-IN-LEIPZIG](https://www.leipzig.de/news/news/beteiligungsrat-gemeinwohl-erstmal-startet-ein-aufsuchendes-lotverfahren-in-leipzig)

Citizens Assembly: “Leipzig Participation Council on Common Good”

Brief Description

The “Participation Council on Common Good” was the first citizens’ assembly commissioned by the city council of Leipzig. Among the 50 participants were 30 adults drawn by lot from the resident register and 20 students from different schools. In four meetings, they discussed the question how civic involvement for the common good could be enhanced and promoted. The assembly worked on recommendations towards the city council. In order to make the process as transparent and credible as possible, the city council had also passed a project-related charter, giving the speaking right to the participants during a public sitting of the city council and made sure that there would be a report about the further utilization of the citizens’ recommendations.

Detailed Description

The citizens’ assembly “Participation Council on Common Good” is the first of its kind to be commissioned by the city council, decided by the City council on 20th April 2023. 50 participants discussed together how civic involvement for the common good could be enhanced and promoted. The result was a catalogue of recommendations towards the elected representatives. The recommendations will be presented publicly in a session of the city council. There will furthermore be a report about the utilization of the citizens’ recommendations.

Lot from the residents register recruited the adult participants for the “Participation Council on Common Good”. The experience of other cities and assemblies shows, however, that around 90 % of people who are invited do not respond or register for citizens’ assemblies. This is why we extended the written invitation with personal visits in case people did not respond to the letter. In doing so, we could not only motivate more people to participate but we also learned a lot about reasons for the lack of participation or response of people. The teenage participants were recruited through the cooperation with different local schools from different school forms all over the city. Some of the schools also applied the lottery as a recruitment measure to active a diverse group of people. The citizens’ assembly took place at four different wheelchair accessible places in the city of Leipzig.

Leipzig – Project 4

Detailed Description

From the beginning, support measures like translation, child care or driving service were offered and a relevant number of participants needed the support in order to participate at all (e.g. translation to/from German sign language). Professional facilitators guided the discussions in all sessions. A variety of methods was used to make the discussions as interesting and inclusive as possible.

The participants discussed the issue of common good and the civic involvement for common good in particular. They collected resources and barriers for getting involved from different experiential backgrounds. The participants learned about activities to enable and promote civic involvement for common good that are already there on the part of the public administration as well as civil society organizations. They carved out relevant lacks of information concerning those activities. The participants learned about research on common good and discussed the question what civic involvement could or should contribute to common good. They also discussed the distribution of responsibility between inhabitants, politics, administration, companies, media, etc. Based on all that, the participants formulated recommendations towards the senior major and the city council how to promote civic involvement for common good in Leipzig.

Contribution

The “Participation Council on Common Good” contributes to the mission statement because of its topic and its form. The issue of common good and the scope of action for different actors is a key issue for a sustainable and democratic future in the growing city that benefits the many and not only some. As a form of participation, citizens’ assemblies have the potential to strengthen representative democracy and foster democratic culture in society. Particular features of the project are: the charter making the participation transparent and reliable; the recruitment by lottery and by personal visit and thus reducing self-selection; the equal participation of youth and adults together as well as extensive reduction of participation barriers. The experiences gained during this project will become the basis for developing our next projects, also regarding the programme year. During the year, the results of the first assembly and their implementation will be publicly discussed.

Target Groups

The project targeted a diverse group of adults and young people from all over town. though only 50 people participated, connecting the project to the city council, it affects the city as a whole. Citizens’ assembly as a format is definitely applicable in others contexts. The “Participation Council on Common Good” can also be applied to other contexts as the issue of finding democratic ways for a sustainable future for all are important all over the globe.

Leipzig – Project 4

Collaboration

In conducting the “Participation Council on Common Good” we put an extra effort in reducing barriers of different kind in all phases of the citizens’ assembly. This enabled many people to participate who could not have done so otherwise, e.g. because of language barriers or care work. We used a diverse range of methods to promote different ways of expression to enable all participants to take part in the process. We reached participants from all but one districts of Leipzig (this was partly due to the random sample and the different numbers of invited persons per district). We conducted the citizens’ assembly in different districts and types of locations – in the centre and more in the periphery – in order to make it a citywide project and not focus on the city centre. Surrounding areas of Leipzig were not addressed or involved.

