

# Neighbourhood Management - A Key Instrument in Integrative Urban District Development

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As society becomes more and more polarized and the social space in many German cities more and more fragmented, political and administrative action has become urgent at all levels of government and by economic and civil society players.

One consequence of the far-reaching economic and societal structural changes indicated by keywords like globalisation, deindustrialisation, tertiarization, flexibilization, desolidarization, and polarization, is the increasing fragmentation of social space, especially in large cities. In the wake of far-reaching segregation processes, economic, social, cultural, and urban development problems have concentrated in certain districts. Given the complex interaction between these problems they no longer seem amenable to the traditional sectorial political and administrative solutions.

The federal/*Länder* programme “Districts With Special Development Needs - The Socially Integrative City” (for short: “Socially Integrative City”), launched in 1999, takes a new approach in developing and promoting integrated problem-solving strategies. Not only “classical” investment project funding is envisaged but also self-help, private initiative, and collaboration by the people concerned, thus stimulating and supporting essential local development resources. Neighbourhood management is a crucial tool in implementing this new programme.

## 1. The Current Situation in Germany: Worsening Social Inequities

Since the 80s at the latest, economic structural change in Germany has - with the transition from Fordism to Post-Fordism - brought far-reaching changes to the labour market (Hitz/Schmid/Wolff 1995; Lipietz 1995; Henkel 2000). The consequences are serious: declining manufacturing (deindustrialisation) and the flexibilization of production have been accompanied by a loss of low-skill jobs that had largely been performed by migrants. As new industries have grown, for example in the hi-tech sector, both high-skill and low-skill jobs have been created in research, development, and management; and in manufacturing, where an increasing number of women find employment (neo-industrialisation). The booming service sector, too, (tertiarization) exhibits a similar dichotomy between high-skill jobs in producer services and low-skill jobs in personal services, with a trend towards ethnization. Furthermore, flexible employment contracts undermine income security in all sectors of the economy (wages below agreed rates, contracts for works and services, fixed-term contracts, bogus self-employment).

These developments tend to divide society in a variety of ways. Polarization of the labour market finds expression in a growing gap between those in and out of employment, between people with comparatively secure jobs and those with precarious positions, and between highly qualified staff and inadequately qualified staff. A gap opens between relatively high pay and low pay, while the medium earner segment shrinks more and more. This in turn polarizes consumption patterns and life styles (Schmid 1996). Finally, com-

petition for low-skill jobs, public housing, etc. can cause social tensions between Germans and migrants and between well-established non-German residents and new arrivals (Anhut/Heitmeyer 2000). The pyramidal Fordist social structure also exhibited big differences in income, but it was one where each level built on the preceding, where all had "their place" in society and were necessary for society. This pyramid is being replaced by the post-Fordist "hour-glass", where the middle income levels are narrower and the lower levels are no longer important to those "up top". On the contrary, they tend to live on the surplus produced by the upper income levels (Cars/Johansson 2000).

On balance, poverty is increasing, owing to the growing proportion of the (long-term) jobless and recipients of transfer payments. A new quality of social inequity arises if poverty means the exclusion of individuals or households from the average societal standards of life, and if migrants, in addition, have little chance of integration because of their legal and cultural marginality (Häußermann 2000). Moreover, the individuated life styles that develop along with societal fragmentation destroy social networks.

The social cleavage of society is reflected in the small-scale fragmentation of the urban space (Hitz/Schmid/Wolff 1995). The key factor is the development of the housing market with its differing segments. The withdrawal of government from the housing sector - especially from public housing construction - which has going on for many years, has led to greater regulation via the market since the late 80s. Better-off households take advantage of their greater freedom in deciding where to live, with the result that these sectors of the population tend to abandon districts considered "losers" in economic structural change, while disadvantaged households move in (Häußermann 2000).

The consequent fragmentation of social space risks excluding whole districts from citywide processes; such "districts with special development needs" - particularly inner-city or adjoining old neighbourhoods and large new housing estates in peripheral areas - exhibit a complex, interdependent mixture of problems - developmental, ecological, infrastructural, economic, and social. These unfavourable conditions put residents at an additional disadvantage: since many "loser" districts develop from being socially integrated neighbourhoods into "gathering places" for disadvantaged population groups that are very heterogeneous and therefore often not in contact with one another, many residents react by retreating into the private sphere and resignation - such neighbourhoods lose their function as social networks. In some areas, social learning has produced a "deviant culture" among children and young people who, in an environment that offers few models and representatives of "normal life", receive no intimation of the benefits of school, education, and work. In an environment marked by unemployment, minor crime and public welfare replace work as the material bases for consumption. Many "districts with special development needs" face a loss of recognition by "core society"; they suffer from a negative image, which can go as far as stigmatisation of the neighbourhood and its people (Dangschat 1999; Häußermann 2000).

The residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods are thus excluded in more than one way: economically, since, lacking the necessary skills, many are permanently denied access to the reorganised primary labour market; culturally through the loss of self-respect owing to stigmatisation and discrimination; socially through estrangement from the "core society"; and, finally, institutionally, because contact between the people concerned and political or welfare state institutions decreases. An - also politically - explosive vicious circle threatens (Häußermann 2000).

## 2. The Federal-Länder Programme “Districts With Special Development Needs - The Socially Integrative City”

Without intervention by the welfare state, the downward spiral of some “districts with special development needs” is assured. The processes taking place in these areas reinforce themselves continuously unless interrupted and reversed by the concerted efforts of politicians, local authorities, residents, industry, and other local players. An integrated district policy approach is therefore needed that takes account of the area as a social space and encourages the development and stabilisation of the resources that are usually still available there. In this connection, however, a growing discrepancy has become apparent between socio-economic problems and constructional-technical solutions, and the prevailing sectorial approaches taken by specialised departments and authorities no longer offer effective solutions. For this reason and because cities cannot alone meet the challenges posed by the critical developments in many neighbourhoods, the federal/Länder programme “Districts With Special Development Needs - The Socially Integrative City” was launched in July 1999 to develop an integrated approach to the complex problems (Becker/Löhr 2000).

The programme is based on a range of experience in various *Länder* and on the preparatory conceptual work by the Working Group of the Ministers and Senators of the Länder Responsible for Building, Housing and Settlement (ARGEBAU). It also draws on experience in other European countries and on the results of the European Union URBAN initiative. The core elements can be sketched as follows (Franke/Löhr/Sander 2000).

- The programme is to complement traditional urban development assistance and dovetail it with other policy areas relevant to urban development in a new, integrated approach.
- The aim is to concentrate investment and non-investment measures from various programmes of the EU, the federal and *Länder* governments.
- The concept calls for ongoing, area-specific, and integrated urban-development action in the sense of a holistic improvement strategy.
- Residents, business and industry, clubs and associations, and other local players are to take on responsibility in developing and implementing local programmes.
- Implementation of the programme is to be accompanied operationally by experts from the German Institute of Urban Affairs.

The overriding aim of the programme is to counter the generation or consolidation of disadvantage and to promote the preventive improvement of local living conditions. Integrated, cooperative, and activating strategies are needed (Becker/Löhr 2000). DM 300 million are available per year from the federal government, *Länder* governments, and municipalities. After the launch of the programme in 1999, all 16 *Länder* participated, with a total of 161 neighbourhoods in 157 cities. In 2000 the number of neighbourhoods rose to 209 in 189 cities. The federal government has increased its contribution to DM 150 million, making a total of DM 450 million available for social urban renewal. A great deal of thought is being spent by the federal and *Länder* governments on how to stabilize the programme, which, like traditional urban development assistance programmes, has to be prepared each year.

The “Socially Integrative City” programme should be seen in the context of an overriding issue: the need to redefine the relationship between government and society. In Germany, as in other European countries, the call for integrative, socially-oriented urban development policy is associated with the demand for reform in political and administrative structures. In other areas of public responsibility, too, the problems to be dealt with can no longer

be solved with the traditional concepts and practices of governmental action and the discharge of duties. Efforts are therefore being made to redefine the relationship between government as a whole and society, and to redistribute functions not only between the various levels of the federal system in Germany but also between government and the citizenry (Franke/Löhr/Sander 2000).

The State and administration need to redefine their functions and their responsibilities under changed societal and economic conditions. For this purpose, the federal government adopted the programme "Modern State - Modern Administration" in December 1999, which propagated the "activating State" (Bundesministerium des Innern, Stabsstelle Moderner Staat – Moderne Verwaltung 1999). The aim is to establish a new balance between, on the one hand, governmental duties and, on the other, private initiative and social commitment. This new model is based on four, closely linked and interdependent principles, which concern all structural and functional levels of the federal system in Germany (Franke/Löhr/Sander 2000).

- In redistributing competencies between government and society, government wishes to propose more than dispose. The self-regulatory resources of society are to be encouraged and the necessary scope provided. This is to be achieved by setting common goals, by cooperation between governmental, quasi-governmental, and non-governmental entities, and by delegating governmental decision-making competence and thus power.
- An essential precondition is greater orientation towards the citizenry. Government and citizens are equal partners in acting for the common good. This means that government decisions have to be as transparent and comprehensible as possible, and that citizens must be given the means and opportunity to make decisions on their own responsibility, especially at the local level. And this requires devolved decision-making powers.
- The redistribution of competencies and greater orientation towards the citizenry means greater governmental diversity. Not all the functions of the State and the municipality need uniform methods and rules. Cooperative structures between federal, *Land*, and local government become more important. Personal initiative can be strengthened by reducing federal prescription, and greater and more appropriate scope for making decisions is provided.
- If these three principles are to take effect, more efficient administrative structures are needed at all levels of governmental and local action.

