



How Mayors can support civic engagement and participation

7th NOW-Conference, Vienna February 16th 2020
Eva Nemela, Körber-Stiftung, Germany

What is „Engagierte Stadt – local cooperation for civic engagement“?



What do we mean by „civic engagement“ + „participation“?

Civic engagement is a way, in which „citizens can organise themselves according to democratic rules and influence the manner in which the community evolves. [...]Civil society manifests itself wherever voluntary associations are formed, opportunities to contribute and help the society are seized, and citizens take responsibility for the common good.“

(Enquete Commission’s Report: Towards a Civil Society with a Future, 2007)

Participation is the crucial part of a „policy of empowerment“. It involves ensuring both the state and citizens to engage in constructive discourse and decision-making.

(Enquete Commission’s Report: Towards a Civil Society with a Future, 2007)

Civic engagement and participation are preconditions of social cohesion.

Civic engagement in Germany

- **Civic engagement and the participation of the local population constitutes the backbone of society.**
- The problem:
 - Points of contact are missing or are hard to find
 - Little recognition and appreciation for voluntary work
 - Lack of resources of all kinds



31 million
people

Mayors in the Engagierte Stadt...



Results of intersectoral cooperation between mayors and NGOs



Online presence (websites) for initiatives



Points of contact



Local cooperation networks



Local events



Joint actions against right wing-movements

Online presence for initiatives and organizations



Du engagierst dich in Görlitz freiwillig in einem Verein, einer Initiative oder in einem Projekt - oder möchtest dich zukünftig engagieren? Dafür suchst du nach Beratung, Ideen oder Leuten, die mitmachen? Dann bist du hier richtig!