Communication

From the session of the city council in which the “Participation Council on Common Good” was decided in April 2023 to the public presentation of the recommendations in September 2023, there were and will be regular media posts on the city website and social media channels. There was a press conference with the minister of state from Saxony as well as the major of Leipzig responsible for democracy before the start of the citizens’ assembly. There will be different reports on the project based on interviews with the team of the Department as well as the participants by different media channels. There will be an external evaluation of the project’s impact. The evaluation contains an anonymous survey for the participants from the University of Leipzig as well as the observation by an external evaluator during meetings of the citizens’ assembly.

Project Setup

The project was conducted by the staff of the Department for Democracy and Social Cohesion. Colleagues from other departments of the public administration supported the project during the preparation phase (e.g. working group inclusion) and when giving the participants an overview about existing activities for promoting civic involvement for the common good. Some colleagues supported the project as facilitators of working groups during the meetings. For facilitation as well as process design, we cooperated with freelance facilitators from Leipzig. The Round Table on Common Good was another external partner in the project, as initiator of the “Participation Council on Common Good” as well as a platform for the participants to present and exchange with local leaders about their recommendations.

Description

The public administration of Leipzig currently works on a strategy for civic involvement. The development of the strategy involves two pillars: the needs assessment from within the public administration as well as from the civil society. For the latter, civil society organizations are in charge.

Leipzig – Project 4

Description

The recommendations of the “Participation Council on Common Good” hold ready important insights and ideas for the promotion of civic involvement. Thus, there will be an intensive exchange between the civil society organizations and representatives from the citizens’ assembly to make sure that the work of the assembly is effective and influences citywide strategies for civic involvement.

Budget

Operating Cost	the Project was planned by the officedemocracy with no extra budget. Besides costs for personell support (external moderation) the biggest financial block was spent on barrier reduction.	59,000€
Total Budget		59,000€

Funding

The office for democracy and social cohesion could successfully raise funds from a funding programme from the federal state of Saxony to support the project with 30.000 € (already included in the budget provided above).

Programme Year Integration

The evaluation of the project, as well es the results and their implementation will be publicly discussed during the programme year. We will take this pilot go into the exchange with ourt European partners, on how a participation method based on lottery can used in a way to support representative local democracy.

Democracy Dimension

Empowerment

Leipzig – Project 5

INFORMATION CAMPAIGN | ONE-OFF | 17.05.2018 - 14.03.2019

[URL: HTTPS://WWW.LEIPZIG.DE/BUERGERSERVICE-UND-VERWALTUNG/BUERGERBETEILIGUNG-UND-EINFLUSSNAHME/LEIPZIG-WEITER-DENKEN/BETEILIGEN/JAHR-DER-DEMOKRATIE](https://www.leipzig.de/buergerservice-und-verwaltung/buergerbeteiligung-und-einflussnahme/leipzig-weiter-denken/beteiligen/jahr-der-demokratie)

[HTTPS://STATIC.LEIPZIG.DE/FILEADMIN/MEDIENDATENBANK/DEMOKRATIE-LEIPZIG-DE/DU_WIR_LEIPZIG/DOWNLOADS/DEMOKRATIEBROSCHURE-WEB.PDF](https://static.leipzig.de/fileadmin/mediendatenbank/demokratie-leipzig-de/du_wir_leipzig/downloads/demokratiebroschure-web.pdf)

Year of Democracy 2018 – You.We.Leipzig.

Brief Description

To promote democratic values and engagement, Leipzig initiated a „Year of Democracy“ in 2018. The objective was to raise awareness about existing democratic processes, to encourage new ideas for a harmonious society and foster local democratic engagement. 28 projects from diverse fields were supported, including sports, culture, and social issues. Associations and initiatives implemented these projects to foster democratic interaction. Local political institutions also played a significant role. Leipzig’s efforts were recognized as a finalist for „The Innovation Politics Award 2019.“

Detailed Description

Based on a resolution of the Leipzig City Council, the aim for the thematic year was to strengthen democratic values in general and to raise awareness for existing options for participating in local democracy in Leipzig. In October 2016, the city council decided for the year of democracy. In June and August of 2017, two preparation meetings took place during which actors of city politics and urban society discussed the focus and organisation of the year. A key issue paper provided the base for planning and it was worked on further by the different work groups. About 80 people participated in the preparation meetings. In February 2018, the tender documents were published – on the website of the year of democracy, in the official journal and in other media as well. Project ideas were to be handed in until 14th March 2018.