Such a revised understanding of the performance of governmental functions presupposes that society is willing and able to learn. It means accepting, for example, that the welfare-state mentality and behaviour offered by the State in the past - centralised government, assistance and welfare - be largely substituted by basic patterns of decentralisation, self-reliance, and solidarity. Redistributing responsibilities between the State and society should not, however mean redistributing burdens nor - in a neoliberal interpretation of the concept "civil society" - shifting governmental functions to a more responsible citizenry. Redistributing responsibilities implies redistributing power among the various levels of government and between government and the citizenry, and is thus an essential contribution to the material democratisation of State and local decision-making processes. In view of the existing power-retention structures and routines and the interest in strengthening the representative democracy at the local government level that is so essential to German society, there is discussion about creating a second, non-hierarchical level below the existing political level. Here negotiatory systems would play a more important role. Government or municipality would be only *primus inter pares*, assuming a coordinative function if need be. This approach is particularly important at the local level because it is close to the

citizenry and the decisions made at this level affect them particularly strongly (“from Government to Governance”).

The “Socially Integrative City” programme contains many elements of this approach. It combines new perspectives on the role of government in social and local government policy and in urban development and renewal policy with an appeal to all concerned to be open to new ideas and ways of thinking in coping with new patterns of action and behaviour. Implementing the programme therefore makes heavy demands on integrated and efficient administrative action. A great deal has to be dealt with at the same time: citizens have to be involved and empowered in decision-making on planning and implementation, numerous, very different players have to be coordinated, development processes have to be mobilized and controlled, new cooperative structures across policy areas need to be generated, and specifically neighbourhood policy integrated into citywide development policy. Finally, more efficient administrative structures need to be measured against success criteria like the creation of viable districts with good prospects for the future. Central elements of the programme are therefore the concentration of resources and cooperation, participation and decision-making competencies for the citizenry, business and industry, and the creation of appropriate management and organisational structures (Becker/Löhr 2000; Franke/Löhr/Sander 2000).

*Concentration of resources and cooperation:* A key purpose of the programme is to concentrate resources from a range of sources to permit holistic district development. Urban development assistance is to be linked with other policy areas relevant to urban development in a new, integrative approach. However, the change in perspective and paradigm implied by the new programme consists primarily in an explicit shift in focus from the built environment to people. The aim is therefore to utilise investment and non-investment dispositions by various policy areas cooperatively. An integrated action concept could be useful in housing, transport, employment and training promotion, security, women, assistance for families and young people, industry, environment, culture, and leisure. The “Socially Integrative City” programme seeks to generate and exploit synergistic benefits for disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

To realise this project, institutional boundaries need to be crossed and the various authorities and facilities networked. At the federal level it was agreed that other federal authorities involved would co-ordinate their own programme resources for the urban development project. Concentration and coordination at the *Land* level often takes the form of institutionalised inter-ministerial working groups. The specific programmes concerned and institutional action at the local authority level need sociospatial orientation and harmonisation without such coordination being shifted to the district or neighbourhood levels, which would soon be overburdened.

*Embedding in the overall urban context:* In the first place the programme is concerned with urban districts. In fact, however, the overall urban context has always to be taken into account, since a neighbourhood cannot remain economically and socially viable in isolation, and the aim of the programme is precisely to integrate the area into societal production and reproduction structures. What is needed is therefore not only a cross-institutional, integrated approach to urban renewal and development, but one that operates across area boundaries.

*Participation by the citizenry and industry:* A key innovation introduced by the programme is to tap the specific problem-solving capabilities of citizens, who are to be integrated as “co-producers” into public decision making and the performance of public functions. Participation by the general public has hitherto been largely limited to public planning. A new element is that the organisational and internal management of administrative authorities are to take structural account of these forms of resource activation and exploitation. Social policy is thus to be understood as “identity policy” with the goal of

generating “social capital” within the neighbourhood. The available potential must be developed through strategies of empowerment and community work, people must receive more recognition than before to develop their sense of self-respect and their commitment. The same can be said for local industry; in this field the focus is to be on support for new businesses and employment for people difficult to place on the primary labour market. Locally oriented business and industry are important partners in realising integrated urban district development.

*Neighbourhood management as organisational consequence:* The efficient implementation of the “Socially Integrative City” programme depends on the existence or creation of flexible, cooperative, and deregulated political and administrative structures “on site” for the action and the mobilisation and revitalisation processes considered necessary at the local level. To do justice to these complex tasks and objectives, a new organisational structure below and alongside local government needs to be established: neighbourhood management.

