



Rat der Gemeinden und Regionen
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Municipal Charter for the Future

ONE WORLD – Our Responsibility Sustainability at the Municipal Level

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On behalf of

BMZ



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Charter for the Future

ONE WORLD – Our Responsibility Sustainability at the Municipal Level

With the ‘Charter for the Future: ONE WORLD – Our Responsibility’ the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) has launched a dialogue process. The envisaged outcome of this process is a partnership between the state, civil society, the scientific community, the business community, regions and municipalities. Together, these actors will develop a joint contribution to the European Year for Development 2015 that will be fed into the international agenda for the post-2015 process. 2015 marks the end of the existing Millennium Development Goals agenda and the beginning of a new agenda, to which we as municipalities would like to make a contribution. Numerous member municipalities of the German Section of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) are actively involved in One World affairs. They are supporting decentralisation processes, participating in the establishment of autonomous local governments, and sharing with their colleagues from the South the lessons they have learned with municipal services. Development cooperation aims not only to bring about changes in the South; to achieve a more just world, changes in the North are also absolutely essential.

The BMZ has defined five thematic areas of sustainability: the environmental dimension, the economic dimension, the social dimension, the cultural dimension and ‘global partnerships’. There is now a consensus that sustainability will not work unless we involve citizens and municipalities. This is why we have interpreted the thematic areas from a municipal perspective, and added a key element of sustainability, namely ‘sustainable urban development’. This Municipal Charter for the Future is part of a joint BMZ Charter for the Future. All actors from civil society, the business community, the scientific community and municipalities will be working together on the ‘Charter for the Future: ONE WORLD – Our Responsibility’ and implementing it in partnership from 2015 onward.

This ‘Municipal Charter for the Future’ outlines the importance of these themes for the municipal level, as well as municipal tasks that are being performed in the various areas of sustainability. Although the examples mentioned involve German municipalities, the tasks in question concern municipalities around the world. It goes without saying that the responsibilities of municipalities, as well as their structures and financial resources, vary around the world. What municipalities worldwide have in common are the efforts they make to gain the leeway and resources that will enable them to act in the interests of their citizens and the citizens of our One World.

The ‘think global, act local’ principle formulated at the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 has lost none of its significance over the last 20 years. Numerous global problems, ranging from refugee movements to social injustice to environmental destruction, have yet to be solved, and new problems have since arisen. Municipalities are not only part of the problem, but also – to the extent that they act sustainably – a key part of the solution. They are the places where decisions affecting future global sustainability will be taken and implemented, and where citizens will feel the impacts of these decisions directly.

We would like to contribute these experiences to the ‘Charter for the Future: ONE WORLD – Our Responsibility’ initiative, and we look forward to working with our partners to build a common and just future.



Karl-Heinz Schäfer
Mayor of Pohlheim
President of the German Section of the
Council of European Municipalities and Regions

1. Developing cities and municipalities sustainably

by Dr. Corinna Clemens, Mayor of Sindelfingen, Department of Urban Planning, Environmental Protection and Building

Cities have always been places involved in intensive exchange with their environments – they appropriate resources from the surrounding area, dispose of their waste outside of the city limits, and through their markets organise trade across large areas. The city is a model of success. As a result of urbanisation processes worldwide, today more than half the world's population live in urban zones, and the figures continue to rise. After 7,000 years the 'urban metabolism' remains largely the same, as a result of which the impacts of urban growth as well as the spatial, functional and sociological impacts of urbanisation, can be felt everywhere today. The consumption and mobility behaviour of citizens, and management of municipal building stock, are characterised by a high usage of resources. This causes considerable waste production and emissions, placing a burden on the global ecosystem. Nevertheless, the use of resources per head of the urban population is low in relation to value creation. Sustainable global development as outlined at the Rio Conference in 1992 cannot be achieved without the sustainable development of cities. The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities generated key impetus for urban development oriented toward the goal of sustainability. This crosscutting task involves efforts to steer decisions at the local level, so that settlement patterns and urban society develop in a way that is socially, economically, environmentally, culturally and institutionally balanced. Sustainable development also takes into account the dependencies, interactions and mutual impacts between the various key dimensions of sustainability. It aims to preserve livelihoods and life opportunities for future generations. Contrary to the picture often presented by the media, sustainable development is not just a concern of the spectacular megacities, global cities, megalopolises, metropolitan areas or big cities; it is also an issue for small and medium-sized towns and municipalities. Today, the roughly 600 medium-sized towns and cities in Germany, around a hundred of which have a population larger than 50,000, are home to a total of some 23 million people. Worldwide approximately half of all people live in urban zones. All of them share joint responsibility for the sustainable development of their cities.

a) What does sustainable urban development mean?

Key areas of activity for sustainable urban development: how to do it

Every municipality is unique – by virtue of its geographical location, its history and the factors that affect it. Consequently, there is no ideal solution for the sustainable city. Sustainable urban development focuses less on solving specific problems, and more on identifying potentials and strategies that can help generate added economic, social and environmental value both in the city and beyond it. We will now outline some of the approaches currently being pursued by many German municipalities.

Adapt and modernise

Over the coming decades substantial parts of the 'green' and 'grey' urban infrastructures – roads, bridges, canals, municipal tree stands and green spaces – will need to be radically modernised. Moreover, a significant proportion of the public building stock is today (once again) in need of refurbishment. Given the tight municipal budgets and uncertain prospects for the future, municipalities are asking themselves fundamental questions before embarking on any renovation work: Which parts of which buildings should be preserved and undergo energy-efficient refurbishment? Who should perform the work? Bearing in mind how citizens

in the future will wish to use the buildings, and the inevitable follow-on costs, which structures should be adapted, and which should be replaced? And: Which buildings and which infrastructures do the local population identify with to such an extent that they should be refurbished and preserved despite their dilapidated structural condition, even if they have become largely redundant?