A total of 131 proposals were received by the year’s project team. After a formal review, 13 smaller projects were selected by the municipal monitoring committee together with the extended monitoring committee of the strategy “Leipzig. Ort der Vielfalt” (Leipzig. A Place of Diversity). The five big projects were decided by the municipal monitoring committee. The Division for International Cooperation of the City of Leipzig decided on the ten international projects. The projects were chosen according to the focal points cooperation, experience and visibility, innovation and reaching new target groups. In total, 28 projects showing how democracy can look like and be lived were supported.

Leipzig – Project 5

Detailed Description

The programme of the Year of Democracy was made up by four areas:

1. Living democracy in the representative democracy in Leipzig
The instruments of local democracy are to be outfitted better and to be made more accessible. Among these are local political bodies like district councils, the youth parliament who act as direct contact partners for the inhabitants. The aim was to provide knowledge about the local representative democracy and to break down barriers to participation with projects and approaches oriented to the target group (e.g. by showing special political forms of discussions).
2. Living democracy in everyday live
Democracy lives from citizen participation. That makes it even more important to widely communicate the existing, well-established approaches as well as to go new ways.
3. Living democracy in international exchanges
Leipzig as a civil city has been an ambassador for democracy since the Autumn of 89. Today, strengthening democracy is an important topic throughout Europe where we can learn a lot from each other and together. Here, we can use the well established ties to our twinning towns and to urban networks like EUROCITIES.
4. Living democracy at special places and spaces of local democracy
Democracy needs spaces where people can listen and be listened to and where new things are created by exchanging ideas. Therefore a central place for information and participation was created next to the town hall. It is used to collect various offers for information and participation in one central place in the city centre and to inform the public about urban planning.

The Year of Democracy was coordinated and implemented by the following parties:

- The municipal monitoring committee
- District councils
- Youth parliament
- 194 associations, initiatives and organisations

Contribution

Building on the experiences our city made during the Year of Democracy we create continuance between the project year of 2018 and the ECoD programme year in 2025. While in 2018 the focus lay on information and communication we can now use feedback and lessons learn to move on to a programme year in which we will focus on participation an empowerment. The experiences of 2018 add to the backbone of our democratic ambitions for the future.

Leipzig – Project 5

Target Groups

The thematic year aimed to engage all citizens of Leipzig, especially those who typically don't participate in local democracy, known as „silent groups.“ To ensure inclusivity, projects were designed to be adaptable to individual circumstances, often taking place in public spaces or outdoors. These 28 projects involved numerous disseminators, expanding their reach to a wider audience. Several projects targeted especially young people to raise an early awareness for democratic processes.

Collaboration

The implementation of the Year of Democracy was based on a comprehensive participation process, including two public preparation meetings with politics and civil society. The objectives were to incorporate existing citizen ideas and develop new approaches to enhance democratic values in society. The process encouraged individuals, associations, and businesses to propose project ideas with a low participation threshold and without the requirement of self-financing. Personal outreach was made to engage skeptics of democracy, while trust-building initiatives targeted underrepresented groups, such as individuals with diverse abilities and women's political participation.

Communication

The thematic year was communicated publicly through a variety of communication channels. In addition to leaflets, newsletters, press releases and a website, poster campaign showing citizens of Leipzig with positive statements about democracy were used. The poster campaign was to make Leipzig's citizens think and to highlight existing options for political participation. In addition, information media like a roll-up-exhibition informed about the different actors, tasks and processes in the local representative democracy. A creative and innovative approach to communicate the thematic year was created with a cargo bike which acted as an eye catcher during events and was used to distribute free information material about the local democracy, or the "democracy tram" presenting selective motives of the campaign on its surfaces. During the closing event the year, its implementation and results were openly discussed.