### **3. Aims, Organisation, and Tasks of Neighbourhood Management**

#### **3.1 The Neighbourhood as the Locus of Social Exchange and Participation**

The neighbourhood, the local implementation level for integrative urban district development concepts, is both the point of reference and identification factor for its inhabitants. In this “life-world” - to some extent beyond the structural data and outside the visible range of the built environment - problems are perceived, conflicts fought out, and, quite simply, everyday life is lived. For this reason, local residents need help in articulating their views on the development of their neighbourhood and district from their personal perspective and situation, and, as far as possible, in actively contributing to the planning and implementation of appropriate measures or projects. What is meant is that the neighbourhood is not only the place where a person lives but also where the basis for a livelihood can be created, the locus of social exchange and participation in societal institutions (Alisch 1998; Hinte 1998; Schwarz-Österreicher 1999; Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, Umweltschutz und Technologie 1998).

#### **3.2 Neighbourhood Management**

Various coordinating bodies are needed in implementing integrative urban development concepts, involving not only local residents but all locally active players. Whereas the coordination of assistance programmes, technical planning, and financing has tended to be the concern of interministerial working groups at the *Land* level and interdepartmental bodies at the local government level, neighbourhood management handles coordination, arbitration, mediation, and is the on-site “motive force” at the local implementation level. Furthermore, it mediates between the “life-world” of the neighbourhood and the “technical worlds” of administrative players and others not located directly in the district (Hinte 1998).

In the view of the German Institute of Urban Affairs, Berlin, and the Institute for Community-Related Social Work and Counselling, Essen, neighbourhood management is a strategic approach for the systematic promotion of self-reliant and permanently effective personnel and material structures for the development of a neighbourhood with the targeted utilisation of municipal resources, which is integrated into a citywide development policy and given an intersectorial thrust. It is based on the activation, stabilisation, and empowerment of as many district residents as possible, and on the intensive

collaboration of local business, local organisations, initiatives, and associations, and on institutions located in the area concerned with, for example, education, health, leisure, environment, housing, employment, religion, and welfare.

### **3.3 The Aims and Functions of Neighbourhood Management**

In setting up a neighbourhood management system, only general, priority goals are formulated, since the starting conditions, problems and resources of “districts with special development needs” differ from case to case. The social, economic, developmental, and ecological dimensions of the integrated action concepts must differ accordingly. In general, a neighbourhood management is intended to integrate strategies and players in neighbourhood development, link up economic and social development projects, and strengthen the scope and capacity of residents to take action. Under no circumstances is neighbourhood management to replace or displace local activities. The job of neighbourhood management can thus be district/neighbourhood coordination (networking on-site players, establishing cooperative relations between players at the citywide and district levels), resident activation, project initiation/fund raising, public relations, and cost-revenue control/reporting.

The main task of neighbourhood management is to activate local residents, especially groups that have so far been difficult or impossible to reach. Neighbourhood managers should therefore be reachable at a local contact address (“community bureau”) and, for example, offer advice under the motto “helping others to help themselves”, promote personal commitment and responsibility by a variety of campaigns, and encourage residents to contribute their own ideas and talents to integrative urban renewal. The “direct line” to residents helps in identifying problems, needs and ideas to be addressed in projects and measures developed jointly with the local population. In the implementation phase, responsibility for such projects need not lie with the neighbourhood management itself, but it should be involved in all aspects if it is to perform its communication and coordination functions.

### **3.4 Areas of Action for Neighbourhood Management**

The neighbourhood management becomes a central coordinating office for a highly varied project landscape, which can offer the follows areas of action:

- Social and ethnic integration - improving neighbourly community life,
- Employment and education for local residents, placement on the primary labour market,
- Economic revitalisation, support for the local economy,
- Redevelopment and modernisation measures, improving the residential environment; linking investment measures in urban renewal with non-investment social and employment measures,
- Improving the transport infrastructure and accessibility,
- Improving the social and cultural infrastructure, integrating infrastructural facilities such as schools, youth and senior-citizen facilities etc, into district work, the promotion of children, young people, and families,
- Improving (residential) security in the neighbourhood,
- Public relations, image development.

### **3.5 Neighbourhood Management as Intermediary**

The spectrum of effective players is as wide as that of the fields where action is needed. They include individual residents and existing resident groupings such as neighbourhood networks, district groups, local resident groups, citizen action groups, and interest groups. They also include:

- cultural, religious, and other associations (especially sports clubs) and networks,

- urban renewal advisory boards, tenant advisory committees and associations, youth committees,
- crime prevention committees, city marketing bodies,
- sponsors and sponsoring organisations active in the district, churches, and schools,
- local business people, local retailers' associations,
- representatives of the housing industry,
- representatives of the political parties in city and district councils,
- local Agenda 21 groups, etc.

