



The Playbook
for the Post-Covid City.

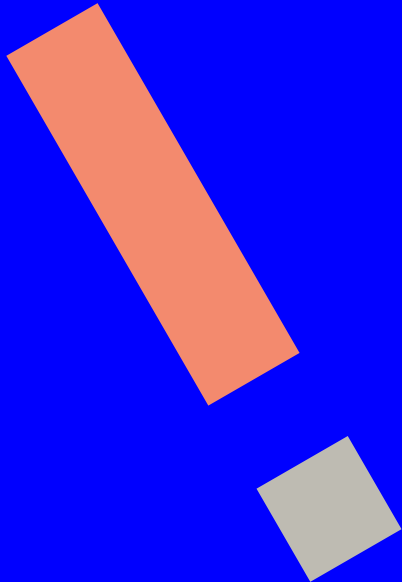
Urban Creativity Now!



Urban Creativity Now!

The time for change is now.
This playbook is for everyone
who wants to take action.

2nd, revised edition
Hamburg, 26 Oktober 2021



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Urban Creativity Now!

The coronavirus pandemic has changed city life almost beyond recognition. Many people are struggling with loss, financial insecurity, and loneliness. At the same time, the crisis has made many things possible that were previously unthinkable or difficult to imagine – parks became open-air fitness studios, car parks turned into playgrounds, exhibition halls changed into hospital wards. Bicycles have been given more space on the streets in many cities, retailers and restaurateurs have become more creative and found new ways to serve their customers despite shop closures.

Many of these things have come about spontaneously, without any underlying strategies or development plans. They demonstrate a creativity we have not seen that we have not seen in cities for a long time. As the “Urban Change Academy”, we were wondering: what can cities learn from these projects? This playbook reflects that approach.

“Urban Creativity Now” is a collection of impulses, observations, and perspectives on the Covid pandemic and how it is changing our cities. In three parts, we explore the question of how cities and citizens are dealing with this crisis and what options for action arise from it.

Part 1: Impulses is a collection of best cases that have given us food for thought in the past 18 months. These projects may seem temporary at first glance, but we believe that they can inspire us to find solutions to urban challenges beyond the pandemic. What new ideas and projects will the pandemic lead us to? And what will have a lasting impact post-pandemic?

Part 2: Observations paints a picture of the current situation by crowdsourcing.

We wanted to find out more about how people have experienced the effects of the pandemic in their city – from north to south, from east to west, in large and small cities: How has the pandemic changed urban life? Their observations, thoughts and feelings provide insights into the different cities and their various qualities. This playbook is intended to be used as a starting point for city planners to ask: What can we do to promote these qualities?

Part 3 brings together **Perspectives** from 11 Experts about the Covid crisis from the fields of futurology, culture, urban planning and research, social work, mobility, technology, finance and architecture. We ask: What direction do they think cities should take? And what does this mean for urban development?

You are reading the second, revised edition of our playbook for the Post-Covid City. When the German edition was first published in April 2021, it was not yet foreseeable when the “post-pandemic” period would start. Six months later, the pandemic is still a defining factor in our everyday life. More than ever, dealing with uncertainties on a day-to-day basis has become our matter of course.

We do not know how the situation will unfold this autumn. But we can still seize the opportunity to reshape our cities in the future and make them more resilient for future crises. One thing is certain, there will be many more crises in the years to come. Or, as futurologist Stephan Rammler puts it: “The world will become very uncomfortable.” It’s up to us how we react to these crises. With this playbook, we would like to start a discussion about our future and give you a few tools to take with you.

From urban inventory to testing ground

In the past few months, we have seen many exciting initiatives around the Covid pandemic emerge spontaneously from the situation we're in. The pandemic was the trigger, or accelerator, for us to take a different look at the multiple possibilities for urban spaces. It shows us that cities need to do much more to build up their resilience. We asked ourselves: How can we share our resources in an even better way in the future? How can we make them better and more easily available? How do we move from reactive to active action?

First, we need an overview of the available resources in a city. We call this step the "urban inventory." The "urban inventory" is not just a record of the areas, spaces, or infrastructure, but also the skills and capabilities that are available in the city. This inventory should be updated continuously because the city and its inhabitants are constantly changing. Taking stock once is not enough. The combination of an "urban inventory" (What is there?) and the corresponding "matchmaking" – (Who might need which resource or capacity? Where can a transfer take place? What new connections can be made?) creates new possibilities.

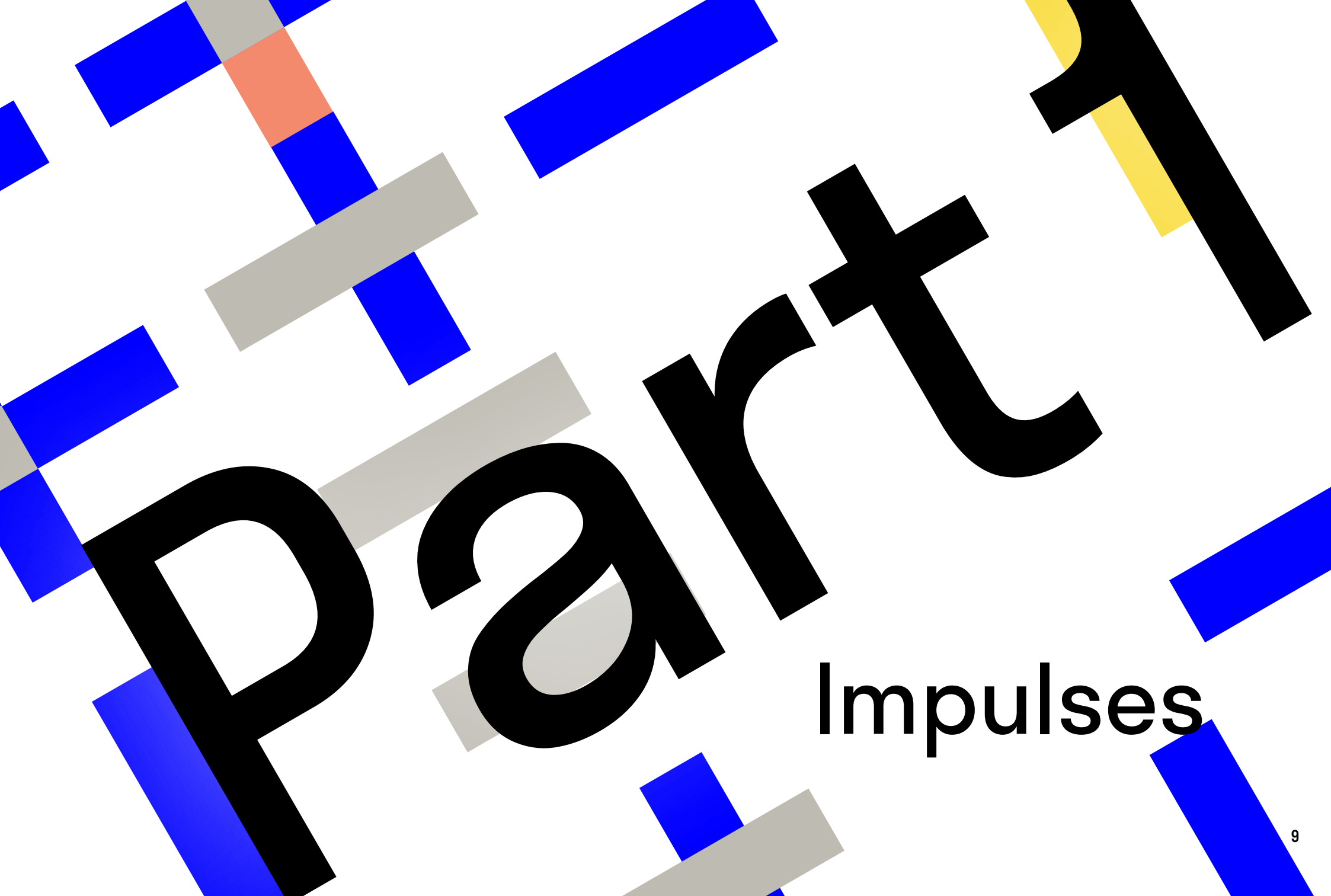
Our working model

Any number of **experiments** can be set up on this basis. And these can be evaluated according to predefined criteria and then either continued, discontinued, or scaled accordingly. These experiments can be carried out freely according to methods that have already been tried and tested, e.g. from the world of agile software development. The [“Pocket Book for Agile Piloting”](#), for example, describes the co-creative approaches taken up by the City of Helsinki.

In the last few months, we have seen many experiments taking place in cities around the world. One of the most popular ad hoc projects was probably the appearance of pop-up bike lanes. These were first piloted in individual cities such as Berlin and then taken up or further developed elsewhere. In Germany, local cooperations between different cities/municipalities and the ticketing platform Eventim, were established to reliably organise the allocation of vaccination appointments – another example of a concrete matchmaking between defining a problem and using an existing service to solve it, and scale it, in different places.

“We can’t wait 20 years until new neighbourhoods with new mobility structures and new railway lines are built, we have to focus on what exists right now: How can we restructure it while protecting the environment at the same time? And how can we protect our cities against the climate changes that we are already experiencing?”

Philine Gaffron



Part

Impulses




Rethinking
urban spaces

Connecting
knowledge and
capabilities

Strengthening
the common good

Daring to
experiment



Impulse 1

Rethinking urban spaces

How can we use
spaces in new
ways?


Intro

During the covid pandemic, we've experienced urban space in a completely new way: buildings, public spaces, streets, bridges and green spaces were rediscovered and revitalised in many places, public spaces were reappropriated, and repurposed, private spaces were made accessible and private facilities were shared. On the grounds of the Kampnagel arts centre in Hamburg for example, children and young people transformed a concrete ramp into a playground, leading artistic director, Amelie Deuflhard, to say that: "People have simply re-appropriated public space."

Behind the locked doors of cultural venues, restaurants, and retail and sports facilities, new spatial concepts have emerged. The ensemble from the Thalia Theater in Hamburg played in the city's tallest buildings, such as the Elbphilharmonie or the St Michael's, instead of on their usual stages, and the neighbourhood management team in Berlin's Brunnenviertel encouraged the neighbourhood to take part in a covid-compliant sports programme on their balconies. Elsewhere, spaces simply became more

accessible. A Hamburg swimming pool, which opened its doors several times a week to give homeless people a free shower during the lockdown, for example – a simple and highly effective idea.

Other places, on the other hand, have lost their appeal during the pandemic: covid has ruthlessly exposed the weak points of monofunctional spaces such as the deserted city centres and empty office complexes. The city centre must become a "meeting place that people want to stay in," says Kirsten Pfaue, coordinator of the City of Hamburg's mobility revolution. Urban planner Marion Klemme also sees an opportunity in the crisis: "Even though it is a difficult time for individual traders and many closures are expected, from a planning point of view it is a real gain for the city centre when new uses and functions are ushered in again: Living, working, commerce, urban production, but also public facilities such as libraries, music schools, youth centres." This is what the city of the future could look like. The pandemic has taught us that urban space is becoming



increasingly hybrid, elastic and multifunctional. Numerous city planners—from non-profit initiatives to committed city administrations—are challenging the old model of the functional separation of spaces: There is a slumbering potential here that is crying out to be used in the interest of all. Every city, every municipality is thus called upon to systematically record its areas and spaces to promote innovative spatial uses. Mobility expert Philine Gaffron sees a need for action with regards to [“Space justice for the different modes of transport and the different uses—mobility, dwell and meet, culture and restaurants, trees and green spaces. We have to look at this even more through the lens of spatial quality.”](#)

Everyday life during the pandemic has required us to re-think urban spaces. How can we multicode and repurpose existing spaces? How can we make places accessible to more people and their different needs? How can we combat vacancy? How can we relieve overcrowded places to make them safer, but also more attractive? The idea of

decentralising spaces is reflected, for example, in a project run by an architecture firm in Rotterdam that has redistributed the large open-air markets across the city. With the idea of micro-markets, the challenges of the pandemic overlap with fundamental urban planning concepts such as the 15-minute city. With a polycentric reconstruction of the city, we not only gain “vital neighbourhood centres”, as urban researcher Dieter Läßle emphasises, but also pave the way to building a resilient city with an infrastructure less susceptible to disruption in view of medium- and long-term challenges such as climate change.

“Every city must take a thorough look at its spaces and analyse them: What function do they have for the local area, for the living environment, for climate adaptation or for more living space?”

Marion Klemme

“The companies that are being established today don’t want to settle in a mono-functional industrial estate. They want to settle in a vital, lively city with a mix of uses. It’s not just people working in media who want to have coffee or lunch in the surrounding area in the afternoon.”

Dieter Läßle

“An interim use is always first and foremost an experiment. You see what works, without fixing everything in advance – you work in a processual way. (...) in the present, ideas usually emerge quite quickly about what a subsequent use could look like.”

Amelie Deußhard

“If you are thinking of taking some areas away from motorised, private traffic, then you should take the opportunity to improve the quality of these areas especially regarding amenity value, cultural events, and the possibilities for people coming together. If people are no longer attracted to the city centre for shopping, then you have to create spaces where people can meet, which can also be used for cultural and artistic events.”

Marion Klemme

“It was amazing to see people reclaiming and enjoying public space in the summer of 2020.”

Kirsten Pfaue

“My vision is strongly influenced by the idea of the 15-minute city as conceived by Anne Hidalgo, the mayor of Paris. In other words, a polycentric reconstruction of the city so that all the important functions we need in our daily lives are within walking distance or can be reached by bicycle within ten or fifteen minutes.”

Dieter Läßle

Rethinking urban spaces

Best Cases

New ways of holidaymaking in the city

Travelling during a pandemic has been difficult and at times impossible. But what exactly does it mean to go on holiday and what might holidays look like in the future? [Fundus Theater Hamburg](#) is asking itself this question as part of its Holiday Research Project.

Up to ten families in Hamburg will be able to swap flats with each other for two nights in March 2021. Under the motto, “different rooms, different furniture, different toys, a different view and a different environment!”, new holiday experiences will be discovered through collective research, and fundamental questions will be discussed:



Photo: © Daniel Ladnar

“Perhaps this is precisely the right time to ask – How do we want to go on holiday in the first place? Because it’s not just during the pandemic that going on holiday has become more complicated. How can we travel without harming the climate and what can we do about over-tourism and Airbnbisation?”

Why is it interesting?

- Even though holidaying isn’t possible at the moment, cities offer a lot of new things to discover – we just need to create targeted opportunities for this.
- This project enables a climate-friendly and cost-effective change of scenery.
- The project opens new perspectives without the need to travel great distances.
- The theatre serves as a mediator – bringing together people and their living environments who wouldn’t have any contact otherwise.

Potential

- One’s own city can be discovered anew.
- What could hyperlocal holiday offers look like in the future?
- How can the sharing principle in a city also be expanded in the direction of non-commercial leisure activities?

Using urban infrastructure in a multifunctional way

Many European cities have got creative to make good use of vacancies during the covid pandemic. In [Barcelona](#), the fire brigade has converted three sports centres and a hotel to accommodate and care for around 600 Covid-19 patients. In Berlin, the city converted its exhibition centre into the Covid Emergency Hospital: Up to 1,000 beds were made available for patients with milder symptoms so that hospitals could concentrate on more critical cases.

However, vacant buildings are not only being used for medical purposes. The Red Cross, in cooperation with the Spanish Civil Defence, has set up 100 beds for homeless people in a sports hall in [Gijón](#). And schools have also become more than educational spaces. The Covid measures in the [Milan Adaptation Plan 2020](#) provide for school buildings and their green spaces to be made accessible to the public during the summer months – in line with the motto “scuole aperte” (open school).



Photo: © Messe Berlin

Why is it interesting?

- Existing urban infrastructure is being used flexibly and in a variety of ways.
- Buildings and green spaces that would otherwise be closed are being made accessible to the general public.

Potential

- Every city should take stock of its urban infrastructure to see what can be repurposed.
- The multifunctional use of existing urban infrastructure has the potential to become the basic principle of the post-Covid city.
- The multiple uses of existing spaces mean that new meeting places in the city are created.
- Who else could benefit from the multiple use or conversion of infrastructure and buildings?

Sources: [barcelona.cat](#), [Corona-Behandlungszentrum Jafféstraße](#), [Eurocities Covid News](#), [Comune di Milano](#)

Rethinking shopping with micro markets

It hasn't been easy for us all to keep our distance at busy open-air markets during the pandemic. At the same time, markets as physical points of sale are an important part of the urban infrastructure. So, to be better prepared for crisis situations like the pandemic, it's important to rethink the design and function of local markets.

The Rotterdam-based architecture firm "[Shift Architecture Urbanism \(Shift AU\)](#)" has developed a research-by-design prototype for this purpose: a safe hyperlocal micro-market. The idea is to take the large open-air markets and decentralise and distribute them across the city. The markets also stay open for longer to further reduce the accumulation of people. In this way, "Shift AU" creates a shopping environment that is not only risk-free but also very comfortable for everyone.

Each market unit consists of a 16-square grid with three market stalls, each selling a different type of fresh produce. The grid is marked on the pavement with tape and cordoned off with guard rails. The visitors wait in a distant queue to enter the market, with a maximum of 6 people allowed in at any one time.

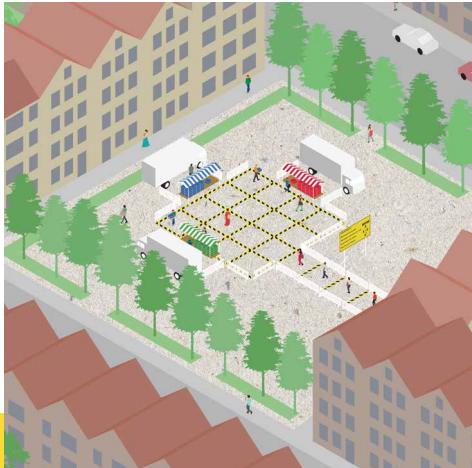


Photo: © [Shift AU](#)

Why is it interesting?

- The hyperlocal micro-markets not only relieve the supermarkets, but also shorten the distances customers have to travel in the city.
- The rectangular 4x4 grid concept can be realised in various combinations and formats.
- The decentralisation of large markets is relatively easy to implement, as open-air markets consist of flexible, mobile units.

Potential

- This project raises the question of how we want to use community spaces (such as markets) in the future.
- Are there other spaces that could be decentralised?
- Micro-markets offer a new shopping experience. By decentralising large markets, new meeting places are created in the city and local supply is improved.
- This example is simple, quick to implement and easy to scale.

Source: [stirworld.com](#)

Flying high with the Thalia Theater

In the face of the cultural shutdown, over the past year and a half, theatre professionals have been under a lot of pressure. The [Thalia Theater](#) in Hamburg has made a virtue out of necessity: “If we can’t do it on earth, we’ll perform in the air in future!” Introducing: [Theater der Lüfte](#) (theatre in the sky).

Since their usual theatre spaces are closed, the ensemble has unceremoniously moved its stage to the highest and most skyward buildings in the city: the roof of the Elbphilharmonie, the planetarium, the tower of the Katharinen-

kirche, the television tower, a harbour crane, and the St Michael’s church, to name but a few. The short performances of around one minute each can all be seen [online](#) as part of a web series.



Photo: © [Thalia Theater Hamburg](#)

Why is it interesting?

- Creative solutions continue to emerge even in times when cultural institutions like theatres are forced to close.
- Theater der Lüfte makes theatrical work visible in the urban space and draws attention to its social significance.
- Theatre as an art form is extending out into other urban spaces.
- Well-known tourist areas in the city are given a new cultural function.

Potential

- Even after the pandemic, churches, towers, buildings, and public spaces could be used in a multifunctional way (e.g. for theatre but also for other cultural events).
- Temporary uses of unusual places could be facilitated – even beyond the pandemic – through simplified approval procedures.

Source: [Thalia Theater Hamburg](#)

An anti-stress campaign for the people of Beşiktaş

The administration of Istanbul's Beşiktaş district has launched an anti-stress campaign for its citizens. Yoga classes and sessions with psychologists are being offered free of charge in parks.

Under the motto Beşiktaş will heal together, various measures have been implemented in line with the city's social-distancing rules. The campaign is pursuing a preventive approach to reduce the negative long-term psychological consequences of the pandemic by offering psychosocial support.



Photo: © [Beşiktaş Municipality](#)

Why is it interesting?

- This project tests new ways of using public space.
- The topic of mental health is brought into the foreground.
- The offer is low-threshold and free of charge.

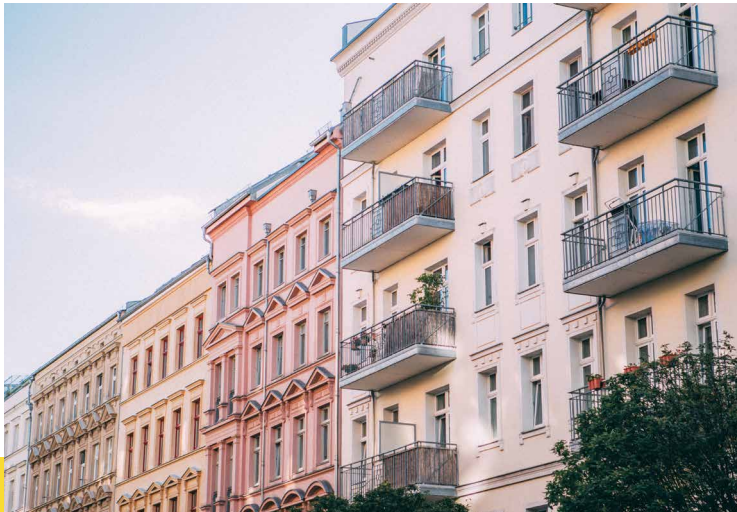
Potential

- What other offers could be made more low-threshold and brought into public spaces?
- Fitness trainers from fitness studios could design new fitness trails or training programmes. The city would pay and the trainers would have something to do.
- Cooperation with health insurers or urban public health initiatives is feasible.
- The programme could be extended to other areas such as mindfulness training or meditation.

Keeping fit with balcony sport

This fitness project in Berlin's Brunnenviertel was being planned even before the pandemic. The social distancing rules meant that there was a whole new set of parameters to consider and so the team decided to move the sports programme to the balcony – so everyone kept a safe distance from the trainers.

The programme was aimed at the whole neighbourhood, but the team was especially keen to encourage men, and families with children, to engage in sporting activities on, or on in front of, their balconies (if they live on the ground floor).



Photos: [Jonas Denil](#)

The balcony sports took place at three different locations in the summer of 2020 with the exercise sessions lasting about 15 minutes. There were sessions for fitness and coordination, and at the end there was time to learn how to do a sports massage for yourself.

Why is it interesting?

- If you can't go to the gym, the gym will come to you. This simple motto was put into practice in a very pragmatic way. It appeals not only to people who are interested in fitness, but also to those who are more shy.
- The natural distance between the balcony and the outdoor area allows even the shyest of people to get a good first impression of how it all works before joining in.

Potential

- Cooperation with local trainers and fitness studios is likely to continue after the pandemic.
- The project has a high potential for scaling to other locations.
- What other activities could be carried out from the balcony?

Private concerts from person to person

The initiative “[1:1 Concerts](#)” brings musicians, listeners and hosts together via coordinating institutions and thus aims to make a substantial contribution to the preservation of our cultural landscape.

The concerts aim to facilitate personal contact and shared musical experiences, while considering all applicable Covid protection measures. At the 1:1 concerts, musicians and listeners can meet for around 10 minutes.

Along with established concert venues, an art gallery, a quiet backyard, an empty factory building, or an allotment garden can all become concert venues, as

private hosts have made their premises available for the concerts, too.

The voluntary donations received from concertgoers go into the emergency fund set up by the German Orchestra Foundation and other regional funds. This money will be used to support musicians who have lost their income due to Covid-related cancellations of all their concerts and performances and whose livelihoods have been threatened.



Photo: © [Astis Krause](#)

Why is it interesting?

- New experiences are being created around music, in new and unusual places.
- The relationship between musicians, institutions, and their audiences is maintained, and perhaps even deepened as a result.
- It's not just food from restaurants that can be “delivered” to new places – music can, too.

Potential

- This example is based on an idea that could also be used in the future to add value to concert halls, e.g. as a subscription model or as a gift.
- The targeted use of such a project, e.g. in schools or nursing homes, is also conceivable.
- Music could become even more accessible through these activities and lower the inhibition threshold for engaging with it.

Showers for the homeless in a swimming pool in St. Pauli

Homeless people were able to shower three days a week in a swimming pool that was closed due to Covid-19. The project was made possible through a cooperation between the Hamburg Social Welfare Authority, the non-profit initiative [GoBanyo](#), which operates a shower bus, and Bäderland Hamburg.

Why is it interesting?

- The pandemic has enabled new solidarity-based support services to operate, and these should continue beyond the pandemic.
- The needs of homeless people are too often overlooked, and they faced additional challenges during the pandemic.

Potential

- Regular shower services for homeless people could also be established beyond the pandemic. This example could set a precedent and would be easy to implement and scale up.
- What if cities gave homeless people access to other services in the future? What could these look like?



Photo: © [Marius Röer](#)

Closed shops open their outdoor areas for market stalls

During the pandemic, markets were temporarily banned in Angers, France just like in many other cities. So, the city council initiated a platform to make the open spaces in front of closed shops usable for market traders.

Many local food producers were desperately looking for ways to offer their perishable goods for sale. To help, established shops, which were also affected by closures, adopted market traders.

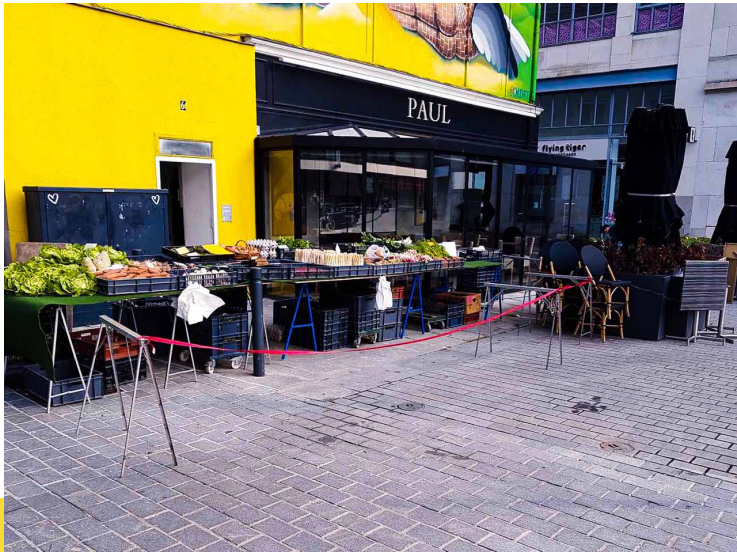


Photo: © [Angers, adopte ton maraicher](#)

This allowed the traders to set up their stalls in front of the closed shops, bars and cafés and sell their goods. More than 70 shops took part in the action and made it possible for the market stalls to continue to operate safely.

Why is it interesting?

- The project is based on the targeted use of excess space and gave closed shops a new purpose.
- Here, markets have been made accessible to more people and the decentralised distribution of the market stalls prevents larger crowds.
- The city has not only developed a good idea but has also managed to implement it.

Potential

- Beyond the pandemic, new hybrid concepts and cooperations could be promoted for the long term.
- How can we create a system that goes beyond solidarity and helps shops which have to close?
- How can mobile markets in new locations increase the quality of life in neighbourhoods? One example: food truck markets.

A municipal gallery becomes a classroom

Cultural institutions have been closed for months. In Rosenheim, the [Städtische Galerie](#) has opened its rooms to the neighbouring grammar school. Here, the graduating class can prepare for their Abitur (high school diploma) in 2021.



Photos: © Martin Weiland, Kunst trifft Schule, view of the gallery, works by Bettina Gorn

Why is it interesting?

- Covid-related vacancies mean that spaces have been used in new ways.
- New cooperations between urban initiatives are emerging.
- School can also take place outside the school building and open new perspectives at the same time.

Potential

- The spatial and technical “extra space” should be recorded systematically and made usable to new groups of people.
- A marketplace for the temporary use of cultural spaces could be developed beyond the pandemic.
- The idea of “school in new places” should be continued to promote new incentives and perspectives.

Source: [Städtische Galerie Rosenheim](#)

Cemeteries become parks

During the pandemic, city cemeteries have been rediscovered as places to enjoy. Many of them have park-like structures and offer green recreational areas alongside their usual functions. But, before Corona, few people had the idea of using these places for something other than mourning.

A report from Deutschlandfunk Nova describes the situation in a cemetery in Berlin: “For me, it’s a place to relax, I live right next door. It is a bit like having my own little private garden, where I can read, play and go for walks – and it’s simply fantastic.” – as told to [Deutschlandfunk](#) by the cemetery’s new residents in Berlin-Neukölln for the “When the cemetery becomes a park” report.



Photo: © Ivy Nortey

It is interesting to note that the cemeteries are also changing all the time: “The cemeteries are opening up. Because, of course, more and more space is becoming available. And so spaces are opening up that can really be used for leisure and recreation, too.” – Martin Venne, urban planner – as told to [Deutschlandfunk](#) in the article “When the cemetery becomes a park.”

Why is it interesting?

- The traditional uses of public places are called into question.
- A place with seemingly clear restrictions on use can also be interpreted differently.
- Peaceful coexistence is possible despite strict regulations.
- Rules (such as those for cemeteries) can be renegotiated to enable spaces to be used in new ways.

Potential

- Public places should be systematically reassessed in order to discover their potential for shared use.
- We need a dialogue, e.g. with church bodies, to identify further places that could be used publicly for recreational purposes.

Source: [Deutschlandfunk Nova](#)

The front of a house becomes a cinema

Cinema operators have been, and continue to be, hit hard by the pandemic. Therefore, several exciting initiatives have sprung up in various European cities, not only to bring cinema back to the people – but to bring people closer together again through films.

In April 2020, [Olaf Karkhoff](#) initiated the [Window Flicks](#) project, which brought films from the cinema to backyards and house façades during the lockdown: “Window Flicks is a cultural project that aims to support cinemas in Berlin during the Covid crisis. We want to encourage all Berliners to stay at home during these difficult times. Our vision is to be able to offer cinema as a community experience in communities in a safe environment with our courtyard façade projections and to help the cultural workers in Berlin in the process.”

The project’s [Instagram feed](#) shows its impact on people – not only was a sixth birthday saved thanks to a film screening (Shaun the Sheep). Even Wim Wenders gave the project his blessing at the start, so that distribution hurdles did not even become an issue.

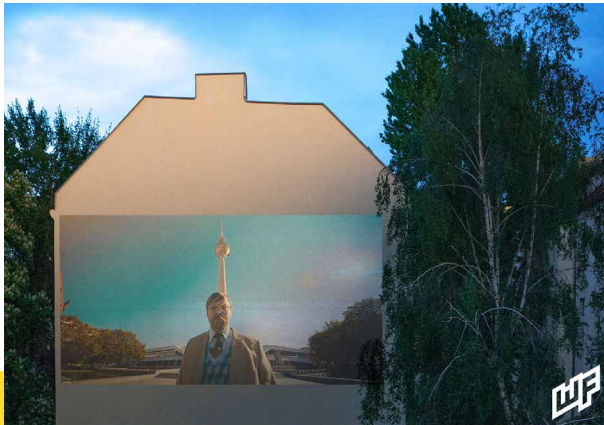


Photo: © [Window Flicks](#)

Why is it interesting?

- Even in times when cultural institutions such as cinemas have to close completely, creative solutions continue to emerge.
- New community formats are emerging that serve other needs than, for example, the classic open-air cinema.
- Patrons like Wim Wenders, who can become inspired by a good idea, can facilitate the implementation of such projects.

Potential

- The legal framework for the public screening of films has been somewhat restrictive up to now – making it very difficult or impossible to implement such ideas in normal times. The example of Window Flicks shows the value of these actions and hopefully encourages rights holders to create spaces for similar ideas in the future.

Source: [Window Flicks](#)

A multi-storey car park turns into a house for living, working and culture

The pandemic has pointed out that we need more diverse use- and housing concepts in city centres. In Hamburg the abandoned multi-storey car park [Gröninger Hof](#) is being converted into a new place to live, work and play. Instead of demolishing the building, the existing structure is being used – this smart move tremendously saves construction costs and CO².