Project Setup

The Department for General Administration hold the overall responsibility for the year of democracy. The coordination unit for citizen participation and civic engagement "Leipzig weiter denken" from the Department of Urban Development and Construction was tasked with process organisation and implementation. In addition, a municipal monitoring committee was involved in the preparation. Every group represented in the city council at the time named a representative. The following political groups were involved: CDU, Die Linke, SPD, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, AfD and Freibeuter. The representative actively supported the projects and campaigns in the year of democracy 2018 as well.

Leipzig – Project 5

Description

Local associations, initiatives and institutions were part of the planning as well as the implementation process of the Year of Democracy. Accompanied and supported by the City, the majorities of the concrete projects was implemented by civil society.

Budget

Operating Costs	Allocated for planning and implementing the thematic year. In 2018 270,000 EUR were allocated to support 28 local democracy projects.	500,000€
Operating Cost	In addition to the personnel costs for the administrative employees involved, costs were allocated for project management.	15,000€
Communication Costs	Multiple Communication methods of and during the project year	215,000€
Total Budget		730,000€

Funding

N/A

Programme Year Integration

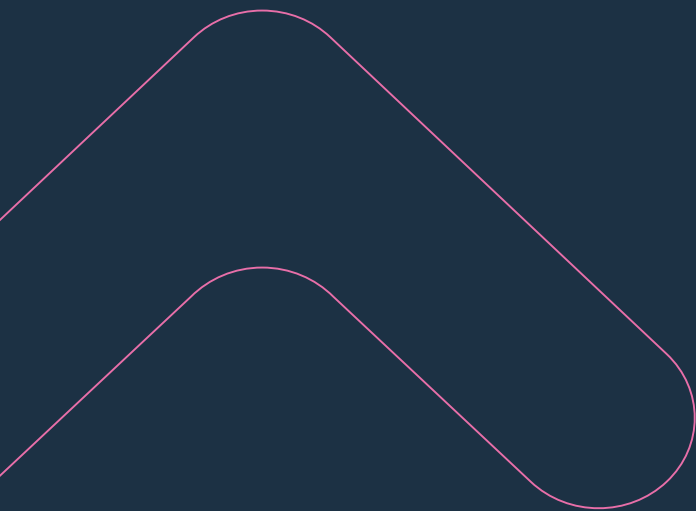
The information and experiences gained, methods used and lessons learned during the project year 2018 provide the backbone of our preparation for a programme year 2025.

Democracy Dimension

Participation

ECOD APPLICATION LEIPZIG

Project Ideas



Leipzig - Project Idea 1

DEMOCRACY DIMENSION: COMMUNITY

“Third Spaces” – Spaces for culture, people and ideas

Challenge

The complex crises we face trigger fears and a loss of trust in democratic institutions, leading to societal divisions. The Municipal Citizen Survey 2021 revealed declining social cohesion in Leipzig. To address this, projects are needed to strengthen cohesion and empower citizens. The municipal adult education centre has been successful in promoting democratic education through the „Civil Rights.Academy“ since 2015. Currently, cultural and educational facilities are increasing their efforts to enhance citizens' self-efficacy and encourage active participation. These facilities aim to become „Third Spaces,“ providing meeting and activation spaces away from work and personal life, fostering exchange and community support. Leipzig seeks creative solutions to these challenges, which are not unique to the city.

Solutions

The Idea is to create a citizen-shaped open space. It offers a free area for citizens, associations, and initiatives to develop projects, share ideas, and find partners. Citizens can book the room easily through a webtool without providing detailed information. This was tested with the “Leipzig Room” in one library. Due to its success, the concept will be expanded: The „LanguageRoom“ provides language learning materials, workspace, and self-organized meetings for people of diverse backgrounds. The Leipzig Municipal Libraries have a network of 16 locations planning to gradually implement the LeipzigRoom concept citywide. The municipal museums, including the Stadtgeschichtliche Museum, Museum of Fine Arts, Grassimuseum, and Natural History Museum, will offer free access to their permanent exhibitions starting in 2024. This decision elevates cultural participation and creates new learning and participation opportunities. Offering free access and creating rooms attached to cultural sites, sets Leipzig apart, emphasizing the commitment to community spaces and fostering democratic testing in response to recent crises.