Many of the densely built-up and mixed-use districts that arose during Germany's years of rapid industrial expansion, as well as the estates containing multi-family units and other housing developments, will require systematic support to upgrade the quality of the stock and strengthen social cohesion. Nonetheless, in terms of their basic structure these districts are proving to be robust and resilient. From the perspective of sustainable urban development, the settlements that are problematic are the widely dispersed, extensive mono-functional developments containing single-family and twin-family units. Here it is no longer possible to guarantee services within easy reach, or ensure good links to public transport. This is further compounded by the fact that the population structure and the value of real estate are following negative trends. Densification, i.e. the retroactive 'mixing in' of buildings for other purposes and measures to increase 'demographic resilience', in practice requires intensive participation on the part of local residents (who not infrequently are rather critical and sceptical).

Involve and network

Sustainable urban development involves citizens and other actors systematically, actively, comprehensively and early on, regardless of whether the activity in question involves the entire city, only specific districts or neighbourhoods, or particular projects. It involves people from different groups in the initial information gathering process and in the discussion of objectives, strategies and measures. In doing so it makes use of the knowledge and the ideas of local actors.

Many innovative participatory arrangements are currently being further developed and tested in practice. Since urban development processes are complex and complicated, the relevant participatory processes have so far themselves proved highly complex and lengthy. There is therefore a need to identify methods to motivate the actors concerned. To preserve the scope for governance by the official bodies of the city, and to protect legal positions and warranted interests of individuals, cities must define precisely the tasks of participatory processes, and how binding they should be. Cooperating in participatory procedures requires all the actors concerned to display a high degree of tolerance and to share one basic understanding: They should understand that in case of doubt, sustainable urban development will attach higher priority to the common good of present and future citizens than to protecting any short-term particular interests.

Sustainable urban development promotes networking within the city and assigns more responsibility to various actors. It strengthens the tradition of voluntary work, prompts the formation of new alliances and projects between businesses, private agents, volunteers, associations and institutions, and designs public buildings, roads, paths, parks and squares in ways that enable the various social groups within a city to share them.

Quality of life and identification

Key approaches to sustainable urban development can be summed by the image of a 'good life within the community' or simply by the term 'quality of life'. The district – the manageable spatial unit that people experience as their immediate everyday environment – is a pivotal level of integration for sustainable development. In Germany, it has long since become established practice in urban development to support local products, markets, economic activities and centres in close dialogue with citizens, to create high-quality public spaces for pedestrians, cyclists and community activities, and to strengthen people's sense of identification with their district. Strategies are now becoming more differentiated according to

the type of district involved. And the number of methods, key themes and objectives is growing. For example, there are now activities to mitigate climate change that focus on specific districts (focus districts), and activities designed to promote ‘aging in place’ by encouraging residents to remain in their district for the rest of their lives.

When the district-specific approach is applied to existing industrial areas, sustainable development promotes refurbishment (including energy-efficient refurbishment). It also supports structural modernisation, and encourages local companies to develop a common profile for their zone and create an attractive working environment. This approach aims to stabilise business locations, to encourage companies to remain and diversify, and to increase the proportion of service providers.

b) What enabling frameworks are required for sustainable urban development?

Ideas and exchange

There are a large number of programmes, initiatives and project platforms that can provide impetus for sustainable urban development. An important role is played by the systematic sharing of ideas and lessons learned with other municipalities – neighbouring municipalities, twin cities and cities that are structurally similar (in terms of size, history and destiny).

Dialogue makes it easier to evaluate practical lessons learned, and identify solutions that are either already appropriate to the prevailing conditions and circumstances in a city, or can be adapted. Local, national and international networks and platforms also promote joint learning by municipalities.

The local transfer of knowledge, capacities and ideas is also an integral component of successful development. Cities and municipalities act as role models and advisers for private actors and businesses, for instance when it comes to the sustainable design and management of green spaces, or increasing the energy efficiency of buildings.

Backing and resources

Sustainable urban development must be a permanent community task for all policy levels – otherwise, many of the efforts made by municipalities and local actors may come to nothing. Local, regional, national and international systems of objectives, strategies, support programmes and measures must be closely coordinated and harmonised vertically, from the individual municipality up to the EU. The crosscutting approach to sustainability also requires measures to be integrated horizontally, as is evident with issues of education and care, as well as multimodal regional mobility strategies.

Sustainable development will be founded on a financial policy that incorporates generational justice. Cities and municipalities must take specific decisions in the wider context of overarching strategies for the city as a whole, and must be able to fund and invest in projects that are likely to generate positive sustainable impetus for future urban development. Huge financial efforts are needed in order to refurbish and rehabilitate the building and infrastructure stocks of cities, to make it more resilient, and where necessary to replace it. Municipalities therefore require structural relief and a fair system of municipal funding that will allow them to plan reliably on a medium and long-term basis, and to balance budgets. Many cities and municipalities are dependent on economic trends and large payers of trade tax, yet at the same time they face rising expectations and needs of residents regarding their life setting, infrastructure and public services.

For particularly challenging tasks, such as the rehabilitation of large-scale infrastructure, the development of conversion areas and the creation of prospects for deprived districts, there remains a need for targeted financial support. These funds will subsequently attract private and public follow-on investment on a considerable scale, as well as generating model solutions, lessons learned and knowledge of development processes which – when used in other municipalities – will generate considerable added value.

Municipal responsibility and attention

Autonomous local government in Germany is a valued political good. Where European and national policy-making affects the frameworks and guidelines for the sustainable development of cities, it must protect and strengthen the autonomy and leeway of municipalities.

Sustainable urban development needs what autonomous local government produces: an active willingness on the part of citizens to identify with their city, discuss various paths to development and get actively involved themselves for the benefit of their city. Municipalities and cities are not only part of the problem, but also – when they act sustainably – a key part of the solution. All around the world, thanks to their density and mixture, they are major producers of knowledge and innovation, and are drivers of growth and integration. They are also the places where many people jointly think about, take and implement specific decisions, and in many cases also feel the effects of these decisions directly.

2. The social dimension of sustainability at the municipal level

by Prof. Dr. Thomas Fabian, Deputy Mayor for Youth, Social Affairs, Health and Schools, City of Leipzig

a) What does social sustainability at the municipal level mean?