Points of contact



Local cooperation networks



Local events



Joint actions against right-wing movements



The collective impact method

Shared goal

Well-equipped coordination unit

Measurable targets and milestones

Mutually reinforcing actions

Continuous communication

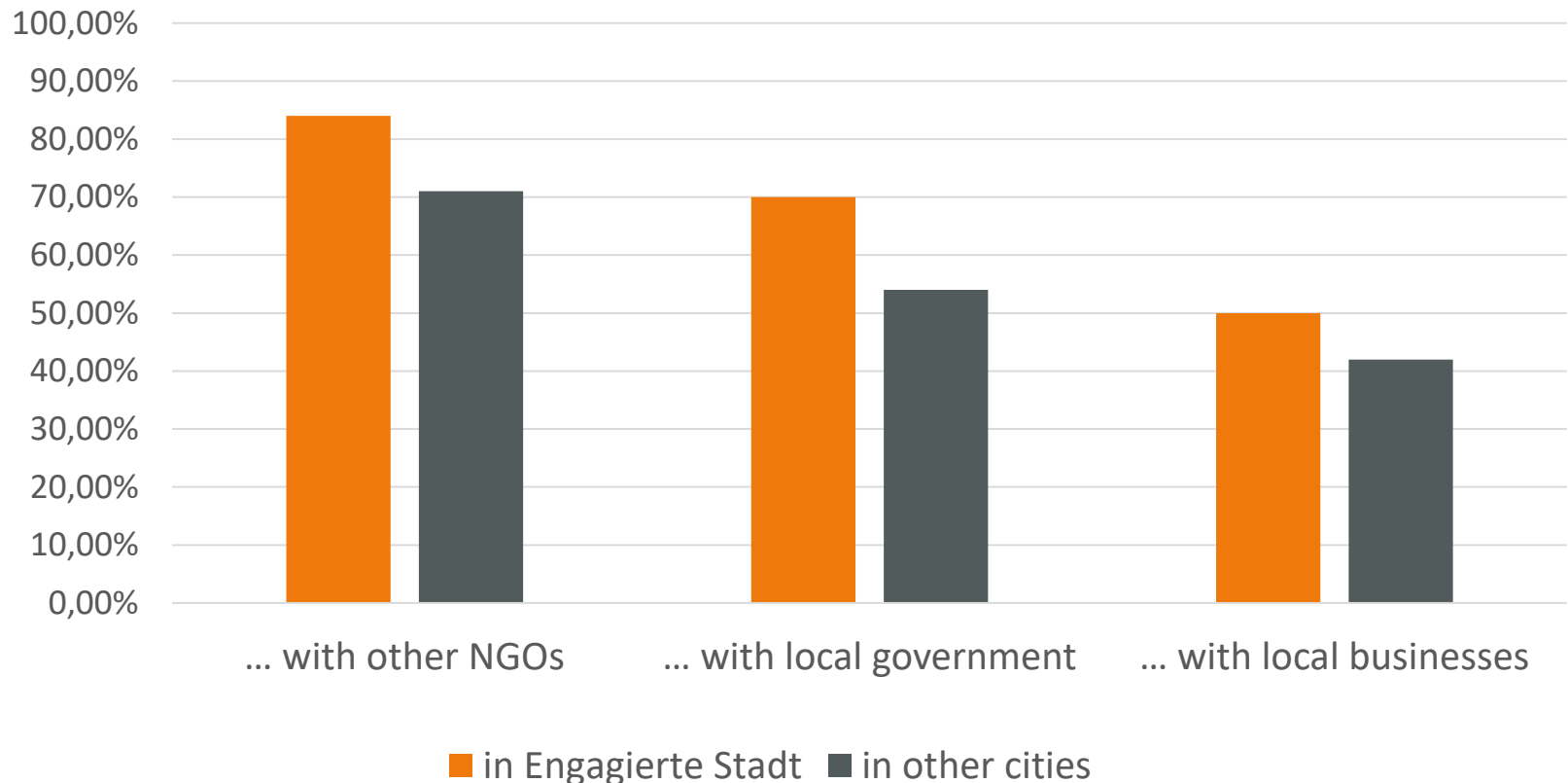


Collective
Impact

Learnings from „Engagierte Stadt“

What worked...?

NGOs have cooperated...



Learnings from „Engagierte Stadt“

What worked...?

- Every second NGO states that it **receives more support** by the local government und local companies.
- Every second NGO sees an **opportunity to participate** in the decision-making processes itself.



Learnings from „Engagierte Stadt“

What worked...?

- Every second NGO finds that their city is **more welcoming to civic engagement** than at the beginning of the program.



Learnings from „Engagierte Stadt“

What didn't work...?

- Not in every Engagierte Stadt the mayor is supportive.
- Sustainable financial security for the network coordination and the created infrastructure is scarce.
- NGOs have difficulties convincing local companies to commit to support civic engagement financially on a long-term basis.
- Little knowledge of Engagierte Stadt in the general public.



Learnings from „Engagierte Stadt“

What can you do...?

To support civic engagement and local cooperation...

- 1) **Listen** – to different people with all kinds of perspectives, especially to those who are normally not being heard
- 2) **Endure** – engaged citizens are not always the easiest fellows, but at least they care
- 3) **Be transparent** – on what can be changed and what not
- 4) **Make room for ideas** – and bring the best of them to life
- 5) **Show what you´ve got** – show the variety of existing NGOs and opportunities as well as your support activities

What you can do to support civic engagement and local cooperation

To support civic engagement and local cooperation...

- 6) **Be appreciative** – openly. It is not a given that people care
- 7) **Be responsible** – train your staff to understand the benefit of invested and engaged citizens. Establish “participation and social innovation” within your municipality as a cross section with high priority within your municipality
- 8) **Be the spider in the net** – understand your role as manager and matchmaker for interaction between the sectors

Journey of ideas

Find a partner you don't know yet...

1. Why and how would you like the sense of togetherness in your city to evolve?
2. How could engagement and volunteers support these goals?
3. What can you do as a mayor to inspire more people to contribute to civil society?
4. What is holding you back to do so?

Thank you for your cooperation 😊

Feel free to contact me:

Eva Nemela, Körper-Stiftung
Tel +49 (0)40 – 80 81 92 157
nemela@koerber-stiftung.de