The pilot project was initiated by the Gröninger Hof cooperative, founded in 2018. The contract for the redesign of Gröninger Hof was awarded to Duplex Architekten. They will convert the eight-storey car park from the 1960s into 80+ state-funded rental flats for different lifestyles. The base and some storeys are to be retained. In addition, several storeys in wooden construction are in the plans. Quite a highlight is the newly designed inner courtyard providing sufficient light for the living areas. A roof terrace will serve as communal area with a tree garden. On the lower levels, the building will open up to both neighbourhood and interested visitors as a place for culture and education, small businesses, gastronomy and co-working.



Photo: © ELBE&FLUT / Thomas Hampel

Why is it interesting?

- Living in the centre becomes affordable. In addition, affordable commercial space is created.
- The city centre will be revitalised. Space for cars is transformed into space for people.
- Living, working and culture will take place under one roof.
- The cooperative model promotes exchange, encounter and civic engagement.
- The building project focuses on sustainable construction, as part of the existing building structure will be reused – even the construction waste will be recycled. Energy efficiency, energy supply and climate protection were also taken into account in the planning from the very beginning.

Potential

- The Gröninger Hof cooperative is a shining example of place-based, innovative project and property development. This project could set a precedent and generate imagination for other places in the city. It encourages new thinking about cooperatives and cooperative projects.

Source: [Genossenschaft Gröninger Hof](#)

What you can do right now

Exercise: Using spaces in new ways

You will need: **Paper** **Post-its** **Pens**

Enabling new uses for urban spaces means bringing the *what* together with the *where*. Start with a systematic urban inventory: What spaces are available to you in the city? Look at street maps, maps, plans and aerial photographs, observe your surroundings by taking a walk through the city, talk to each other.

Step 1: List the spaces

Take five minutes and write down – separately – the different spaces that exist in your city. Think about:

- Private open spaces, e.g. brownfield sites, undeveloped areas, gardens, and office buildings.
- Public traffic areas, e.g. roads, footpaths, car parks, traffic islands, roadside greenery, public transport stops, city squares and recreational areas
- public green and open spaces, e.g. parks, sports grounds, playgrounds, bathing areas and cemeteries (use the [BSSR directory](#) to conduct a location search for open-space projects).

Think about: What kind of functioning places are there in your city? Which forgotten spaces can you revive? What spaces are only used seasonally? What spaces can you use for temporary projects? In what areas has the demand

for space decreased during the pandemic? Which rooms have become vacant?

Step 2: Compare your findings

In your team, discuss the spaces you have been thinking about. Write them down on post-its.

Step 3: Collect ideas for uses

In the next step, collect the different uses and services that every city needs. This could be services such as hairdressers, the opportunity to train or participate in sports classes outside or a local festival. What new things does the city need to facilitate? What is essential for you? Which services have a high inhibition threshold and are therefore not taken up by everyone? Again, take 5 minutes and write down what comes to your mind.

Step 4: **Compare your findings**

In the team, discuss the uses you have come up with. Write them down on Post-its.

Step 5: **Combine spaces with uses**

Now put the collection of Post-its on the wall and ask: How can you combine the spaces and uses in the most unusual way? What about a play in the playground? A cinema show in the supermarket? Gardening on the traffic island? Why not?! Many spaces can be used in multiple ways. Parks, for example, are not just for walking, lounging, playing sports and sunbathing. During the pandemic, Istanbul's Beşiktaş, district launched an anti-stress campaign in which city residents could attend yoga classes in parks or even have free sessions with psychologists – this is a good example of how we can multicode spaces and offer activities with both high and low-threshold inhibitions. The things that may seem wacky or out there at first glance can open the way to urban innovations.

For those in a hurry...

If you want to get into it as fast as possible, you can use the following spaces and possible uses as a basis.

Spaces

Offices, parks, empty building sites, wasteland, traffic islands, riverbanks, bridges, streets, pavements, car parks, ice cream parlours, restaurants, clubs, sports halls, swimming pools, gardens, sports fields, playgrounds, stadiums, bathing lakes, cemeteries, churches, mosques, synagogues, bus stops, town squares, cafés, hotels, supermarkets, theatres, cinemas, galleries, museums, schools, hairdressers, bars, street markets, beauty salons, saunas, nurseries, libraries, neighbourhood meeting places, bookshops...

Possible uses

Art exhibition, working, eating out, drinking coffee, psychotherapy, festival, concert, adult education, music lessons, walking, sports, stage play, barbecue, gardening, shopping, swapping things, street festival, cooking together, band rehearsal, going out, dancing, skateboarding, meditating, yoga, sewing, painting, watching a film, homework help, bike tour, rickshaw ride, karaoke, roller skating, repairing something together.



Connecting knowledge and capabilities

How can we develop better
forms of cooperation
and make (experiential)
knowledge more accessible?

Impulse 2

Intro

Every city is a pool of knowledge, and every inhabitant brings their own set of experiences and skills. This is an immense potential that should be used as far as possible. The Covid pandemic showed how projects and solutions have developed in an interdisciplinary way and often with the participation of several, sometimes surprising, actors. The systematic collection and networking between people with different fields of knowledge could be a way to discover even more new and innovative forms of cooperation.

The pandemic has forced us to adopt new problem-solving strategies only made possible by the freeing up of certain resources which have been put to new uses – be it through temporary work, debarment from working or unemployment. This refers not only to places and their transformations, but also to human experience and skills. Often it is individual or private initiatives that see the need for new solutions and just as often these get going entirely on their own. But there are also projects that have been initiated by the cities themselves.

Our best cases show that new and previously untapped potential can be discovered through the change in conditions. One example: Some small and medium-sized enterprises that have been struggling with the effects of the pandemic have been brought together with freelance creatives in Hamburg, who in turn were struggling with a lack of work. The creatives made good use of their idle time and the SMEs benefitted from their expertise – remunerated by a fee that was paid through the project's funding. So, both sides are helped: The SMEs got the expertise they may not have had access to before, and the creatives got jobs and new contacts in a difficult economic situation.

“In the long run, development really depends on how local actors reinvent themselves: What alliances can they form, what new coproductions or cooperations can they enter into?”

Marion Klemme

“In March, April 2020, some of my colleagues who normally do international media work were called away to City Hall to help set up the social media department better and to help the few colleagues who were responsible for it. This dialogue and exchange between different offices and authorities is extremely important.”

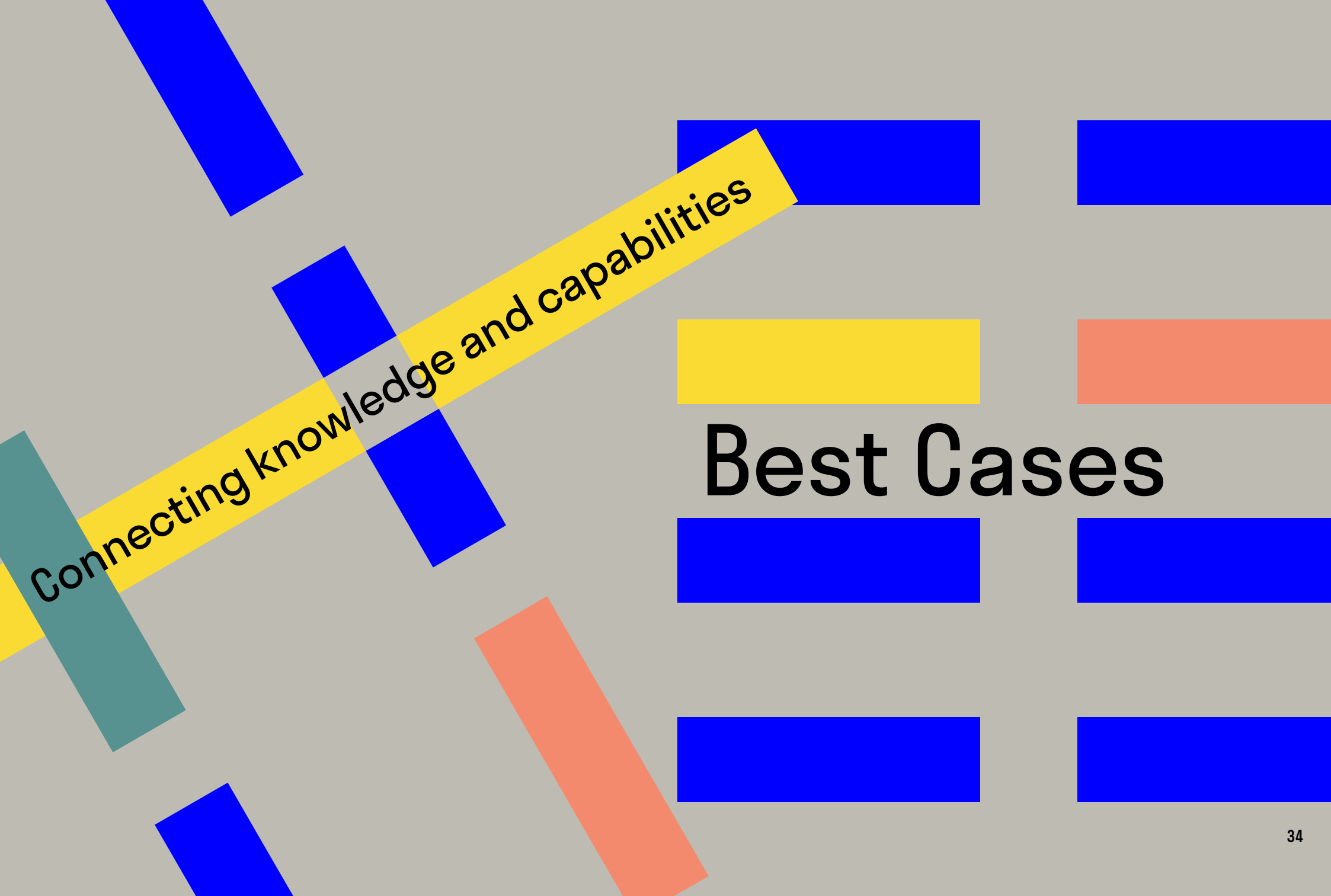
Svenja Holst-Runge

“I think collaborations within communities are going to be something extremely important. And that will be added into everything here, like the green and nature, and culture, and open spaces, and work and production. We need to create better kinds of teamwork and collaborations.”

Jenny Grettve

“An alliance of different thinkers from different departments and backgrounds would be interesting and could open up new perspectives.”

Amelie Deuflhard



Connecting knowledge and capabilities

Best Cases

Emergency Lab brings creatives and SMEs together

Many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have been facing unexpected challenges as a result of Covid-19. To offer practical support as quickly as possible, the Hamburg Kreativgesellschaft (Creative Society) set up an [Emergency Lab](#) in cooperation with the local Chamber of Commerce.

Over a period of two and a half days, a team of two creatives devoted themselves to solving a specific problem for an SME. The creatives were paid for their work, and the service was free of charge for participating companies.

Why is it interesting?

- Many creatives and self-employed people have been particularly affected by the pandemic. At the same time, they have the creative skills that are needed to help mitigate the effects of the pandemic.
- This is a funding scheme that works both ways – for the companies and the creatives.
- Even short-term interventions can help companies enormously.

Potential

- This model is scalable and could be rolled out both locally and beyond the borders of Hamburg.
- How and where could creatives expand what they offer to help companies cope with the effects of the pandemic?
- Developing new business models and networks for creatives (e.g. through cooperative approaches) is possible.

“With the Emergency Lab, we are pursuing two goals: We want to support small and medium-sized enterprises to overcome crises with the help of concrete solutions. To this end, we want to use the innovative power of creative professionals to find new ways out of the crisis.” – Kreativgesellschaft Hamburg.



Neighbourhood help on the other end of the phone

Many older people do not have access to digital neighbourhood platforms. With the “[Machbarschaft](#)” initiative they can make a phone call to request help, like assistance with shopping, for example. The requests are forwarded automatically via app to volunteers in the neighbourhood.

[Quarantänehelden](#) (quarantine heroes) works according to a similar principle – they bridge the gap for vulnerable people without internet access using community notices and phone calls.

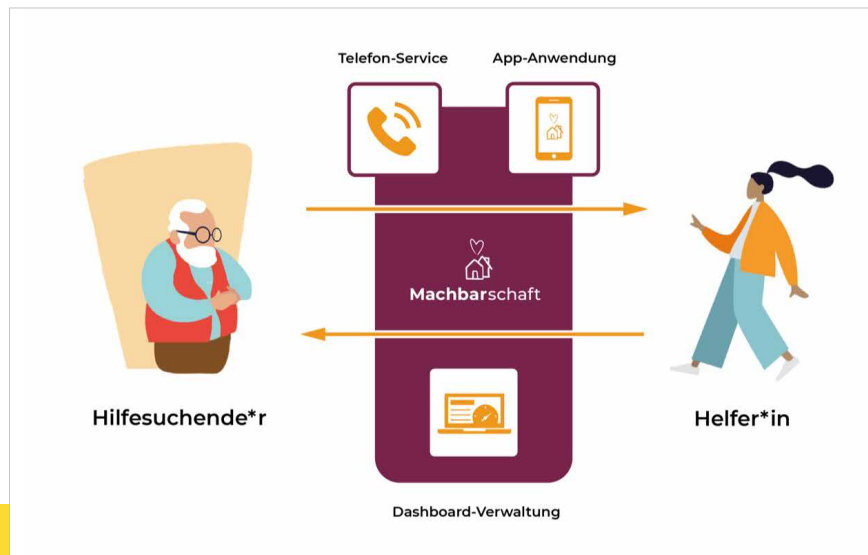


Photo: © Machbarschaft e.V.

Why is it interesting?

- Some older people are active online – not all. With “Machbarschaft” no one is left alone.
- The app serves as an interface for existing support services, i.e. it is a kind of intermediary.
- The project came out of the [#WirvsVirus](#) (UsvsVirus) hackathon run by the German government.

Potential

- This offer could be integrated into other existing platforms, e.g. car2go or coupon systems belonging to food retailers (i.e. to offer discounts on purchases or bonus points as an additional incentive to participate).
- What other digital offers could be translated for those without access to the internet?
- This project has real potential for scaling.

Sources: [Machbarschaft](#), [Quarantänehelden](#)

London advertising professionals work pro bono for small shops

London is a powerhouse for design and advertising. But these industries have also been hit hard by the economic impacts of the pandemic. As a result, many agencies have put their staff on “furlough” or paid leave. With the [Not Fur’Long Creative](#) initiative, a group of communications professionals offered their services for free – since they were getting paid anyway.

“Instead of starting a podcast, or learning the art of baking with sourdough, we decided to start Not Fur’Long. We want to use our time to help non-profit initiatives and small businesses that have been hit hard in these unprecedented times.”



Photo: © [Not Fur’Long Creative](#)

The offer was targeted at small local businesses and the first clients included a fitness studio and a brewery. Due to the high demand, the group was forced to discontinue the offer as there were so many shops that wanted to take advantage of the group’s expertise and the group had limited resources.

Why is it interesting?

- The clever and self-initiated use of excess capacity (advertising professionals being paid but still having a lot of time on their hands) benefits companies that would not otherwise have access to resources like these.
- Suddenly, “the little guys” get a wild card and can attract attention for their cause or their business.
- The project is a pragmatic and self-organised offer of help that came into being without a commission.

Potential

- Behind this project there is a simple concept that can, and should, be scaled locally and globally.
- The state-supported model of furlough (paid leave) enables specialised resources to be offered elsewhere. This could also lead to entirely new models of work in the future.
- Paid leave or part-time work is filled with meaning thanks to this project. How can existing skills during times of unemployment or paid leave be made useful elsewhere?

Source: [Not Fur’Long Creative](#)

Online education levels the playing field

Social background continues to play a key role in educational success. Not all students have the same access to personal, social, cultural, and financial resources. So some of them are denied access to certain educational opportunities. The Covid pandemic has exacerbated these inequalities, many students especially have had to study on their own during the lockdown(s). Most teachers had limited resources and availability and many parents were overburdened with the combined pressures of working from home and home-schooling.

Considering this, a group of students set up “[Corona School](#)” to support students with their home-schooling on a voluntary basis. On the platform, students can network with dedicated students and arrange free, digital learning support via video chat. This also reached students who would otherwise not be able to take advantage of traditional tutoring opportunities due to financial reasons.

Why is it interesting?

- The use of digital technologies can promote equality in education.
- This is where the principle of matchmaking comes into play – the Corona School brings students in need of help together with committed students willing to help them.
- The voluntary project shows that it is possible to support one another, especially during hard times.

Potential

- The project can also help to promote equal opportunities beyond the Covid crisis.
- In what other contexts can we share knowledge and skills?



Corona School e.V.

#wissenstattvirenaustauschen

Discovering creative potential with hackathons and sprints

Whether it's social inequality, a lack of digitalisation, loneliness, or bureaucratic hurdles: The Covid crisis has confronted us with a multitude of societal challenges. During the first lockdown in March 2020, the German federal government invited citizens to work in a digital space on the many challenges posed by Covid-19. The aim of the so-called [#WirvsVirus hackathon](#) was to bundle the creative potential of civil society and to find solutions to problems together. Anyone with time, interest and internet access could take part. Over a period of just 48 hours, 28,361 people worked together on over 1,500 solutions. More than 150 projects were then put into practice, including [Machbarschaft](#), [U:DO](#), [Wir bleiben liqui.de](#) and [Fast Border Crossing](#).

With the help of [Update Germany](#), another hackathon took place in March 2021.

Why is it interesting?

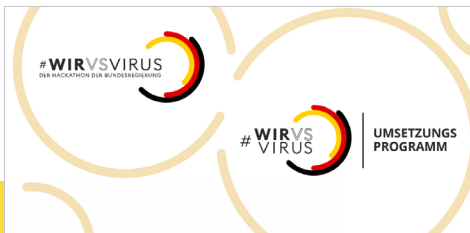
- The hackathon format allows civil society to contribute and solve challenges in a coordinated and effective way.
- The formats enable rapid testing and user-centred development.
- The wealth of ideas contributed by civil society is

brought together with the implementation power of the state.

- Since the ideas come from civil society, their greatest possible potential can also be found here, and solutions oriented towards the common good emerge.
- All participants broaden their horizons and learn new things.

Potential

- The problem-solving ability of civil society should be used actively in the future to find new solutions to the challenges of our time.
- Open Social Innovation, i.e. a broad participation process (Open) to address social challenges (Social) with new solutions (Innovation), could become a new standard in urban development.
- The formats contribute to the networking of different players: Individuals as well as institutional players can expand their social networks to facilitate cooperation on different levels.



Assistant nursing crash courses for flight attendants

The Covid crisis has led to widespread travel restrictions around the world. The airline SAS Scandinavian Airlines had to put about 90 per cent of its staff on paid leave for this reason. Since cabin crew have basic medical skills and there has been an increased need for health workers during the Covid crisis, Oscar Stege Unger (Wallenberg Foundations AB) and Fredrik Hillelson (Novare) founded the [Skill Shift Initiative](#) one day later – a platform for matching people who are temporarily available and can be deployed in the health system. The aim is to mobilise available human resources to support Swedish healthcare providers in the fight against the pandemic.

In 3-day fast-track health training developed by the Sophiahemmet University, SAS cabin staff were trained as assistant nurses to relieve the Swedish healthcare system. Contact was also made with caregivers for the elderly. In addition, Spotify also offered its technical expertise and the Roschier law firm lent their legal knowledge too.



Photo: © [Skill Shift Initiative](#)

Why is it interesting?

- The matchmaking principle is put to good use here as freed-up resources are used elsewhere.
- Innovative forms of cooperation are created.
- The project is aimed at occupational groups with a fundamental affinity to the nursing profession.

Potential

- The idea is very easy to scale. Everyone can bring their knowledge and skills to places where they are needed.
- What other knowledge or skills can be used in new contexts?
- Every profession has skills that can be used elsewhere. How can a troop of “crisis reservists” be trained in advance? What skills are needed in crises?

Opera singers help Covid-19 patients learn to breathe again

Many Covid-19 patients have difficulty breathing normally and without fear as a result of their condition. The English National Opera (ENO) and St Mary's Hospital in London developed the [ENO Breathe](#) online course to support these people in their recovery.

Guided by trained singers, the participants learn exercises to improve their breath control and adopt techniques to better cope with anxiety caused by breathlessness over a period of six weeks. For the time between the online courses, various working materials such as music sheets or audio/video materials are made available, especially lullabies which have a particularly calming effect.



Among the participants in the pilot project, 90 per cent said that ENO Breathe had a positive or very positive impact on their breathlessness, 91 per cent could see positive or very positive effects on their anxiety.

Why is it interesting?

- This project is based on the systematic use of excess capacity: the skills of opera singers who have no performance opportunities in lockdowns are able to assist Covid-19 patients.
- The surprising mixture of culture and medicine engenders a new approach to therapy.
- The project establishes a new relationship between opera and people who previously had little contact with it.

Potential

- What other skills can be applied to new contexts?
- How can music, art and cultural institutions be more strongly integrated into therapeutic contexts?

A swap shop for flats

Despite the Covid crisis, prices in the real estate market continue to rise. Especially in big cities, the housing market is a tough place where new solutions are much needed. Instead of struggling with an estate agent or hundreds of people in flat viewings, flat swapping is an interesting alternative to the conventional flat search.

The online platform tauschwohnung.com makes permanent flat swapping feasible for everyone. The matching algorithm helps apartment seekers find the right exchange partner. Whether it's a flat, a room in a shared flat or a house – anything can be exchanged. While traditional websites for flat listings usually only offer empty flats, tauschwohnung.com also includes flats that are currently occupied. This means that the flats offered here cannot be found on any other website.

In addition to its own platform, tauschwohnung.com offers cities, housing associations or housing cooperatives the possibility of providing their own exchange platform with individual adaptations and functions. For example: The city of Düsseldorf and the Düsseldorf housing office offer their own platform for flat swaps in cooperation with

tauschwohnung.com involving local actors such as the city's relocation management. The platform tauschwohnung.com is a product of swap-me UG (hb).

Why is it interesting?

- The matching platform saves both exchange partners a lot of time.
- Moving costs can often be shared and thus almost halved. Double rent payments and estate agent fees are also avoided.
- The housing market eases due to a better distribution of living space. Large flats can be exchanged with small flats.

Potential

- Other advisory systems can be integrated into the housing exchange process. For example, the need for further care measures, especially for elderly people, can be recognised during an exchange.
- What other resources can we exchange in cities?



Photo: © [Tauschwohnung](https://tauschwohnung.com)

A weather and climate workshop for citizens

In light of the covid pandemic, the need for adequate urban green spaces has increased. In order to make more people aware of the importance of environmental and climate protection, the Office of Cultural Management and Economic Development of the City of Offenbach has entered into an innovative cooperation with the German Weather Service.

The Weather and Climate Workshop (WKW) in downtown Offenbach seeks to inform interested citizens about weather, weather hazards and climate change through scientific experiments and interactive installations. Visitors weigh air,

make it rain, create air pressure, puzzle, predict the weather or even create their own weather in workshops. The weather and climate are constantly being examined from different angles, while lectures and events are held several times a month. The goal is to strengthen commitment to an intact environment. The offer will initially run until the end of 2021 – an extension is being sought.



Photo: © [DWD](#)

Why is it interesting?

- Offenbach now has a place where citizens can experience the future topics of weather and climate in a practical way.
- The Weather and Climate Workshop (WKW) makes it possible to directly address the population.
- The concept is based not only on facts, but above all on dialogue, commitment and personal involvement.

Potential

- Other future topics, such as the need for mobility change, could also be brought closer to the population in workshops. Which actors would have to work together for this?
- Which future topics can we address? Which cooperation partners would be needed for this?
- In which other contexts can we combine knowledge and skills?

Source: [Deutscher Wetterdienst](#)

What you can do right now

Exercise: Forging alliances

You will need: **Good people with different backgrounds and experiences**

Complex problems, be it a pandemic, increasing social inequality or climate change, require multi-perspective solutions. Cities must therefore ask themselves the question: How can we promote interdisciplinary cooperation? How can we break down silos and share knowledge? City makers in authorities, organisations, companies, collectives, and associations are responsible for initiating collaboration establishing interfaces with external experts and promoting transparent cooperation across team, company and city boundaries.

This exercise is inspired by [Working Out Loud](#), a method developed by John Stepper to build relationships, share knowledge, and expand one's mindset. Five principles are effective: Relationships, Generosity, Visible Work, Purposeful Discovery, A Growth Mindset. In so-called WOL Circles, four to five people work on the following work for one hour per week over a period of 12 weeks on coaching exercises from the [Circle Guides](#), which are available free of charge.

Step 1: Define your learning objective

Think about: What do you want to achieve? What are you looking for? Do you want to dive into a new topic, meet people who do what you would like to do or explore new ways of working together? What do you want to work on and what is your learning goal?

Step 2: Find your sparring partners


To do this, first ask yourself: Who has something to do with your goal? Are they people who have practical experience in a certain subject area, who write or speak about it? What knowledge is available in your city or elsewhere and who do you need to get on board? The next step is to contact the selected people. To do this, also ask yourself: What can you offer the others? How can you contribute to deepening your relationship?

Step 3: **Make a circle of experts**

Meet with four to five people from different disciplines for one hour a week for 12 weeks. Share what you are working on. This gives others the chance to build on your experience and avoid duplication and mistakes. Offer feedback and concrete support, learn from each other, be curious and open to other perspectives and forge alliances for a better city.

A bonus method to read:

Building successful teams.



Impulse 3

Strengthening the common good

How can we design
cities for everyone?

Intro

The strength of a community has a great influence on how successfully it can cope with crises. The Covid pandemic has shown us how important it is to help each other – whether it's helping an elderly neighbour with her shopping, setting up a joint delivery platform for local retailers or offering smartphone training for senior citizens.

A city for the common good is a city for everyone. Urban planners should therefore ask themselves: How can we help everyone to participate in urban life in the city? With rickshaw rides for senior citizens, for example, we're creating an age-friendly city, as Mitra Kassai from ["Öll Inklusiv"](#) describes it.

But children and young people also need open spaces. Places must be accessible regardless of skin colour, age, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political conviction, income, and ethnic, national and social origin. How can cities do justice to this diversity regarding the design of urban space? And not lose sight of the rural regions at the same time. ["We mostly talk about cities, inner cities and densely built-up settlement areas. But the topics also concern the surrounding communities of large cities, and the rural or less densely populated areas."](#) – Philine Gaffron

During the lockdowns, we have seen how important attractive public spaces are for our collective wellbeing. We have learned to appreciate urban greenery again and wonder at the desolate inner cities that have little or nothing to offer without their temples of consumption. It is becoming increasingly clear that the design of public spaces needs to be oriented towards the common good. And examples of this already exist, like in Nantes, where gardens were systematically cultivated in public green spaces to provide fresh vegetables to less privileged families.

The Swedish architect and designer Jenny Grettve calls for an ["economy of generosity"](#), the urban researcher Dieter Läßle advocates a reactivation of the commons, and the futurologist Stephan Rammner would like to see ["greater civil society involvement in social processes aimed at solving problems."](#) How do we achieve cooperative togetherness? What values do we want to agree on as a society? These questions need to be debated and the answers need to be put into practice.

“There needs to be a much stronger willingness on the part of civil society to participate. I would like us to rediscover that. Communitarian, civic, social processes to solve problems are always good when they are locally or regionally grounded. Because they have to do with proximity of feeling and social proximity. The city is simply the right place for this.”

Stephan Rammler

“We need new financial instruments and financial concepts to fund commons, services of general interest and new public transport systems in such a way that the vitality and profitability of urban structures are preserved for the future. And not to say in advance: this amount of money is there; we can invest it and that’s it. In doing so, we undermine the future existence of our cities.”

Dieter Läßle

“I think it’s super important that we stop being egoistic, and that we’re willing to give more than we want to get back. This also needs to be reflected in open-minded teamwork and a sharing attitude.”

Jenny Grettve

“We should take older people into consideration, but also better include them in city life. We have to make cities more age-friendly.”

Mitra Kassai

“I am definitely afraid that the (social) differences could become greater. Counteracting this is certainly a task for city planning, for urban design and of course for traffic planning.”

Philine Gaffron

“That’s exactly what the state is there for, to spend money in times of crisis, to make bridges during difficult times.”

Alexander Bechtel

“I think the most important impact is on the people who are often left in the dark: those along the social divides and borders in the city. We don’t see the poverty – especially the child poverty – that takes place behind closed doors. We don’t see the home-schooling problems for migrant families.

We don’t see those struggling with part-time work and we don’t see the people who have lost their jobs.”

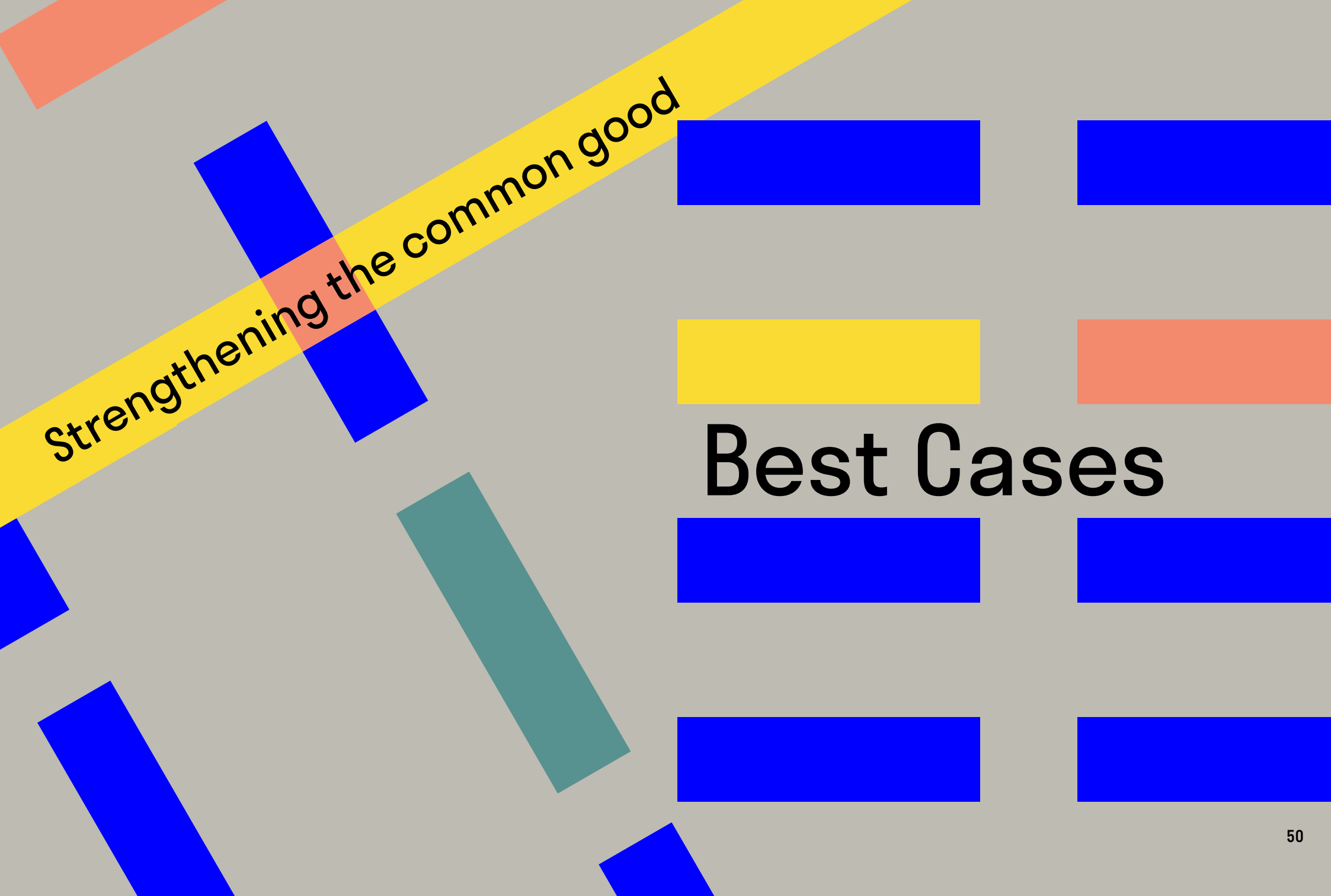
Dieter Läßle

“We have to meet everyone at the same level.”