As part of social policy, municipalities share responsibility with other local actors for shaping the life of the community in the sectors of education, youth, family, senior citizens, migration and integration, health and social affairs. The primary objective is to facilitate equality of social opportunity. Various aspects are important here. It is important to create social participation and inclusion. It is important to meet people's basic needs and protect against life risks. Opportunities to gain access to resources such as health, education and independent livelihoods should be open to all. Cultural diversity in different lifestyles should be possible, and a sufficient degree of orientation toward the common good, tolerance, solidarity and an ability to integrate should be promoted among all citizens. This also includes successful intergenerational coexistence in which young and old treat each other with respect, show mutual understanding, consider each other's needs, resolve conflicts jointly and support each other in living together on a day-to-day basis.

Municipalities are the place where people are socialised, receive their education, make a living, start a family, live, participate in social networks and get involved in social issues. Municipalities thus always shape life in a specific part of this earth that is territorially defined. Yet they also affect other municipalities in the world by entering into partnerships with them, and by people going out into the world and taking with them the resources and the experiences that they have acquired. By integrating refugees from other parts of the world, municipalities promote networking between people and boost transfers to people in the refugees' home countries, be it in the form of money, knowledge or personal assistance. Through networks, municipalities influence national and international social policy. Making municipal social policy sustainable also helps make social development in our One World sustainable.

b) What contribution do municipalities make to sustainable social policy?

One key prerequisite for sustainable social development is good education. This is because poverty can only be reduced on a lasting basis when education creates access to better paid

gainful employment. Municipalities can make an important contribution toward creating education management by a community of responsibility involving various institutions, as is the case for instance with 'local learning'. Municipal education policy guidelines and municipal education conferences provide orientation and guidance for the many actors involved in the education sector. Here there is a need to integrate both informal and formal education, to create diverse and fully accessible links between educational paths, and link youth support measures with schools, so that education also reaches especially those who live in social structures that are less conducive to education. Municipalities must create a high degree of equality of opportunity for access to education. This also includes early support for language acquisition by children, including support for children with a migrant background when learning the local language, and for children with language difficulties. Child day care centres can be used as educational facilities and as places where families can receive support in gaining valuable access to education.

Over the last few years the number of migrants has increased significantly worldwide. According to UNHCR, in 2013 international migrants included 15.7 million refugees. Only a small proportion of refugees reach Europe and Germany. The proportion of refugees migrating to Germany has increased, however, although the total percentage of migrants from developing countries is just 19.7 percent. Most immigrants are European. Globalisation and sustainable development in our One World mean that tolerance, cultural diversity and the local integration of people with a migrant background are hugely important. Municipalities can help manage international migration in ways that are as meaningful and beneficial as possible for individuals and for the community. In our One World, municipalities in the North have a special responsibility to provide people who have fled their home country for various reasons with life prospects, regardless of how much time they will spend here. Integrating refugees and immigrants will enable them to participate in society. Language, education, gainful employment, housing and contact with the local population are important aspects of the integration process. In Leipzig, the social support provided at centres for asylum-seekers is designed to facilitate swift integration into society and the city: acquisition of language skills, education and training, and housing outside of dedicated municipal facilities are all part of this process. The sponsorship programme 'Arriving in Leipzig – Sponsors for refugees' supports the integration process, and makes it easier for refugees to settle down in the city by linking them up with personal sponsors. A further aim is to foster a climate of mutual tolerance in order to maintain peaceful coexistence between the inhabitants of the city from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Promoting people's health and well-being is key to sustainable development. Municipalities around the world have to deal with different threats to the health of their populations. Encouraging people to take more exercise is an important area of activity for well-off municipalities where obesity threatens the health and well-being of large sections of the population, and especially the poorer sections. Sufficient immunisation for all is particularly important in a globalised world in order to prevent epidemics and reduce the risk of people falling ill to life-threatening and dangerous infections. Due to large gaps in immunisation within the population, the number of cases of measles in Germany has risen significantly over the last few years. Through public information, education and communication work, the public health service in municipalities can increase the willingness of the population to seek vaccination.

Voluntary engagement is absolutely key to the sustainable social development of municipalities. It promotes social cohesion, and harbours major potential for balanced neighbourhoods that work well. Without the support of numerous volunteers, the wide range of cultural, social and sporting activities would be inconceivable. Moreover, voluntary engagement creates social contact and areas of activity in which people can bring their own

skills and experience to bear, and offers a broad playing field on which to acquire and further extend competences. Voluntary engagement is an expression of human solidarity and responsibility for the community. Municipalities use many means to promote this: public appreciation of volunteers, public awareness-raising, discounts or support for volunteer agencies and volunteer services. Local Agenda 21 processes boost voluntary engagement. In our One World, voluntary engagement by associations and initiatives generates important impetus for increased social sustainability. One example is local associations financing and organising the construction and appointment of schools and hospitals in Africa and Asia. And when global crises occur, the willingness of many individuals to donate, often organised by school classes or local associations, is an expression of interpersonal solidarity in our One World.

Thinking globally and acting responsibly at the municipal level are essential for social sustainability. This includes sharing knowledge and lessons learned with other municipalities, for instance concerning social transformation processes resulting from mass unemployment and demographic change. Municipalities must network, learn from each other, cooperate with each other and take joint action in pursuit of their interests. Municipalities cooperate with other municipalities on various levels. Leipzig attaches special priority to its involvement in the German Association of Cities and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, as well as its participation in the Eurocities network, which represents 130 major cities in Europe. Through the Social Affairs Forum of this network, Leipzig influences among other things European refugee policy. Twinning schemes are important relationships between municipalities. The twinning scheme between Leipzig and Addis Ababa, for instance, encompasses not only many intercultural projects, but also the sale of a fair trade coffee. A cooperation arrangement between the local universities is supporting Ethiopian doctors in training as specialists. Sustainable impetus for thinking globally and acting responsibly at the municipal level is provided for the younger generation through international school partnerships and school exchange schemes.