Where possible, the neighbourhood management should unite all locally active players in district-level cooperative structures such as “community conferences”, “round tables”, and “neighbourhood forums”. It should arbitrate differences and mediate disputes, and coordinate the efforts of all players in the framework of a holistic project landscape (horizontal networking). By integrating target-group oriented players into the overall community concept, a holistic, sociospatial approach is achieved. To ensure effectiveness, it is vital that player representatives composing these cooperative structures have the authority to make decisions. The cooperation of the administrative authority competent for the neighbourhood is indispensable.

In addition to its functions as coordinator and activator at the local implementation level, neighbourhood management should maintain at least a presence in bodies responsible for net-working the local level with administrative and citywide players (for example, representatives of council parties, of retailer and handicrafts chambers, the labour authorities, the press, etc.) so that it can communicate neighbourhood needs “upwards” and “outwards”, and keep the neighbourhood informed about “material constraints” and differing interests among administrative and other non-local players (“steering group/body” for vertical networking).

Neighbourhood management thus becomes a “cross-level” intermediary between resident, administrative, and economic interests.

### **3.6 The Structure and Organisation of Neighbourhood Management**

Since “districts with special development needs” differ, and because neighbourhood management is designed as a resident-oriented process, great flexibility is called for organisational forms and in procedural arrangements. Existing cooperative and communication structures are also a basis on which neighbourhood management can be developed.

The goals and functions of neighbourhood management presented here are therefore to be understood as basic structures that need to be adapted to the needs of the individual area. All projects and strategies assume that the neighbourhood possesses human, spatial, financial, and institutional resources. There is no normative concept of the “ideal” urban district; the guiding principle must be what is feasible and appropriate for the district. District management is oriented on the existing material and social structures and on the existing use structure. It starts with the potential, the capabilities, and the activities of the residents and reinforces them (Alisch 1998).

Neighbourhood management cannot be regarded as a tool for solving the manifold and complex problems of a neighbourhood. It aims to develop structures that permit a high measure of participation and commitment on the part of the various locally active players, thus producing synergistic benefits (Kürpick 1999).

In sum it can be said that - at the administrative level, too - a number of fundamental criteria for successful neighbourhood management need to be observed. They are listed in the “Handbook for the Joint Project ‘Socially Integrative City’” issued by the Working Group of the Ministers and Senators of the Länder Responsible for Building, Housing and Settlement (ARGEBAU; cf. Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik 2000):

- A political decision to implement an integrated concept must exist for the target residential area(s).
- In the medium term - i.e., for at least three to five years - the financial and human resources needed to ensure the activities of the relevant levels of action (see below) must be guaranteed in the form of established posts.
- Within the administration, a specific entity must be in charge of inter-area and inter-departmental cooperation.
- The following levels of action are to be included or developed (Grimm/Hinte/Löhr 2000):
  - A responsible interface within the administration with powers to allocate local authority resources in coordination with the relevant departments/agencies (area commissioner at the administrative level),
  - Intermediate level to concentrate and communicate needs from the residential area, to raise funds and diffuse information in the neighbourhood (neighbourhood management level: vertical networking),
  - Local implementation level in the form of an on-site bureau appropriately equipped and staffed and with the main task of activating the local population (neighbourhood management level: horizontal networking).

### **3.7 Qualifying as a Neighbourhood Manager**

Experience with neighbourhood management has been gathered in a number of urban districts. Neighbourhood managers can be both local authority employees and external persons under contract to the municipality or the department in charge. Neighbourhood managers need first of all highly developed social competence and negotiating skills and a basic understanding of economic practices. They should be familiar with the area and the “language” or culture of the neighbourhood, and, as “generalists”, be able at least technically to assess the entire spectrum of the project landscape so as to be in a position to discuss the subject matter with the responsible sponsoring institutions and players from investment and non-investment areas alike. Since the bringing together and coordinating of players and projects by neighbourhood management also depends strongly on confidence and trust, which have to be earned, on-site bureaus - which in North Rhine-Westphalia, for example, generally have one to two employees - need continuity in staffing over a number of years (Kürpick 1999).

However, neighbourhood management is to be understood - at the neighbourhood level, not within the municipal organisation or in competence allocation - as a limited-term institution that promotes or creates self-supporting structures in the area, and thus makes itself obsolescent after five or ten years. The whole point of neighbourhood management is help replace the “culture of dependence” so often found in neighbourhoods by a “culture of independence”.

### **3.8 Resources for Neighbourhood Management: Appropriation Fund or District Budget**

Appropriation funds or district budgets are a substantial factor in the effective local operation of neighbourhood management, allowing projects and measures that although minor, are important for the neighbourhood, to be realised fast and without red tape. It is not so much the amount of money available that plays a role - in Germany between DM 10,000 and DM 200,000 per neighbourhood - than the possibility of citizens on the spot using this money directly without complications and on the basis of more or less democratically legitimated decision-making structures. Appropriation funds show that the local population is taken seriously and are thus an important condition for the acceptance of participative structures and, accordingly, a key instrument in activating local residents.