Stephan Karrenbauer

“We are intensively looking at what the Covid pandemic means for all areas of life – locally as well as globally. It turns out that the impact for privileged people is nowhere near as severe as for people who are less privileged.”

Amelie Deuflhard



Strengthening the common good

Best Cases

A shared production space for artists

Kampnagel – the international arts centre in Hamburg – regularly hosts contemporary performing arts, concerts, conferences, and a variety of festivals. Despite the Covid shutdown, the Kampnagel team wanted to stay in touch with local and international artists. In order to make art possible during the pandemic, Kampnagel has set up a free-to-use production space to show their solidarity with Hamburg's cultural workers.



Photo: © [Kampnagel](#)

The Kampnagel technicians provided the basic technical equipment and invited artists to experiment with the medium of video and then post the results on the internet. The video or streaming stage was suitable for a wide range of formats – from tutorials to dance lessons – and slots were allocated for each project. The only rule is first come, first served.

Why is it interesting?

- The project is a concrete offer of help that makes good use of the resources freed up within cultural institutions.
- Although politicians have tried to support artists with various programmes, many are not eligible as they don't fulfil the criteria for funding. Kampnagel's offer, on the other hand, is low threshold.
- The spaces are used in a collaborative way and in solidarity.

Potential

- The shared use of spaces in the city builds and strengthens local networks and fosters solidarity.
- What other free resources could be made available to artists and performers in the city?

An app that brings seniors and senioritas together

Where can older people safely meet and exchange ideas during the pandemic? This was the question that inspired a new idea for Hamburg cultural manager Mitra Kassai. Her non-profit initiative OLL INKLUSIV, has been working to bring together people who are 60++ in a relaxed way since 2018. Together, they can enjoy culture and dance, socialise and chat to their hearts' content. [“The OLL INKLUSIV community now includes several hundred seniors & senioritas. In March 2020, these open-minded and adventurous older people suddenly became an at-risk group sitting isolated at home.”](#) – Mitra Kassai

To enable older people to come together as a community even during the pandemic, she developed a free app for their smartphones. They could not only find all the news from OLL INKLUSIV, but could also get in touch with each other: The heart of the app is the personalised area. Seniors and senioritas can register and create their own personal profiles.

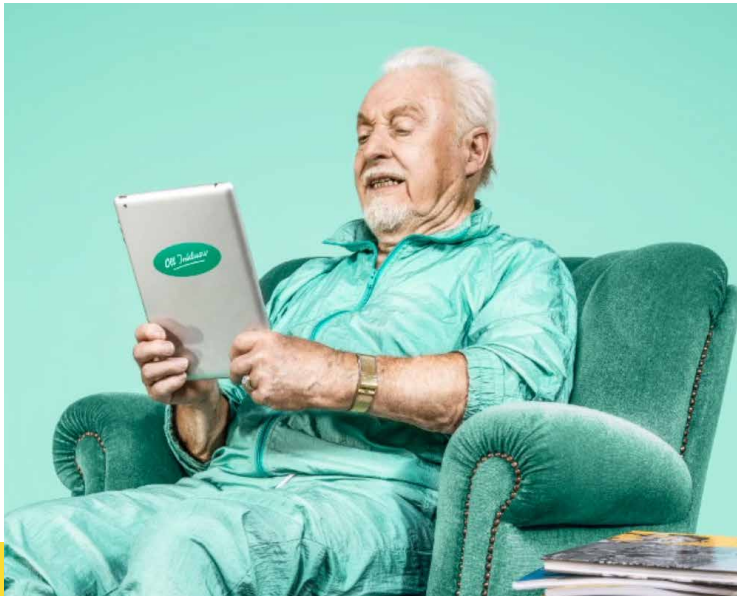


Photo: © [Katja Ruge / Thomas Koch](#)

This gives them access to a members-only protected digital space. In this network, they can chat with each other, talk to each other via video conferencing, find new friends through shared hobbies or ask for book recommendations on the noticeboard.

The multifunctional platform was supported by the app developer Appack as well as by the Hamburg CMS Foundation and the solidarity initiative from the Hamburger Morgenpost “Das Hamburger Wir” (The Hamburg We).

Why is it interesting?

- The OLL INKLUSIV app creates an inspiring environment around the topic of positive ageing.
- Since the app is free of charge, it gives people aged 60++ easy entry to participation in society.

Potential

- The OLL INKLUSIV app offers seniors and senioritas a community platform that can be used beyond the pandemic.
- What other groups could be connected via an app?

Source: [OLL INKLUSIV](#)

A streaming initiative brings the club into people's homes

Cultural life has taken a hit over the past months. And the Covid shutdown hit the club scene particularly hard. To contain the spread of the virus, nightlife came to a standstill from one day to the next in March 2020. Since then, many club owners have feared for their existence.

In response to the challenges, the initiative “United We Stream” was founded, which makes livestreams from well-known, currently empty clubs available free of charge on various online channels and the culture channel ARTE. Behind the project lies a solidarity-based alliance of over 100 activists from Germany's club scene, most of whom have worked on a voluntary basis to preserve the diverse club scene, including the Berlin Club Commission, the Reclaim Club Culture network, and the non-profit association BERLIN WORX.

What started as a successful fundraising campaign for Berlin's clubs has now grown into a global cultural platform and collaborative streaming initiative online – the website already has over 40 million visitors. The donations not only benefit the clubs: “[United We Stream](#)” also shows solidarity with refugees worldwide and collects donations

for the Civilian Sea Rescue endowment fund, which draws attention to Europe's policy of making itself inaccessible to migrants.

Why is it interesting?

- The offer is low threshold.
- With the donations generated, the financial losses of the clubs can be compensated to protect them from having to close.
- Local cultural spaces, artists, culture professionals, companies, and institutions can connect with a global audience.
- The project brings the cultural significance and richness of the diverse club culture to the forefront.
- The project raises awareness of the preservation of the club scene at a social and political level.

Potential

- Even beyond the Covid crisis, “United We Stream” could be used as a strong open-source network that carries the idea of solidarity across borders.
- United We Stream has the potential to connect club culture across cities and countries.

Source: [United We Stream](#)



Photo: [Alexander Popov](#)

Free food for those in need

The Covid crisis has exacerbated the existing social inequalities in our society. Those who depend on humanitarian organisations such as homeless shelters, day centres and other social services have been particularly affected. In Hamburg, about half of these drop-in centres could no longer fulfil their work or could only do so to a limited extent due to hygiene regulations.

The “[DEINTOPF](#)” initiative came together to offer basic care to people in need in Hamburg. During the first lockdown in March 2020, volunteers began collecting surplus food (e.g. from restaurants, suppliers, wholesalers, and other aid initiatives), processing it and distributing it to the needy in compliance with safety regulations.

The food was then distributed to those in need including homeless people, elderly people, families, and other people who found themselves in financial difficulty due to the Covid crisis. DEINTOPF is currently located in the premises of the Kids Welcome project in Hamburg’s Karoviertel district and is open Friday to Sun-

day from 2 – 5 p.m. The team serves over 100 people a day. Alongside hot meals, the volunteers also hand out bread rolls, tinned food, fruit, cakes, and toiletries. Those who have to stay at home can get food delivered by cargo bike. Thanks to the initiative’s cooperation with local refugee aid organisations, the initiative ensures that leftover food is not thrown away but redistributed sensibly.

Why is it interesting?

- This project is a good example of how we can all live together in solidarity and in cooperation with the city.
- It offers closeness despite the social distancing rules, as DEINTOPF offers a social meeting place in times of crisis.

Potential

- To combat social inequalities not only during the pandemic, permanent drop-in centres in the city for those in need are thinkable.
- Further cooperation with restaurants and hotels is possible.



Photo: © DEINTOPF

Source: [DEINTOPF](#)

Rickshaw city tours for senior citizens in Bamberg

To slow the spread of the coronavirus, people have had to keep their distance. Social distancing, i.e. keeping social contact to a minimum, has affected older people to a greater extent. As a risk group, senior citizens live in greater isolation and often suffer from loneliness, too.

To ensure that the city's oldest residents also got to experience some social closeness during the pandemic, the city of Bamberg came up with a special campaign.

Under the motto "Climate-friendly mobility for all", committed citizens offered free e-rickshaw rides for senior citizens and people with limited mobility from the 16 – 21 September 2020, in compliance with the Covid regulations, of course.

The rickshaw rides in the city area not only provided an extra breath of fresh air, but also brought some variety to the everyday lives of Bamberg's senior citizens, especially as there was always time for a chat with the rickshaw drivers during the 30-minute city tours.



Photo: © Diakonie Bamberg-Forchheim/Seniorenzentrum Seehof-Blick

Why is it interesting?

- Social cohesion between the generations is strengthened.
- Through this initiative, senior citizens and people with limited mobility get to experience a sense of social participation.
- The action week also makes climate-friendly mobility visible.

Potential

- The initiative also inspires us to think about how we can make cities more age-friendly and integrate older people into city life better.
- The project is a good example of how we can think about mobility in a green and inclusive way.
- The idea is easily scalable and transferable to other cities.

Source: [Stadt Bamberg](#)

Online teaching made possible with open-source technology

Due to the Covid pandemic, many schools in Germany were closed temporarily. Instead of meeting in person, classes met in the digital classroom via video conferencing tools. To teach their subject matter online, teachers needed easy-to-use programs that they could trust in terms of data protection. The video conferencing tools had to be transparent for all participants at all times and show what kind of data was being collected and what was being shared with third parties.

Most of the latest video conferencing tools from the US did not meet these strict data protection requirements.

The tool also provides guidelines for digital learning for pupils and teachers as well as a lot of freely available teaching material.

Why is it interesting?

- The digitalisation of school education is becoming increasingly important.
- Digital technologies can be used for the common good.
- It is possible to bring digitalisation into schools without recourse to commercial solutions.

Potential

- Open educational infrastructure means that schools and other educational institutions can work independently and are not dependent on certain companies.
- The project strengthens media skills and the understanding of technology among pupils, parents, and teachers.
- The use of digital technologies creates new possibilities in the school environment.



Photo: [Chris Montgomery](#)

For this reason, the educational initiative “[Chaos macht Schule](#)” (Chaos sets the trend) as part of the Chaos Computer Club has developed a “Jitsi” tool for video conferencing.

The Jitsi tool used by schools in the Rhine-Neckar metropolitan region is an open-source, data protection-friendly and free alternative to other proprietary video conferencing programs.

Source: netzpolitik.org

Digital training for seniors

Even before Covid, many senior citizens suffered from loneliness, and the pandemic pushed many further into isolation. The Hamburg-based non-profit association "[Wege aus der Einsamkeit](#)" (Ways out of loneliness) fights against the increasing loneliness among older people, as its members encourage people aged 65 and over to take their first steps into the digital world. As early as 2015, the association launched the free discussion rounds "Wir versilbern das Netz" (We are silver surfers) which covered the basics of using tablets and smart phones for people 65+.

Since the Covid crisis, the seniors have no longer met in person in Hamburg or Berlin, but they could meet on Zoom instead to talk, learn, and have fun together.



Photo: © [Wege aus der Einsamkeit e.V.](#)

Why is it interesting?

- The project enables older people to participate both socially and digitally.
- Digital technologies are used for the common good.

Potential

- With the help of digital technologies, older people and those with limited mobility can also participate in social life.
- The various services for seniors could be even more strongly interconnected on digital platforms.

A shared digital platform for local shops in Groningen

The pandemic has put local retailers under extreme pressure. So far, it's only online retail, dominated by Amazon, that has benefited from the pandemic. In Groningen, an online shopping platform was financed by the city to enable local shops to sell their goods again and deliver them to customers in the city area.

The city of Groningen covered the delivery costs by bicycle courier, so that local retailers could compete with services such as Amazon Prime. Already 120 traders are now part of [Warenhuis Groningen](#), and the city has given all its employees a 10-euro shopping voucher for the platform.



Photo: © Warenhuis Groningen

The project was financed with money from the Innovation Fund which is given to companies that come up with smart solutions to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. The fund has a total budget of 250,000 euros. Meanwhile, support for Warenhuis Groningen continues to build outside the Covid Innovation Fund.

Why is it interesting?

- The project is a practical offer for retailers that helps local shops to continue to sell their goods.
- With the participation of more than a hundred traders, the platform is highly attractive for consumers.
- The use of cargo bikes for delivery also supports sustainable mobility.

Potential

- This approach to helping local retailers sell their products online is relevant for most cities in Europe, so the project has a high potential for transfer.
- With the help of the platform, retailers can also offer convenient services for their customers in the future and thus remain competitive with online retailers.
- What other application scenarios are there for local networking and cooperation?

Cardiff Castle opens outdoor space for local restaurants and catering

The Welsh city of Cardiff opened the outdoor space around the city's castle so visitors and locals could enjoy food from various local restaurants in a safe environment. Due to the pandemic, the strict social distancing rules had made it impossible for restaurateurs to operate profitably in their spaces. So, with the help of the Yoello app, dishes from various restaurants could be ordered directly to the table with a view of the palace, and payment was also processed conveniently via the app. Under the motto "Keep Dining", the covered outdoor area offers 240 seats, with a maximum dwell time of two hours.



Photo: [Igor Starkov](#)

Why is it interesting?

- The city of Cardiff is working with local (Welsh) ordering platform (Yoello).
- The fact that there are many different restaurants on one ordering platform means that the offer is very user-friendly.
- An attractive location has been made even more appealing thanks to the new culinary offer.
- The project brings residents closer to one of their local attractions.

Potential

- The systematic identification of further outdoor areas which could be used by the local restaurant and catering trade is something every city can do.
- The local catering service (e.g. delivery service) could be further expanded.
- New meeting places can be created through the expansion of designated outdoor dining areas.

Photo: © Fritidsbanken

At [Fritidsbanken](#) – also known as the sports and leisure equipment library – people can easily borrow golf clubs, Pilates balls, skates, kickbikes, inline skates, bicycles, football boots and much more at 90 locations across the country. Before a new location is opened, it must be ensured that at least 1000 items are available for lending.

accessible and easy to reach for people with disabilities and have sufficient space.

- Fritidsbanken promotes the physical and mental health of people in a city.
- Even households with low incomes get the chance to do sports.
- Fritidsbanken promotes the reuse of discarded sports and leisure equipment.

- To increase awareness of Fritidsbanken, cooperations with local clubs, day-care centres, schools, universities and adult education centres could be established.
- This example is simple, quick to implement and easy to scale.
- The concept could be expanded to include not only sports and recreational equipment, but also other things such as deck chairs, picnic blankets, barbecues and dishes.

What you can do right now

Exercise: Co-City Protocol

You will need: Good people with different backgrounds and experiences

Paper Pens Street maps Other materials depending on how you create your Co-City Protocol

A [Co-City Protocol](#) is a method originating from Italy that supports city planners in identifying the conditions necessary to turn a city into a so-called co-city. The concept of the co-city conceives of the city as infrastructure that enables sharing and collaboration, participatory decision-making, and peer-to-peer production, supported by open data and guided by principles of distributive justice. A co-city is based on the shared, collaborative, polycentric management of a variety of urban resources such as environmental, cultural, knowledge and digital assets that are jointly governed through contractual or institutionalised public-private partnerships – thus the co-city goes beyond individual disconnected urban commons.

The co-cities process consists of six phases that, when done together, form a cycle:

Cheap talking

Organise an informal meeting with key people in the city (e.g. practitioners, experts, academics) to identify existing or potential urban assets in a particular neighbourhood or district.

Mapping

Go out, do some field research and map potential urban commons, local networks, and stakeholders both on- and offline. Observe, conduct informal interviews, or do a survey. If you want to involve the urban community even more, you could use a collaborative digital platform.

Practising

Now it's time to experiment. The heart of this phase is building a collaboration camp in which you can explore common interests and test new forms of cooperation. City residents and others can take part. You could involve social innovators, knowledge-based institutions, non-profit organisations, small and medium-sized enterprises, and public authorities.



The camp can be followed by a collaboration day which you can use to put ideas into practice, by planning a street party or building a community garden, for example.

Prototyping

The focus here is on redesigning governance to promote projects that are self-organised and designed for the common good. You should derive the characteristics and needs of the community from the previous stages and take these into account in the co-design and implementation of common good governance models.

Testing

Now it's time for implementation. Here you can use both qualitative and quantitative metrics to assess whether the implementation of the prototype is in line with the design principles and objectives. Remember to adapt the evaluation methods to local conditions.

Modelling

The last phase involves tailoring the evaluated governance model to the legal and institutional framework of the city. To do this, you should enter into a dialogue with politicians and members of the administration and include relevant regulations and administrative acts.





Daring to experiment

How can we bring more flexibility into decision-making processes and more creativity into administration?

Intro

Bureaucracy is designed to promote standardisation and stability. The Covid pandemic has made it clear that these often rigid rules inhibit innovation and creativity, especially when it comes to reacting quickly or changing direction. In view of the major challenges that cities will face in the future on top of pandemics – be they changes in mobility, climate change or the urbanisation of city centres – flexibility and creativity will become valuable resources. The sooner these two things find their way into the structures of administrative action, the better.

Future urban planning will be geared towards the needs of the people. Therefore, we believe that citizens should be given much more room for manoeuvre in the future as they can bring a wide range of experience and energy to projects.

“Cities have only just begun to build the muscles needed to consistently and deeply engage all the available assets within their communities to common purpose. (...) Imagine

all the power that resident energy represents, if only city leaders could readily tap it.” – James Anderson in Bloomberg City Lab: [Don't Flatten the Curve on Urban Innovation](#)

We need a system that allows for experimentation, invites people to try out new things and ultimately examines what works – and what doesn't. This includes more flexibility in permits, the digitalisation of procedures, more transparency in administrative processes and the development of suitable tools to facilitate a dialogue with the people in a city.

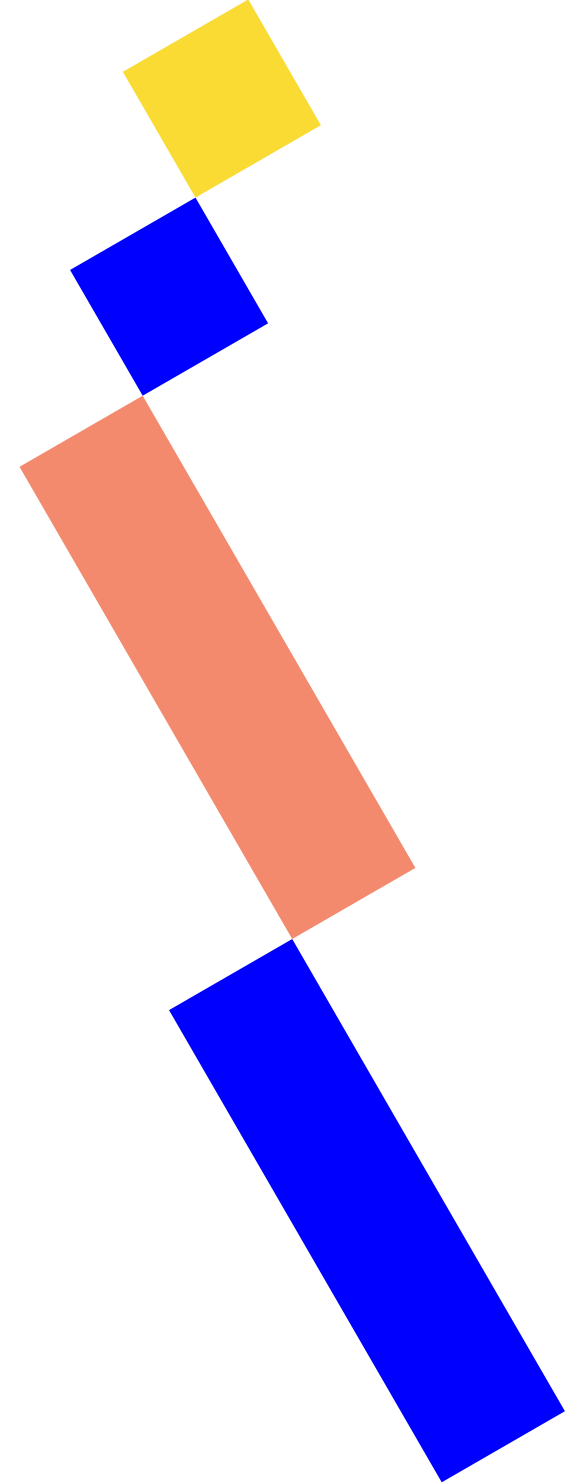
The expansion of outdoor areas for urban catering during the Covid crisis or the establishment of pop-up cycle paths have created new spaces of possibility for urban life.

What rules need to be changed to allow for more experimentation?

The pandemic made the creation of a mobile roller skate rental shop possible in Hamburg's Planten un Blomen park. Before that, there were always bureaucratic hurdles in the way. When you look at the many creative projects, you start to wonder: Why couldn't we do that before?

But even before Covid, there were plenty of temporary initiatives that provided for a creative reuse of public space. For years, PARK(ing) Day has been a day in September when cars are banned from parking spaces with these being used for other things. Restaurant Day also created the framework for a day when every citizen was allowed to run their own restaurant in different cities around the world.

The courage to change is a quality that many of our interviewed experts would like to see in city administrations. The following best cases and stimuli are intended to encourage you to think outside the box in every way.



“What you really have to be is flexible. I have noticed that many people first have to learn flexibility. That is very, very important. Moving around a city also means having or bringing a certain flexibility. Through that, something can emerge.”

Mitra Kassai

“We have to close the gap between strategy and implementation, between knowledge and action, between values and reality. The will to change – that is something very, very important.”

Philine Gaffron

“Start small, experiment. And then if we think it worked well, scale it.”

Jenny Grettve

“Sometimes I wish we had more courage to just try something or keep the bureaucratic barriers as low as possible to let creativity emerge.”

Kirsten Pfaue

“We believe that resilience is only possible through change and adaptivity and not through stability-oriented, structurally conservative behaviour. In this respect, the classic administrative policy, the classic structure of bureaucracy that we know, is exactly the wrong thing.”

Stephan Rammler

“For me, communication and participation are big issues. How do I talk to people about certain issues without scaring them?

How do you carry the others with you? How do you move from theoretical readiness to real change?”

Philine Gaffron

Quotes from the interviews

“I can well imagine giving city residents new tools to enter into dialogue with the city: Where can I contribute my ideas? Where can I give positive feedback on a measure?”

Jens Wille

“I think cities should also dare to improvise more. Example: pop-up cycle paths. (...) The fact that something like this is suddenly possible in Germany, where everything first takes forever and you have to make some kind of applications and approval procedures and so on – I think that’s improvisation par excellence.”

Svenja Holst-Runge

“I would like to see experiments being carried out in the social sphere as well. And if it doesn’t work, one should also have the courage to abandon a project. Sometimes I get the impression that projects are meant to last forever. It would be better to think in smaller periods of time and then make an evaluation.”

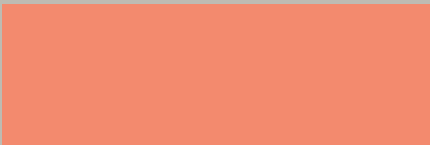
Stephan Karrenbauer

“You have to offer people platforms so that they can exchange ideas more easily or tackle small projects directly and take away their fear of formal processes.”

Marion Klemme



Daring to experiment



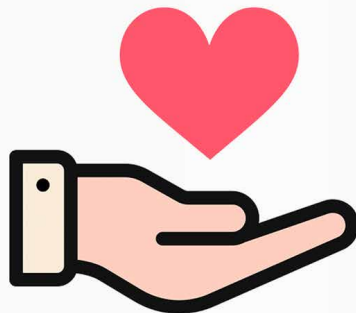
Best Cases



Strengthening local trade with a digital city centre

The Covid pandemic is leaving its mark on local trade in a big way. The forced closures of shops have hurt many stationary retailers – who now find themselves fearing for their existence due to the large drop in sales. Furthermore, those who do not have an online shop are left with a surplus of goods.

This is where “[Downtown](#)” comes in – a new digital platform for cities, communities and associations with the aim of supporting local trade during the Covid crisis. Born out of an impromptu hackathon by the “[Händler helfen Händlern](#)” (Retailers Helping Retailers) initiative. Downtown gives shop owners the opportunity to list and sell their products online quickly and easily.



As a central platform for all local goods and services offered in the region, the digital city centre allows customers to shop in their favourite shops. Downtown is also a non-commercial open-source project that anyone can contribute to.

Why is it interesting?

- The Covid crisis has exposed the weaknesses in traditional retail. Even retailers with a strong connection to their customers and local communities will have to rely more heavily on digital services in the future.
- The project brings the digital world together with the world of brick-and-mortar retail.
- A new kind of solidarity is created – customers remain loyal to retailers and retailers help other retailers.

Potential

- Networks like these strengthen the cooperative coexistence in a city.
- New digital technologies help to create a new closeness between consumers and traders – e.g. through personal consultations via WhatsApp or Instagram.
- Strong local online marketplaces can also shorten delivery routes.

Source: [Downtown](#)

A funding finder for SMEs and the self-employed

Throughout the Covid crisis, self-employed people and SMEs have been particularly dependent on financial support. However, finding a way through the jungle of funding applications can be difficult. The platform wir-bleiben-liqui.de (we're staying solvent) brings light into the darkness. The project, which emerged from the [#WirvsVirus-Hackathon](https://wir-bleiben-liqui.de) organised by the German Federal Government, helps entrepreneurs and self-employed people to secure their future, from helping them to find funding opportunities to assisting them with preparing documents for the bank.

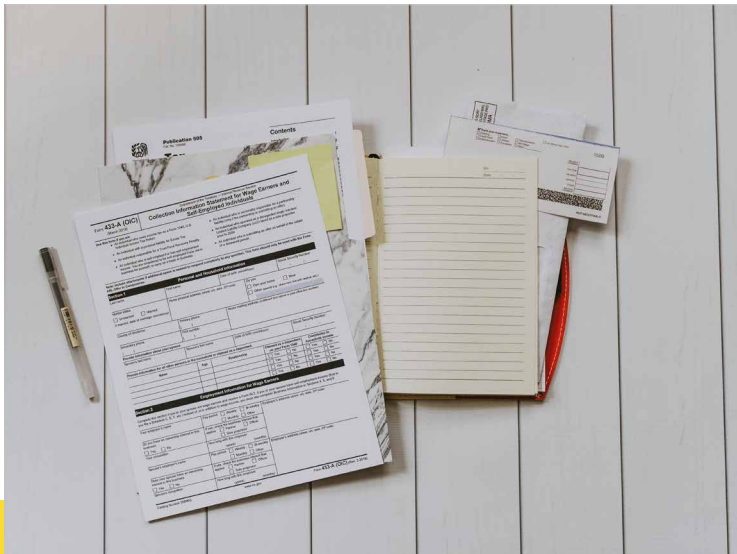


Photo: [Kelly Sikkema](#)

Why is it interesting?

- The application for funding is low-threshold and the platform is easy to use – this reduces bureaucratic hurdles. There are significantly fewer queries in exchanges with banks and authorities.
- The Funding Finder is a voluntary project that serves the common good.

Potential

- Civic tech platforms like this could become the standard to enable as many people as possible to access funding.
- What other bureaucratic processes could be streamlined?

Source: wir-bleiben-liqui.de

#SoliKitchen: Doing good and securing survival at the same time

To stay afloat during the Covid crisis, restaurateurs have had to get creative. Koral Elci, chef and designer of the mobile Kitchen Guerilla cooking unit in Hamburg, set himself the goal of not only securing his own survival, but also helping the homeless and needy – all with [#SoliKitchen](#). For every donation of 7 euros, the Kitchen Guerilla employees put together individually wrapped food packages. Along with a wholesome and nutritious meal, these packages also contained fresh fruit. Kitchen Guerilla then gave the food parcels to volunteers who take care of the homeless and needy, who then handed over the food parcel in line with the Covid regulations.

Why is it interesting?

- This project strengthens social cohesion.
- Local players cooperate with each other for the greater good.
- Restaurateurs – although in a crisis themselves – also help others.

Potential

- The #SoliKitchen concept could establish itself beyond the pandemic and become a fixed component on menus belonging to restaurants and other catering businesses.



A digital pass for Europe's internal borders

The Covid crisis has presented a challenge for the logistics and transport industry. Thanks to the time-consuming health checks at Europe's internal borders, freight traffic has been stuck in traffic jams on the roads. As a result, there have been delivery bottlenecks and many perishable goods have gone off before they could be delivered. Before the lorry drivers are allowed to cross the borders, they have had to fill out an analogue questionnaire – which is not only time-consuming, but also risky, because every contact between border officials and drivers carries the risk of infection.

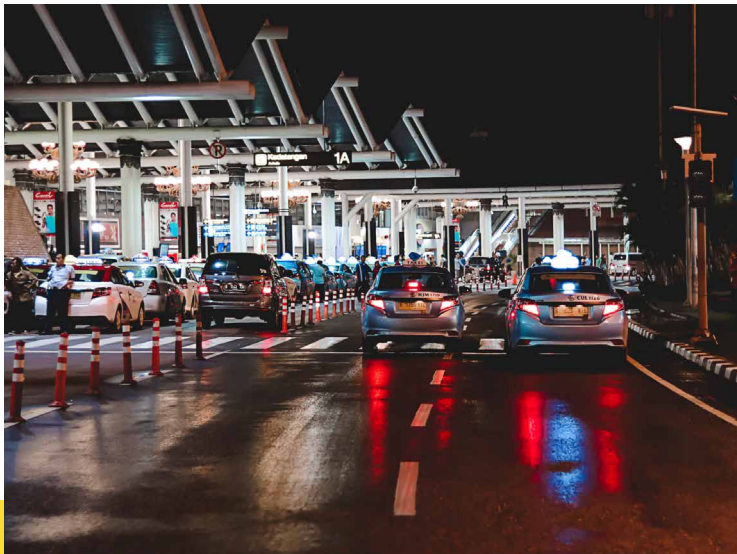


Photo: [Naufal Giffari](#)

The EU-wide platform “[Fast Border Crossing](#)” solves this problem by making border checks as quick, easy, and hygienic as possible. The web-based smartphone application collects all the relevant information on drivers, vehicles, loads and journeys as well as health-related data digitally and before the journey begins. The border officials can call up the information stored in the database via QR code and check it without making contact with those crossing the border.

The platform is the result of a hackathon organised by the German government under the motto [#WirvsVirus](#).

Why is it interesting?

- This project reduces bureaucratic hurdles and
- the platform facilitates efficient and hygienic border controls.
- The data obtained can be further processed and analysed (e.g. by the Robert Koch Institute).

Potential

- The platform could prevent traffic jams and optimise traffic flows in the future.
- With the help of this platform, important goods could be prioritised.
- The processes could be further streamlined to create a holistic, Europe-wide solution.

Source: [Fast Border Crossing](#)

Pop-up cycle lanes in Hamburg

Since the beginning of the Covid pandemic, main roads across the country have been increasingly closed off for cars. Numerous cities, including Hamburg and Berlin, are creating more space and safety on the roads quickly and cheaply, by turning the unused traffic infrastructure into so-called pop-up cycle lanes. Luminous markings separate bicycle traffic from car traffic in both directions, leaving only one lane in each direction for car drivers.

Why is it interesting?

- Pop-up cycle lanes are not just good in times of crises, but also present an opportunity to experiment with new mobility infrastructure.
- The pop-up cycle lanes increase the quality of life in the city by reducing traffic noise, lowering exhaust fumes, and creating space for cycling.

Potential

- The positive experiences with pop-up cycle lanes can be a basis for reducing car traffic in the long term.
- While streets used to be dominated by private car traffic, they are now being opened up to new road users.
- Calming traffic contributes to an increase in the quality of life in the streets – grey thoroughfares can become green spaces of opportunity instead.



Photo: © Behörde für Verkehr und Mobilitätswende (BVM)

Pick-up zones help restaurants in times of crisis

During the lockdown, going to restaurants was no longer allowed in Seattle, much like in many other cities. With restaurateurs trying to keep their heads above water with deliveries and take-aways, the traffic authority in Seattle set up temporary pick-up zones for them. The measure was supported by a digital map which showcased the small businesses.