Leipzig - Project Idea 1

Impact

The Leipzig Municipal Libraries and Museums are accessible to everyone during opening hours, including local residents and city visitors. The libraries attract approximately 1.2 million visitors and 45,000 event participants annually. Opening these institutions and transforming them into meeting places is expected to further increase visitor numbers. The 2017 Municipal Citizen Survey revealed that 31% of Leipzig's residents visited the Municipal Libraries for events, 28% for reading and working, and 11% for computer access. The survey, along with user requests during the development of the „LeipzigRoom“ and the high demand for the „LeipzigRoom“ and „LanguageRoom,“ highlights the need for libraries to become communal spaces in times of social uncertainty. In the 2020 Municipal Citizen Survey, a majority of Leipzig's citizens (77%) expressed agreement with free access to permanent museum exhibitions. Younger age groups were particularly supportive, with 86% of 25- to 34-year-olds and 92% of 18- to 24-year-olds in favor. Almost half of the respondents (49%) stated that they would visit the museums more frequently if entry were free. Once again, younger individuals demonstrated the highest interest in visiting museums if they were free (61% of 25- to 34-year-olds and 74% of 18- to 24-year-olds). These findings indicate that reducing access barriers, such as entry fees, can attract more visitors and transform museums into „Third Spaces.“

Implementation

A visitor survey in 2016 shaped the development of the Leipzig Municipal Libraries into „Third Spaces.“ The „pay how much you want“ pilot project was implemented in 2017, followed by extensive discussions in 2019. The implementation of the entry free of charge, scheduled for 2024, depends on city council resolutions and democratic negotiations. Citizens, associations, and initiatives actively participated in the conception of piloting the „Leipzig Room“ and „LanguageRoom.“ Workshops provided opportunities for introducing requests, ideas, and suggestions, which were implemented to a large extent. The „LeipzigRoom“ project was initially funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation in 2019/2020 and is now financially supported by the Leipzig Municipal Libraries. The success with citizens and the interest from the professional community inspire further development of the library as a space for intercultural exchange and self-activity. Expansion to all locations and the inclusion of new topics, such as health, climate, and STEM, are now the goal.

Since 2023, the Leipzig Municipal Libraries have focused their offers and work processes on the 17 sustainability goals. Education for sustainable development is prioritized, with findings being put into practice. The next step is expanding the „LeipzigRoom“ concept each of our districts.

Leipzig - Project Idea 1

Support

The projects "LeipzigRoom" and "LanguageRoom" are already piloted. The next step is an expansion regarding location and contents. The project is funded with budgetary resources of the City of Leipzig and supported by partners and citizens. The implementation of entry free of charge for the permanent exhibitions of the Leipzig Municipal Museums was decided by the city council on 19th April 2023 – which brings the necessary financial security for the project which is supposed to start in 2024.

Video Link

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1faZo9WkX1KK-kMLcl4SbvRoT7X_pSZbd/view?usp=drive_link

Images

N/A

Leipzig - Project Idea 2

DEMOCRACY DIMENSION: COMMUNITY

Strategic Blackout Planning – making the city crisis proof. Together

Challenge

The challenge we face is the preservation of a free, democratic, and socially fair urban society under dramatic restrictions of basic services, communication and information. These challenges are not unique to Leipzig; they occur when people are forced to face extreme situations. In a situation of a black-out established control mechanisms of city and state for distributing reduced resources are missing, due to lack of communication and information. In addition, access to vital resources and services is impaired or impossible. What is unique is our approach to meet these challenges: no quick decisions made from above but preparing the citizens to be a part of the process so that they have a sense of collective responsibility and knowledge about possible actions in a crisis. This project is connected with community, empowerment and participation.

Solution

The unique selling point of our approach is that the city will only act as moderator and guidance for the basic management and implementation during the planning phase. During the acute phase, the citizens are essentially left to their own devices thanks to their own planning, organisation and preparation. The City administration helps preventively to develop structures and plans how to distribute resources based on a multilevel system. In doing so, the citizens decide how to prepare and implement ideas due to their involvement. The city acts as an advisor and offers infrastructures and the municipal framework planning. With this moderated, joint planning we create a sense identification, prevent feeling helpless when facing coming crises and encourage solidarity and joint action.