### 3.9 Neighbourhood Population: Participation and Activation

There are three basic options for participation by local residents (Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik 2001):

1. The classical form of participation practiced for the past twenty years in the form of forums, initiatives, round tables: the precondition for this form of participation is the existence of a corresponding discourse basis in the neighbourhood, for example through existing association and grass-roots party work. For this approach, planning resources are needed at the local implementation level and access for civic action groups to local political institutions with which direct discussion has to be conducted.
2. The second possibility is to reach the residents of a neighbourhood where they experience their daily problems - for example, in home improvement or amelioration of the residential environment. Direct participation in solving these problems reveals the advantages and disadvantages of the measures planned. The prerequisites for this procedure are early involvement of local residents right at the start of the planning stage and intensive accompanying support. This can also provide the basis for further forms of participation.
3. The third alternative is to make residents neighbourhood players, i.e., to give them the possibility of performing functions in civic self-organisation. This can, for example, be in the form of associations and clubs. The precondition is decentralised access to resources allocated by local government.

The list of instruments for activating the neighbourhood population is comparatively long: street parties, activating surveys, visiting work, inspections and neighbourhood walks, neighbourhood newspapers, competitions, workshops, advisory services, public debates, innovative workshops, arts projects, public relations (Hinte 1998). What instrument is to be used in a particular case depends on the level of existing civic organisation forms and the goals of the specific activation strategy (making contact with the population, reaching certain target groups, gathering information, passing on information, involvement in decision-making or deliberations)

## 4. The Status of Neighbourhood Management Implementation in Germany under the Federal-Länder Programme “Districts With Special Development Needs - The Socially Integrative City”

### 4.1 Länder Guidelines on Setting up Neighbourhood Management

Under the heading “Goals and Measures for Neighbourhood Development” in the “Handbook for the Joint Project ‘Socially Integrative City’” dated 1 March 2000, ARGEBAU recommends setting up a district management and a localised community bureau as typical resident participation measures. More specifically, they state elsewhere: “Cities and towns face the task of establishing an efficient community management” (Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik 2000).

The *Länder* have given varying degrees of attention to these demands in the information issued on the “Socially Integrative City” programme. *Länder* terms of reference can take the form of comprehensive *Land* programmes, sometimes with detailed government/senate decisions (see Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, Hesse, and North Rhine-Westphalia, which to some extent have years of experience in the matter), or they can be comparatively simple guidelines or essays on the how best to implement the programme in communities. From the content point of view, some specifically recommend cities

and towns to establish neighbourhood managements and local bureaus - sometimes laying down detailed specifications, funding modalities, and qualification requirements for neighbourhood managers. Others are content with vague formulations (Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik 2000).

#### **4.2 Setting up Neighbourhood Management in Communities**

Differences in dealing with neighbourhood management are also apparent in the municipalities participating in the "Socially Integrative City" programme. Of about 120 programme areas, about which detailed information is available, 90% claim they have or intend to set up a neighbourhood management. The actual implementation status in the 16 model areas - one per *Land* - is more complex. In ten a neighbourhood management with a community bureau has been established (Berlin, Flensburg, Gelsenkirchen, Halle, Hamburg, Hannover, Kassel, Leipzig (partial area), Ludwigshafen, Schwerin, Singen). The other five areas primarily offer upgraded classical procedures for participation in urban renewal/redevelopment, or - in the larger context of the administrative district - as "community conferences", "civic forums", etc.

These differences in assessing the status of neighbourhood management and community bureaus in implementing integrated district development concepts is evidence not only of different political and administrative priorities, but also that the definition of the concept, terms of reference, and implementation scope of neighbourhood management still raise many questions in local government practice. This is also shown by the results of a national impulse congress "Socially Integrative City" on the subject of neighbourhood management staged in Leipzig in late October 2000 by the German Institute of Urban Affairs, which threw the problems and opportunities of neighbourhood management into strong relief. Many of the demands made of neighbourhood management that are discussed here and the experience with implementing the "Socially Integrative City" programme in municipalities are confirmed by the evaluation of the North Rhine-Westphalia "Districts With Special Development Needs" programme, carried out by the North Rhine-Westphalia Institute for State and Urban Development Research (ILS) in Dortmund. The following remarks are based on the findings of the congress, the ILS studies, and the experience of the German Institute of Urban Affairs in accompanying the programme (Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik 2001; Institut für Landes- und Stadtentwicklungsplanung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen 2000).