The procedure for applying for the collection zones was kept as simple as possible, as restaurants could submit an

informal application by e-mail or telephone, stating their address. The city then checked to see where collection zones could be set up at short notice.

“Our small businesses, especially restaurants, have been bearing the brunt of our efforts to combat the pandemic. By making it easier to take away (or deliver) food, we can help these businesses. They do so much to enrich our city.” – Mayor Jenny Durkan



Photo: © Seattle Department of Transportation

Why is it interesting?

- The use of road and parking areas must be rethought under pandemic conditions.
- Bureaucratic hurdles are removed in order to provide help quickly.
- The project is based on a systemic approach as parking spaces are reused and shops are made visible with the help of the digital map.

Potential

- What other implications does this era of contactless/reduced contact retail have for urban planning?
- Instead of cars, cargo bikes could be used.
- What other priorities could be revisited in the city in order to encourage small businesses?

Solidarity and urban gardening in Nantes

In 2020, the city of Nantes planted vegetables in 50 locations for people particularly affected by the Covid pandemic. Now the vegetable gardens make up more than 25,000 square metres of land, and the urban gardeners expect to harvest 25 tonnes of fresh vegetables a year.

This means that during the seasonal harvest, around 1,000 households can each receive about 25 kilograms of vegetables each. They can get seasonal vegetables for the summer

(tomatoes, courgettes, chard, beetroot, and various cabbages) and for the winter (sweet potatoes, pumpkin, beans and sweetcorn) all of which grow in the flowerbeds of the parks and gardens of Nantes.



Photo: © Stephan Menoret

Why is it interesting?

- The project is a concrete offer of help that makes use of available resources in the city.
- The city's "excess capacity" of green spaces is put to good use and even upgraded.
- A new outdoor activity has been created.
- The project is based on an idea that is relatively easy to replicate.

Potential

- The production of food in the city can be expanded even further.
- How can more public spaces be used for the common good?
- Citizens can become more involved and take on tasks and responsibility (the consumers could become the producers).

A chatbot that helps you to fill in forms

[U:DO](#) is a chatbot that guides you through the application for part-time work. The project was developed as part of the German government's [#WirvsVirus hackathon](#). Until now, the application process has been much more complicated and has required a lot of expertise from companies.

The free solution supports all small and medium-sized companies with fewer than 50 employees – simply, transparently and without complications. U:DO is based on official forms such as the Kug 101 form. Applicants communicate with U:DO via a chat interface, and U:DO then automatically transfers the information to the form in the background and provides support in submitting it to the authorities.

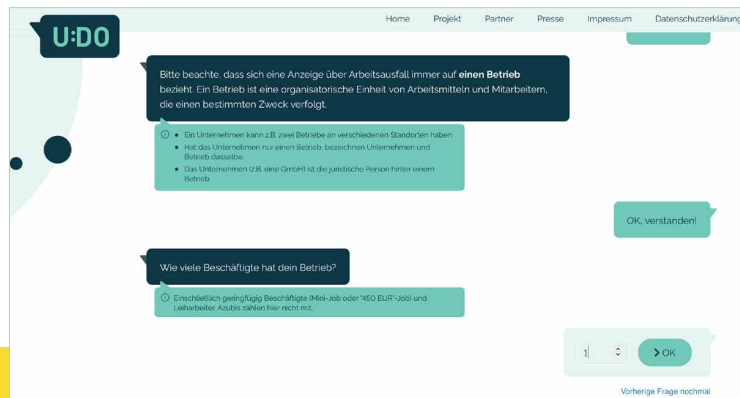


Photo: U:DO

The team behind U:DO consists of 17 people. The team includes experts in labour law who cooperate with the relevant authorities, programmers, graphic designers, project managers and experts in marketing and communication. They work digitally and remotely on U:DO throughout Germany.

Why is it interesting?

- Bureaucratic hurdles are a hindrance in normal times, and in times of crisis they can prove fatal. The pandemic has created a lot of pressure for us to find new ways of doing things, make processes simpler and focus on user-centred solutions.
- Why does a form have to look like a form? The chatbot approach allows us to rethink the dusty form format, which is in urgent need of revision.
- The know-how of designers and developers enables us to come up with new approaches to solutions.

Potential

- Bureaucracy in cities and administrations can be further simplified or reduced. Which area should be tackled next?
- External and interdisciplinary teams can bring valuable impulses to processes and services within administrations.
- Teams outside of the big IT consultancies can also produce valuable results. How can they be given access to public services in the future? How can we facilitate their access to public contracts?

Source: [U:DO](#)

France subsidises bicycle repairs

Aiming to promote cycling in a sustainable way, France has subsidised bicycle repairs with a flat rate of 50 euros. The subsidy is part of a holistic programme with a budget of 20 million euros. The focus is on bicycle repairs, the installation of temporary bicycle parking spaces and providing bicycle courses for free.

The French Minister of the Environment, Elisabeth Borne, wrote on Twitter: “We want to use this time to reach a new level in the creation of a cycling culture. In doing so, the bicycle should become the queen of transport, especially now that restrictions are being relaxed again.”

Paris is also planning to add 750 kilometres of new cycle lanes for commuters travelling into the city from cities outside Paris.

Why is it interesting?

- Targeted incentives such as subsidies make cycling more attractive and thus also more likely to have a lasting effect on people’s mobility choices.
- Any city that wants to improve its cycling infrastructure now has the opportunity to do so. Many good examples have sprung up during the pandemic.

- So far, funding programmes have often been directed at the purchase of e-bikes or cargo bikes, for example. Paris is taking a new approach with its “anti-scrappage scheme” and is trying to bring existing bicycles back into circulation by repairing them.

Potential

- A simple idea with a relatively low financial commitment – this initiative has great scaling potential and can be expanded even further.
- In what other areas could repair premiums create incentives to reuse what is available instead of throwing it away?
- What other incentives could be given for repairs?
- How could we encourage people to repair instead of replacing their things with the help of communication?



A mobile roller skate rental shop opens in a Hamburg park

The pandemic has shifted life from indoors to outdoors, especially in places where the city's infrastructure supports this. Indoor recreational opportunities outside the home have become almost unthinkable. But in some places, the restrictions have also brought new opportunities for implementing good ideas. One of these is the mobile roller skate rental shop run by DJ Mad and Mitra Kassai.

Not only are they both passionate roller skate jam fans, they also organise skate jams too. Their Roller Skate Jam series at the Mojo Club is legendary in Hamburg. For a long time now, they have been trying to get a permit to

rent roller skates at the ice skating rink in the Planten un Blomen park. So far in vain. But in the summer of 2020, their idea finally became a reality. The district authority recognised the value of this initiative as it could give even more people the opportunity to move around outside without coming into contact with each other.



Photo: © [Rollerskate Jam](#)

Why is it interesting?

- In order to meet the increased need for outdoor exercise, more new, free and low-cost offers are needed.
- Public health will remain an important topic even after the pandemic.
- It is often the very simple things in life that are the most fun. Roller skating is one of these things.
- The roller skate truck can be used anywhere – all you need is a suitable area for roller skating.
- The pandemic has made it possible to implement a concept that already made sense.

Potential

- Parks and open spaces could invite more people to undertake sports activities through mobile or stationary rental systems (e.g. they could facilitate the rental of sports equipment, balls, or games).
- How could further incentives be created to enable new uses of parks?

Source: [Rollerskate Jam](#)

Platform matches vacant retail spaces with creative tenants

Finding suitable spaces is often a real challenge for creative professionals. This is especially true for attractive locations in the city center, often occupied by retail hence unaffordable for creatives. At the same time, the coronavirus pandemic has dramatically increased the vacancy of urban retail spaces – including Hamburg.

To counteract these problems, the Hamburg Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Culture and Media, together with the Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft and the Landesbetrieb Immobilienmanagement und Grundvermögen (LIG), have developed the “[Free Space: Space for Creative Interim Use](#)” funding program. In order to match creative professionals with landlords, Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft has launched a [platform](#), where landlords can create profiles of their vacant premises and creatives can submit their concepts.

The goal is to enable cultural and creative interim uses of vacant retail spaces at very favorable conditions, thereby minimizing vacancy costs – from art exhibitions to pop-up stores. The program ensures that creatives only pay a monthly contribution of 1.50 euros per square meter for the space they use, regardless of location. All operating and ancillary costs are covered by the program, including

deposits. Landlords seeking to avoid vacancies, prevent vandalism, and revitalize their property’s neighborhoods also benefit from the funding.

Why is it interesting?

- While landlords have to deal with economically painful vacancies, free and experimental space for creatives is a rare commodity. The funding program combats two problems at once.
- The platform not only makes vacancies visible, but also good ideas.
- Creative professionals decide how long and for what purpose they rent a space.
- The effort for landlords is low, since the Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft initiate, implement and supervise the interim uses.

Potential

- The platform functions like a marketplace where creative professionals and landlords have to get in touch with each other. To organize interim uses strategically, the city could act more as a curator and bring parties together according to predefined goals for urban development.

Source: [Hamburg Kreativ Gesellschaft](#)



Photo: © Jan-Marius Komorek

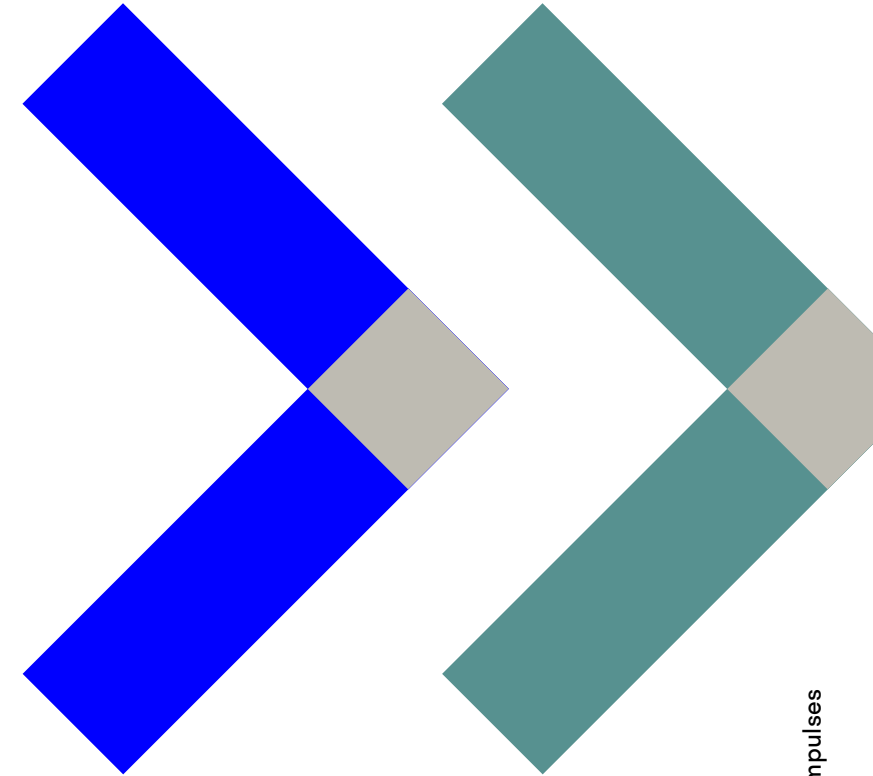
What you can do right now

Exercise: Design Sprint methods

To conduct experiments in a targeted and structured way, you could orient yourself with methods from agile software development. The best-known method is probably the Design Sprint method developed by Google Ventures. It is very well documented, not only in [Jake Knapp's books](#), but is also freely available on [Google's website](#).

Design Sprints are based on six phases, each of which are allocated a specific amount of time. These phases include: understanding, defining, sketching, deciding, prototyping and validating. You can also use [several different methods](#), such as the [question method](#) "How might we do XYZ?" or you map user journeys or conduct user interviews.

The [Pocket Book for Agile Piloting](#) from the Virium Forum in Helsinki translates the agile way of working for the city.





Part 2

Observations

To find out how life in the city is changing due to the pandemic, we launched a digital crowdsourcing project on urbanchangeacademy.com in January 2021. We called on the public to write to us about how they have experienced the Covid situation in their city – from north to south, from east to west, in large and small cities. We wanted to know:

- What do you miss most in the city at the moment?
- Which places have become more important to you?
- Which place could you easily do without?
- Which changes have made you happy?
- What annoyed you during the crisis?
- Where will you go first when the Covid pandemic is over?
- Where have you observed new creativity?
- What new places did you discover during the crisis?
- What are you most afraid of in the city?

The result is a diverse impression of the mood about the Covid situation. More than 300 observations were shared with us and have thus contributed significantly to the creation of the Playbook for the Post-Covid City. We have condensed the observations, feelings and thoughts of the citizens into seven central theses about the qualities of cities. Everyone who wants to take an active role in shaping the future of cities should ask themselves: What can we do to promote these qualities?

Thesis 1:

Without chance encounters, the city loses its charm.

To contain the Covid pandemic, public life has been paused: Popular meeting spaces such as cafés, restaurants, bars, clubs and other cultural venues have closed and were sorely missed during the lockdowns. Chance encounters that make up city life have become a potential threat. The virus forces us to keep our distance, limit our contact with others, wear masks and avoid one another. Social controls are increasing. It is becoming very clear that, during the pandemic, cities can no longer keep their promise of freedom. Keeping our distance changes our relationships with other people. With the outbreak of the virus,

the light-heartedness of urban life has been lost. Instead, we meet each other on the street with scepticism, avoid each other, suspect each other as potential virus-carriers, and avoid spontaneous exchanges with strangers, neighbours and acquaintances. We avoid surprise meetings, which under normal conditions could lead to friendships and clever ideas. If all this disappears, where will new impulses come from?

Quotes from the Crowdsourcing

“I miss the incidental, the informal and the coincidence. It’s places like museums, cafés, pubs and events like exhibition openings or concerts that you visit and you meet people quite unexpectedly. Rummaging through the flea market, finding and observing treasures, being part of the hustle and bustle.”

Sarah, as observed by me and friends

“The light-hearted encounter on the street.”

Philipp, observed everywhere in public places

“Sitting in a group of friends in a public space drinking beer and randomly bumping into more friends.”

Sabeth, observed in public spaces

Questions

How can we respond to the need for chance encounters? What new meeting places could be created?

How can we change existing spaces to make them into meeting places?

How can we encourage more chance encounters?

Where can we create consumption-free meeting places?

How can we design green spaces to make them into meeting places?

Quotes from the Crowdsourcing

“I miss the spontaneous tea drinking while reading a newspaper in the cosy city cafés. Sometimes you stay there alone, sometimes you meet acquaintances and sometimes you can strike up a conversation with strangers. Breaks like these are always beneficial and exciting.”

Alice, observed in Bern

“Meeting places of all kinds. Restaurants and shops have closed, but the city centre is still a place where people can meet. Unfortunately, apart from a few park benches, there are no nice places to sit – neither outdoors nor in the empty malls (this is where people are supposed to shop, not sit around).”

Britta, observed in the pedestrian zone in Grevenbroich

Thesis 2:

City means collective experience.

The extensive restrictions on social contact continue to influence our everyday lives and thus also city life as a whole. In places where there used to be hustle and bustle, it is now much emptier. Instead of letting ourselves drift in crowds, we increasingly keep our distance from each other. The city seems much less lively.

The restrictions and the standstill of public life have made it particularly clear to us just how much we humans make up the vitality of the cities and how strong the longing for this vitality is. In the hustle and bustle of the city, we can let ourselves drift, observe other people, listen to their conversations, be ourselves and not be alone. In cities, we can blend into the crowds and remain anonymous – at the same time we experience a sense of belonging through collective experiences, for example, at concerts or street festivals. Urbanity means crowds, light-heartedness, and liveliness – and this is everything that we are missing at the moment.

Quotes from the Crowdsourcing

“Life or liveliness! People you can observe. The urban. Places where I can meet up with friends and have a good time.”

Sarah-Maria, observed in Mainz

“The people, the lively bustle on the streets, in the parks and shops. Meeting friends in public spaces, being able to have a coffee together.”

Michaela, observed in Aachen

Questions

How can we maintain the vibrancy in our cities?

What urban spaces do we need to create for this?

How do we need to design such spaces?

What role does public space play in the overall liveability of a city?

What roles do restaurants and cultural institutions play in upholding the vibrancy of our cities?

Quotes from the Crowdsourcing

“The people in the streets, on the pavements and in the squares. Their colourfulness, their movement, their conversations, their diversity. People alone, in pairs, especially in groups.”
Thomas, observed in Esslingen

“Crowds. Pushing your way through the crowds at the evening market or the concert hall bar. Being in the same place surrounded by strangers and all of us experiencing the same thing.”
Jessi, observed in Bielefeld

Thesis 3:

A whole new appreciation for green and open spaces.

Where do we go when closed spaces become places of increased risk of infection, restaurants, cultural facilities and playgrounds are closed and travel is discouraged? Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have rediscovered the green spaces in our immediate surroundings. Here, we can take a break from the home office, breathe deeply, and escape the confines of our own four walls, while still being in the city. In the city parks and on the waterfronts, we go for walks, hike in the woods, and meet people while keeping our distance and enjoying the fresh air.

Along with green spaces, open spaces have also become more important: People have reappropriated urban space during the pandemic and transformed large squares, undeveloped areas, vacant buildings, and bridges closed to car traffic into informal meeting places for everyone. Aside from public green and open spaces, private gardens have also become more important. It has become clear that, especially in times of crisis, we need places we can retreat to, recreational spaces, and alternative meeting places.

Quotes from the Crowdsourcing

“The breathtaking nature right on your own doorstep, which looks completely different during every season and can be used in a new way. The phrase “Why go far away when it’s so beautiful at home?” suddenly makes sense.”

Hanna, observed in Freiburg

“The green spaces, parks and forests in the city or close to the city.”

Katharina, observed in Stuttgart

“Public spaces that were previously out of the way are now being used creatively (e.g. inline skating on a covered empty DIY store car park).”

Henrike, observed in Lokstedt

Questions

Where and how can we create new open spaces and green spaces in our cities?

How can we increase the amenity value of open spaces and green spaces?

How can we create new incentives to use open spaces and green spaces differently?

How can we make the corresponding offers usable for different groups?

How can we make local recreation areas easily accessible?

Quotes from the Crowdsourcing

“The green open space, my garden and the walking routes around my neighbourhood.”

Michaela, observed in Aachen and the surrounding areas

“The congested green spaces of a big city are no longer a retreat for me.”

Jutta, observed in Hamburg

“The banks of the Rhine and the paths there, the greenery all around are all generously designed public spaces for you to have walking dates with friends or to go for a run. Besides that, of course, your own balcony, your own flat and those of friends, your own garden.”

Sarah-Maria, observed in Mainz-Kastel

Thesis 4:

Without diversity, city life loses its meaning.

During the Covid-19 lockdowns, restaurants, cultural institutions, and shops have had to close again and again. Despite new hygiene concepts and online strategies, the situation remains difficult and many fear for the survival of the many small shops, cafés and restaurants, theatres, clubs, and cinemas. A wide range of offers is what makes city districts lively and attractive places to live. Restaurants, bars, and cultural institutions play an important role as meeting places – where we can meet, experience art and culture together and exchange ideas.

What will happen to our cities if these businesses do not survive? Even before the pandemic it was clear that the role of city centres needed to be renegotiated. Malls, shopping centres and shopping streets have hardly been missed; some people have even started to rethink their consumer behaviour during the crisis. At the same time, the desire for a diverse range of offerings remains. We find ourselves in a field of tension in which new possibilities, reinterpretations and conversions are becoming more likely.

Quotes from the Crowdsourcing

“I fear for the cultural institutions, the diversity of state and independent theatres, small art-house cinemas and large multiplex cinemas, the cabaret theatres, etc. It would be bad if we had fewer of them. It would be terrible if we had fewer of them!”

Doris, observed in Bonn

“To preserve our many beautiful little shops... we need this diversity... there remains the fear that only the big chains (whether café or clothing or restaurants) will manage to survive... :- (“

Jule, observed in Hamburg-Eimsbüttel

Questions

How can we use empty buildings to help the cultural scene?

How can new concepts be developed, and spaces reinterpreted, especially for city centres?

How can we contribute to the diversification of offerings? How can we also make it easier for smaller businesses to get started, what bureaucratic hurdles do we have to remove?

What priority do we give to art, culture, and catering in the city? In what way do our priorities need to shift?

Quotes from the Crowdsourcing

“I could easily do without city centres. I don’t miss shopping malls in any way.”

Sven, observed in Hamburg

“I can do without shopping malls and the glittering city centre, because I never use them. Shopping streets don’t interest me.”

Jutta, observed in Hamburg

“I fear most for the small fine local traders and restaurateurs, as well as the private, pre-Covid funded cultural institutions and initiatives.”

Anna, observed in Offenbach

These 5:

Those who
dare to
experiment
win.

The Covid pandemic has plunged beloved cultural institutions, cafés, restaurants, retail and social services into crisis. But in this difficult situation, new, creative solutions are also emerging – choir rehearsals are taking place online, concerts are being streamed, sports programmes have been moved to the city park, films are being shown in backyards, restaurateurs have developed to-go offers, retailers have advised customers via video call and outdoor eating areas have been converted into campsites for the homeless. The pandemic has forced us to rethink and try out, to find new solutions and to be more experimental. The city's restaurant trade, cultural institutions and retailers all show us how important it is to be open and willing to adapt and change.

Quotes from the Crowdsourcing

“I find the quick adaptation of digital formats by those in culture, catering and commerce remarkable. I am willing to pay money for cultural streaming offers. Art and culture are worth a lot to me.”

Jutta, observed in Hamburg

“In local retail, like at the Koch Kontor for example, or other small shops. They really go out of their way to offer a great service.”

Matthias, observed in Hamburg

“Exhibitions in shop windows and art exhibitions on posters in public spaces.”

Björge, observed in Hamburg's Gallery mile on Admiralitätsstraße

Questions

What lessons can we learn from culture, catering and retail for other areas and apply them to creative solutions?

What are the limits of these experiments? How long can culture, catering and retail hold out?

What support structures can we continue to offer, to support small or new institutions in particular?

What will happen if lots of things take place online even after the pandemic? What significance will city centres have then?

Which structures are worth keeping in the long term?

Quotes from the Crowdsourcing

“Specialist shops and restaurants that are now thinking ahead and about their customers, and continue to keep in touch with them during the lockdown, that create things with other business people, that tried new things in the summer and that are already telling me what they plan to do in 2021.”

Thomas, observed in Esslingen am Neckar

“From the to-go concepts developed by restaurants to the personal video sessions offered by service providers, to the fancy consultations and delivery services offered by small retailers. These should definitely be preserved in the future!”

Hanna, observed in Freiburg

Thesis 6:

Streets must be made accessible for the people again.

Car traffic decreased considerably, especially at the beginning of the pandemic. In many areas of the city, traffic calming has brought relief and relaxation, but also a short-term reduction in noise pollution, particulate matter, and CO2 emissions. During this time, walking has experienced something of a revival. During our breaks, while

working from home, we could all go for a walk in the park or the neighbourhood, and at the weekend we could take long walks with the family. Restaurants and cafés have used parking spaces to offer more outdoor tables to their customers. We have been walking more, and cycling has also gained in importance with pop-up cycle lanes being created in some places. During the pandemic, road users, other than car drivers, have taken back the streets and the city has become more liveable.

Quotes from the Crowdsourcing

“Especially during the lockdown, it was much quieter in the city – which was probably due to there being less traffic.”

Thomas, observed in Zürich

“People are strolling again.”

Natascha, observed on a former main shopping street

“In many places, pedestrians are using the roadways when it gets too crowded.”

Sven, observed in Hamburg-Ottensen

Questions

How and where can we create more areas with less traffic?

What measures do we need to take to accommodate strolling and walking?

What can we learn from the crisis and how can we give more importance to walking and cycling?

How will this affect transport development planning in the future?

How can we react to the change in mobility behaviour by redistributing public space?

How can we create more equitable space for all road users?

How can we offer more safety and more space to more vulnerable road users, i.e. cyclists and pedestrians?

Thesis 7:

Micro-Local love: How our immediate surroundings and neigh- bourhoods are gaining in importance.

Home offices, online universities and home schooling have all saved us many trips into the city, so much so that we have less need to leave our neighbourhoods. Our radius of movement has been reduced and our own neighbourhoods have been rediscovered during our walks. In many a quiet side street we see people walking in the middle of the road. Neighbourhood children are using the street as a playground. In many places, neighbours have moved closer together, founded neighbourhood help groups and lent each other a hand – be it for the older woman next door who belongs to an at-risk group or the family across the street who is stuck in quarantine. Along with the emergence of a new togetherness in our neighbourhoods, our own four walls and our own gardens or balconies have also become even

more important, as large parts of our pandemic lives have taken place here. In our own flats, we can enjoy the peace and quiet or the closeness with our neighbours.

Quotes from the Crowdsourcing

“My home and the neighbourhood I live in and all of its facilities (shops, pick-ups from restaurants, ...).”

Matthias, observed in Freiburg

“My shared flat! I’ve always liked living in shared flats, but I have appreciated it even more since the crisis began!”

Kathrin, observed in Hamburg

Questions

What is the significance of neighbourhoods and districts in the city and how will this significance change in the long term as a result of the crisis?

How can we strengthen neighbourhoods and continue to support neighbourhood help groups?

How do we need to design neighbourhoods to make them sustainable anchor points in everyday life? What role do commons or the third place play in this?

To what extent does there need to be a new negotiation between the importance of one's own four walls and the simultaneous significance of the neighbourhood as a space for community?

Quotes from the Crowdsourcing

“Support, neighbourhood help, consuming locally, outdoor and indoor sports, new ways of working, new ways of socialising.”
Salome, observed in Basel

“People are going for walks in the neighbourhood much more often.”
Matthias, observed on the Elbe



Perspectives

From September 2020 to February 2021, we discussed the observations and various opportunities for the post-Covid city with 11 experts from all over Germany, Sweden and Switzerland. When selecting the experts, it was important to us to cover as broad a spectrum as possible. As a result, these experts are active in the fields of futurology, culture, urban planning and research, social work, mobility, technology, finance, and architecture.

For **Amelie Deuflhard**, artistic director of the international performance and arts venue **Kampnagel** in Hamburg, the city is always also a stage. There are many examples of this, from participatory art projects in Hamburg's HafenCity to the interim use of the gutted Palast der Republik in Berlin. Born in Stuttgart, she read romance languages, history and cultural studies in Frankfurt am Main, Tübingen and Montpellier before moving to Berlin for many years.

Amelie Deuflhard



Photo: © Julia Steinigeweg

There, she took over the management and artistic direction of the **Sophiensäle** in 2000. We asked her about the challenges of artistic work in the pandemic, the standstill of public life and its consequences, the potential of inner-city closures and how we can diversify our thinking about the city today and in the future. The interview with Amelie Deuflhard took place on 04.02.2021.

To cushion the impact of the Covid crisis, the coalition

government is launching a Covid aid package of 1 billion euros, which is intended to be used to benefit businesses, restaurants and culture, as well as low-income earners and families.

Urban Change Academy: What has your experience of the Covid Pandemic been like so far?

Amelie Deuflhard: As is probably the case for most people, the effects of the Covid crisis have been felt differently at different times over this long period of time. I try not to let it get me down so easily and maybe that's why I'm still in a reasonably good mood. That being said, I have found it difficult. The first lockdown was like a shock. I still remember, we theatre directors and the head of the Elbphilharmonie, we could not imagine that we had to close. Kampnagel is a medium-sized institution, I have 130 employees. Running a business in these times is a real challenge. Especially if you decide to continue with business-as-usual somehow. You can't just carry on as before. All the work areas and processes that were well-rehearsed before the pandemic have since fallen away. In the office, we now work in a decentralised way with digital and hybrid meetings. For the artistic work, the central question is how we can continue to uphold our relevance, including our social relevance that we claim at Kampnagel, if we have no real spaces to perform in.

During this process, we are intensively dealing with the question of what the Covid pandemic means for all areas of life – locally as well as globally. It turns out that the effects for privileged people are not nearly as serious as for people who are less privileged. And this can be seen locally, nationally, and globally and regarding the distribution of income, the gap between rich and poor, the climate crisis, inequality in medical care or migration. All these social and global problems, which have been accepted consequences of global capitalism, have been further exacerbated by the global pandemic.



Open-Air Concert at the Summer festival 2020
with Covid restrictions and social distancing
© Anja Beutler

Globalisation and migration are topics that Kampnagel has dealt with intensively. You have worked a lot with migrants. To what extent is it possible for you to continue this kind of work?

We work both locally with a migrant diaspora and with a diaspora of people with refugee backgrounds. Globally, of course, we work with many artists from different countries and continents. International exchange is very complicated at the moment and intercontinental exchange is almost impossible. I believe that this will remain the case for the time being, at least until we open again in the early summer. This means we have to completely rethink our methods of production. The question of how we will work internationally in the future is complex. For the time being, I assume that we will continue to travel, but there will also be other forms of exchange.

For example, reproducing pieces locally again and again, this would mean that a piece created by an international director or choreographer could be created anew in dif-

ferent places with local artists. This is often possible with conceptual approaches; Jérôme Bel already practises this principle. But you also have to consider that there are many artists from other less-privileged continents whose livelihoods are dependent on their travelling from place to place and whose artistic activity is not possible without travel.

How are you dealing with this?

One example is the fact that we are bringing the Chilean choreographer Jose Vidal to Hamburg at the beginning of April. The idea is that he will create a piece here with thirty to fifty amateurs or semi-professional dancers from Hamburg who are keen on movement. It is about closeness and distance, about how our physicality has changed during these times of crisis. It's a wonderful challenge for a choreographer, and Jose Vidal has always had a very intense and dense physicality in his choreographies. We're just planning it now and we don't yet know if, and how, we'll be able to do the rehearsals!

So, he's actually physically coming here to Hamburg?

Yes, he is physically coming here and maybe he'll bring two or three people from his core team with him. We've told him clearly that we don't even know when he will be able to rehearse here in real life and how small the group of people he will rehearse with has to be. It may be that we can only rehearse online from April to May. Theoretically, he could also do that in Santiago de Chile, but he also wants to carry out some research to get a picture of the local situation in Hamburg. At the moment, my strategy is to think of new productions in different scenarios. This

means thinking about Vidal's play as it would be done on one of our Kampnagel stages, but also imagining how it could be performed in the Stadtpark or in the Sankt Pauli Stadium or, in the worst case, how it could be played online. During rehearsals, the artistic teams have to think about all this because the location and the underlying conditions have consequences for the production. It's a real challenge!

What other effects have the Covid restrictions had for you?

The hardest effect for me personally is that there is no public life any more. The fact that there is no art, no theatre, no events and no museums is serious, of course; but the most serious thing is that there are no more meetings and encounters at all, whether in the office, in the club, in the restaurant, in the bar or in the nightclub, and that will have consequences. There is hardly any public discourse any more, there are simply no opportunities to meet, only on Zoom, of course. But in my view, that isn't as strong as being in a room with people.

Not having places like restaurants, bars, theatres, opera houses or the town hall where you can just go, festivals

all over the world, where you meet people you know and people you don't know. That just doesn't exist anymore and that's a huge problem because it also has an impact on the political debate.

What effects have you felt or seen?

Things are getting worse and more visible, for example in the way that public discourse is conducted. Because many people insist on sharing their point of view in a very ideological way, discussions are often not possible anymore. It's also difficult to tolerate different opinions. You can be friends with someone, discuss your thoughts on a certain topic, and if you have different attitudes, you can fight it out. And afterwards, you can just sit down at the table again and drink a beer or have lunch together or enjoy a glass of wine. We are slowly running out of practice in this form of debate. We are not really governed by the government at the moment. Angela Merkel and the government ministers decide on the measures needed to combat the pandemic largely on their own. In the past, i.e. until last year, decisions were made democratically in parliament, but we are far from that at the moment. Because the pandemic has made it more important to act quickly. We will see what effects this has on our democracy.

Art and culture play a central role in social discourse – people watch a play together and perhaps have different opinions about it – that's where it all starts. The lack of such impulses feels like a kind of vacuum to me. Where does reflection take place, if not in the cultural and artistic institutions as it did before?

