Good Practice Summary: Masterplan Korneuburg 2036

Initial situation, process progress and results

Korneuburg is a medium scale district capital in Lower Austria with about 13,000 inhabitants and is located at the Danube river next-door to the metropolis of Vienna. It grappled with an unbalanced municipal budget, considerable population increase as well as with heterogeneous interests and perceptions of its identity and image between the poles of urbanity and village quality of living. Starting in 2011, a group of self-organized citizens convinced the municipal government to develop an **integrative mission statement** for urban planning in close collaboration with citizens and external experts. The city now commits itself to the mission statement as a binding guideline for decision-making in future urban planning, which shall ensure a targeted development of the city, instead of uncontrolled growth. Based on this, a **masterplan** was developed in the same participatory manner comprising guidelines and measures for the implementation of the desired vision. Similarly to the mission statement, the masterplan comprises nine core fields of urban life and thus adopts a **holistic perspective on urban development**: urban planning, economics, education, mobility, energy, participation and communication, social issues, leisure and quality of living as well as culture. Furthermore, a **charter for citizen participation** – an agreement for future collaboration between the city and its citizens – has been elaborated and anchored within the masterplan.

The process generated considerable self-reinforcing tendencies over time. Each and every step gave an impetus for further development and for searching ways to consolidate newly evolving ideas and structures. During the formulation of the mission statement, the vision of a new cooperation culture between citizens and municipal government evolved. Thus, when elaborating the masterplan, the issue of participation became a cross-sectional topic considered in designing implementation measures in all of the nine fields of action which finally resulted in the charter of citizen participation, including rules and quality criteria for future collaboration.

Process, Timeframe and Milestones

The process officially started in April 2012. Further milestones were the approval of mission statement in spring 2014 and the approval of the masterplan and the charter for citizen participation in summer 2016. Since then the permanently installed steering group according to the charter is promoting and monitoring the realization and implementation of measures formulated in the masterplan and securing the quality of citizen participation in newly starting urban projects. Until now, all project-related outcomes resulted in unanimous decisions within the city council (approval of the mission statement, the master plan, the Charter for citizen participation as well as decisions on how to proceed with the process by all four parties represented in the council). This confirms the high level of trust and acceptance of the committee's work by the municipal government.

Innovative potential and Potential to Re-use

The success of the process is mainly based on the high degree of openness and collaboration between all actors involved (the mayor as well as citizens and governmental representatives). Thus, citizens were not only involved on the level of solution finding, but in all strategic planning of the process right from the beginning. The city council was very supportive in the open-ended process and e.g. agreed to a binding direct vote during the formulation of the mission statement, where all citizens could decide between four different scenarios for Korneuburg in 2036. These scenarios were the outcome of a

broader participation process involving hundreds of citizens via school and city events and formed the basis for the mission statement.

The Korneuburg case study shows, that what has started as a more or less typical example of citizen participation (case-related, clearly defined goals and operational framework), has developed its own dynamics and thus has come up against boarders of conventional participation projects. The charter regulates the co-management of the city by collaborative strategic planning and decision-making processes and shared responsibility for the city between citizens and authorities. Especially the institutionalization of the steering committee, some mayor questions arose, which are of high relevance but also bear high uncertainty (e.g. related to legitimacy and transparency of the committee). Even if some questions are still not fully answered by now, the city is breaking new grounds and has a rich experience with institutionalizing long-term citizen participation, which can be shared in a cities network. While findings from participation literature and practice help to define procedures of project-related involvement of citizens, they provide little help in how to design appropriate rules for long-term co-management within the steering committee, blurring the boundaries between government, i.e. the representative democratic system, and citizens. Also in terms of holistic strategy-building for urban development (masterplan) the city may offer empirical know-how. Experiences with the development of scenarios as a basis for strategy building (guided by scientific experts) may as well be of interest for other cities.