Moreover, sustainable social development can be achieved in our One World if we succeed in reducing inequality of access to the world's resources, and the inequality of social opportunity between the well off countries and poor countries which this entails. Municipalities can support this by raising awareness, providing ethical education and promoting good practice examples to encourage people to consider the effects of their actions on others, and show more solidarity with others through their actions. In particular, there is a need to create appropriate incentives for sustainable behaviour.

c) Enabling frameworks for sustainable social policy at the municipal level

Although municipalities are the policymaking and administrative bodies that are closest to people, what they do is dependent on the leeway created by EU, national and regional policy. As well as defining the legal framework, these policymaking levels also determine the financial resources available to municipalities. In German municipalities, expenditure on youth and family, education, health and social affairs accounts for a major share of the funds available. In many municipalities, the need to save money is causing a predicament in which only a minimal level of social services can be provided, and in which there is little scope for preventive activities. Yet prevention is the key to sustainable social development. Delivering interventions and support early on, such as measures to promote the acquisition of German language skills among children with a migrant background in kindergartens, will improve the children's long-term performance at school, and thus improve equality of opportunity. There is therefore a need to ensure that municipalities are allocated sufficient funding that will enable them to take preventive action.

To make local social policy effective it is very important that all the actors involved work together. This includes all the administrative and policy-making levels, as well as associations, clubs, businesses and citizens. The example of local education management, or the example of drug addiction policy, clearly illustrate that networking and cooperation are absolutely essential. Active involvement in city networks is also very important for sharing lessons learned and for shaping policy that affects municipalities.

Conclusion

Municipalities are workshops of sustainable social development for equality of opportunity. Key approaches for locally responsible action in the context of One World are: creating educational opportunities for all, facilitating the successful integration of people with a migrant background, promoting health, and supporting voluntary engagement and international partnerships. For all social policy strategies, prevention is especially important. Municipalities can only make social measures a success together with all the other actors involved, a process that is further supported by exchange and cooperation with other municipalities in networks. To reduce inequality of social opportunity between the municipalities of this world, municipalities need to raise awareness, provide ethical education and support good practice examples in order to encourage people to think more about the consequences of their actions for others and to show greater solidarity with others through their actions.

3. The economic dimension of sustainability at the municipal level

by Ullrich Sierau, Lord Mayor of Dortmund

a) What does economic sustainability at the municipal level mean?

It goes without saying that today's growth must not jeopardise the natural resources on which life depends and the potential for economic growth for future generations. At the same time, our actions must support development in our One World. This is best realised at the level of cities and municipalities. As local 'governments', municipalities help shape the frameworks for sustainable economic activity.

This is why municipalities have two roles to play in economic sustainability: they are both entrepreneurs and market actors. As entrepreneurs they must achieve their corporate purpose in the long term and create sufficient value. An important element of this involves securing environmental and social resources. As market actors they not only hold major responsibility and serve as role models; they also possess considerable market power, which they must use.

The thematic areas and activities for economic sustainability in municipalities are manifold. Examples include:

- Revitalising former industrial and commercial sites
- Using 'soft factors' to make municipalities more attractive as business locations
- Environmental management systems
- Promoting recycling and efficiency
- Business networks
- Alliances between local government, the business community and non-governmental organisations
- Regional and local economies
- Educational sponsorships
- Promoting sustainable patterns of consumption

- Municipal procurement

In Dortmund major importance is attached to the topics of ‘fair trade’, ‘corporate social responsibility (CSR)’ and ‘resource and energy efficiency’. These require participation and civic (co-) responsibility, as well as integration into policy-making and administration.

b) What contribution can municipalities in Germany make?

Municipalities can meet their responsibility in a globalised world by implementing sustainable development as a crosscutting task. ‘Environmentally and socially sound procurement’ is a field in which municipalities can set a good example and make progress. Since 2007 Dortmund has been committed to not procuring products involving exploitative child labour. Dortmund has operationalised the guiding principle of economic sustainability by setting up a central contracting and procurement centre, and by participating in the EU pilot project ‘Every municipality counts’ together with the Romero Christian Initiative and partners from Wels (Austria) and Trébic (Czech Republic).

In 2001 Dortmund became the first city in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) to offer the ÖKOPROFIT consultancy programme. ÖKOPROFIT studies and analyses the use of materials and energy in production processes and all other activities, with the aim of reducing costs in companies. Since 2001, 113 companies have successfully taken part.

In 2010 a master plan was prepared for the city of Dortmund, together with all the relevant social, political and economic actors. The actors involved also identified joint ways of implementing it. The master plan is designed to achieve a 40% reduction in CO₂ emissions by the year 2020, relative to the figure for 1990. The master plan comprises the three projects ‘Programme of Action to Protect the Climate’, ‘Service Centre for Energy Efficiency’ and ‘Strategies for Renewable Energy Development’. Key elements of the programme of action include the energy-efficient refurbishment of old buildings, effective electricity management and renewable energy development.

The ‘efficiency initiative’ marked the launch of an innovative process designed to generate a key competitive advantage for the regional economy by promoting innovative processes and products. Companies in Dortmund, and particularly traditional companies in the region, are profiting from this among other things due to the major potential that exists among users. The issue of efficiency thus concerns both the manufacturing side, which can enter new expanding markets, and the user side, whose competitiveness is being increased.

The NRW competence network for e-mobility, infrastructure and networks deals with all kinds of issues concerning e-mobility, the energy turnaround, transport and distribution networks, and energy management.

Since 2013 a self-supporting CSR network has been operating in Dortmund. This network aims to support companies in voluntarily upholding social, ecological and ethical concerns that go beyond the legal requirements, in their activities and relationships with partners including their workforces, customers and suppliers. As part of a multi-stage training programme, small and medium-sized enterprises in particular are being given an opportunity to develop their own CSR strategies together with the trainers, and thus become tailor-made CSR companies.

The FA!R TRADE & FRIENDS trade fair is Dortmund’s leading project for presenting fair trade and sustainability issues to a wide public. It has set itself the goal of further broadening

public awareness of fair trade, making developments in fair trade transparent, bringing together the key market actors, responding to trends, laying the foundation for innovation, transferring knowledge, and providing an international platform for fair trade and responsible business.

The fair sees itself as part of the sustainability strategy of the German state of NRW, which means that it is embedded in a wider political and economic framework. For Dortmund, establishing FA!R means creating a unique selling point for the city as an attractive business location, which will ultimately significantly raise Dortmund's profile as a sustainable city.

c) What enabling frameworks will this require?