Artistic institutions are places to gather. Actually, there

There are hardly any public discussions left, there are simply no opportunities to come together— only on Zoom, of course. But from my point of view, this isn't as strong as being in the same room with people.

aren't that many places where we go to spend time with so many people. Maybe in a football stadium, that's also a nice place to gather, especially in the St. Pauli stadium. Or the theatre, when you go to see a play, but also to meet other people. Most of the time, people go to the theatre in pairs, or even in groups of several people. But no matter where they go, they know pretty well that they will meet other people there, because these are places that are visited regularly by certain groups of people. At Kampnagel, I make a point of cultivating this kind of gathering beyond watching a play. Be it by organising a premiere party for the audience afterwards, or planning some kind of opportunity for them to sit together in the restaurant, or dance with us in the club. In this way, we extend the time of coming together beyond watching the artistic pieces. I have always pushed the concept of gathering very strongly. And that's exactly why we cultural institutions have almost logically been the first to close and are always the last to open. Because we represent the opposite to what society currently needs. Namely, to stay at home and only meet in pairs.



Premiere dinner for the audience in the Kampnagel foyer before the Covid pandemic
© Tim Eckhardt

There is not much left.

Everything I normally use in our cities isn't there anymore, except for my office and the streets and parks. It's clear that cities have lost a large part of their function - except for local transport, living and working. All the other structures that make up urban life have been lost. Any reason for people to want to live in the city has been removed at the moment. If you only communicate via Zoom, you no longer need to be anywhere in particular.

Kampnagel is a kind of campus or meeting place. There is a restaurant, and in the summer there is a beautiful garden outside. The space is also used by the neighbourhood community. People come by, meet each other, the children can run around, or you can just come and have a coffee or watch something. So that means there is also another level to what we do. What happens here is not something you can do from India with a Zoom call.

That's why I'm still on site and I think it's important that I remain personally approachable even in times when we all work in a decentralised way. One of the most beautiful developments in terms of social life took place here on the Kampnagel site during the first lockdown, when the playgrounds were closed. There is a concrete ramp in our entrance area and it was suddenly transformed into a playground by children and young people. There were always skaters here and small children came with their parents. The forecourt became a playground and people simply reappropriated the public space. Responsibly, of course, in line with the Covid rules. I thought that was great, because it was a kind of transformation in social life as the theatre entrance area was turned into a playground.

Chalk drawings created by children playing
on the Kampnagel piazza during the first
lockdown in 2020
© Kampnagel



The forecourt became a playground, and people simply reappropriated the public space.

It was especially nice, for me of course, because playing is part of our profession at Kampnagel.

Let's talk a bit more about the city, society and Covid. You also said that there is almost no public life right now. How does the role of citizens change in a post-Covid city?

That's a very good question. Well, I am convinced that citizens will resume their social lives as soon as they're allowed to again. I hope that those people who have raised and discussed the things that have now become visible will have a stronger role in public debate in the future. These could be academic or activist positions, but they will be heard more. That would be a very optimistic interpretation

of the post-Covid era. Clearly that's not the case right now. In any case, I believe that people who criticise our society and our world should try to gain more positions in public life. We need public debate!

What could that look like?

More focus on the social, less egoism. By that I mean not only thinking about personal success. Deceleration is also an interesting topic to think about. Capitalism is based on the motto higher, faster, further. But slowing down has interesting aspects if you think about it. Perhaps some people who were previously only interested in becoming faster, better and earning even more money are now questioning this. This brutal stop that we have all experienced and dealt with in our lives could also have some interesting aspects. We've had more time to think, not been so rushed, travelled less, had less mobility – that certainly has disadvantages, but it can also have advantages.

What phenomena do you expect to see in the future of cities as a result of Covid that we are not yet observing today?

One development that was already apparent before Covid is that cities today are actually designed as purely consumer areas that are very, very unattractive, especially if the opportunities for consumption are closed as they are now. There are many people who have been saying for a long time that we need to make our cities greener and car-free. Covid could be a positive accelerator to this end. By the way, cities also need to become more diverse in terms of their uses. The city centre doesn't just have to consist of shops. There could also be places for start-ups or creative people, or designers with their workshops.

Then, it would be much more interesting to look around. Regarding Hamburg, could we do something different with the empty Karstadt and Kaufhof buildings? They could also be used in a super cool way.

How would you use the vacant Karstadt building?

It could, and should, be put to temporary cultural use. And when it comes to temporary cultural use concepts, I'm an expert. For example, I temporarily used the Palast der Republik in Berlin with a group of other stakeholders. A temporary use is always first and foremost an experiment. You see what works without fixing everything in advance – you work in a methodical way. The Karstadt building could be used for small shops owned by young gallery owners, start-ups, artists, coworking spaces, studios, and so on. In this way, it could be used for things that are actually needed. And the temporary usually quickly generates ideas for subsequent uses.

What skills are important for you personally for dealing with this crisis situation now? And, at another level, at the city or authority level, what skills are important there?

Interim use is always first and foremost an experiment. You look at what works without fixing everything in advance – you work in a methodical way.

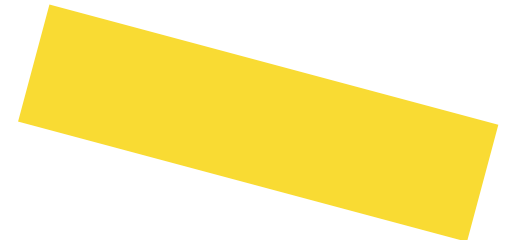
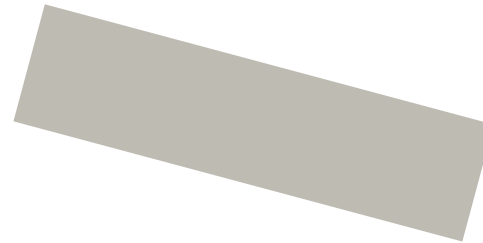
This may sound a bit stupid now, because we are talking about a very serious pandemic – but I always find times of crisis interesting. They are times when the old is partly swept away and the new can develop. I find this more invigorating than paralysing. I want to develop solutions and new concepts. What is being asked of us here in the pandemic is almost unbearable for many people, they are suddenly confronted with death, even young people. Others are excluded, for example children who have no help at home or problems with the language. On the one hand, there are privileged people who can cope well with such a crisis. But on the other hand, there are also many who cannot handle it at all. And with the continuation of this long road, which we probably still have to walk, it weighs more and more heavily. I am beginning to think that, somehow, we should have managed to deal with the Covid measures in a more differentiated way and to include other social aspects more. I find it super problematic that the social problems lurking behind them are possibly no longer being tackled. And I think new ideas have to be developed. But since we no longer have a broad public discourse – only a small club of bosses makes all the decisions – it is becoming more and more one-dimensional.

What should an Urban Change Academy teach?

I believe that it is important that there is comprehensive participation in society. By that I don't mean that every single person should have a say, but that as many people as possible from as many areas as possible should be brought in – different generations, men, women, immigrants, refugees, homosexuals, heterosexuals, transgender people and so on. And different sectors of the economy,

sociologists, economists, pastors too if you like – it would be quite interesting to hear what they have to say about how cities can function in the future. An alliance of different thinkers from different disciplines and with different backgrounds would be interesting and could open new perspectives. Another concrete example comes to mind – the old people’s home of the future. We always think it’s only old Germans who are in old people’s homes. What about the old people who grew up in Anatolia, for example? They get food that is completely different from what they would have cooked for themselves. We have to think about our society in terms of diversity, because the city (today) and in the future is very diverse and this has to be taken into account, not only in different disciplines, but also – perhaps we will learn one day – in that we are an immigration country and people from many different backgrounds gather in the cities.

Thank you very much



Alexander Bechtel is responsible for blockchain and digital currencies in the strategy department of Deutsche Bank. He also researches and publishes articles on the topics of (unconventional) monetary policy and digital currencies at the University of St. Gallen. He has also worked as an external consultant at the European Central Bank and spent a research period at Stanford University. On top of that, he has produced one of the leading German-language podcasts, **Bitcoin, Fiat & Rock'n'Roll**, since 2019. His podcast covers

Alexander Bechtel

Photo: © Alexander Bechtel



all things related to digital currencies and he regularly delves into the world of new money. We spoke with this payment expert about the economic consequences of the Covid crisis and asked him about the financial innovations that await us in the city of the future. The interview with Alexander Bechtel took place on 08.02.2021. At the end of January, the seven-day incidence in

Germany was below 100 for the first time since October 2020. At this time, many hoped that the Covid restrictions would soon be relaxed, while other voices were in favour of extending the lockdown and were warning about the spread of increasing virus mutations.

Urban Change Academy: What impact does the Covid crisis have on your work?

Alexander Bechtel: Actually very, very little, because I have always been able to work when and where I want. This means I've always done a lot of work at home, especially during my doctorate. I was free to move back and forth between the office and my office at home. And my team at Deutsche Bank works completely remotely anyway. My boss is in Hamburg and my other colleagues are in Frankfurt, Berlin and Munich. Everything is 100% remote for us anyway. We used to meet once a month in Frankfurt, but that's no longer the case. But apart from that, very little has changed in my day-to-day work. I no longer go to the Deutsche Bank office in Zurich but sit here at home. But that's nothing out of the ordinary for me.

What was the most surprising realisation for you in the pandemic year?

You only miss things when you don't have them anymore: the personal exchange with people, getting out, going away sometimes; you only realise how important that is when you can't do it anymore. I think that was a realisation for me. I'm someone who is always very focused, who also works a lot and who hasn't taken that many holidays in the past few years, I now really miss going out and not always sitting at home within my own four walls.

And with regards to the financial system: Were there any surprises?

Well, I was positively surprised by how quickly things went, that everyone stuck together and helped, that the banking sector granted loans very quickly, that the state also react-

And that is precisely what the state is for, that in times of crisis money can be spent, to bridge a difficult time.

ed quickly with aid packages, that people were courageous and put a lot of money in their hands. That's one reason why we're still doing so well today, despite everything, and why things don't look so dark. That was a positive surprise. A negative surprise was clearly – although somewhat less related to monetary policy – the whole denial of the Covid crisis. I have my own problems with that.

Central banks and states are currently providing an incredible amount of liquidity. What effects do these Covid aid packages have on the entire monetary and financial world?

You have to distinguish between aid packages – What is fiscal policy and what is monetary policy? Fiscal policy is the aid packages that come from the state. In the end, the state goes into debt in order to be able to give bridging loans. And the other is monetary policy, the liquidity that you just mentioned. I think both are important and necessary to get us through the next few months. Imagine if we hadn't done that and if there hadn't been these bridging loans, then a large number of shops, restaurants and hairdressers would have gone bankrupt. A lot of infrastructure would have been destroyed, and we want to avoid that at all costs. And that's exactly what the state is there for, to spend money in times of crisis to provide a bridge through

difficult periods. That's why I think both the state's aid packages, i.e. fiscal policy, and the expansive monetary policy are important, because they also have a supporting effect, of course.

There is always the fear of inflation. How do you assess that?

If you pump a lot of liquidity into the market, there is always the danger of inflation, of course. In the short term, there is more a danger of deflation. That means that in the next one, two, maybe three years it is more about preventing deflation rather than being afraid of inflation. The question is, what happens in the medium and long term? Inflation rates always rise when the liquidity that the central bank creates also enters the market, i.e. when banks start lending. All the liquidity that the central bank has created is largely sitting in the banking sector. But it is not yet being passed on – why? Because there is no demand, because there is no economic growth. But when the economy opens up again, when people start consuming again, then these loans will be in demand again, and if that happens to a very large extent and very quickly, then something like that can explode and become uncontrollable for the central bank. And this potential is just lying dormant. This means that the central bank will have great difficulty in being consistent and saying: "Now we have to be careful that all this liquidity doesn't slip through our fingers and lead to inflation."

One thing is important to me, just because there is a lot of liquidity in the system now, it does not automatically mean that we will see inflation in five years. One can also imagine many situations in which that will not happen.

How does the current economic crisis differ from historical economic crises such as the financial crisis of 2008? Are there any differences?

Yes, definitely, there are some very big differences. What

Sure, we have a higher debt ratio, but it is not any higher than it perhaps was ten years ago.

we are seeing today is what economists call an exogenous shock. This means that something from the outside led to a crisis. In this case, it was a pandemic. Neither the banks nor the industry can do anything about it as nobody made a mistake. If you compare it with the last big financial crisis in 2007, 2008, 2009 – that was a crisis that came from the system itself. It came from the fact that far too many real estate loans were granted in the USA; this meant that banks then went into debt and banks invested in securitised loans that were junk securities. A few years later, there was the

euro debt crisis – that was a crisis that came from the fact that the European states were too heavily indebted. These are all endogenous crises that developed out of the system itself, whereas this current pandemic is an exogenous crisis – like a meteorite that strikes suddenly. It's something we have to deal with.

What do you expect for this year within the financial world? What will happen? And what must not happen under any circumstances?

Of course, it all depends on how the crisis continues. If the vaccine works soon and we can open up the economy again, then I think we will have come through this crisis relatively smoothly. Sure, we have a higher debt ratio, but it is no higher than it perhaps was ten years ago. So, I would say that we have managed really well in Germany. It will be problematic if there is a third, fourth or fifth wave and we live more or less in lockdown for another year.

Then, of course, at some point the question will arise – can we keep the economy alive somehow by granting more and more loans? Loans won't work forever. The state does not have infinitely deep pockets and the central bank only has a limited amount of influence on all these things.

Is there anything related to the Covid virus and the economy, be it macroeconomically or inside companies, that worries you?

There will be industries that will continue to suffer after Covid because there will be less demand for them. This will include airlines, for example. It will take a very long time before we are back to the level we were at before the crisis, i.e. that people travel so much. This means that a company like Lufthansa cannot avoid laying off lots of people and scaling back in order to survive. This is just one example of the many sectors that will suffer. But that doesn't mean that the money that was previously spent on these will not be spent on something else. Then the question arises – do I think this is systematically bad? We economists always call this “deadweight loss”. Is something being lost or is consumption simply shifting somewhere else? You can find that good or bad, but as long as consumption and economic output are still there, the economy, at least as a whole, will not be damaged. Right now, I don't see there being a massive “deadweight loss”. As I said, all this is assuming that we don't have another fourth, fifth, sixth wave in the next few months. Should that be the case, then I see the biggest problem being that infrastructure will be lost and this can take years to recover.

What about culture and the creative sectors? Are they included in all the forecasts?

I think this is a good example of what can happen if the pandemic lasts too long, because this will mean that things break and can no longer be repaired. We'll do long-term damage if we don't bridge that time and keep people and businesses alive. If artists are forced to give up their professions, they might not come back after the crisis.

What do you think Covid means for the future of money?

What we see now is that people are already paying much more digitally, i.e. cashless. This is something that people wanted before. Many shops stopped accepting cash because there was fear that cash could be a possible way of transmitting the virus. I think that led a lot of people to realise that cashless payments are actually quite convenient. And I think this trend will continue. Many people have now got used to this way of paying. There are statistics from the Bundesbank that clearly show that cashless payments have increased a lot in recent months.

Many shops have stopped accepting cash because of fears that cash could be a possible way of transmitting the virus. I think that led a lot of people to realise that cashless payments are actually quite convenient. And I think the trend will continue.

What else can we expect in terms of financial technology in the city of the future?

One vision is that we will have an “economy of things” in the future. This means things will become economic agents: a car will become an economic agent, a parking meter, or a rubbish container can become economic agents and these things will also make payments in the future. Let's assume that we will have self-driving cars in the future. That is, I leave my flat, press my smartphone and a car drives by autonomously, gives me a lift, drives me into the city centre and parks in a multi-storey car park. The car also pays for the parking garage. I don't have to do anything more. It then picks me up again, drives me home again and then the car drives to the next charging station, recharges itself and also pays the charging station directly. And if I have a subscription, everything is billed transparently for me, so in the end I don't have to worry about anything. These are all things that are possible with new technology. It's about IoT (internet of things): objects, like a car, can become economic participants that can make payments..

How soon do you expect such developments to happen?

These things are already technically possible today. There are already some initial prototypes; Bosch, for example, is working on a charging station concept with which a car can pay a charging station, or a car can pay a parking meter. But the infrastructure for this still needs to be built. I would say that we will see the first prototypes in the next few years, that it will become completely normal for us that our car pays our bills. We are talking about ten years plus.

I can become a partner in my city by making it investable. For example, I can become the owner of a parking garage by tokenising it.

Are there other phenomena that we are not observing yet, but that you expect for the cities of the future?

Yes, I can become a shareholder in my city by making the city investable. For example, I can become the owner of a parking garage by tokenising it. Today, I can only sell the car park as a whole entity. And as such, investments like these can only be shouldered by large investors. Things would be different in a world where I can tokenise things and make them investable. Let's say the car park is divided into a million tokens and everyone can own one token. That means I would end up owning 0.0001 per cent of

that car park and then I also get a share in the returns that the car park generates. If an autonomous vehicle parks in the car park and drives out again at the end of the day and pays its parking fee, I immediately receive a part of this parking fee transferred to my mobile phone. Something like this will be possible in the future and it's

not bad for a community, as such concepts enable participation. I can become an investor in my community and finance projects. Let's say a new multi-storey car park is to be built and you're asked whether you want to invest in it. Then you simply buy a per centage of it and contribute to the realisation of such projects in your neighbourhood. But it's also possible that a taxi driver in Japan could invest five euros in this car park, which means there is a much larger investor base, so that I can perhaps also implement projects more easily. It will become a bit more democratic.

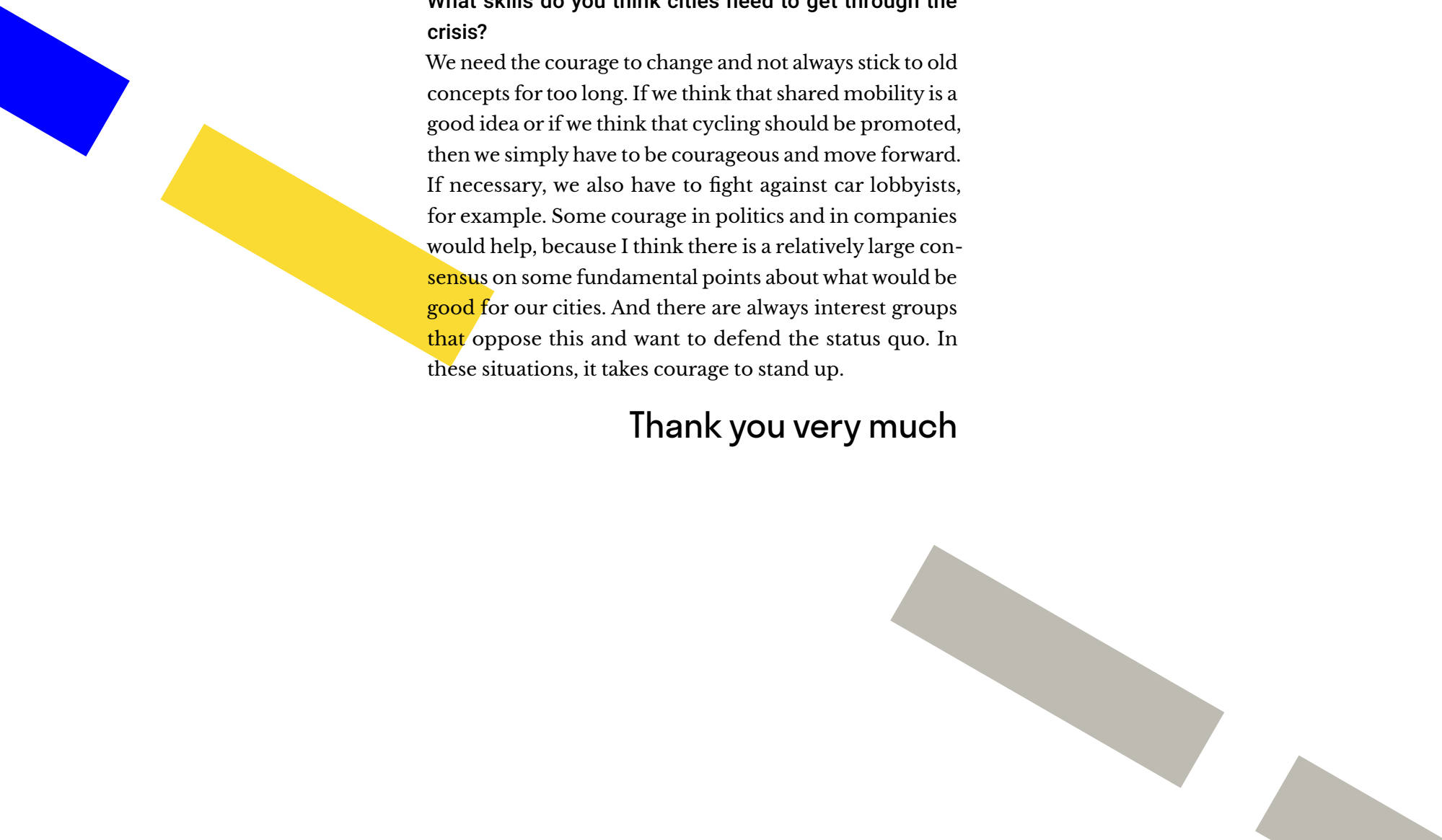
You briefly touched on the importance of IoT (internet of things) for the future of cities. What other developments can we expect in this area?

Parking sensors in the ground, for example. Every parking space has a small sensor in the ground which shows you which parking space is free or not. That means you no longer have to drive your car for hours through the streets, but you have an app and you can see where there are free parking spaces, and you can drive there immediately. Then you can say – to take up the example of tokenisation again – maybe this is a private parking space belonging to someone who rents it. But, because the owner is at work during the day, he simply can rent out the parking space. That means I tokenise the parking space and the person who is then parking on it can log in, the car then pays for the parking space and the money ends up directly in my wallet as the owner of the parking space.

Another example is rubbish bins that have to be emptied but the collection points are a bit further away from my home, so I don't want to drive there every day. I can install a small sensor that tells me when the bin is full. That way, the bin only has to be emptied when it's really full. I think if you think about it a bit, you can think of many, many more things.

Which of your skills have helped you to respond to change, especially during these times?

I think I am generally open and someone who is interested in new things. You can also see this in the fact that I work on innovation topics professionally. I am generally not afraid of change; I find it exciting. I don't think that's a disadvantage in the pandemic because things are chang-



ing, and the fate of many things is uncertain. Because in my job I generally have to deal with a lot of things that we don't yet understand and that may have a big impact on us in the future, what we are experiencing now in the pandemic perhaps shocks me less and I worry less.

What skills do you think cities need to get through the crisis?

We need the courage to change and not always stick to old concepts for too long. If we think that shared mobility is a good idea or if we think that cycling should be promoted, then we simply have to be courageous and move forward. If necessary, we also have to fight against car lobbyists, for example. Some courage in politics and in companies would help, because I think there is a relatively large consensus on some fundamental points about what would be good for our cities. And there are always interest groups that oppose this and want to defend the status quo. In these situations, it takes courage to stand up.

Thank you very much

Dieter Lämple is Professor Emeritus of Urban Research at HafenCity University Hamburg. For many years, he headed the Institute for Urban Economics at Hamburg University of Technology and taught and researched in Berlin, Amsterdam, Paris, Aix-en-Provence, Marseille and Leiden. He was a Fellow of the Brookings Institution in Washington, advisor to the “Urban Age” programme of the London School of Economics and is a member of the Scientific Advisory Board at the Singapore-ETH Center’s “Future Cities Laboratory”. We

Dieter Lämple



Photo: © Dieter Lämple

talked to him about why Covid is putting the commons back at the centre of urban development policy, what inner cities can learn from neighbourhood centres and how we can shape the future at the city level.

The interview with Dieter Lämple took place on 25.09.2020. New Covid infections in Germany’s neighbouring countries were on the rise. The German government had declared the whole of the Czech Republic, Luxembourg and the Austrian state of Tyrol to be Covid risk areas.

Urban Change Academy: We always like to talk about the need for more states of emergency in urban development. Now we have one that is quite big. In which areas do you feel the changes in particular?

Dieter Lämple: There is a deep sense of insecurity that is being processed in very different ways. At first glance, it seems that a large part of the population is relatively disciplined. However, more and more people are becoming exhausted. A minority is refusing to acknowledge the state of emergency. Above all, many consequences of this state of emergency remain invisible. To paraphrase Brecht’s Threepenny Opera: some are in the dark, others are in the light. Those in the light can be seen, those in the dark cannot be seen. I think the most important effects are to be found among the people in the dark. That is, those living along social divisions and borders in the city. We don’t see the poverty, especially the child poverty – that takes place behind closed doors. We don’t see the problems with telelearning that migrant families are having. We don’t see the consequences of forced part-time work, we don’t see the people who have lost their jobs. What we see are people who are longing for a new sociality and are socially present. For example, the attempts at social appropriation of the streets are interesting. This was a remarkable development, at least in the intermediate phase of reopening the economy.

What else have you observed?

What is particularly interesting is that labour is once again becoming the focus of attention. First, what was called systemically necessary work, for example, work in the hospital, at the supermarket checkout or in refuse col-

lection. Today, we have almost displaced these forms of work again. In the meantime – working from home is experiencing a new hype and is moving into the centre of the discussion, and often with a certain sense of glorification as the new freedoms are seen and experienced. You don't have to go to the office, you are no longer subject to the constraints of a hierarchical organisation. But this also conceals new corporate strategies. For employees, working from home is above all an attempt to gain more autonomy, more time sovereignty. For the companies, so-called "homeshoring" serves to outsource problems and costs to individual households. Strategies are being developed to save office space and office equipment. Sooner or later there will be a split in the workforce. Some will be forced into standardisable work processes, which can ultimately also be "outsourced" as "clickworking" via digital platforms. For others, hybrid forms of work consisting of a mixture of face-to-face and remote work will perhaps become more established. In any case, we are confronted with a situation of upheaval where we have to look very carefully at what is happening, and ask: who are the actors, who is shaping the developments and what dynamics and influencing factors are behind it?

If you look back over the last few months: Which spaces in the city have gained in importance?

The greatest lesson of the Covid pandemic is the central importance of the commons or services of general interest. In other words, areas that are not subject to any direct logic of exploitation or direct discipline by the state. It has turned out to be extremely significant that we have public health systems, that we have public spaces that


offer opportunities to leave the isolated home and find new forms of communication. Where the commons are less developed, society becomes extremely vulnerable, especially for those who are already in a precarious situation, for example those living in cramped quarters who have no room to manoeuvre. Problems then accumulate within the home – for example in the form of domestic violence. This means that the commons are also an outlet, an opening of the private space and a bridge to the public. For me, one of the central tasks is to further expand the commons.

What could this look like?

We need to reactivate the idea of the commons: We need forms of the commons that are managed and used by civil society, whereby the elementary rules of use should be negotiated in civil society. What we are currently experiencing on the streets is in line with this logic: people no longer abide by the traffic regulations but take to the streets and try to anticipate shared space and test behaviour in a way that at least takes the weakest road user into account. This is a kind of game in which new rules are developed without waiting for the state. It would be important for the state to take up such processes and the associated compromises, to develop them further and to give them stability through appropriate governance structures. By the way, not only does this apply to the social and cultural sphere, but it also applies to the commercial sphere.

Which commercial sector are you thinking of?

Let's take the discussion about the decline of the inner city. For decades, people have tried to attract as much



purchasing power as possible to the city. The result is a marketisation of the city centre and the public spaces. This has led to an urban cannibalism in which the strong have forced out the weak through excessive rent demands. They have destroyed those things that should actually make up the inner city: diversity, amenity value and the meaning of public space. Trying to save this system using state subsidies only prolongs the problems associated with it. We now have the chance to think about how we can get back to public spaces that are not subject to the market. Where you can sit without having to consume anything in exchange for money. After all, this concerns the urban heart of urban society. At the same time, we have to find a strategy to bring diversity and quality of life back into the city. A look at France is worthwhile here. When the last bookstore in Paris was in danger of disappearing, the “Coeur-de-la-ville” strategy was developed to save the “heart of the city.” The state has spent a lot of money buying up empty shops and renting them out again to owner-managed businesses or even selling them. In other words, the city intervenes to save the quality of supply and the amenity value. It treats the shops as part of the overall public service and infrastructure and thus gives the city centres a new lease of life.

This strategy is based on the idea of an “urban return”, through which this strategy pays off for the city in the medium term, the city regains its “urban heart” and a diverse, vital retail trade. These are courses of action that we should also consider.

It is a basic economic rule that you have to invest to bring about change. The discussion is now getting louder in

Germany, too. We are always quick to look at the federal government – could this also be a strategy for the countryside too?

In Hamburg, we have had a hard time with such innovative strategies thus far. We need to discuss whether we should set up a revolving special fund for such an investment strategy in order to be able to act in a better way. At the moment, a lot of money is pumped into “flows”, for example in the form of compensation for income shortfalls, which is of course important. But there is a lack of strategic investment in the substance and the development of a future-proof infrastructure in the sense outlined above. We cannot save the inner city through subsidies or income compensation. We have to stabilise and upgrade the existing structures and give them the character of infrastructures. Such a strategy requires flexible action or governance structures and innovative financing concepts.

This brings us to the topic of city centre management. There is a strong polarity here: on the one hand, there are the administrations, which deal with new concepts or economic development for the inner city. On the other hand, there are the more retailer-oriented inner-city interest groups that exist in many places. Do we need to put a completely different structure in place?

Of course, it's not enough to plant flowers and run advertising campaigns. It is crucial to increase the diversity of use. We definitely need a critical amount of housing in the city centre. Of course, the ground floors are particularly important – their use shapes the character of the street space. The interplay of commercial and community uses on the ground floors with the street space in front is where

urban life unfolds in the neighbourhood. In the area of new construction, interesting approaches have been developed that could also be applied in a modified way to facilitate an inner-city transformation.

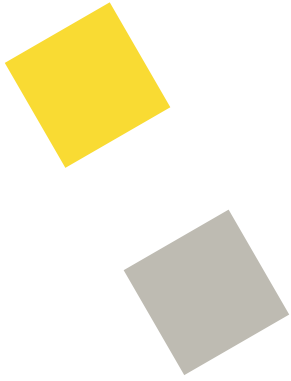
In a new building project in Vienna – “Seestadt Aspern” – for example, a “score” was formulated for the design of the ground-floor zone. This includes: four metres of ceiling height, transparency with public space and an invigorating use has an impact outside the building. Normally the objection comes almost immediately with people saying “this is not feasible under market conditions”. For this reason, the development company founded an Einkaufstraßen GmbH (shopping street company), which prepares the marketing, assumes the vacancy risk and sets the rents in such a way that a diverse mix of uses can develop that meets the needs of the neighbourhood. This approach is also based on the idea of an “urban return” or “urban district return” – lively ground floor zones with very different commercial, cultural and community uses mean a good quality of supply and are important meeting places that can contribute to the development of urban life. How could such a model be developed for an existing neighbourhood or individual blocks of buildings in the city centre? What legal instruments are necessary for this? What forms of cross-financing are possible? How would the governance structure have to be designed in order to

Of course, it is not enough to just plant flowers and run advertising campaigns. The decisive factor is to increase the diversity of use.

set such transformations in motion? This is a learning field that we have to test out. The market alone will not do it.

When we talk about city centres, we usually have big city centres in mind, like Vienna or Hamburg.

We also have many centres in small and medium-sized cities. And I would like to emphasise one thing. The centres in the neighbourhoods are even more important than the city centres. My vision is strongly influenced by the idea of the 15-minute city as conceived by Anne Hidalgo, the mayor of Paris. In other words, a polycentric reconstruction of the city so that all the important functions we need in daily life are within walking distance or can be reached by bicycle within ten or fifteen minutes. With the polycentric structure that we have grown up in, we in Hamburg have good starting conditions for such urban redevelopment. We already have vital neighbourhood centres in many parts of the city, where there are ties between customers and companies and where companies actively cultivate their customer relations. Some companies are very innovative. They try to improve their work through digital means, set up neighbourhood platforms, offer delivery services with cargo bicycles. They focus their offers on specific customer needs and thus strengthen customer loyalty. I think that the city centre could learn a lot from the neighbourhood centres. My dream would be to complement and underpin such customer-oriented strategies with urban factories. It would be wonderful if it were possible to integrate forms of urban production into the neighbourhoods and thus give a boost to “fluid” commerce by linking it with forms of customised production. Such ideas, which have already been partially realised in



neighbourhood centres, could also be an orientation for centres in small and medium-sized towns.

