

UpdateDeutschland: OPEN SOCIAL INNOVATION

thinking ahead and learning



LEARNING REPORT

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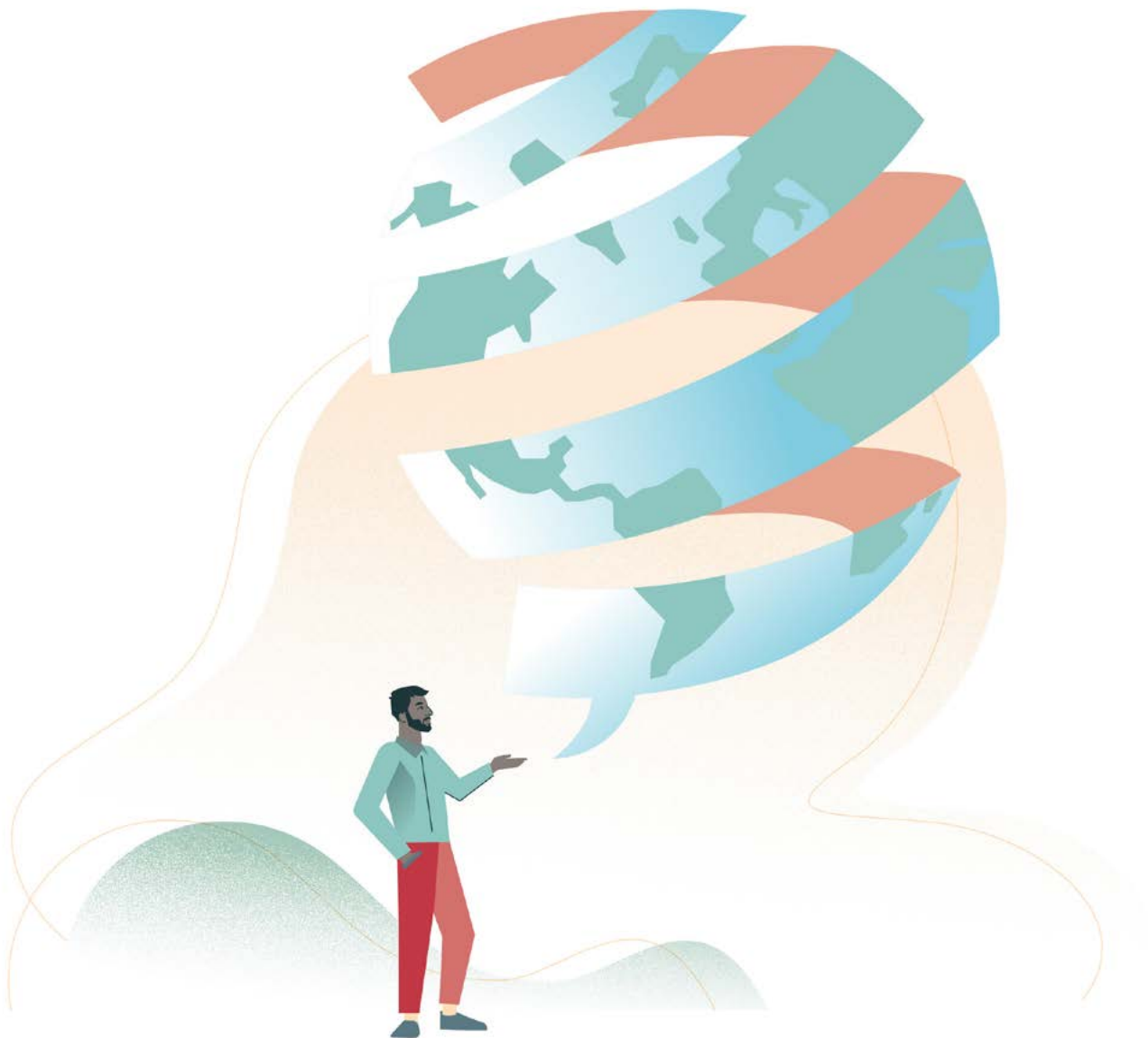
FROM #WIRVSVIRUS TO UPDATEDEUTSCHLAND

The current societal challenges - such as the Corona or the climate crisis - show that the existing structures and processes in public administration and in other sectors are insufficient to solve urgent social problems. Therefore, we need to think about novel approaches to break new ground and modify rigid structure.