#### **4.3 Neighbourhood Management in Practice: Questions and Problems**

The more than 300 participants of the congress provided very clear evidence of the strong differences in experience from *Land* to *Land* and city to city in implementing the "Socially Integrative City" programme, and thus in establishing neighbourhood management. Many questions remained open, especially on the organisation of neighbourhood management, on cooperation between participants in the programme, and on resident activation. The exchange of experience between communities was also made more difficult by imprecise definition of "area", "district", "neighbourhood", and - partly as a result of this - by the inconsistent use of the terms "district management" and "neighbourhood management" for organisational forms at the municipal, district/intermediate area, and neighbourhood levels.

#### **Organisation of Neighbourhood Management**

Despite the availability of organisational and management models, the question of how actually to structure and institutionalise the relationship between municipality, district, and neighbourhood is still unanswered in many cities. Particularly thorny problems are how to establish cooperation at and between the different levels, and what decision-making powers to vest in the various bodies and players. Experience has varied strongly with the intro-

duction of new forms of management. Cities where relevant structures had been established in the context of *Land* programmes prior to the “Socially Integrative City” project were often able to give a favourable report. Others cities that have only recently started implementing the programme complain of initial difficulties, especially in overcoming institutional bounds and creating cooperative structures at the administrative level. The lack of appropriate framework conditions often retards renewal processes and can in the long run prevent success.

But it cannot be the task of neighbourhood management to overcome an “unsuitable” administrative system. Neighbourhood management would be completely overburdened if high-level administrative cooperative and coordinating structures did not attempt to eliminate these structural problems. The necessity and difficulty of integrating local authority policy into new structures has often been pointed out. Many cities stress the importance of clear political decisions on integrated action concepts and new forms of cooperation.

A major problem facing neighbourhood managers is the ambivalent relationship between cooperative will and personal interest, especially among - in the broadest sense - economically active players (sponsors, associations, [housing] companies, etc.). They have to compete for market shares, subsidies and the like, but they are to be networked with one another. Experience has shown that, in creating communication and cooperation structures, care must be taken to ensure the greatest possible equality of representation on bodies composed of various institutions and interest groups. The effective networking of neighbourhood players can be achieved only if partners are found that are willing and able to lend support to the neighbourhood management. Most importantly, neighbourhood players must be shown the advantages of cooperating with neighbourhood management - for example, easier dealing with the bureaucracy or economic advantages. Problems and conflicts ought not to be swept under the carpet, they should be brought out into the open and thus made productive. This can contribute to critical discussion of neighbourhood development and to eliminating obstacles for neighbourhood management.

Networking among neighbourhood residents is often a laborious and protracted process, since, in many cases, there are no organised resident structures in the neighbourhoods concerned. In such areas a great deal of time and energy needs to be spent. Residents need to be made aware of the issues and induced to take action - merely in articulating problems or, at a later stage, in volunteering active commitment. It is clear that there is no ideal way to build effective cooperative structures. It is necessary to be open to processes taking place in and ideas emerging from the neighbourhood, and to apply a whole range of methods sensitive to the local situation. The successful use of instruments and methods depends to a large degree on the scope for action available. Neighbourhood management and working bodies need sufficient competence and powers to implement decisions without undue delay.

Many cities ask which functions are to be allocated to management and which not, and to what extent these functions can be defined by the neighbourhood manager concerned. The supporting institution for neighbourhood management can theoretically be the municipality itself, redevelopers, housing companies, university institutes, planning offices, or social institutions. Different situations in the various districts call for different approaches. Some *Länder* demand that concurrent elements be decided for the job description of a neighbourhood manager, to give interested communities a basis for deciding, after a selection process, which institution should be entrusted with the task. Experience has often shown a “tandem” solution to be effective, with an urban renewal expert representing the planning side and a social player representing the community side. This “tandem” solution is regarded as an important approach to cooperation between social and urban

development players, who have hitherto had little tradition of cooperating. Targeted efforts are therefore needed to equip the people concerned with the requisite qualifications.

Experience in North Rhine-Westphalia has repeatedly shown that five principles are important for the neighbourhood level.

1. The setting up of a neighbourhood management should be wanted in the neighbourhood, and is best developed from within the neighbourhood. At the local implementation level, the establishment of a neighbourhood management should give people a sense of a new departure.
2. This can happen only if all neighbourhood players are involved at an early stage.
3. Neighbourhood players should be strongly involved in defining the functions of neighbourhood management.
4. It should be ascertained whether players already established locally can take on the job of neighbourhood management. This improves the chances for the sustainability of projects and measures in the neighbourhood.
5. Neighbourhood managers should already be equipped with good local knowledge and competence to work together with disadvantaged population groups, who often have no-one to speak for them.