Could the Covid crisis also be an opportunity to bring production back to the city, back to the region? Or is that just a naive idea?

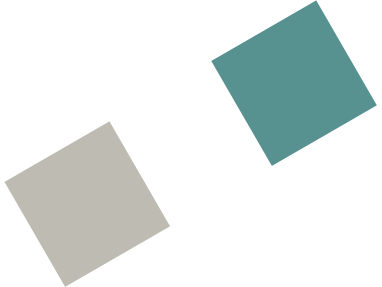
I don't find this idea naive. We are faced with a historically unique opportunity to bring production back to the city, based on digital technologies that are city-compatible and city-friendly. In this way, we can also make production environmentally compatible and realise approaches for a circular economy. There are already some very good approaches. As a rule, such processes are supported by founders and start-ups, which have a particularly hard time in times of crisis. We need a programme that starts with the premise of focussing on renewal and for this we need the start-ups, these gazelle companies. We should offer them development opportunities in the city. This begins first and foremost with the provision of appropriate space, and we need appropriate financing models too. We are seeing fascinating developments in the field of technology. As an alternative to "city-hostile" mass production, personalised on-demand production can now be realised – for example with easy-to-program light-weight robots and 3D printers. We see such hotspots in New York at the Brooklyn Navy Yard, we see them in Rotterdam and other cities. The question is, how do we create a milieu so that it can become more mainstream? I fear that the cities and the state are overburdened with the task of promoting the various good approaches. We might also need private sponsors, like the Factory in Berlin, where investors have come together to focus on

urban manufacturers and are trying to develop viable business models for them.

Some of the big companies in the industrial estates have financial problems. In view of Covid, what future do you see for the classic commercial and industrial locations?

The manufacturing sector is an indispensable basis for a functioning city. Basically, we need the courage to create new forms of intermixing. Instead of monofunctional commercial areas, new mixed forms of working and living should be developed. The commercial location of the future will be the mixed-use city and not the industrial estate. The companies that are now being established do not want to settle in a monofunctional industrial estate, but in a vital, lively city with a mixture of uses. It is not just those who work in media who want to have coffee or lunch in the neighbourhood in the afternoon.

In Hamburg, forty per cent of the commercial areas are monofunctional by law – these are the port areas. There is a completely dysfunctional underutilisation of the available space. We have huge reserves of land that should be opened up and activated in the interest of the city and the port. The port needs the urban stakeholders, it needs a vital urban structure that also offers a development milieu for the new production possibilities. However, not all productive activities can be integrated into mixed quarters. In this respect, we will continue to need areas for exclusively industrial-commercial businesses, but these areas should also be densified and upgraded to make them fit for the future.



The crucial question is: How can we shape the future at the urban level?

We have talked a lot about the need to create commons and strengthen infrastructure to make cities more resilient. However, many municipalities are very worried that they will not be able to finance their ambitious programmes in the next few years. Do we need a complete reorganisation of municipal finances?

The financial strength of the municipalities certainly needs to be strengthened. We have to regulate the financing of the development of local public transport in such a way that it does not put too much strain on the municipal coffers. At the moment, we are taking on very high

debts to keep the economy going. The crucial question is: How can we shape the future at the city level? Of course, one has to be careful and responsible with debt. But, if we borrow money at extremely low interest rates in order to make investments in the future that then yield a return, then it's a completely different story. For that, we need to restructure municipal finances and reorganise responsibilities between the federal government, the states, and the municipalities.

Do we lack an economic accounting system at the city level?

Up to now, classic cost-benefit analyses have been carried out, which as a rule do not take into account many "external effects", such as the urban dividend. We would have to come up with new assessment criteria. The current cameralistic rules by which we manage our cities are not sustainable. We need new financial instruments and financial

concepts to fund commons, services of general interest and new public transport systems in such a way that the vitality and profitability of urban structures are preserved for the future. And we should not say in advance that this amount of money is there, we can invest it and that's it. That would undermine the future existence of our cities.

Thank you very much

Jenny Grettve



Photo: © Jenny Grettve

Jenny Grettve is an architect, writer, artist and designer. With a broad background and years of experience in the architecture, design and fashion industries, she works as a creative consultant with a focus on conceptual work, rapid problem solving, interdisciplinary projects and productions. Jenny is part of the multi-disciplinary design team at [Dark Matter Labs](#). Her areas of focus include spatial transformation, social integration, temporary urban projects, writing, architecture, art and modular structures, object design

and exhibitions for the private and public sectors. We talked to Jenny Grettve about how to make cities more resilient to catastrophes, why we should collaborate and experiment more, and why this requires an economy of generosity. The interview with Jenny Grettve took place on 16.09.2020. At the beginning of the pandemic, Sweden took a special path and introduced fewer and less drastic Covid measures – there were no compulsory masks and only mild restrictions in the restaurant trade. At the time of the interview, the number of new infections remained at a low level despite increased testing. However, Sweden was designated as a risk area as early as November 2020.

Urban Change Academy: How has the Covid pandemic influenced your life in Malmö in general, personally but also professionally?




Jenny Grettve: I'm in Sweden, so it hasn't changed. My life is the same.

It hasn't changed at all?

No, not really. I mean, we live more or less as we did before. And for me, personally, I had a little office, but we were only six people and that never closed, so it hasn't changed at all. But I have changed the way I'm thinking about things, because I'm writing a book right now about retail spaces in cities and how those could be better used in the future. With Covid the uncertainties have grown, because you suddenly have all of these thoughts, "What happens if borders close completely?" We won't get any food from anywhere else, if we need to provide everything in cities, how do we do that? Where do we put things? So, in that book that I had, that was kind of mostly about, maybe more about the economy kind of shifted into, "Okay, how do we produce food inside, like in buildings? Or how can we quickly create 50 hospitals in a small city, in old stores, for example?" So, those kinds of ideas were born, I think, when this hit the world.

We would like to understand more about what's happening in the cities around Covid, and where you might see shifts, big or small, things that are changing or going into whatever direction. We're really interested in these observations also when looking at other countries.

I was just reading this morning that there's this kind of green wave. People want to produce their own food and



are starting to set up their own gardens, farm and also buying houses in the countryside or even moving. A lot of young people are now moving to the countryside. I think we have this huge green wave, because you won't travel anymore. For a while, at least. So I think there's this huge shift in what we appreciate, which I think is fantastic, it was kind of needed. But when I talk to my friends in Australia or in the States, their lives have crashed. A lot of my friends don't have work. They're really mentally not well. So, it's a weird feeling, being in Sweden at the moment.

I remember a New York Times article. In the economy section, there were a lot of very critical voices. And I think also in the German media, some articles were pretty negative. How did you perceive this kind of criticism?

It was so scary, because you feel like you're in this kind of experiment. I felt like I was a little test rabbit. And the rest of the world is doing something else. You just go, "Should we just get a tent and go into the forest and be safe for a while?"

So it put you under some kind of stress?

Of course, yes. Sweden is a strong democratic society where there's a lot of trust in the government. So if the government says that this is correct, most people are going to trust them. I had a discussion with a friend the other day about that. He's American and he said, "You know, in the States you're born and from day one, they teach you not to trust the government or the system. I mean, don't because it's just full of corruption and crazy kinds of things, they want you to believe things that are maybe not correct, so don't trust anything." But the way I'm born is like, "Trust

them," that's the only way to make this work. This contrast is kind of interesting, isn't it?

You're born in a certain culture and have more trust in the state. How do you see that kind of trust? What builds this trust in the Swedish government?

I actually gave him an example when we talked about this, because a while ago in Sweden, one minister, in a high post, she got fired because she happened to buy a chocolate bar with the business credit card of the party. I mean, that's the level. If you happen to buy a chocolate bar with money that isn't yours, you're fired, you're kicked, it doesn't work. So I mean, the message is "You can trust us, we're on track of things." I'm guessing, but I think corruption, for example, is non-existent in Sweden. Or it must be done in a very, very clever way.

Which parts of a city might be affected by Covid and the pandemic in the future, what might change, what might stay, what might not – what are your observations?

Right now I am fully immersed in the work I'm doing for Dark Matter Labs. We work a lot with retrofitting, that I didn't know much about before. In Europe alone, maybe around 250 million houses need to be changed to reduce their energy consumption. The walls and the roofs are not good enough, so we need to attach material on every single façade. That's something that we, that every city and every country will have to do. That's straight away something that I would add, because it's a huge project. I think production is going to be much more local, that's also connected to the retrofit project. There are also a few projects already working on this, with open-source

systems where you could download everything you would need for these types of constructions. So local production that may be with some kind of digital, open-source systems. Work and production need to be prepared for events like Covid, but that could also be different types of climate changes or whatever could happen. I think we need to be ready. Cities need to be ready to manage all of the production that they need.

As architects, do we need to start building in different ways? Do we need to think more about pandemics, or rising water levels? Do we need to construct the cities with emergency in mind? Do we actually need to shift this and create safe cities? It's a discussion worth having.

So the question is, how can you make cities more resilient? And then it doesn't matter really if it's a pandemic or it's climate change or any other kind of challenge.

For me, I think there is no need to talk about Covid only, but the idea of a world in change, in rapid change, and that we need to be prepared for whatever might hit us. I think this makes an interesting topic. As architects, do we need to start building in different ways? Do we need to think more about pandemics, or rising water levels? Do we need to construct the cities with emergency in mind?

Do we actually need to shift this and create safe cities? It's a discussion worth having. In Malmö (a coastal city) they're already talking about rising sea levels, and the city needs to be constructed for this.

Let's talk about neighborhoods. How might the pandemic change our relation to them?

I think the local area or the street you're living in will become more important to you.

I kind of feel generous and happy towards my street. I waved to my hairdresser, and I buy my little flowers and I chit-chat a bit. I think when the world is a bit rocky, it's all about the scale that feels safe and I think that's something we could build on.

How?

This is very connected to the book I am working on about empty spaces: just where I live, there are five, six, eight empty stores that could be used for something way more interesting in this micro-society. The project that I'm doing for the city of Malmö is going to take an example street and add things, some test beds for the future. Something that I would like to add, that they don't know yet, but also that Dark Matter Labs are working with a lot, is behaviour patterns and consumption. If we do all of the work with carbon neutrality in our own cities, we're still using the resources of a city somewhere else in the world. And is that really a carbon neutral city then? Right now those kinds of third emissions are not really taken into the equation, and I don't think that people want to change their behaviour. I mean, we want to add better façades, but we still want to go to H&M and buy cheap clothes. From my point of view,

this is not going to work. And it's very much connected to a new local approach, in how we live, and what we do.

We need to change the bigger picture?

Yes. Right now we are choosing the easy way. Sure, you can always add solar panels on your roof. But you don't need to do any internal work in how you live or how you consume by adding those. But I think it's going to be really important to act on a more holistic level in the future.

What else do we need to create better futures?

I think collaborations within communities are going to be something extremely important. And that will be added into everything here, like green space and nature, and culture, and open spaces, and work and production. We need to create better kinds of teamwork and collaborations. Another topic I'm extremely interested in right now is economy and generosity. I think that we will have to shift our whole perspective of cities, and that we need to be able to give and not expect to get anything back. I'm talking about big companies or institutions or cities. Or these store owners, I mean, they are right now just sitting on space because it's cheaper for them. So I think we need to move away from money only, and think about humans. What's good, what is going to be good for the city in another kind of holistic perspective? It's about becoming a more generous economy.

There is the citizen level and there is the communal, the steering of the city. Do you think the official administrative part will be more important in post-Covid times?

I don't think it's going to be more or less important, but I

think that the administrations are as well shifting the way they see things. This afternoon, I'm doing a workshop in Sweden with Vinnova and Viable Cities, ten cities, to take a deep dive into these topics. I think cities are quite interested in this change, and they know that they have to work on it. They are looking for different, new approaches. Back to carbon neutrality: there is a deadline when it comes to sustainability and it's very close. So it's not just about kind of wanting to change, they have to.

So it's important to refocus back on the whole issue of climate change, sustainability and not being stuck too much with the pandemic?

Yes. I am guessing this pandemic is going to pass eventually. I mean, hopefully it's not something that's going to stay. It might stay for six months more in Sweden or one more year I don't know – but I think there's a timeframe on it. I think it's always important to keep your vision at a longer perspective in time. But it's also very interesting to think more about the effects of the pandemic. Dark Matter Labs did [a risk cascade analysis of Covid](#), and specifically about closing societies, and what happens, and the long-term risks. So all this is something to consider.

How does the pandemic change our outlook into the future? Does it change what we think is possible?

I think it opened many people's eyes that we can't control what's going to happen, and we need to be prepared for whatever could come. It's harsh, but maybe also important to be ready for those things. As someone said here in Sweden in the beginning: this is just a trial, the real thing

I also see great kinds of workshop formats or sprints. The people who are super good at those things can jump in and do mini-interventions. I think that's a great resource which is often missed.

is going to come soon, and then at least now we're a little bit more prepared. It sounds scary, but I think it is true.

Who do you think are the people competent enough to navigate this future or to design it?

I think this question leads us back to collaboration again. I don't think there is one kind of approach like okay, well, it's going to be the cities to solve this, or it's the architects. This is a huge team effort. I had a meeting last week with

a city that was open for this idea of generosity and sharing. I think it's super important that we stop being egoistic, and that we're willing to give more than we want to get back. This also needs to be reflected in open-minded teamwork and a sharing attitude.

How does this influence your work as a designer?

I did a few kinds of pop-up parks last year. I'm not so interested in doing that anymore. I don't know. It just felt almost meaningless. So the way I see my work has changed, shifted a lot. I feel that I have responsibilities which I maybe didn't feel before. If you work with cities and have the opportunity to design, I think this is what you should work on right now. I don't want to do a nice bench.

When you look at institutions, cities, governments, which skills or work modes, in your view, are we missing at the moment that will be important and might be developed in the future?

What we are helping cities with right now with Dark Matter Labs is providing the big overviews, systemic strategies. I think that's something which is strongly needed. It's hard to know everything that's going on within the world. To keep this long vision alive and not fall into, as we said, fall into Covid, but to keep a good overview. Almost like management of a long-term survival.

I also see great kinds of workshop formats or sprints. The people who are super good at those things can jump in and do mini-interventions. I think that's a great resource which is often missed. I also noticed from the cities that we've talked to, that they're asking for advice around business models and different ways of funding, because of course there's always a lack of money. At the same time, there are lots of really cool initiatives, where people pay a certain kind of tax, or community budgets, there's so many different ways going on in how we see the economy, and how the economy can work in a city. I think economy and funding is a very interesting topic for cities right now. It is tricky. The cities themselves don't know what they need to do, and they don't know what they're missing, they don't know how to get there. There's a lack of information, but also a lack of results. For example, test beds are interesting. This is also new and there are not many cities that are doing things that you can look at already. We're still just in the beginning of trying all these new kinds of things like solar panels, retrofit, changing consumption or whatever. I mean, so give it another few years and there

Start small, experiment.
And then if we think it
worked well, scale it.

might be better examples, but today there are very few. This also makes it hard to have cities on board, when they don't know exactly what you're talking about, or when you don't have examples you can show, like, "This is what the city did, you should do the same".

So we need more tangible examples, best practice?

That's always good. I mean, there are not many people in the world who are brave enough to try things that haven't been tested before.

Which specific courses would like to see in the Urban Change Academy?

It would be interesting to mix high and low. I mean, I think it would be super interesting to see a course in long-term strategies about sustainability for cities, that kind of run for the next ten years. What is that? And then you have a course about those things and what to think about and what not to forget, different types of mapping systems or whatever. But then I also think that it's super cool to dive really deep and go, "Okay, how can we make every single corner in the city into an urban farm?" and they learn about carrots, very practical. I think there is maybe a space for both high and low.

Interesting idea!

I think it's important. I think we need to do both. Both of these need to run at the same time. We can't just do the strategies and do nothing else for two years, and then suddenly go into the test beds. I also think that these two should inspire each other. Whatever you test in the street, you also bring along in the strategy once it's tested, and you will find out whether it works or not.

What knowledge would you be interested in sharing?

Right now, I'm super interested in this kind of small-scale experiments. Like, you take a street or a mini community and you try, let's say, 20 ideas. What happens if we give all of these, let's say, it's ten houses. We give them the information about consumption on the fashion industry, we tell them how they can add solar panels. We give them all the clues that they need to create a mini sharing community on that street. We tell them about the energy and how to reduce energy use at home. We give them new power sockets to try out and see if that changes something. Mini trials, but connected to bigger ideas, that's something I'm super interested in doing. And also to try those and then, "Okay, this kind of a solar panel thing went amazing. Let's try it in 25 per cent of the city, instead of just one street." Start small, experiment. And then if we think it worked well, scale it.

Thank you very much

Jens Wille



Photo: © Jens Wille

Jens Wille has always been fascinated by maps. After training with Deutsche Bahn as a surveyor and cartographer, he studied urban and regional planning, architecture and urban design in Weimar and Glasgow and then immersed himself in the world of media design. His love of maps culminated in the co-founding of **Ubilabs** in 2007. As a data and location technology consultancy, Ubilabs supports data-driven companies that are shaping the future of mobility, life in cities, and sustainable development. To this end, Ubilabs offers

an integrated portfolio of consulting, software development, visualisation, and data management. We talked about the importance of data in the Covid crisis, the potential of mobility analytics and why pop-up bike lanes need an outlet for feedback.

The interview with Jens Wille took place on 16.12.2020 – the second hard lockdown in Germany was here. Due to the exponentially rising numbers of infections again and the increasingly highly critical situation in hospitals, public life was being radically shut down to prevent further escalations in the infection rate.

Urban Change Academy: What role has data played in the Covid crisis?

Jens Wille: There are many insights in data. We have conducted mobility analyses at Ubilabs, which we can use to see how quickly mobility behaviour has changed in the lockdown. In other projects, too, a wide variety of data sources were analysed anonymously, and we asked: Where are the cycling routes located? How is the volume of traffic distributed throughout the city during the day? In my opinion, more could be done in this respect. It would also be interesting, for example, to evaluate location histories. By donating data, we could retrospectively analyse the impact of a pop-up cycle path, for example. Do people really change their mobility habits? The change in the modal split, i.e. which means of transport are used, could also be analysed over time. These are pure data topics. In addition, there is also a need for a qualitative, emotional level of data – for example by annotating the recorded routes. As a cyclist, you often come across poorly constructed cycle paths that suddenly end in the middle of nowhere or are parked in certain places. In order to enrich data with such important information, we have to find a suitable access.

Data is a good keyword. At Ubilabs you deal a lot with map applications. What do you think of the discussion about location-based personal data and the tracking of infection chains?

When it comes to your personal location history, it's clear that this is a highly individual treasure trove of data that you wouldn't want to share with anyone else. Even if the data is anonymised, the movement patterns allow conclusions to

My hope is that the post-Covid city will lead to a true smart city that offers a high quality of life and offers a variety of sharing services.

be drawn about the person. Nevertheless, we know how dramatic the whole Covid situation is and how crucial it is to trace the chains of infection. My guess is that many people would provide the past two weeks of their location history or give this information manually. Nevertheless, we notice how big the hurdles are to introducing such solutions in the health sector. At the moment, they are having a hard time

with perspective questions because they have their hands full.

One thing is clear – the workload of those in the health services must be reduced. In order to make this possible, we have developed a tool for the Federal Ministry of Health together with the Medical

University of Hanover, with which those people infected with Covid can make their location history available or enter it manually in order to achieve a fast and structured recording of locations and contact persons.

What challenges do you see there? What should be done in the future to be better prepared for the next pandemic?

Federalism means that we have 400 public health offices in Germany, which are set up very differently – there is no one software for German public health offices, each office has its own methodology for establishing infection chains. With the uniform software platform SORMAS and a location tool anchored in it, the data can be collected in a structured way and processed immediately. At the

moment, the data is not collected in a uniform format, so that you could overlay all the movement profiles and analyse where people meet – it's a bit more simplified than that. But work is being done on that. There are currently efforts to equip 90 per cent of the public health offices with a SORMAS that is open to expansion. That is a hope. But of course, the question is justified: Why hasn't this been thought of before?

With a view to the post-Covid city: What potential do you see in mobility analyses? What else could be developed from it?

Public transport is now faced with the question: How is mobility behaviour changing in our city? What insights can we draw from all the data available – from passenger counts in the S-Bahn to subscription models and ticket sales at vending machines, to the question of where which tickets are bought and when, and how does this correlate with the connection information? This data could be made available to a wide variety of users and supplemented by shared mobility data to obtain as holistic a picture as possible of usage habits and to derive measures from it. Hamburg's Hochbahn is already making good progress with the hvv-switch app. The point is to keep a constant eye on things: Where are the tickets being used? How are special offers being accepted? How do we have to adapt the offer to make it more interesting? What else can we offer to help people avoid peak times on public transport? That's where we are, still at the very beginning. Instead of conducting a passenger survey every two years, measures like these can help us get a real-time look at mobility data and make decisions based on that.


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My hope is that the post-Covid city will lead to a true smart city that offers a high quality of life and a variety of sharing services.

Due to the pandemic, many areas in the city have had to be restricted. What technological solutions can help us make better use of limited capacities in the future?

We have already discussed this topic with many major event organisers. How can we equalise traffic at all kinds of events – from concerts to football matches? We call it safe routing. How can we divide the admission to events into time slots and give people a concrete movement time frame? Through the routing requests in the navigation, we can already calculate quite precisely who will be where and when. On this basis, we can direct visitors before they arrive at the concert hall or stadium: “You don’t have to leave yet. You’ll also have enough time if you take the underground three minutes later because your time slot doesn’t start until 5.30 pm.” This way we can avoid people arriving all at once.

We have to prevent commuter traffic from increasing so much. For this, we urgently need more intelligence in all commuter planning. This is a big challenge, and I hope it will be a big enough challenge, that technologies can create real added value.

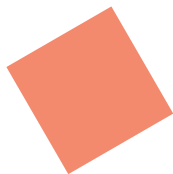
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The pandemic has exacerbated existing social inequalities. Can interactive map applications be a solution to this as well?

I think it is important to create transparency with regards to the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) of the UN. The 17 goals relate to homelessness, poverty, education, and water quality, among other things. Many of the SDGs are related to maps. Aside from the topic of transport, one could also look at city districts using certain questions, such as: What are the socio-demographic conditions there? How can this be depicted on maps? In this way we can review: What is a city doing to contribute to the SDGs? In this way, we can demonstrate to the citizens: Where are we right now? What is going wrong in this city? What can we do to achieve the goals? What are the steps we need to take to get there? I believe that the more visibility you create for this, the greater the willingness there is to fight for it. This could become a standard for urban planning. For example, we developed a vacancy indicator together with the Gängeviertel a few years ago. It is a map on which anyone in the city can enter vacancies in the city: “There are three empty flats next to me in my house.” At the time, there was a big discussion about how district councils could oblige owners to rent out the flat or impose penalties if they did not. This issue of visibility was totally essential. Within a very short time, more than 1000 places were registered in Hamburg; soon more than 35 cities were using the platform. This gives the topic of data collection or crowdsourcing a whole new meaning, which I find very important.

How has the pandemic changed our view of the future as a society?

I think that urban-rural relationships will become more relevant. How can shared mobility services also help to reduce or bundle commuter flows in the surrounding areas? The whole issue of Empty Seats Travelling: How do we manage – even if this may be difficult from a Covid point of view – to occupy more seats in a car? We have to prevent commuter traffic from increasing so much. For this, we urgently need more intelligence in all commuter planning. This is a big challenge, and I hope it will be a big enough challenge, that technologies can create real added value.



An important point in my eyes is the use of technologies and the commitment of companies: What are the possibilities to shape the “urban change” – and who are the right the right partners for this? Tools and feedback are an exciting topic in this context. I can well imagine providing city dwellers with new new tools for them to enter into a dialogue with the city.

At the motorway exits around Hamburg there are often commuter car parks where people congregate. Everyone drives to this car park in their cars and then continues their journey in one car, which is already a great step forward. I have no idea how well this is organised. What possibilities are there for rethinking these classic car-sharing or commuter exchanges through technology?

What do you think an Urban Change Academy needs? What skills should it teach?

You should definitely pick up, listen to and understand the different stakeholders. What is the biggest challenge they’re facing at the moment? What is the situation on the ground? In my view, this is an essential point of departure for every successful project.

I also find the exchange of experience important. In this respect, I think it’s a great idea if an academy like this can contribute to creating more networking among the individual actors and report on what they would do differently next time. Or, to present each other’s projects live on site, to make it possible for everyone to experience them. And I think it’s an exciting idea to enter into a discussion at this point. And also, to bring together very different user groups. I would like an academy to present new, controversial projects, ideas, and business models for discussion and get early feedback from all stakeholders, with whom ideally it should establish direct communication. In my view, this is a platform that can be of great value for cities and their inhabitants.

What topics would excite you?

Everything around data, data analysis and data strategies. And how the various stakeholders in a city can gain new

insights from data in order to make better decisions. An important point in my eyes is the use of technologies and the engagement of companies: What opportunities are there to shape urban change – and who are the right partners to do so? Tools and feedback are an exciting topic in this context. I can well imagine giving city dwellers new tools to enter into dialogue with the city: Where can I contribute my ideas? Where can I give positive feedback on a measure? Who can I tell about how happy I am about this pop-up cycle path in Max Brauer Allee? The pop-up cycle path is lacking the feedback channel. I would like to see more dialogue in the future.

Thank you very much

Kirsten Pfaue



Photo: © BVM

As the coordinator for the mobility revolution, Kirsten Pfaue is making Hamburg fit for the future. At the **Ministry for Transport and Mobility Change (BVM)**, she manages all activities related to the transformation in mobility with the aim of strengthening the environmental alliance. As a lawyer, she was chairwoman of the ADFC Hamburg regional association and is currently a member of the Advisory Council on

Cycling and the Dialogue Forum on the National Cycling Plan of the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure (BMVI) as well as of the Administrative Board of the Hamburg State Transport Authority (LBV). In our interview, Kirsten Pfaue explains how the pandemic has changed the balance of power on the roads, how we can revitalise city centres and why the Covid crisis demands that we as a society agree on our common values. The interview with Kirsten

Pfaue took place on 21.01.2021. The number of new Covid infections was decreasing slowly but steadily. However, the number of Covid deaths reported daily was still high.

Urban Change Academy: How have you personally experienced the Covid pandemic?

Kirsten Pfaue: I find the pandemic an unbelievable challenge, especially for all organisational processes. My job as coordinator for the mobility revolution in Hamburg is primarily to bring people together. This includes solving emerging and existing conflicts, developing ideas, and inspiring people for new projects. The mix of working from home and all the personal crises associated with the pandemic definitely makes my work more challenging.

How are the pandemic and the transport revolution connected?

I perceive the current developments as very contradictory. Continuing to work constructively with a large number of stakeholders under pandemic conditions means it's a great effort for all of us. Nevertheless, 2020 was very successful from a professional point of view, because cycling can be called the absolute winner of this crisis so far. We have 33 per cent more cyclists on the roads in Hamburg than in the past few years and there are junctions where we can no longer handle the cycling traffic safely because it has grown so much. We also set a new record in 2020: We built 62 kilometres of new cycle lanes – that's huge.

What does that mean for mobility in the city as a whole?

For many people, cycling opens up a whole new way to move around, to get in touch with others and to experience the city from a new perspective, especially to break out of the monotonous working from home routine. Of course, foot traffic is also increasing, while car traffic has decreased due to everyone working from home. Unfor-

It was amazing to see people reclaiming and enjoying public space in the summer of 2020.

tunately, public transport is one of the losers in this situation, and it will be a great challenge for the cities in the coming years to pick up the slack. I believe that a major social task will be to restore confidence in the safe use of public transport. But we will succeed. I am confident that we will, with good hygiene concepts and new ticketing systems. I also believe that cities will continue to grow, but space will remain scarce.

What has been the most surprising realisation for you in the past few months around the pandemic and the developments related to it?

It was amazing to see that you can cycle very well in Hamburg when there are fewer cars on the road. And how many people suddenly enjoyed cycling and felt safer because of this. Many people seem to have rediscovered Hamburg for themselves by bike.

What observations have you made about city life in Hamburg in recent months?

It was amazing to see people reclaiming and enjoying public space in the summer of 2020. A good example of this is the Krugkoppel Bridge, which was being rebuilt at that time. So, there was no car traffic on the bridge and it became a lively meeting place every evening. All kinds of

people met there casually, spent time together, had a drink. They experienced their city in a completely different way from before. I have never experienced such liveliness in this place. Before the building activity, cars

drove there on four lanes – in this beautiful place, it's unbelievable. You forget that so quickly. This need for social exchange in public space has become very strong during the pandemic. That's why, in my view, cultural offerings in the inner city will continue to be so important in the future so that there is a reason to stay there. For that, we need attractive places to stay.

How has your image of the city centre changed both before and during the pandemic?

Before the pandemic, I associated Hamburg's city centre mainly with shopping, multi-storey car parks and cars on the Jungfernstieg. I assume that after the pandemic we will rethink the city centre in many areas. Namely as a meeting place with a strong amenity value, with culture, with changing offers and also a newly designed form of retail. I also believe that during the pandemic people have recognised the importance and value of a small, regional village centre in their neighbourhood. And they've realised that there is value in not hearing car noise, in making the city quieter, in improving the air and in creating more space for people to meet – these are the basic values that will shape the inner cities and regional centres after the pandemic.

The topic of car-free city centres is still considered to be very controversial. How do you think climate change mitigation measures will develop in Hamburg in this regard? And how will you deal with it?

In the short term, there will certainly be controversial discussions, especially in the inner city, because professional and economic livelihoods are at stake and there needs to

be willingness by the individual players to change. Opposing interests arise very quickly here. On the one hand, retail and catering will be concerned with their survival

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and thus quickly become concerned with maintaining the known status quo. On the other hand, all stakeholders are aware that it will be very difficult to survive without change. We need visions. And not everything is clear. What will happen on Hamburg's streets in the coming months if we no longer have to work from home, but public transport has not yet regained the trust of the population? It seems to me that major conflicts on the road between car drivers and cyclists are preprogrammed. It is then important not to lose sight of the vision of the mobility revolution and to do everything in our power to ensure that public transport gets going again and that the expansion of the cycling infrastructure makes rapid progress.

The issue of quality of life in the city seems to be important. In the summer we saw that restaurants were allowed to use more outdoor space, and in Hamburg's Planten un Blomen park there was a temporary roller skate rental service. You

see a lot of exciting initiatives that make places in the city even more attractive than before – and increase the quality of life despite the crisis. How can you ensure that such projects will survive the pandemic?

I think we have to take a broader view. We won't all go back to the office five days a week after the pandemic. I am convinced of that. The work situation will change a lot for people who have been in the office every day up to now. This also means that people who spend a lot of time at home will want to get out into the city from time to time. I believe that people will long to go back to the city centre, to spend time there, to use seating areas, to go for a stroll. And that's exactly what the measures have to be geared towards. Above all, it is important to make new offers possible and to make them tangible. We must not just talk about making the city centre attractive but also make this experience visible and implement it within a relatively short period of time

Does that mean that the time for change is now?

Yes, exactly. I think the opportunity that lies in the pandemic is that people have experienced the benefits of less car traffic. We've seen the qualities that places like the Krugkoppel Bridge can develop. What a city with less traffic is like – the air is so much better. The understanding of why, for example, sufficiently wide cycling lanes are needed now more than ever. Many more people, including inexperienced cyclists, suddenly find themselves at road junctions and want to navigate safely through the city. The deficits are becoming clear, and it is now possible to build on them and make improvements.

What could that look like in concrete terms?

Last year, we conducted a traffic survey in Hamburg's city hall district in which individual streets were closed. This was received very positively by the majority.

The neighbourhood became more attractive because, among other things, the restaurateurs were allowed to put their tables on the street and people enjoyed spending their lunch break there. I think this approach will become even more entrenched. Sometimes I wish we had more courage to simply try something out or to keep the bureaucratic obstacles as low as possible in order to allow more creativity. But with these traffic experiments, which are now also provided for in the Road Traffic Regulations

(StVO), we have and improved framework for this – to just do it. Unfortunately, we tend to discuss all problems first until the desire and courage have gone. We can do better than that.