As well as the further development of legal frameworks, financial aspects are also an important enabling factor. Pilot projects require financial subsidies in order to eventually be scaled up. It is also especially important that various partners who possess different kinds of expertise, but share common interests, link up with each other, so that business activity can incorporate aspects of sustainability. This means that alliances between different sections of society must emerge. One example is the FA!R trade fair, in which the EU, the state of NRW and the city of Dortmund, as well as the Messe Westfalenhalle trade fair company, the NRW One World network and the Westfalen-Münsterland retail association, are working together constructively.

4. The environmental dimension of sustainability at the municipal level

by Axel Welge, Chief Environmental Officer, German Association of Cities

a) What does environmental sustainability at the municipal level mean?

Environmental sustainability means a continuous improvement in the quality of life in cities. Over the last 30 years, municipal environmental protection has achieved a large number of success stories in this regard. This has involved improvements in air quality, nature conservation, water quality and the provision of green spaces. Success stories in municipal environment protection not only serve the interests of citizens, however. Increasingly they are also becoming an important factor in making cities attractive locations for business, and are therefore in the interests of the city as a whole. The many successes must not, however, tempt us to reduce our efforts to achieve environmental sustainability. In the future the following problems will play a major role:

- We already know that the greenhouse effect is to a large extent caused by urban and industrial growth, and therefore originates largely in the urban agglomerations. This is why cities in particular, in the spirit of the slogan ‘think global, act local’, are expected to develop sustainable urban models and strategies for the future that will reduce emissions of the trace gases carbon dioxide, methane and nitrogen dioxide, which affect the climate. They are expected to do so e.g. in Agenda 21 processes. Cities can only partially meet these expectations, however, because the instruments at their disposal to influence the main causal factors are of limited effectiveness.
- The consumption of land will continue to increase. In urban areas, land used for housing and transport infrastructure accounts for approximately 50% of the land available. The areas available for mitigation and compensation measures under nature conservation laws are becoming increasingly scarce in urban zones. The reprioritisation of necessary objectives such as space-saving construction and extensive desealing measures cannot be achieved through municipal strategies alone, unless the costs of exploiting land by sealing are made sufficiently unattractive.
- Despite the indisputable success stories, atmospheric pollution in cities is increasing, particularly as a result of pollutant emissions caused by traffic. In most cities the nitrous oxide and diesel soot burdens have continued to rise over the last few years, caused by the increase in passenger car and HGV traffic. Along the edge of very busy roads, atmospheric pollution caused by motor vehicle traffic is over 70% of the total burden for a city.
- Particularly in urban agglomerations, populations will continue to face an increasing noise burden. Along many roads affected by heavy traffic, noise burdens exceed thresholds of damage to human health (daytime 65 dbA, night-time 45 or 50 dbA). This is compounded by a considerable amount of aircraft noise, noise from industrial installations and rail traffic, as well as noise caused by recreational activities at sports facilities. It is now beyond dispute that noise pollution, with its demonstrably serious effects on health, is threatening to become the greatest urban emission mitigation problem of the future.
- Cities will continue to face groundwater burdens caused by pollutant emissions, as well as surface water pollution caused by industrial and domestic sewage. The

introduction of inadequately treated surface water, and water body maintenance that is increasingly non-natural, are leading to a dramatic deterioration in the biological quality of water bodies.

- Finally, cities continue to face the huge (cost) problems associated with the rehabilitation of contaminated sites. In Germany there are still some 150,000 potential sites (abandoned landfills and industrial sites) requiring attention. The increasingly urgent task of recycling industrial sites as land becomes more and more scarce will reach its financial limits.

These examples demonstrate that, given the looming environmental issues, cities will be overstretched if left to cope on their own. This is why Germany's national government, its federal states and the European Union must create the legal and financial frameworks needed to achieve a further improvement in the environmental situation.

b) What contribution can municipalities make to a sustainable environmental policy?

Cities have a key role to play in mitigating climate change and implementing the energy turnaround. To a large extent the global greenhouse effect and the climate change associated with it are caused in the urban agglomerations. This is why cities are expected to develop sustainable urban models and strategies for the future that will reduce emissions of the trace gases carbon dioxide, methane and nitrogen dioxide, which affect the climate. Many cities have already long been actively engaged in mitigating climate change. As well as energy saving and renewable energy use, the approaches followed here include in particular the energy-efficient refurbishment of buildings, and the promotion of forward-looking traffic and transport planning. Climate change mitigation criteria are also increasingly being integrated into municipal urban development planning. Cities are thus making an important contribution toward mitigating CO₂ emissions. Pillars of a municipal environmental policy include:

Energy efficiency/energy saving: Sustainability at the municipal level is most effective when energy consumption is avoided (energy saving) and renewables account for a significant proportion of environmentally-friendly energy production. In 2007 the Freiburg municipal council decided to reduce the city's CO₂ emissions by 40% by the year 2030. A package of measures then succeeded in reducing emissions, chiefly in the transport and energy sectors. The share of electricity generated from nuclear power was reduced from 60% to less than 10%. Since 2011, 50% of municipal power consumption has been obtained from cogeneration.

Transport planning involving public transport and bike paths/footpaths: Urban policy goals include guaranteeing mobility without allowing urban development to impact negatively on natural resources and the environment. The city is promoting pedestrian and bike traffic, for instance through designated bike lanes and designated bike paths that avoid intersections and include traffic light settings that are optimised to suit cyclists and pedestrians. There are also optimised lanes for public transport vehicles, including preferential traffic light settings and an attractive tariff system. This also includes the 'easy reach neighbourhoods' concept, according to which all the places people need to get to as they go about their day-to-day business (such as shops, schools, the doctor's surgery, the pharmacy, banks etc) should be within easy reach within their neighbourhood.

Construction: The energy requirement for buildings can be reduced considerably by applying modern approaches and materials. The low-energy or passive house standard also includes 'energy plus buildings' in which more energy is obtained than is consumed. It is possible to

save energy not only in modern new buildings. The existing stock can also be refurbished to the passive house standard. We should not underestimate the extent to which municipalities can set a good example to many of their citizens in the way that they manage their own building stock. Municipalities can make contributions by providing citizens with information, making them aware of opportunities to obtain financial support, and by ensuring that their own buildings and facilities have a low energy requirement. Furthermore, energy-efficient refurbishment also helps reduce costs considerably.