Leipzig - Project Idea 2

Solution

If the citizens decide against participating in this project, they will miss out on the possibility of participation and influence regarding the municipal planning. They will also miss out on getting to know mutual competences and support possibilities and how to use them in a crisis.

Impact

The citizens will use the municipal and own planning results in a time of crisis, viz. in case of blackout. The instruments developed in the project have the potential to be used during other crises to mitigate the effects (cyber-attack, pandemic, military conflict / state of defence). All citizens of the City of Leipzig benefit from this project. A risk analysis of potential threats shows the necessity of this project.

Implementation

The citizens are approached by a special sub-working group / planning group of the Department of Democracy and Societal Cohesion in order to channel and to moderate civic involvement. At this stage, it is difficult to determine whether the project in its current scope can be implemented within the existing budget constraints. Yet, current data shows that this may be possible. The next step will be commissioning concrete plans and concepts for crisis response of the respective Departments of the City administration, determining the municipal priorities, efforts and financial needs as well as harmonising the commissioned priority individual plans and concepts.

Support

The project needs project management and support, different forms of citizen participation, communication and participation platforms, funding (etc.). Exchanging experiences with other municipalities will help with the successful implementation of the project.

Video Link

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Images

N/A

Leipzig - Project Idea 3

DEMOCRACY DIMENSION: TECHNOLOGY

Smart City Lab Leipzig

Challenge

1. Not all citizens have equal access to digital technologies or reliable internet connectivity. This digital divide can exclude marginalized groups of population and low-income individuals from participating fully in the digital transformation. Digital transformation has the potential to exacerbate existing social inequalities.
2. Many citizens lack the necessary digital skills and knowledge to effectively navigate and utilize digital technologies. This includes basic computer literacy, understanding online safety and privacy, using digital tools for communication and collaboration, and being able to critically evaluate online information.
3. As citizens engage more with digital services and platforms, there are increased risks related to privacy and security.
4. Reliance on digital services can create challenges when there are technical glitches, system failures, or cyberattacks.
5. As technology advances, citizens face ethical dilemmas and legal challenges associated with its use.

Solution

Not all citizens have equal access to digital technologies or reliable internet connectivity. This challenge is particularly pronounced as the proportion of low-income households in Leipzig is particularly high compared to other German cities. This can be seen, for example, in the average disposable income in 2020: 20.051 EUR per year in Leipzig and 24.433 per year in Germany. People lose their insecurity when dealing with digital solutions, recognize their self-efficacy and acquire skills in dealing with digital solutions. If people do not participate, they miss the chance to be active and creating part of the digital transformation and to increase their knowledge as resulting side effect.

Leipzig - Project Idea 3

Solution

The challenges of digitization can be better addressed when people with different skills and experiences collaborate in an inspiring environment and develop innovations. With the Smart City Lab, an ecosystem will be created for stakeholders from academia, the urban community, and city administration to work together on beneficial solutions for the city of Leipzig.

Impact

Citiln lectures for example during the Data Week 2025 (example 2023: Data Week Leipzig 2023: <https://www.dataweek.de/en/index.html>), workshops and hackathons we expect 1.500 participants from urban society per year. zens are invited to attend lectures, participate in hackathons, and test digital services before we launch them. On the one hand, the need is reflected in the great interest of residents in participating in hackathons and workshops. At the same time, the number of users of digital services in Leipzig is still comparatively low. Uncertainty in dealing with digital services is usually given as the reason.

Implementation

With our regular public relations work on the Smart City Lab Leipzig, we aim to inform, inspire, involve and engage citizens in the long term. Through targeted, multi-channel communication (leipzig.de, social media, Leipzig App, tram television) and a participatory approach, we can arouse people's interest and clarify the relevance of the lab for the inhabitants in Leipzig and the region. The project is on scale and can be financed within the budget. The opening week, which we are combining with Data Week Leipzig, which is taking place for the fourth time in 2025. We will start the regular program of the Smart City Lab Leipzig with a future festival with lectures, workshops and hackathons.