How do you think the role of citizens will change in the post-Covid city?

I can well imagine that many citizens are angry at “those up there” and are angry with the

state. And this indefinable anger at the decision-makers, at politics in general, I think, is very dangerous. I have the impression that the restrictions associated with the pandemic have strengthened or triggered this feeling in some people. After the pandemic, it is important that we

as a society agree on common values and norms in order to be able to tackle the big issues, such as climate change and the mobility revolution. Otherwise, conflicts could arise by proxy. Then there is the angry car driver who is hopping mad with the cyclist, but not really with the cyclist at all because there is something else going on under the surface. And I think that's dangerous.

What effect will the pandemic have on our view of the future?

I believe that the pandemic makes it very difficult to develop and find a common vision in a creative way. By the way, I notice this in my work, too, which is why I talk to people about visions and impulses that move us forward. At the moment, we all simply have to persist, and somehow get through, from day to day. The length of the pandemic will certainly have an influence on when we start again. Certainly, the city and the people must first come to terms with the pandemic before we can look too far ahead together. But as long as anger is still fermenting about civil rights being so severely restricted, and many entrepreneurs are still fearing for their existence, people will be less willing to discuss visions for new forms of mobility.

Looking back at the past few months: Which of your skills have helped you most in your work to deal with all these changes?

Listening. Listening and letting statements sink in. I think it's important to remember that everyone has their own view of the pandemic. And only by listening and changing perspectives can a basis for a common discussion and a common picture be created. One should also free

Sometimes I wish we had more courage in this respect, to simply try something out or to keep the bureaucratic obstacles as low as possible as possible, in order to allow more creativity.

oneself from the idea that one's own view is the measure of all things. At the moment everyone has their own, different view of their own situation and also evaluates it differently.

If we take your personal skills as a starting point, what skills or ways of working do you think institutions, cities and authorities will need in the future?

There needs to be a dialogue between the city and the people about what has happened and how we want to shape our common future. To strengthen our democratic forces, this can only happen through discourse. We need to interact with citizens as much as possible. Communication and

There needs to be a dialogue between the city and the people about what has happened and how we want to shape our common future.

discourse are, in my view, central to the post-pandemic period. However you organise it, it costs money. It costs resources, it costs nerves. But I am convinced that it is worth it, and I am confident that we will succeed.

Thank you very much

Marion Klemme



Photo: © Marion Klemme

The Covid pandemic has shown us what it looks like when there is no life left in the cities. **Dr Marion Klemme** directs our attention to public spaces and their development. She heads Department I 2 Urban Development at the **Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development** (BBSR) in Bonn. The department provides scholarly policy advice on social developments and their effects on the levels of action in cities and urban neighbourhoods.

The interview with Marion Klemme took place on 22.09.2020 — In parts of Europe, including Great Britain, the Covid infection figures were rising sharply again. In Bavaria and North Rhine-Westphalia, protective measures were being tightened.

Urban Change Academy: The coronavirus pandemic has caught us all on the hop. Looking back over the past few months, what impact has it had on your work?

Marion Klemme: Covid has had a massive impact on our projects. We didn't realise that at the beginning because we were sitting at home and just trying to run everything from there. You have to know that we do a lot of research projects and also public events. It became clear relatively quickly that every one of our projects would be affected by Covid. Workshops, congresses, events, exhibitions: We either had to reschedule, postpone or think under completely new conditions. This means that the core of our work was, and continues to be, affected.

Let's talk about the city centre.

At BBSR, we have an intensive discourse on what happens to cities during the pandemic. We distinguish between observations about what is currently happening and the overarching thoughts on the post-Covid city. In other words, what might cities look like in the future?

The lockdown has shown us all what a city looks like when there is hardly any life there anymore. There is also the issue of working environments, since so many people are now working from home. Covid has a massive impact in both areas.

The beginning of the discourse was strongly normative and influenced by our wishes for what a city of the future should look like. One's own ideas of the future were, so to speak, linked to the Covid discussion. These ideas often didn't match with the reality, because ultimately, we have to start with the existing situation. I think it's important to do a lot of analysis – i.e. urban observation – right now,

The lockdown has shown us all what a city looks like when there is hardly any life there anymore.

in order to understand what's happening.

An important point. That's why we will start with the question about your observations. When you look at the topic of the city centre, what specifically has changed as a result of Covid?

The city centres are no longer frequented to the same extent as they were before Covid. The desire to buy, the purchasing power is no longer there to the same extent as it was before Covid. The inner cities – if we mean inner

cities in the sense of retail areas, pedestrian zones, city centre areas – are strongly characterised by the fact that trade is no longer as prosperous as it was before the pandemic. But the changes go far beyond trade. There is much less business travel, and this is affecting the big cities. The hotel and cater-

ing industry, especially in the vicinity of office locations, trade fairs and the like, is particularly hard hit. What will happen here in the future? Which areas will pick up again and which will not?

In a recent stakeholder process, we floated the idea that retail will no longer be the lead function in the city centre of the future. At first, that didn't elicit much of a reaction. I think this thesis would have been much more controversial a few years ago, wouldn't it?

Yes, I think so too – although you also have to distinguish between different types of cities and locations when it

comes to the lead function. I don't think we need to talk about Hohe Straße in Cologne or Mönckebergstraße in Hamburg. It is probably the medium-sized cities or even the inconspicuous large cities that are most affected – like Herne, for example. They suffer quite differently under the pandemic from the metropolises, which will perhaps still have a stronger attraction in the retail sector – even when travelling becomes a possibility again. I believe that a certain amount of trade will remain – whether it will continue to be a leading function or not is something I will leave open for the time being. Even if it is a difficult time for individual traders and we have to deal with many closures, from a planning point of view it is a gain for the city centre if a diversity of uses and functions returns in terms of living, working, commerce, urban production, but also public facilities such as libraries, music schools and youth centres.

Have you observed, through the development of the Covid crisis that the gap between the cities – not least in the inner city – is becoming more apparent?

I think in the short to medium term, yes. But in the long term, the development really depends on how the local players reinvent themselves: What alliances can they form, what new co-production or cooperation can they enter into? Perhaps municipalities that have been struggling with structural change for a long time are also being more creative and are more courageous in doing new things than the municipalities that have relied on the prosperous inner city for a very long time. Small towns like Elmshorn, for example, which experimented with a pop-up format even before Covid, have been able to have quite a different

experience from the large cities that have always relied on the big players. Also with a view to the stakeholder landscape, perhaps people are coming together more quickly in a smaller spatial context to get something off the ground together.

It's interesting that you mention the word courage. We've had that in all the interviews so far: We have to be courageous. It's about experimenting, trying things out and approaching things with courage. This word seems to be somehow central.

We really need more courage (laughs)! If you lack courage, you don't try new things. But new things are essential for the development of inner cities. We also see that many places are already experimenting with new formats. For example, small bookshops are offering delivery services. A lot of things are being tried out.

Are there any other observations on the topic of the city centre that you can share with us?

Public space is extremely important for city centres. I

think that the public spaces in German city centres – in some, certainly not all – have been neglected in recent years. This is particularly noticeable if you take a look at our neighbouring countries such as Switzerland, Austria or the Netherlands. There, public spaces have a very different appearance from in this country. In Germany, the main squares are usually spruced up – but if you go three streets further, things start to crumble rapidly. In my view, there is a great responsibility to put public space back in the foreground, especially if you want to locate non-consumer-oriented functions in the city. Public space needs investment and can be redesigned together with private individuals. New cooperations or co-productions need to be found in order to use these spaces differently.

What role does mobility play in this?

The mobility revolution is an important factor because cities are often already very densely built. As a rule, space is scarce. If you are thinking of taking away some areas from private motorised traffic, then you should take the opportunity to upgrade these areas in terms of amenity value, cultural events, people coming together and opportunities to meet. If people are no longer attracted to the city centre through shopping, then you have to create meeting spaces where people can gather and which can also be used for cultural and artistic purposes. Many areas have to work together in the sense of integrated urban development.

In the long term, will politics go so far as to make investment in public spaces part of an economic stimulus pack-

If people are no longer attracted to the city centre through shopping, then you have to create meeting places where people can gather and which can also be used for cultural and artistic activities.

age in the larger sense? Or with a view to the restaurant and hotel trade alone.

There are also efforts on the part of the federal government to further strengthen the city centres. In many municipalities it is now important to initiate processes in the short term to take advantage of these windows of opportunity that are just opening up. I think we have to be careful with all measures that we do not promote and finance structures or operating models that would not have been viable in the near future even without Covid, because they are too narrowly calculated from an economic point of view or because the online world interferes with it. We need solidly elaborated ideas that show us that a change of course is being sought for the inner cities. And at the same time, the city still needs money for short-term experiments and opportunities to seize the chances available to them now. The difficulty right now is to do justice to both – short-term solutions and long-term viable strategies.

Do you think that the issue of density will be discussed now or in the future on a completely different, or perhaps also on a more fundamental level?

In the discourses of the last few weeks, the question kept coming up: do we now have to rethink our guiding prin-

ciples of the dense, mixed, compact city? In the course of the pandemic, we saw that it was not the dense cities that were responsible for the exploding numbers. It was private events such as family celebrations, but also cramped living conditions in individual apartment blocks, but that it is not the dense city per se that is responsible for the virus spreading.

So, I think that while the density discussion is getting more attention, ultimately you have to look at each city on a case-by-case basis. You can't give a blanket answer to the question of optimal density.

Every city has to look at its space thoroughly and analyse it: What function does it have for the local area, for the living environment, for climate adaptation or even for more living space?

We have a joint project: Nachdenken über die Stadt von übermorgen (Thinking about the City of the Day After Tomorrow). There, we have often discussed how important it is to prepare intensively for the future. What connection do you see between Covid and the topic of shaping the future? Right now, there is a spirit of optimism in planning practice and in the city-making scene, because there is a sense that spaces will soon be made available again in central locations. I believe that people are thinking in terms of many windows of opportunity. But I can also imagine that for many people it leads to a sense of hopelessness, that people have the feeling that they can no longer shape anything. Now we see the pictures of burning California and there is the pandemic.

My attitude is to stimulate discourse and to think about the future – but in terms of alternative futures. Many

Every city must look at its space thoroughly and analyse it: What function does it have for the local area, for the environment, for climate adaptation or even for more living space?

people ask, “What does the post-Covid city look like?” This question is far too narrow for me, as we also have other local and global challenges to overcome. We should ask: How can we imagine different urban futures and different ways of living in the city and try them out on different levels? Trying out a lot and letting science evaluate it so that as many people as possible can learn from these experiments – that seems to be a good way to think about it at the moment.

You said earlier that the city needs a good analysis, it needs time and it needs courage. Those seem to be three very important factors.

Yes, the important thing is to bring the players in the cities together if you want to get something off the ground now. We have city managers – it doesn’t matter whether they are called city marketing, city managers, city centre managers or pilots. In the meantime, there are a number of tried and tested models from different funding contexts. It is important to actively shape these processes on the ground now and that there are people who take this into their own hands. And whether that is a private person who can network well, or a municipality as a whole, it’s not so important in the end. What is important is that we now come together locally and find alliances.

Finally, I would like to turn to the topic of skills – also with a view to the Urban Change Academy. What do you think is needed in terms of topics and content that such an Urban Change Academy could contribute in order to improve the way we deal with the future and shape the city?

You have to offer people platforms so that they can exchange ideas more easily or tackle small projects directly and take away their fear of formal processes. Especially younger people, who often find it difficult to understand this complex, formal administrative world. How can I make a difference on my doorstep? Who do I have to contact in the first place? What conditions are there? How can I get temporary interventions off the ground? We have to show the way here. I think this is very important for the future. We have dealt a lot with informal engagement, and I believe that bringing the informal and formal worlds together would be very valuable. We need that to be able to play with cities or places differently or in a new way. There are also some initiatives from the BBSR. A few years ago, we developed [Freiraumfibel](#), an open space primer that is in incredibly high demand. And for me, that is an indicator that it is not just a small, fine booklet, but that the demand for this knowledge is really there.

Thank you very much

Mitra Kassai

Mitra Kassai is an old hand in Hamburg's music and cultural landscape. Born in Munich, she used to manage hip hop legends such as 5 Sterne Deluxe, now sits on the board of Rock City e.V., an association for the promotion of young musicians, and is an advisory board member of the Millentor Gallery. As the founder of the non-profit initiative **Oll Inklusiv**, she has been organising events for "seniors and senioritas" since 2017 – from trips to the city's clubs and street art tours to music bingo and graffiti workshops. We

spoke to her about how cities are becoming more age-friendly, why the pandemic is teaching us that we need more flexibility in the decision-making processes and what a roller skate rental shop has to do with anything. The interview with Mitra Kassai took place on 04.12.2020 – barely two weeks before the second lockdown.

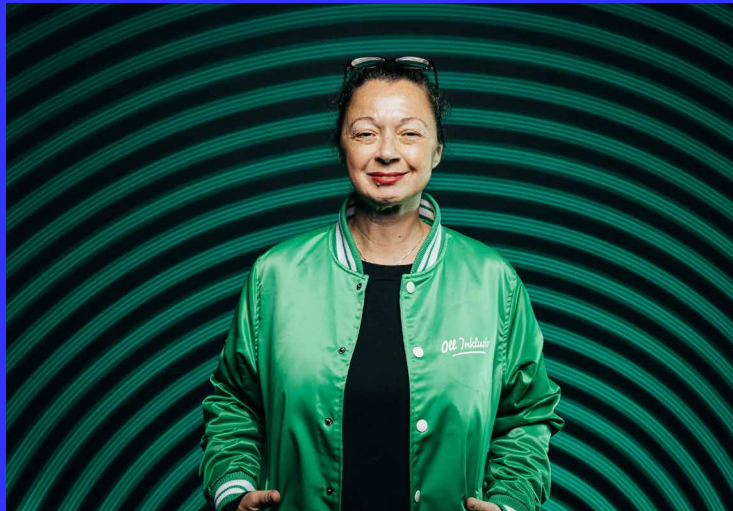


Photo: © Jonas Krantz

Urban Change Academy: How have you experienced the Covid pandemic personally?

Mitra Kassai: I have experienced the pandemic as very work-intensive because I'm out and about a lot in seniors' facilities. In 2019, I was awarded the Annemarie Dose Prize by the City of Hamburg for my social and innovative work with "Oll Inklusiv". From the prize money, I did further training to become a senior citizen's assistant. This means that I can go directly to the senior citizens and "senioritas", as I call them at Oll Inklusiv. My job is to provide good humour and simply be there in both individual and group care – whether that means making phone calls, helping with shopping or anything else they might need.

You go on many excursions with the seniors and senioritas. What has changed for you in terms of your contact with people?

What I have missed a lot in the phase between the first and the second lockdown falls under the heading of "personal" or the hug. You notice that you have simply relearned physical greeting modalities. Whether it's the "foot tap", the "elbow pat" or just waving and saying hello. This physical distance that we have to maintain simply does something to your mind.

And spatially, I made sure that the Oll Inklusiv activities took place outside. We were very lucky because we had a beautiful summer. For example, I offered outdoor graffiti workshops or street art tours for the seniors and senioritas. In the future, we will introduce rickshaw rides – we call the format R'OLL on – and implement this in cooperation

You can't always get frustrated and say, "Oh no, I can't, I won't", you have to think think creatively and innovatively and adapt.

with the Hamburger Fahrradgarderobe and the association Radeln ohne Alter.

I was also invited in other cities with Oll Inklusiv, like Munich for example. There was the project "Art in the Square", it was a really great event. Various artists were asked to perform – DJs played, there were dancers, capoeira and photography courses. Everything took place outside on the Theresienwiese. I was a guest there with Oll Inklusiv and I did music bingo. I simply took our "half-board" format outdoors and replaced things that aren't possible now with things that can be implemented. What I'm trying to say is that you can't always be so frustrated and say, "Oh no, it won't work, I won't do it", you also have to think creatively and innovatively and adapt.

What was the most surprising realisation for you in the past few months around the pandemic?

That uncertainty can take such a big place in my life so quickly. I am a very courageous person. But I realise that a lot of insecurity has come from this pandemic. It starts with wearing a mask and ends with vaccina-

tion, and there's a lot in between: whether it's closing restaurants, keeping your distance, hygiene management, all these things. Sometimes something can happen and then the clubs can't open, yet again. All this leads to uncertainty because you don't know what will happen next. And this uncertainty does something to you. I don't want to lose

my courage because of it. My courage to change things means I continue to make society a better place.

What do you think are the consequences of the pandemic for city life and culture?

The purpose of catering offers is currently, I go out and get food because I'm hungry. But actually, going out to eat is a social interaction, whether I organise a business lunch or a dinner, or go out for dinner with friends, whether I have a romantic dinner or a blind date or whether I go to a club because I think the people there are cool. This communal coming together in society, that's what's missing. And restaurants and bars are the platform for that.

What I also don't understand is why street food markets are not allowed to boom. At the end of the day, they offer exactly what you want and you can eat and keep your distance.

In my opinion, they deserve much more promotion and support from the city. Parking spaces could have been blocked and used for street food markets, so that they could stand in front of office complexes, for example. You shouldn't put so many obstacles in people's way. They could also have been placed in marketplaces – where there are weekly markets. Why not just allow food trucks to sell food there in the "grey zone"?

So, more flexibility in the use of space?

Yes, or more flexibility in the approval process. The "grey zones" should have been turned into "green zones." An example: My husband and I treated ourselves to a hobby two years ago. We bought an old 70s van and had the outside beautifully decorated by Stuka, a street artist. And in this

step van there are over a hundred pairs of roller skates. We are a mobile roller skate rental company and have pushed the whole roller skate and skate scene up a bit. It's totally booming at the moment.

And we always wanted to be here in Hamburg's Planten un Blomen park. Just open the doors there and then start renting roller skates. And the city didn't react at all. I wrote to the most senior people everywhere. It dragged on for five years. We simply communicated into the void because no one felt responsible.

When the new flooring was approved this year, the lady in charge at Planten un Blomen contacted me directly. And then she didn't contact me by e-mail, but immediately via WhatsApp and we had the approval within 24 hours. Then I think to myself: "Yes, okay, sometimes it works out." Sometimes you just have to want it. We are very grateful for that.

What would have to be done to make it easier for such ideas for temporary uses to be brought to the city's attention and to have a chance of being implemented?

Let's compare it to the free economy – if I have a problem, I write to the company and get a so-called ticket. And this ticket has to be processed within so and so many hours – so that I remain a loyal customer. I have now submitted a funding application to the city of Hamburg. I first had to look for the funding application. Then it was unclear where to send it. Then I had to print out the application because I had to sign it. Then I wanted to take it to the city hall to hand it in personally. I was turned away at the reception desk. I was told to post the letter because of Covid, which means I could have sent it by post. Then I didn't

hear anything for three weeks, didn't know if anything had been received at all – so this ticket opening that you know from the economy didn't happen at all. Then I get an e-mail saying that I have to add this and that. In the meantime, however, I get a call from another person at city hall: "I would ask you to write me an email and withdraw from the application, because we have no more funds. If you don't write that you are voluntarily withdrawing the application, then we have to go through a lot of bureaucracy to reject it." So: she calls me to tell me that they don't want any work, but I don't get any support. That's when I thought to myself: "Well I never!" If something like that happened at a company, I would be gone in three seconds. So, it's not just the bureaucratic hurdles and complicated procedures that are a problem. The processes are also incredibly untransparent and incomprehensible.

What else would you like to see?

That you are allowed to give an assessment afterwards: Were you satisfied with our processing, yes, no, why not, or something similar. These customer service evaluations that we're all familiar with simply don't exist at the city.

Let's talk about nightlife. What do you expect for the future?

I think it's crass that nightlife is completely at a standstill. The club industry and the catering sector were the first to come up with functioning hygiene concepts. This additional training costs upwards of six hundred euros and many have been trained. All the clubs have joined forces through club foundations or other institutions and have looked at how to create Covid-compliant offers: whether it's sitting at a distance or outside – and yet nothing is al-

lowed to take place. I find that very frustrating. It's ruining a whole industry.

And what I find unfortunate is that society always says, "You just want to have fun" when it comes to music, art, culture, and parties. We shouldn't forget how important all of this is for the social thinking in a city, even beyond the region. We change the world through music, art, and culture. We also want to convey messages. And music is not just an emotion that lives in the nightlife, but music provides food for thought. The city needs music, art and culture if it's to change. Cities are not shaped by their musicians and artists for nothing. You can tell if it's Hamburg, if it's Berlin, if it's Kassel. Artists, musicians, creative people: they shape cities through their creative output. I hope that it will continue. Perhaps we will have to find another way of celebrating, another way of experiencing culture. We have to keep at it and think of new things. And I'm pretty sure that nightlife will come back because that's what we all need and want. Owls are most creative at night.

Is there anything new on the horizon already? What are you observing?

A city is created through movement. Whether it is tearing down houses and building them up, whether it's walking from A to B or taking the underground from A to B, a city lives on movement.

I think we are all more health conscious; we have all become more active. E-bikes are, I think, more expensive than ever before. It's unbelievable. Roller skates are sold out, skateboarding is totally in again, people go jogging a lot and generally move around outside. A city is created through movement. Whether it's tearing down houses and building them up, whether it's walking from A to B or taking the underground from A to B, a city lives on movement, and people move a lot.

And that's why cityscapes will reshape themselves. For example, more skate parks could be built, or basketball courts redesigned. If you look at the parks in this city, they could really be cleaned up. Some of the park benches are completely rotten. There are playgrounds that look as if they were built in 1912. You could completely rethink the outdoor design: Why are there no decent barbecue areas? You could rent out super barbecue stations in parks. Similar to festivals where, when you camp, you have to pay a deposit and you only get it back if you leave your campsite properly. You could also rent out chairs in the park, like in England. Why can't you rent out deckchairs like that and those who hire them make sure that the parks are kept clean?

What skills have helped you during the Covid situation? Is there a skill that you have learned recently?

Above all, I have learned to be patient. I hate patience. Patience and I are not friends, never have been. And we still struggle a bit. But I once bought a kilo of patience, and I'm still using it. And what you absolutely have to be at this time is flexible. But I've always been flexible. I've noticed that many people have to learn flexibility first.

That is very, very important. Moving around in a city also means bringing a certain flexibility with you – that's how something can come about.

**What should we address with the Urban Change Academy?
What would you wish for yourself, for Hamburg, for the whole world?**

What I would like to see in my field of work, of course, is young and old meeting at each other's levels and that cities are made more age-friendly. That means we not only have to show consideration for older people, but also include them better in city life. Just as we do at Oll Inklusiv, in a very modern way. A senior doesn't necessarily always need help; a senior is simply a person who is perhaps slower, or who needs space because they have a walker. That's what I would wish for. The aim of the project is to help shape a more age-friendly cityscape. This includes, for example, installing park benches with a higher seat so that older people can stand up more easily. Many things in everyday life can be thought through further so that they are more friendly to seniors. In this way, we can create an inclusive cityscape at our level.

Thank you very much

We need a flexible, resilient system that is also useful beyond the Covid period – especially with a view to climate change – mobility expert **Dr Philine Gaffron** is convinced of this. She teaches and researches at the **Institute for Transport Planning and Logistics** at the Hamburg University of Technology. Her focus is on the social and environmental impacts of (urban) transport, the interdependencies of transport and space, concepts for sustainable (urban) transport and implementation strategies for transport planning. We

Philine Gaffron



Photo: © Eva Häberle

discussed how we can create more space equity for different uses and different transport participants, what role spatial quality plays in this and how we can move from theoretical readiness to real change. The interview with Dr Philine Gaffron took place on 28.09.2020. In most neighbouring countries, the number of Covid cases was rising rapidly – in Germany, the number of new infections was still comparatively moderate.

Urban Change Academy: What challenges does the Covid pandemic pose for the transport system?

Philine Gaffron: Many people have changed their mobility behaviour because of the pandemic. They are travelling less, or differently. Public transport is emptier, public space is being used differently. There have been spontaneous reactions such as the adjustment of public transport timetables or pop-up cycle paths. But these are mostly temporary. But even if the current state of emergency changes again, there is no guarantee that further pandemics will not occur. That's why, firstly, we need a flexible, resilient system that will be useful beyond the Covid period. And secondly, at the same time, we urgently need to make progress in terms of climate protection.

With regards to resilience, it is a matter of creating as much security as possible for everyone. Even for those who do not own a car. In cities like Hamburg, up to 50 per cent of households do not have their own car – these people must also be able to move around as safely as possible at all times – safe from accidents and safe from the risk of infection. To do this, we need the findings of research so that we can ask, what well-founded recommendations can be given to people so that they can structure their mobility behaviour and their use of public space? There must also be the corresponding offers for this.

We live in uncertain times. How does transport planning deal with this?

The tools we need to deal with such situations are already available to a large extent. The keywords are multimodality and mobility-as-a-service. How can we best combine the different services? There is still a lot to try out, to learn,

to restructure, to organise better. At the moment, however, the main thing is to maintain this readiness for urgency that we have developed and lived with in the Covid period – we have to change things right now because a disease is threatening us as a society – we have to maintain this readiness and use it in relation to climate change without falling into panic and fear.

We need to build on what we have made possible in the area of mobility and solution-oriented financing instruments, what we have seen at least in small beginnings. And also think of new impulses. We mostly talk about cities, inner cities and densely built-up settlement areas. But, the issues also concern the surrounding communities of large cities, rural or less densely populated areas and the relationships between these spaces. How do people get to the city under Covid conditions? How do commuter links develop? And what are climate-friendly solutions? We should look at the surrounding communities to find out what is needed there. The chances are good that new local structures will then also establish themselves, such as other concepts of local supply or co-working spaces. And if public transport is to become the backbone of the new mobility, we need a good interplay of traditional offers and newer sharing transport modes of various kinds everywhere – both on a spatial and temporal level.

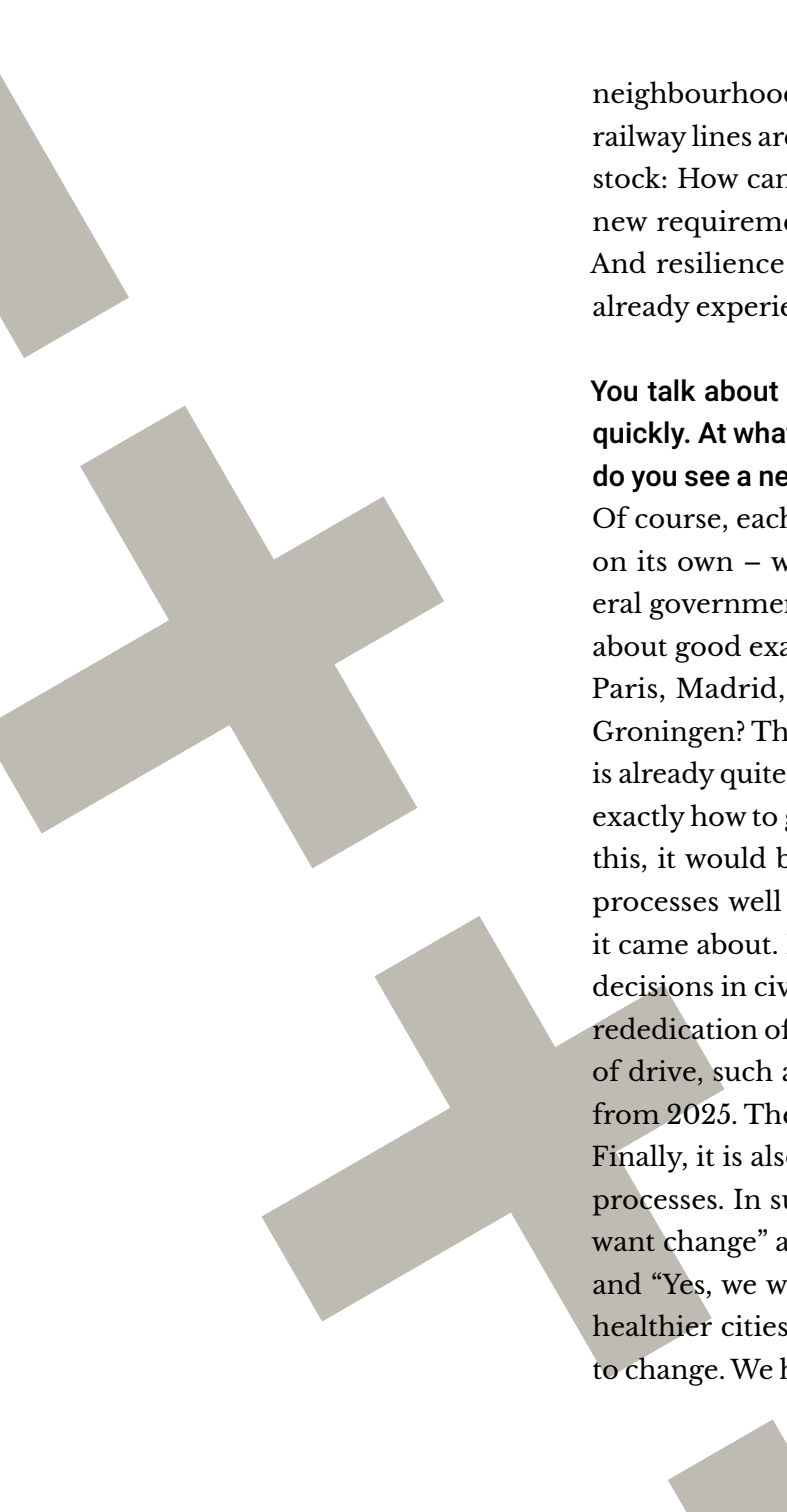
You are an active city dweller. What changes have you seen in the area of city life and culture?

Like so many others, I am concerned about cultural diversity, especially for smaller providers, independent cinemas, smaller music clubs that live off the daily traffic. I can't imagine that this diversity can be maintained with

the current guidelines and possibilities, even if a lot of digital offers are being created in this area. In the summer, it was no big problem to move catering outside, but how do we deal with this in winter? How do we also make it possible for people to meet safely in the open air, free from commercial offers? We have seen an increasing demand for this. In southern European countries it is certainly a bit easier because the weather conditions are different. But also, in Northern and Central Europe, we want to continue to have a public life, get together, use pubs, restaurants and bars. But how do we solve the noise problem in residential areas, for example?

Does that mean we have to redistribute and redesign public spaces?

Yes, and not only because of the consequences of the Covid pandemic. This is a topic that we have been discussing for a very long time in the context of the mobility revolution, that we have been calling for and, in some cases, even trying out, but in many places we have not yet made enough progress: the redistribution, the fairness of space for the various modes of transport and the various uses – mobility, recreation and meeting, culture and catering, trees, and green spaces, etc. We need to look at this even more through the lens of spatial quality; not only because it is part of good urban life, but also because it can offer possibilities that are needed in an extreme situation such as this. In any case, it is a task that we urgently need to make progress with. And for that we need, first of all, good ideas that can be implemented quickly. And secondly, we need development paths, i.e. we can achieve this in the next five or ten years. We can't wait 20 years until new



neighbourhoods with new mobility structures and new railway lines are built, but we have to focus on the existing stock: How can we restructure it so that it can meet the new requirements? And also serves climate protection. And resilience against the climate changes that we are already experiencing.

You talk about developing and implementing good ideas quickly. At what level does this have to take place? Where do you see a need for action?

Of course, each municipality has to implement its ideas on its own – within the framework defined by the federal government and the federal states. I am often asked about good examples in this context: How did it work in Paris, Madrid, Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Utrecht and Groningen? The awareness that something has to change is already quite high, but many municipalities don't know exactly how to get there; there is a lack of experience. For this, it would be helpful to document decision-making processes well – not only what was done, but also how it came about. How did the city manage to make certain decisions in civil society and politically? Whether it's the rededication of roads or the decision to ban certain types of drive, such as combustion engines, from city centres from 2025. The authorities often lack staff too.

Finally, it is also a task of civil society to support change processes. In surveys we always read: “Yes, of course we want change” and “Yes, climate protection is important”, and “Yes, we want different mobility and less noise and healthier cities.” But for that to happen, something has to change. We have to close the gap between strategy and

implementation, between knowledge and action, between values and reality. The will to change – that is very important. But if people then feel that they cannot have a say, then there are fears, worries, resistance – not always justified, but they need to be taken seriously nevertheless. These are aspects we have to deal with and, for that, we need targeted information and dialogue.