Waste and recycling: Solid waste management guarantees safety, hygiene and tidiness in cities. One important task of municipalities and cities is to create incentives and provide information on solid waste reduction at the local level. Municipalities also enable the comprehensive collection and recycling of high quality reusable materials and secondary raw materials, as well as the recycling of residual waste materials.

Wastewater: Municipal sewage treatment plants are among the largest consumers of electricity in municipalities. By implementing energy efficiency measures (ventilation systems in the main treatment stages) around 20% of power could be saved in Germany, which would make a significant contribution toward reducing CO₂ emissions. Wastewater treatment also harbours potential for recovering energy, including for instance from incineration or by harnessing wastewater heat.

c) Enabling frameworks for a sustainable environmental policy at the municipal level

Environmental change is causing huge challenges for municipalities in Germany and around the world. The risks to the population, municipal infrastructure and green spaces caused by heavy precipitation, overheating and storms will continue to increase. This will require further adaptation of the operation and development of infrastructure as well as other areas of municipal activity. Municipalities will not be able to provide the additional investment and extensive climate change adaptation measures on their own. This is why in the future central governments will need to provide greatly increased and more systematic support to municipalities for their climate change mitigation and infrastructure adaptation measures. Governments will also need to step up scientific research to support these climate change adaptation strategies. As well as flood protection, and water supply and sanitation, this research will need to focus in particular on efficient and low-carbon energy supply. The state is not the only actor that will create enabling frameworks. Municipalities too must create an enabling environment for a sustainable policy with specific implementation measures at their own level, by raising citizens' awareness, and by mobilising and involving them.

5. The cultural dimension of sustainability in cities

by Davide Brocchi, for the City of Cologne

a) Cities as places of cultural change for sustainability

Thinking sustainably today means bringing about a cultural change, and one which is best begun in municipalities. Why? Because the local level corresponds more closely to the *human dimension*, whereas the global level tends to overstretch us, because global standardisation and the economisation of everything do not make global society a better place in which to live. Since subjects (mind, individual, ego and the human being) and objects (nature, society and age) are particularly close at the local level, this is where we can best become aware of and rethink the relationship between them.

Nature is never somewhere else; it is always here, in each and every one of us. The negative

or positive impacts of our action on the environment are most visible at the local level, and this is where we can reflect on them. While globalisation has led to a deterritorialisation of lifestyles, strong local cultures strengthen identification with territory and with the community – and in doing so strengthen the willingness of individuals to assume responsibility within that community. Municipalities are guardians of local identity and collective memory, they supervise its materialisation (e.g. in urban development and rural conservation), and foster old and new rituals. Regional food cultures are particularly sustainable, because they transmit knowledge from a long historic experience, are most appropriate to local environmental conditions, and turn local materials into enjoyment and social experience.

It is not just more capable and efficient machines, but above all dialogue and cooperation between people which are the path to gaining a better understanding of the environment and making it sustainable. Sharing is also a strategy that makes sense for reducing the resources needed by society. Nevertheless, it does have one key precondition: trust. Yet globalisation has led to a broad crisis of trust. Consumers no longer trust producers, the electorate no longer trust politicians etc. Competition, status symbols and social inequality are constraining social communication. Trust cannot be substituted by money or advertising, nor can it emerge in the virtual spaces of social networks. However, it can best be fostered where people meet each other face-to-face in their day-to-day lives: at the local level, in the districts and neighbourhoods where people live. This is where the various asymmetries can be overcome, and the objects of governance (citizens) can become its subjects. Municipalities are predestined to be laboratories for testing and further developing bottom-up strategies for social development and direct democracy. Intra- and intercultural dialogue are key prerequisites for reaching sustainable decisions based on broad rather than narrow perceptual horizons.

Because information, ideas and imagination are intangible and are not tied to material necessities, culture is a *space of possibility*. Within this space, social processes can be subjected to critical scrutiny and alternative life choices tried out. The independent art and culture scene is a relevant source of innovation which, although not highly profitable economically, can nevertheless make cities better and more sustainable places in which to live. Engaging with other cultures also harbours the potential for switching perspectives and finding inspiration for alternative ways to live. In our own cities we often live alongside many ambassadors of other social, cultural and ecological realities who can help us to significantly broaden our perceptual horizons and better understand the global impact of our actions.

Cultural offerings can help bring more sustainability into the life of a city. Art and culture provide aesthetic spaces for sharing thoughts, and reflecting on social conditions and personal sensitivities. Art fosters communication with our ecological, social and inner environment, and an engagement with issues which we sometimes like to ignore, despite their relevance in a society based on consumption and entertainment.

On the one hand, work in the arts and culture sphere provides a sense of belonging, identity and possibly even home, while on the other hand, it establishes links to other societies and other epochs. The cultural heritage in a city, with all its ambivalence, can be read and experienced physically in monuments, in the local archive and in museums. The protection, maintenance and reconstruction of buildings, rows of houses and entire districts are a response to the removal of boundaries in people's lives and to the throwaway mentality. Given the increasing differentiation of the cultural orientation of the population, the discussion as to which and whose heritage should be preserved itself requires discussion. This discussion can only be held meaningfully by systematically also taking into account issues of sustainability.

b) What contribution do municipalities make to a sustainable arts and culture policy?

The example of Cologne

Cultural diversity is significantly more than just the integration of migrants. It is the opportunity that each human being, no matter how different, has to develop, to find his or her own space, to articulate his or her thoughts publicly and to participate politically.

The city of Cologne is a popular city and a growing one, because it is seen as a tolerant, open and diverse city of culture. The new mosque in the district of Ehrenfeld, or Christopher Street Day, are more than just symbols of the value that citizens attach to diversity and living with alterity. This is why the city government also has its own diversity point. Diversity is also guaranteed by numerous civic initiatives that participate in local politics – and a certain, albeit modest, diversity of media (DuMont-Verlag, StadtRevue, WDR...). Over the last few years, the city of Cologne and its district authorities have made efforts to diversify development and find spatial solutions for (sub-)cultural institutions (the Autonomous Centre, Club Underground, Building 9, ZAMUS in the Helios complex, Cap Cologne on the Clouth estate in Nippes), to give them a footing.