Support

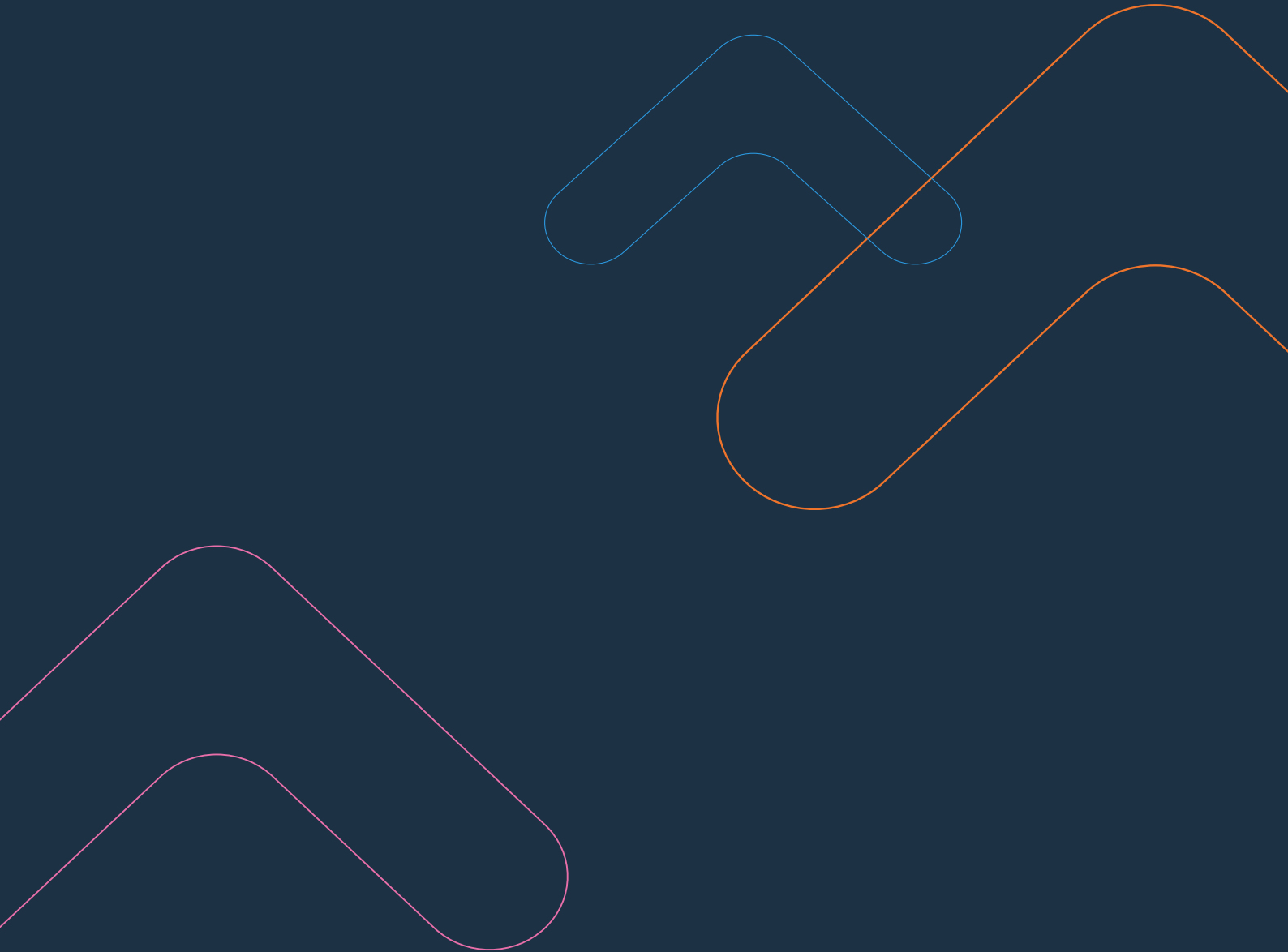
The Smart City Lab will be set up on an existing community with stakeholder from the city administration, science, civil society and economy creating the digital transformation in Leipzig already today. The Smart City Lab will be the new "home" of this community, an open space which will invite citizens to create the future together with us.

Video Link

https://drive.google.com/file/d/13KnZ0jkabzqC3omCWa05nfBuLRBnO6GGQ/view?usp=drive_link

Images

N/A



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