These principles for the neighbourhood have their pendant in five principles for administrators and politicians:

1. Local government should really want neighbourhood management. Successful work is possible only if this is the case.
2. Local government should regard neighbourhood management as a chance to gain a better understanding of the problems and potential of a community in the interest of more purposive and effective action.
3. Local government should be prepared to devolve powers to ensure real participation by all local players. Politicians should return to their real job - guiding and controlling work - and leave decision-making as far as possible to the community or neighbourhood level. The administrative authorities should build internal cooperative structures, so that they can package the various subsidies and other resources for feeding into the neighbourhood.
4. Among other things, this requires appropriation of a fund that is at the independent disposal of local players. This fund is particularly important for neighbourhood management, because it makes it possible to carry out smaller projects on demand from within the neighbourhood. Not only in the view of North Rhine-Westphalian cities, such an appropriation fund is a fundamental factor in activating local residents.
5. Experience in Duisburg has shown that these principles are indispensable for the functioning of a neighbourhood management. Fulfilling them can be a lengthy process, in which conflicts cannot be avoided. Neighbourhood management accordingly needs an open conflict culture.

### **Resident Activation**

How to activate and involve local residents raises even greater problems. What are they to be activated for? What methods can be used to activate and involve them; how does one reach the population? How can participation, once achieved, be sustained? What role do public relations play in activation and involvement? What is the status of resident activation in the work of neighbourhood managers? How does neighbourhood management deal with groups that are difficult or impossible to reach? How can self-organisational forces among residents be encouraged?

Participation and activation have diverse functions, and are imperative for the success of neighbourhood management. Various methods can bring

satisfactory results in involving and activating people. But it is essential that the measures taken be adapted to the area and its residents. Because no two areas are the same, simply transferring experience from other areas generally does not work. The methods to be applied thus depend strongly on the size of the area and the specific problems it faces. Small-scale, short-term forms of participation at the project level, for example building modernization, home improvement, or enhancement of the residential environment are usually relatively unproblematic, but do not go very far. It is easiest to encourage people to become involved and to keep their interest with small projects and rapidly visible first results. In contrast, participation in more comprehensive development processes gives rise to great uncertainty. In all, residents should be fed no illusions about their wishes being realised; the chances of a project's success must be clearly articulated, and procedures must be transparent. Activation is most successful in the long run when people take action on their own initiative. Wherever possible, the necessary structures for facilitating personal initiative should be established.

Important preconditions for resident participation and activation in a neighbourhood are the continued presence of experts on the spot, and accessible contact addresses with low-threshold proposals. To activate residents and gain their active participation, it is crucial to approach them in the environment in which they live their lives, and to take them seriously, which requires knowledge of the local "lingo". Cautious support for personal activities has top priority.

It is naturally not the job of neighbourhood management alone to organise participation and activation. It is necessary that the various sponsors, companies, institutions, associations, and political groupings become much more active with regard to resident participation than has often been the case in the past. In activating the local population, neighbourhood management should assume a primarily coordinative role, and only to a much more limited extent an initiative one.

### **Appropriation Fund**

Various *Länder* and municipalities have had experience with the appropriation fund mentioned above. This instrument is widely considered indispensable for activating neighbourhood residents. In North Rhine-Westphalia, the money needed - between DM 10,000 and DM 200,000 per year and district - is provided by the *Land* as lump-sum allocations for resident urban renewal projects. Usually the money is at the disposal of a "civic forum" in the district concerned. In other cases, a coordination group composed of political and administrative representatives and neighbourhood multipliers decide by consensus on the use of the money.

## **5. Conclusion**

German cities face new development challenges. The hitherto successful traditional urban renewal instruments and procedures, like those of the welfare state as a whole, cannot meet them. It has long been apparent that, under the new conditions of post-Fordist production, government is overburdened. More efficient government action is needed, and a stronger role for civil society in public affairs, not only in peripheral fields but in central areas of social policy.

The federal/*Länder* programme "Socially Integrative City" is an important step in this direction. Neighbourhood management plays a key role in the programme: all experience has shown that without effective neighbourhood management and appropriate administrative and political structures, government and the citizenry would fall back into their old roles of service sup-

plier and service demander, hindering the lasting, self-sustained reversal of the difficult developments in disadvantaged urban areas.

Vice versa, however, it should be emphasised that neighbourhood management and resident-centred urban renewal cannot as a whole be regarded as the sole “problem-solving channels”. The result would be system overload and trite recriminations. The implementation of integrated action concepts must be understood as a long-term process that lives by the interplay between top-down and bottom-up elements. At the same time, rapidly realisable “lighthouse” projects are necessary, which can “prime the pump” in the neighbourhood and show that something is happening.

Implementation of the “Socially Integrative Cities” programme has shown to date that, although it is indispensable to settle many questions and create new structures, the will of political and administrative players and personal commitment by all concerned are the keys to success for integrated urban district development concepts and neighbourhood management.

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