One third of the population of this city has a migrant background. Cologne's Department of Arts and Culture has therefore long since had a dedicated cross-cutting unit for intercultural affairs with its own support plan (www.stadt-koeln.de/mediaasset/content/pdf41/foerderkonzept_interkulturelle_kunstprojekte.pdf). This also led to a process of critical self-reflection on how we deal with foreign cultures, and ultimately to the establishment of the Academy of the Arts of the World.

In 2011 the commissioned study 'Cultural worlds in Cologne' (www.stadt-koeln.de/leben-in-koeln/kultur/kulturwelten-koeln) concluded that artistic offerings in the city reflected a Western understanding of art. Art from Turkey, Russia, Africa or Asia is significantly underrepresented in the city's artistic offering, even though many citizens of Cologne come from these countries. The city's institutions are focussed predominantly in the inner city, while the number of institutions located in those districts of Cologne with a high proportion of migrants and low socio-economic standards is particularly low. In these areas the cultural sphere is occupied by a fragmented independent art scene. These findings were integrated into the design of Cologne's 'Academy of the Arts of the World'. This was established in 2012 in order to open up the city's cultural life to influences from all continents.

With its arts and culture development plan of 2009, Cologne was one of the first municipalities to formulate its policy to support culture in a comprehensive paper. This plan formulated goals, visions and concrete measures for sustainable support of the arts through a process of detailed and extensive communication with the social actors in the city who shape them. It is envisaged that from 2015 onward this approach will be systematically further conceptualised through an update of the arts and culture development plan, designed to facilitate comprehensive civic participation in the arts and culture. In the cathedral city of Cologne great emphasis is placed on local identity, for instance by promoting the local 'Kölsch' dialect, the history of films in Cologne or the local history of National Socialism. The National Socialism documentation centre transmits the important lessons learned from the experience of National Socialism, and makes users aware of the special importance of democracy and human rights also in the present day.

As a transversal pillar, arts and culture in municipalities can promote the emergence of new kinds of alliance, strengthen marginalised actors and mediate between the different social

spheres and interests in dialogue processes.

In 2012, a broad and diverse alliance was formed in Cologne whose members currently include more than 120 local organisations, institutions, initiatives and businesses. In September 2013 'Agora Cologne' organised the first 'Day of the good life'. On that day an area of one square kilometre in the district of Ehrenfeld, which is home to more than 20,000 people, was closed to motor traffic. The car-free roads and squares were transformed into a broad 'agora' where direct democracy, community and culture were practised. As part of the process, the inhabitants formed neighbourhood groups that met regularly months in advance to debate questions such as 'What city do we want to live in?' On the day of the good life they were able to view their streets as common property and govern themselves. In the open air they tried out and experienced their own ideas of the good life. A process of this kind opens up spaces for social, intra- and intercultural interaction, and fosters the trust required for mutual sharing. The initiative was so successful that in 2014 the inhabitants conducted the day themselves. Following Ehrenfeld, a further district (Lindenthal) has since voted unanimously to also hold the day on its own territory. By invitation of the Department for Arts and Culture, the Viennese group of artists WochenKlausur organised a similar project in the public sphere on the right bank of the Rhine in Cologne. As part of the field trial 'Urban laboratory for art in the public sphere', together with the local population the group developed proposals for structural and spatial improvements in the district of Alt-Deutz. Participants decided that art in the public sphere need not necessarily be confined to putting up sculptures. Design was viewed not as a formal act, but as an option for direct action. By surveying people who were thinking about their immediate environment, and by liaising with a network of committed, not-for-profit associations and initiatives, the WochenKlausur artists collected suggestions, which they then at the same time discussed with the city government and other responsible agencies with a view to optimising sustainability.

c) Enabling frameworks for a sustainable arts and culture policy at the municipal level

Within political institutions, time and time again sustainability and the arts suffer the same palpable undervaluation and marginalisation. A reprioritisation of municipal agendas presupposes not only more generous budgets, but also a process of rethinking in all areas and on all levels of the administration, as well as a more vigorous and equal dialogue both among them, and with the actors affected. A broader understanding of sustainability and the arts requires a critical engagement with the dominance of the economic, leading to a shift in personnel policy. To raise the profile of cultural sustainability, what we need are close partnerships with citizens rather than public-private partnerships with international investors. A sound policy for the arts and culture will be less event- and prestige-oriented, and can be measured among other things by the vitality of the local arts and culture scene.

Culture is per se dependent on sustainability. Obviously, the challenge is the financial shortfalls in municipal budgets, which are leading to a considerable decline in funding and opportunities also for arts and culture. Cultural infrastructure cannot be established on a short-term basis, especially where complex structures such as theatres or libraries are to be provided. Procedures for the long-term protection of digitalised culture are currently in their infancy. This is why cultural infrastructure also needs secure long-term funding, which presupposes that cities are allocated sufficient general financial resources by the regional government. Only then can cities responsibly promote the arts and culture on a voluntary basis within the scope of their local autonomy.

Because many people appear to prefer and enjoy a 'do-it-yourself' approach in run-down deserted factories, and creative individuals perceive de-economised spaces as particularly free

and inspiring, municipalities are increasingly calling into question an uncritical modernisation, commercialisation and privatisation of urban spaces. Yet attractively priced residential space and empty buildings continue to be transformed into luxury flats, thus removing them from the spaces of diversity. To prevent artists and creative individuals from inadvertently opening the door to gentrification in peripheral zones, city centres should be de-commercialised to a greater extent and the needs of the population should be taken into account. Cities do not need empty office buildings or more shopping centres. What they need is more ‘agoras’. Just like the square in the ancient Greek polis, ideally every street in the modern city should have a common space that is autonomously managed by the inhabitants themselves, and in which direct democracy, arts and culture, neighbourliness and a sharing economy are practiced. On a general level, the question arises of how the use of public spaces by citizens and artists can be made easier.