Let's talk about the topic of working and producing. Many people are of the opinion that they will continue to work from home. Do you see it that way too? What consequences will that have for mobility behaviour?

Yes, I agree, especially regarding business trips and business travel. For many, much more will take place online in the future. But, working from home is only great if you have a quiet workplace, a good internet connection and a laptop – and that is by no means the case for everyone. This is where co-working spaces can help, offering decentralised, flexible workplaces for people who do not want or need to travel long distances to work every day. For mobility, this means that there will be less commuting. And there will probably be fewer – often more expensive – business trips. However, one must also keep an eye on the psychosocial effects. Many people lack real social contact. And, of course, there are many jobs that cannot be moved to the home at all. So how can we organise this optimally in the future?

Is there a credible threat of a two-class society? Some people will tumble freely in the new mobility world, while others will continue to be dependent on their cars? The

People who work a lot from home need the opportunity to meet others in their personal environment, in public space. That is very important.

same applies to the topic of New Work: some experience the home office as a positive change, others don't even have the possibility.

I am afraid that the differences could become greater. Counteracting this is certainly also a task for city-making, for urban design and of course for traffic planning. To do this, something has to change structurally. People who work a lot from home need the opportunity to meet in their personal environment, in public space. That is very important. But we also need structural changes in the area of work. Because working, producing, consuming – they are all connected. What expectations do we have, which are justified, which do we need to change? Which

cycles make sense and are feasible? This is where the topic of the pandemic society seamlessly merges with sustainability demands in the areas of climate change social justice and global economic contexts. In many ways, we have to become more local again. Of course, the city plays a major role in this.

What topics do you think an Urban Change Academy should address?

For me, communication and participation are big issues. How do I talk to people about certain issues without scaring them? How do we keep one another on board? How do you move from theoretical readiness to real change? How do you deal with fundamental opposition? Psychology plays

a big role here: how do you get people to want change, to accept it, to deal with it constructively? Of course, this also applies to politics. I would like to learn more about this because I often find it difficult.

The topic of mobility triggers relatively strong feelings in many people, and rational arguments are often not accepted. I would find it very exciting to learn how to broaden our perspective again. This is especially true for the new forms of discourse: social media influence the discussion, especially when certain currents are amplified in echo chambers. That is not always constructive. And this raises the question: how do I deal with this as a city maker, whether I work in an authority, in an office or in academia? How much of it do you have to take seriously? How can I intervene constructively? I think we often still think too much in terms of traditional communication channels.

Thank you very much

The Covid crisis hits homeless people particularly harshly and requires quick, flexible solutions for those affected – that much is clear after a wake-up call with **Stephan Karrenbauer**. The social education graduate is a social worker and political spokesperson for the Hamburg Street magazine **Hinz&Kunzt**. There, he has been supporting and advising homeless people since 1995, in their search for a flat or accommodation, bureaucratic issues, addiction problems, loneliness and money worries. In this interview, we talked

Stephan Karrenbauer



Photo: © Andreas Hornoff

about the challenges Covid poses to social work, to what extent the pandemic-related vacancies in the cities can be an opportunity for homeless people and why there should be more experimentation and evaluation in social work. The interview with Stephan Karrenbauer took place on 15.02.2021. In Germany, the number of registered new in-

fections had fallen sharply. The debate about relaxing the Covid measures was continuing to gain momentum.

Urban Change Academy: How have you personally experienced the Covid pandemic?

Stephan Karrenbauer: I have experienced it as extremely demotivating for social work. This is the first time I've been in a serious, serious crisis. On the one hand, we receive a lot of approval and donations to offer support to the homeless, but on the other hand, I have seen a failure on the part of the authorities' management that I have never seen before. Everyone is wearing a mask, which makes it more difficult to get in touch with homeless people. Since we have to deal with many people who speak little or poor German, facial expressions are crucial in order to start a conversation. This leads to many misunderstandings. As far as the atmosphere is concerned, our work has become very different. We have to explain more than ever before. The public wants to know why the support system for homeless people collapsed during the first lockdown. It is very important to us, we were not afraid that they would infect us, but that we would infect them. Homeless people belong to a group that has a weak immune system, and we are the ones who might have brought the virus with us from our skiing holidays.

How is Covid affecting the homeless?

Since December, 13 homeless people have died. Since I've been working here, that's never happened. So, we do what we can. Thanks to the high level of donations, it is possible to initiate new aid measures. Together with the Diakonie and other partners, we were able to accommodate 170 homeless people in hotels. This is going really well, but with such a large number of people, something can always go wrong. It's a very big emotional pressure.

Homeless people are left to fend for themselves more than ever.

What do you specifically want to see from politics in the coming weeks?

I would like to see more support and that people say publicly that we are doing a good job. That we get more support when something goes wrong, and people don't point the finger at us. That the authorities say, we can't offer everyone a single room, but we try to give the homeless the best possible protection until they can get vaccinated. Whether that is feasible, I can't say. But I would like to see the goal expressed.

In a commentary in Hinz&Kunzt you wrote that the help system collapsed with Covid and is still only in operation again to a limited extent. What does that mean for homeless people?

To this day, only very few facilities offer the same programme as they did before the pandemic, simply because of the hygiene concepts. At [Hinz&Kunzt](#) we had a large room where homeless people could always get coffee and tea and rest. This room is now closed, and everything runs through a few open windows. This is similar in many day shelters – homeless people can no longer stay there from morning to night, they are only allocated a time window. And in this time window they have to eat, take care of their physical hygiene, do their mail and attend counselling sessions.

Homeless people are left to fend for themselves more than ever – this could already be seen during the summer. When you change trains at the main station, you see more people in destitution than ever before. Many were already lying in their own urine early in the morning

and could not move at all. We have a working group in the city centre where almost all social workers exchange information with contact area officers. According to a rumour, several patrol cars had to come during food distribution at the main station because there had been fights – the homeless people were apparently afraid they would not get anything to eat. Many citizens got the impression that the police wanted to break up the food distribution. But it was the other way round! The police tried to sort out the people so that everyone got something and distances were kept. There was great distress. This impression was also confirmed by the director of the Alimaus day care centre. She expressed the feeling that the people looked starved. Because many facilities were closed, further impoverishment took place – and this must have been noticeable to anyone walking around with their eyes open.

Yes, terrible.

Really, really, really terrible. At first I doubted that 13 people had died between December and now. It has nothing to do with freezing to death. I think it's horrible enough when you're on the street and then some people actually die on the street. Furthermore, most of the people died alone. That is simply because people's batteries were already empty during the summer.

If the homeless people do not take up the places in collective shelters of the winter emergency programme, one should at least check one's own concept. Why do they avoid these places? In my opinion, one of the main reasons is the bleak image of seeing three hundred other people every evening, some of whom are much worse off than you are – that you have to put up with that. Personally, I

imagine it's really, terrible not to have a flat, to see how I can make ends meet and maybe still have a glimmer of hope of getting a flat again someday. And then I have to go in there at night. I'm frisked every night by security staff, the same procedure every night. That doesn't make you healthy, it makes you sick.

What other support services have developed in the city during the Covid period?

A lot is happening in the private sector: Schrödingers in Sternschanze has set up a small tent city. The Elbschlosskeller organised a soup kitchen during the first lockdown. I welcome the commitment of private initiatives.

But it is also becoming

more and more difficult for the professionals to reach agreements with the private volunteers in order to take a common line. I have the impression that many private organisations think we are not doing enough. Hinz&Kunzt has been screaming for 26 years: We have to change, we need more housing for the homeless. But nothing happens. In the future, I believe homeless people should be offered accommodation and be allowed to stay there until they get a place to live.

We are not talking about an unbelievable number of people who are homeless on the streets, but about 2,000. And I believe that this is a number that can be brought under control.

In the future, I believe that homeless people should be offered accommodation and be allowed to stay there until they get a place to live.

The city could, for example, try to halve the number of homeless people in five years. At the moment, we are regarding lots of things as acceptable consequences. What I don't see is an approach that looks at the results of funded projects to optimise their effectiveness, so that we can identify and expand projects that are doing well. Big cities practise Housing First, for example, and it seems to be successful in many places. Why is this not being used in Hamburg? If we want to go new ways – also in social work – we have to be prepared to rethink our own work. For me, this is not just about authority structures. We also need social workers who are willing to change a bit and go different ways.

What do you think needs to change in concrete terms?

What is it they always say? We have to meet all people at their level. I believe that an approach like Housing First comes pretty close. But it's not just a question of the housing situation. Here at Hinz&Kunzt we have the advantage that about half of the 38 permanent staff are former homeless people themselves. And if we react in the wrong way to a topic, we are very quickly brought into line by them. We can come up with the most fantastic ideas – if our colleagues don't support it, we don't do it.

When we accommodated the first homeless people in the hotel, I saw how a hotel manager talked to our people – that really gave me something to think about. She wasn't talking about homeless people, but about guests. And that does something to people. The woman made sure that a missing towel in the room was replaced by talking to someone on the phone. The homeless man stood next to

her and listened to the conversation. I saw in his eyes that something really changed at that moment.

And it is the same with Housing First: Homeless people get unconditional housing. When they need help, we are ready. At the moment, however, it's the other way around. The homeless get a flat if they meet certain criteria: They have to settle their debts, see doctors and have their teeth fixed. They have to behave well in a temporary flat, then at some point they get the tenancy agreement in their name. This makes them small. This behaviour – it's not healthy.

Besides removing hurdles – what else needs to happen?

We have to give homeless people more opportunities. A few years ago, I visited a small project in Munich. There was a room with ten cooking places. Their approach was, we don't cook for the homeless – they should do it themselves. They get money for shopping and cooking utensils and then they can get in front of the stove themselves. That impressed me very much. You have to remember that homeless people don't have much choice. No one ever cooks your favourite dish. You have no say on what goes on the table. You are never allowed to say – “But this tastes bad.” If you say that, you get the answer: “If you don't like it, go somewhere else.”

What can each of us do to work for more social justice?

First of all, acknowledge that homelessness exists. Not to believe that all beggars coming from Romania or Bulgaria are organised in gangs. To try to get all kinds of information. Of course, you can't toss money into everyone's hat. But you can say hello to the beggar who regularly sits in front of a shop and sees it as his job. After all, greeting

someone is also a way of noticing them. The people who regularly stand in the same place then have the feeling that they belong again. And if you can't stand the sight any more, you also have a duty to take action against this deplorable state of affairs. You can get involved, you can complain to the authorities. I have nothing at all against voluntary work. It gets difficult for me when people think that the social workers are failing and then go it alone. You should always work together with people who do it professionally. It's about sharing this knowledge and experience with each other.

Are working from home and urban migration a chance to approach the issue of housing for the homeless in a completely different way, because more free spaces are being created in the cities?

Yes, I hope so. The Chamber of Commerce has already addressed the fact that there has to be a big change in the inner-city area during the first lockdown. There were quite conservative people there, managers of shopping centres, who said: “We have to sit down with young people. We can't always just say that these ideas from young people are completely wrong, we have to open ourselves up to completely new ideas.” This also includes the conversion of office space into residential space in the inner-city area. In my view, this is what property owners will have to do.

What capabilities will cities, authorities and institutions need in the future?

Authorities or cities usually have the appropriate resources to bring about change as quickly as possible. But this also means having the courage to actually implement change.

Private individuals can only do this on a small scale. Perhaps one should also think about providing citizens with a certain amount of money to play with if the authorities

Sometimes I get the impression with projects that they are meant to last for ever and ever. It would be better to think in smaller periods of time and then do an evaluation. I believe that this will also bring new momentum and new ideas.

don't dare to take things into their own hands. I would like to see experiments being carried out in the social sphere as well. And if it doesn't work out, one should also have the courage to abandon a project. Sometimes I get the impression with projects that they are meant to last for ever and ever. It would be better to think in smaller time frames and then make an evaluation. I believe that this would also bring new momentum and new ideas.

At Hinz&Kunzt we once had a shrub garden for four years. It went well for three years. There was a group that planted vegetables but then in the fourth year, no one cared anymore. So, we stopped the project again. This demand to try out new things is very important. Or the airport project where you can donate your "pfand" (deposit on plastic and glass bottles). That was an attempt to make a difference there. We created four jobs for people who came straight from the street. They make sure that there is a reduction in waste at the airport.

Thank you very much

We shouldn't believe every cock and bull story. We need well-founded analyses to cope with this and subsequent crises. The futurologist and mobility expert **Professor Stephan Rammler** has convinced us of this.

Stephan Rammler



He is the scientific director of the IZT – Institute for Futures Studies and Technology Assessment gGmbH in Berlin. He is currently researching the connection between digitalisation and sustainability.

The interview with Stephan Rammler took place on 21.09.2020. After a temporary stabilisation of the number of cases at a higher level, a further increase in Covid infections could be observed in Germany.

Photo: © Amin Akhtar

Urban Change Academy: How has Covid affected your life?

What changes have there been?

Stephan Rammler: I was a very active traveller before the pandemic, as I lectured all over the place, I enjoyed the fact that I didn't even leave Berlin in the past six months because I didn't have to. So, the raging standstill that Covid has brought, the standstill in the social and the personal. I experienced a springtime in Berlin for the first time in almost twenty years. I saw my children much more. I've seen my wife more.

Apart from that: it's more intense. It's denser. I've been working a lot.

We definitely share that observation!

How does the Covid crisis affect the way people deal with the topic of the "future": Is it that people want to talk less about the future, or is the demand becoming much greater?

In times of crisis, the demand for augurs, prophets and crystal ball readers always increases. We have seen that since the beginning of the pandemic. Scenarios are often developed and sold that have no epistemological justification at all. These are pure branding things, where the desire of society to get positive images of the future is pursued. I find that very annoying.

In times of crisis, analysis and hope are needed. That is, I believe, our great task as science-based future analysts. The positive future, the positive narratives, that is, the view of the question of the future and what we can learn and change for the better, is part of it. But it's also about being honest and not telling people about the unicorn that will supposedly make everything possible.

My perception is that many discourses about the future before the pandemic had a very dystopian character. We talked a lot about the threat of change. In your perception, has this fear potential become greater because of Covid?

I don't think there is any objective reason to be more optimistic than before. Covid basically just tore the veil off our eyes and pointed out some things that were relevant and correct before. And I think a lot of people have realised that. Covid came upon us like fate and forced certain developments and behaviours. The pandemic, just because we are forced to change right now, doesn't really show us what we can achieve as a society. All the other issues that are now coming at us from the future have to do with voluntary and political decisions. The world has not changed fundamentally, but some things have become more difficult.

Personally, I think there is no reason for optimism at the moment, not in the slightest. I see many reasons for warning and dystopias, and the realistic picture of the future is actually more one that I would describe as a long emergency coming our way.

Climate change, resource scarcity and more – there are many challenges and major crises coming our way.

For my part, I almost feel a bit liberated. I am now allowed to speak more freely about dystopian scenarios than before. Before, you were always quickly accused of being an apocalyptic or dystopian, even if, as a scientist, you only put five or six empirical facts side by side. And that has changed. You can discuss things a bit more openly and freely without being attacked straight away.

How would you describe the status quo before Covid?

In Germany and Europe, we were actually driven and supported in the political and scientific debate by the synergy of these various mega-trends that are most important for mobility and urban development. Namely demography, urbanisation, sustainability transformation and digital transformation. In terms of mobility development, a lot has happened, especially in the cities. I would almost be positive about that. Especially in very progressive cities, we have seen that transformation is possible. That was the beginning of the work on a transport revolution. A transformation of mobility in Copenhagen, Stockholm, Amsterdam and Vienna.

Before Covid, did you already have the feeling that the dominoes were tipping over...

The ball was like a penalty in a football match, in many places the city authorities just had to put it into the net. That's when public collective transport was modernised and digitalised so that it would continue to be the backbone of any form of sustainable mobility in the future. We have seen that mobility as a service can be wonderfully integrated if urban development policy does it well. We have seen that participation processes really make sense, and, and, and. So I would have said that the transport revolution was already under way, at least in a model way, in some European cities and also in California. And then came Covid.

Is Covid a showstopper in this respect?

I would say yes and no. Covid has shifted the scenery a bit on the stage on which the transport revolution is being

It is surprising how quickly the city economists, the city politicians, but also the real estate companies are reacting to this and developing new concepts for teleworking and telecommuting centres for working from home.

realised. In other words, public transport has lost its attractiveness against the backdrop of the social distancing requirement. The result is a restabilisation of automobility. These are the two negative aspects.

On the other hand, we see an insane boom in cycling and cycling-based micro-logistics. We have seen a boom in micro-mobility as a whole. And we have seen the central topic of telecommuting emerge. It is surprising how quickly urban economists, urban politicians, but also real estate companies, are reacting to this and developing new concepts for teleworking, telecommuting centres for working from home. Vattenfall, for example, is currently building a corporate headquarters near Südkreuz in Berlin where a maximum of sixty per cent of the total workforce can still be in the building at any one time. This means that they are systematically counting on almost half of the workforce working from home. Covid has helped them tremendously.

And the companies are seeing that they can save a lot of money in the area of international business travel. This will not come back to the same extent.

What can be done about the restabilisation of automobility?

The big task for public transport is to develop concepts that are Covid-compatible or pan-

demic-compatible. This is the question of the resilience of mobility in cities in the future. I believe that pandemics will continue to occur systematically. Basically, we were lucky for a long time. We all knew something like this was coming. I myself wrote scenarios many years ago that took this into account. Public transport, including the railways, must prepare themselves for the fact that pandemics will be a real structural problem for them in the future. That means with coated surfaces, with newly designed boarding and alighting stations, with good ventilation, with a form of new Covid etiquette. It's about the question: How do I move and behave in public space?

As far as cycling is concerned, the existing infrastructures play a role. The fact that the Berliners and the Hamburgers have now been forced to dismantle their pop-up lanes is bad news, because it is one of the best "routine transformation nudges" we could think of. Especially for the people who didn't dare to ride their bikes on the streets before. We must now massively expand and upgrade the infrastructure for cycling.

The situation in public transport is a terrible scenario for the operators. Many of them have beads of sweat on their foreheads at the moment because they say: We are only working at thirty per cent capacity or even less. Economically, we can't keep that up for long. What is your assessment? Does the state have to make available a few billion more to save local public transport companies from collapse?

I always distinguish between Covid as a burning glass and Covid as a field test. A burning glass means that it shows the asymmetries, structural deficits, distortions, inequalities that were already there before but that we either didn't

The strong, caring, security-creating, resilient state is a sign of our time. Transportation systems – especially in public transport – are a fundamental part of public service.

want to see or couldn't see. It brings Covid up, in the health system and in the transport system. Social inequality is one of the issues that Covid has made very clear. And then we have field test learning experiences, like the one with cycling or with teleworking. And we see as a society: "Oops, suddenly more is possible than we thought before." Some of these learning experiences will remain. And then, on an abstract level, there are, of course, learning experiences or analyses that can be made. One that I

consider quite central is that the strong, provision-oriented state has regained legitimacy after thirty years of neo-liberal deregulation and liberalisation policies. Basically, the strong, precautionary, security-creating, resilient state is the postulate of the times. And the transport systems, above all public transport, are part of the systems of public services. I think we have to say this quite clearly: The state should view these systems even less than before in purely economic terms, but invest in them much more strongly with state and public funds in order to ensure a rudimentary form of urban livelihood provision in this area. And not everything has to be self-supporting in terms of costs. And I expect that these areas will not be further deregulated and economised.

Even before Covid, it was clear that we need a culture of experimentation, of field tests. The practical experience also shows that our regulatory systems, from road traffic regulations to local licensing authorities, do not have the necessary flexibility. Don't we have to tackle the rules now, or is that dangerous?

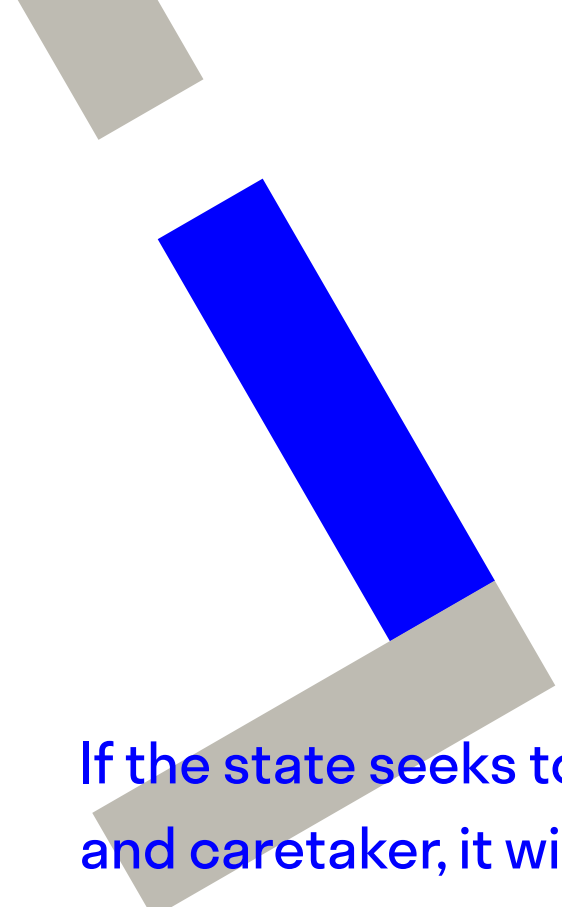
No, it's not dangerous. After all, this is a learning experience that I hope will happen soon and that we will discover and preserve for ourselves in view of what is coming from the future. Namely, in addition to a strong and precautionary state, to have an agile state that is able to break through its own path dependency, its own institutional routines and habits, its determinism based on legal solutions that were perhaps created a hundred years ago and are still in force.

What skills does the city need to develop further for this?

If the city is to fulfil its role as a preventive, caring and security-providing state, be prepared to abandon long-held institutional routines and habits that now act as a barrier. Every city is different. Every area is different. And that's why it's important that participation and discourse always take place at the municipal and regional level, because of course, the problems and solutions can only be brought about in this sense at the municipal level. That is why municipalities must be enabled, empowered, and equipped to solve their problems themselves.

That means that you would also see a strengthening of the municipalities through the Covid pandemic, or at least consider it desirable?

Yes, exactly. Before Covid, I was already of the opinion



that the municipalities are actually the most decisive and relevant level of action for the future – now even more so. Because I believe that the future challenges cannot be met in the classical way as in the last sixty years since the end of the war.

Delegating problems to the state according to the motto “the state will solve this for me” will no longer work in the future. We need a much stronger willingness on the part of civil society to participate. That’s what I would like to see us rediscover. Communitarian, civic, social processes to solve problems are always good when they are locally or regionally bound. Because they have to do with proximity and social closeness. The community is simply the right place for this.

If the state seeks to fulfil its role as a provider and caretaker, it will have to abandon its long-standing routines and habits because they have become barriers in this respect.

I would like to talk about the relationship between urban and rural areas. There seems to be hope that the pandemic can even out the differences between central urbanised areas and more sparsely populated, non-central areas. Precisely because of telecommuting, because of these new experiences that we have had, that we are suddenly willing

to question our lifestyles that are focused on the city and on the metropolis.

We are indeed experiencing the urbanisation of the countryside, but only in certain cities attracting a younger population like Frankfurt, Hamburg, Berlin, Brandenburg. One should be wary of generalising in this area at the moment, because every city has different underlying conditions. Commuter relations in Frankfurt are different from those in Berlin, and different from those in Hamburg. And the abilities or opportunities for the urban middle class to move out of Berlin are different from those for the urban middle class to move out of Hamburg. Conceptually, of course, I think it’s a great idea. We’ve already had some hype on this topic in connection with automated driving. Now, I would like to pose the question: How is this supposed to happen when we don’t even have 5G networks and the digital expansion speed of the infrastructure is lagging behind?

So we are learning that infrastructure matters. And no longer in the old sense, but in the sense of modern services of general interest.

Yes, the digital networks will be an incredibly good basic infrastructure. If we had such systems, then we could operate completely different socio-technical embedding processes for every form of digital technology on this basis, whether it is automation technology in the production sector, in the transport or logistics sector or even telecommuting structures. But we don’t have them yet. And that’s why I’m sceptical.

We believe that resilience is now only possible through change and adaptivity and not through stability-oriented structurally conservative behaviour.

What role do the structures in politics and administration play in this?

We have come from a time in which – to put it in societal terms – structure and functionality were basically the guiding principles. But now we are entering a time that is driven by climate change, where I would say: We need to develop the agile resilient state as a state that can offer very different solutions very quickly. What we need is exactly the opposite of what was necessary and correct in the structural-functional era, when the administrative apparatus ensured stability and security. In the classical sense of resilience, in the sense of springing back into the old situations. And now we are actually experiencing a re-definition. We call it transformative resilience. We believe that resilience is now only possible through change and adaptivity and not through stability-oriented structurally conservative behaviour. In this respect, the classic administrative politics, the classic structure of bureaucracy that we know, is exactly the wrong thing.

We are currently experiencing a major cultural, sociological, economic and political opening process, the likes of which we have not seen for three hundred years or longer. And it is precisely here that we need a kind of administra-

tion that is exactly the opposite of what we have had up to now. Whether it's the universities or the city administration, we need an agile administration, and I would immediately say, for example, that everything that has been structurally put on a permanent footing up to now should be given a time limit.

We should set a time limit?

I think a big problem of this apparatus is its security, which is structurally dysfunctional to a certain extent. We need more of the creative risk-takers in the municipal administrations.

I think it would help us a lot to discuss goals more in the future rather than concentrating on known ways. I would subscribe to what you said earlier, namely that resilience means doing things differently.

And doing it permanently. What I'm trying to say is actually quite dramatic. I'm saying we're going into a long emergency. By the way, this term comes from James Howard Kunstler, "The Long Emergency", a book from the nineties which is highly recommended in terms of path dependency. I would argue that what we are experiencing right now is the beginning of a long emergency that we are entering as a world society.

Do we really have to define this as an ongoing crisis?

I always find that people are not able to deal with the concept of an emergency if one remains serious and persistent. I am always irritated why people immediately say: Why does it always have to be seen so negatively? For me, describing it in concrete terms like that is part of an

analysis. I am not an apocalyptic who says – the world is coming to an end. I don't believe that the world is coming to an end either. The world is far from coming to an end. The world is going to become very uncomfortable and that has to be said quite clearly.

These positive narratives, this telling of the world as it could be – I did that myself with “Schubumkehr”: “The world could be completely different. We just have to think differently.” I really think that's opium, because I think we need hard-hitting analyses, and we also have to tell people. And against this background comes the conclusion that we need a resilient society that generates precisely this kind of permanent adaptivity, flexibility, willingness to change and makes it normal as the status quo.

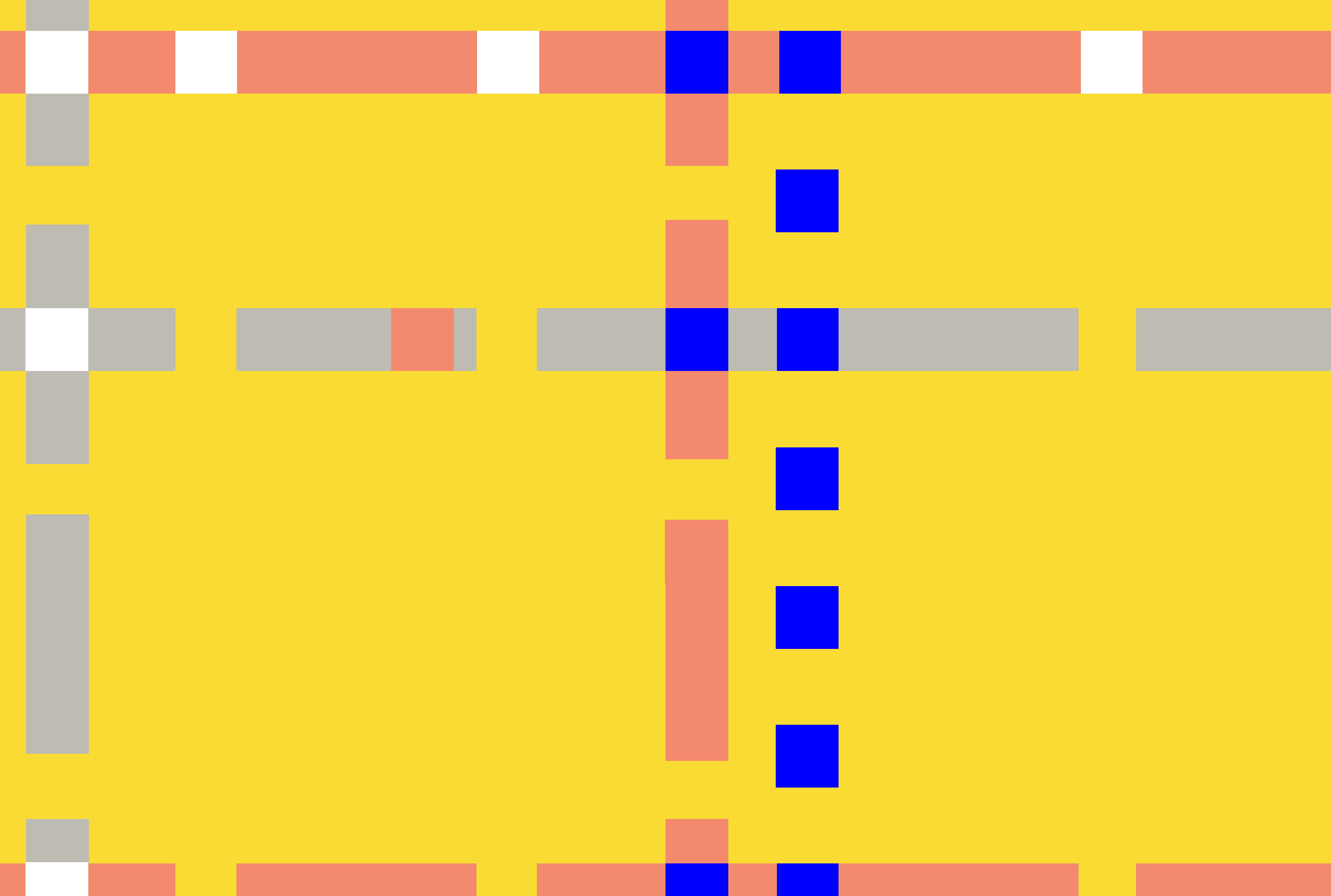
Thank you very much



Contributors

Thanks

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About the contributors

The [Urban Change Academy](#) is a platform for further education on future issues for urban development. We provide urbanists with the tools they need to actively shape the future. The Urban Change Academy is an initiative of urbanista, Futur A and IT'S THE GLUE.



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Patricia Da Costa studied cultural sciences as well as communication and media sciences with a focus on digital cultures and urban space. She enjoys researching the dynamics of cultural phenomena from an ethnographic perspective. Since 2020, Patricia has been supporting the Urban Change Academy in the areas of community management, project management and the development of publication formats.



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Sven Lohmeyer has been supporting urbanista in the field of co-creative urban development since 2012. During his many years of work, he has been involved in various projects, either in a leading role or as project manager – such as the future concept for Offenbach's inner city or his current role in the team behind the Kiel 2042 project.

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At his urbanista office, Julian Petrin advises municipalities, companies and urban institutions in urban change processes. His work focuses on co-creation, strategic development concepts and visionary processes. He also teaches as a professor for Smart City Solutions at the HfT Stuttgart.



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Doris Sibum holds a degree in social sciences and is a futurologist specialising in urban development and the future of work. She specialises in urban foresight, scenarios and trend analyses and places particular emphasis on long-term urban development. Doris is a shareholder and chairwoman of the supervisory board of the IZT – Institute for Futures Studies and Technology Assessment gGmbH in Berlin and was previously Vice President at Deutsche Post DHL with responsibility for the group's market research.



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With an MA in Media Arts and Design, Matthias is a graduate of Digital Bauhaus. He works with his strategy consultancy IT'S THE GLUE at the interface of culture, technology and business. Among other things, Matthias is active for the city of Hamburg and promotes the development of innovations that assume social responsibility. As part of the 040x040 exchange project, he has been investigating urban innovations between Hamburg and Malmö since 2015. He is particularly interested in breaking down the boundaries between ways of thinking, disciplines, and cultures.

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