A great deal of artistic and cultural activity takes place outside of the sphere of competence of municipal arts and culture institutions. It takes place on every building site, in every graphic designer’s office and in every supermarket – yet the issue of sustainability is making conscious cultural production, cultural critique, ‘cultural mutations’ and social learning processes more necessary than ever. This is why municipal departments for the arts and culture should be strengthened, and support for the arts restructured. In a climate of thinking dominated by ideas of division of responsibility, holistic projects will necessarily face difficulty. Financial indicators such as costs, visitor numbers or press coverage are not always appropriate indicators of the real quality of cultural offerings. The traditional public institutions for the arts and culture take up a large share of the relevant budgets. But to what extent is the work performed by opera houses in keeping with the times? Are museums still among the key media through which societies present and explore their self-understanding? Public institutions for the arts and culture certainly should not be places that reproduce exclusivity. On the other hand, opera houses and museums can be places of encounter and cultural education. Yet there are now also new free spaces in the city that have partially taken over this role, and also merit appropriate support.

Cultural sustainability requires a range of new competences. Intracultural dialogue within local governments and intercultural dialogue in city districts can rarely succeed without actors who mediate and build bridges between the different languages (including specialist jargon), who reduce and break down cognitive asymmetries and preconceptions, and who manage channels of communication.

Because sustainability needs more of a bottom-up than a top-down approach, municipalities and district authorities must not remain the final link in a hierarchy of institutions. Their role must be strengthened significantly and they must be given wider creative leeway.

d) Conclusion

Problems can never be solved with the same kind of thinking that created them in the first place (Albert Einstein). This is why sustainability requires a cultural change throughout society. Municipalities are not only ideal laboratories for change of this kind, but also its potential drivers. Why this is the case, and why municipalities can support cultural sustainability, has been outlined only very briefly in this text.

To master the challenges of the 21st century, economic growth will not suffice as a universal remedy. Municipalities that rely on diversity will have at their disposal a broad range of solutions to their problems. Though any dialogue with diverse actors is rarely as efficient as a

monologue among those of the same persuasion, its results are nevertheless usually more effective.

6. Shaping global partnerships locally – Municipalities taking responsibility for One World

by Stephan Wagner, Head, Department of International Affairs and Global Sustainability, City of Bonn

The Charter for the Future revolves around the notion of a ‘global partnership’, which is characterised by a new spirit of solidarity and responsibility. It is based on a shared understanding of the global common good and global ethics, and aims to achieve close cooperation for mutual benefit and mutual accountability. A new feature of the concept of the ‘global partnership’ is that alongside the principle of ‘think global, act local’, a further principle has been added that at first glance appears to reverse the principle: ‘think local, act global’. What this means is seeking multilateral solutions for the large number of challenges whose impacts are felt locally – which is to say at the level of cities and municipalities – but can only be solved internationally. The two principles are complementary, and ultimately form a single unit.

a) Why are municipalities important as actors in global partnerships?

Today, municipalities are already assuming growing responsibility for our One World in many respects. Examples include

- Within city-to-city training schemes and project partnerships (including meetings of professional experts, climate partnerships)
- Through sustainable procurement and the promotion of fair and regional trade
- By taking the lead and setting an example in developing and implementing sustainability strategies within local government (for instance with regard to mobility), and in cooperation with other actors
- Through information and awareness-raising work for development (education for sustainable development)
- By involving migrants in municipal partnerships
- Through engagement in crosscutting themes of sustainable development (e.g. climate change mitigation/adaptation, biodiversity, gender justice)
- Through work for a global energy balance, and thus for energy justice.

Municipalities represent the common point of reference for different actors on all levels. Their special strength lies in their ability to establish and manage networks, e.g. by involving companies and business associations, social organisations, and other associations and development initiatives. Municipalities thus form the nucleus for global partnerships at the local level.

One example of the local establishment of ‘global partnerships’ is the ‘Bonn Network for Development – Responsibility, Justice, Future’. The members of the Bonn Network include over 50 organisations, associations and initiatives who share a commitment to supporting sustainable development. Their joint engagement focuses on supporting and working to raise

public awareness of the global development agenda. It thus forms the nucleus of a community of responsibility that should continue growing, and in the future will hopefully also include other actors from other segments of society.

Partnership between equals

If development is to succeed, it must begin at the local level and take local circumstances into account. This is why municipal partnerships – e.g. for climate change mitigation – are an important instrument for promoting sustainable global development. Municipal projects usually enjoy a high degree of acceptance. Their long-term nature and the fact that they are rooted in civil society usually make them particularly sustainable.

With the support of the Service Agency Communities in One World / Engagement Global, the German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) and the Mercator Foundation, the city of Bonn maintains climate partnerships with cities in various countries such as Bolivia, Chile, China and Ghana. These partnerships differ according to local circumstances. All the partnerships are based on the goal of making an effective contribution toward climate change mitigation and/or adaptation at the local level. They do not aim primarily to transfer good practice examples from Bonn to municipalities in the Global South. Instead, the partners aim to really learn from each other, and jointly develop new ideas and solutions. This is because municipalities are equal partners in development cooperation. This gives them particular credibility. In municipal partnerships, people are able to experience in specific ways the interdependency of actions in countries of the North and impacts in countries of the South. The projects and strategies are as diverse as the partners themselves. Bonn is cooperating with Chengdu (PR China) on sustainable mobility and energy efficiency; with Buchará (Uzbekistan) it is cooperating on sustainable tourism. La Paz (Bolivia) has transferred from Bonn the idea of the climate change ambassador, a climate change education programme for primary school children. In Bonn, on the other hand, project actors are thinking about how consumer behaviour can be harmonised with the idea of ‘buen vivir’ – living the ‘good life’.

b) What enabling frameworks are required for municipal partnerships?

For municipal sustainability partnerships to succeed, various specific conditions must be in place. These include

- Simple, workable and reliable funding instruments that take account of the specific features of municipal structures and procedures
- A policy environment that is open to municipal partnerships
- Greater awareness and support of municipalities as development cooperation actors
- Global development goals that can also be implemented and measured at the local level (which was the case only to a limited extent with the MDGs)
- Greater support/involvement of municipal partnerships in the structures of German development cooperation
- Stronger and more direct inclusion of the local level in global strategies
- Greater public awareness of the fact that engagement for sustainability is an obligatory task in a community of global responsibility. This should also be reflected in legal frameworks in a way that enables municipalities to perform this task.

- More horizontal and vertical networking, e.g. by involving municipalities in multi-stakeholder partnerships
- Greater involvement of civil society

Responsibility begins at home. This is why global partnerships are also always municipal partnerships. Continuing to support and shape them in the future is an important task for municipalities worldwide.

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