This is where Open Social Innovation comes in. Open Social Innovation brings together stakeholders from various societal sectors to jointly participate in the innovation process, from problem assessment to the initial development of a solution to scaling solutions. Open Social Innovation is based on the premise that knowledge about solutions to social challenges exists in different societal sectors. However, this knowledge is not effectively accessed by conventional problem-solving mechanisms, which are often organized on a strictly sectoral basis. In contrast, Open Social Innovation deliberately relies on an open and participatory approach, joining stakeholders from various sectors and enabling collaboration at eye level. Open Social Innovation understands that solving social problems is a collective task.

In UpdateDeutschland (in English "UpdateGermany"), citizens, public administration, the private sector and science came together in the spirit of Open Social Innovation to jointly develop solutions for ongoing challenges. UpdateDeutschland was organized by ProjectTogether, a non-profit social enterprise. The Federal Chancellery took over the patronage of the initiative. The kick-off event, a 48h Sprint, took place from 19th March to 21st March 2021 with 4,400 participants. In the following implementation program from 15th April to 19th August 2021, 330 initiatives embarked on the further journey.

UpdateDeutschland builds on the first Open Social Innovation experiment [#WirVsVirus](#) (in English "WeVsVirus") from the previous year. [#WirVsVirus](#) showed that it is possible to achieve broad participation of different societal sectors in social innovation processes, but also revealed weaknesses in the system and triggered learning processes. [#WirVsVirus](#) and UpdateDeutschland are similar at first glance. Both Open Social Innovation formats started with a Sprint weekend (hackathon), where the participants gathered online to work together on pressing societal issues. The Sprint weekend was followed by an implementation program in which the initiatives could further develop their ideas.



However, there were also notable differences: UpdateDeutschland explicitly involved the public administration in the entire Open Social Innovation process, from specifying challenges to implementation. In addition, already

existing initiatives working on societal challenges were invited to get involved.

As part of our accompanying research, we were able to intensively monitor #WirVsVirus and continued our joint learning journey with UpdateDeutschland.

Unser Ziel ist es, alle Interessierten
Our aim is to equip all interested
parties with concepts, language and
insights to better understand and
jointly develop Open Social Innovation.

This distinguishes our approach from classic evaluation research (for more information on our research approach, see infobox below). This Learning Report complements the first [#WirVsVirus Learning Report](#) and highlights new findings from UpdateDeutschland. We will address the following questions in this Learning Report:

1. What is Open Social Innovation and what is UpdateDeutschland about?

In the first chapter we provide an overview of UpdateDeutschland and use it as an example to explain the Open Social Innovation process. In this chapter we create a common knowledge base.

Readers who are already familiar with the method and format of UpdateDeutschland may want to start with chapter 2.

2. What happens at UpdateDeutschland, who participates and how?

In the second chapter, we analyze data around challenges, participation and activity to deepen the understanding of the Open Social Innovation method at UpdateDeutschland.

3. What is the potential of Open Social Innovation?

In the third chapter, we show four different pathways that illustrate how UpdateDeutschland created impact.

4. How did the public administration participate in UpdateDeutschland?

The fourth chapter shows the multiple roles that public administrations played in UpdateDeutschland and highlights the broader benefits as well as obstacles that public administrations faced during the process.

5. Which key factors should be considered when designing an Open Social Innovation format?

The fifth chapter identifies four key organizational challenges.

6. What is the transformation potential of Open Social Innovation and where can the journey lead in Germany?

The sixth and final chapter offers a critical reflection on Open Social Innovation and demonstrates its transformative potential.

Besides the questions raised in the chapter outline above, we also identified similarities that we already documented in the #WirVsVirus Learning Report: Initiatives in UpdateDeutschland face similar obstacles in scaling their social innovations. We also observed that UpdateDeutschland does not only have an impact through the projects, but through the method itself (e.g., empowering those individuals and institutions working to improve the innovation capacity of public administration). For those who want to learn more about Open Social Innovation, we recommend reading the first [Learning Report](#).

Finally, we would like to use this introduction to express our gratitude. This Learning Report was supported by the Federal Chancellery. We would like to thank ProjectTogether, as well as the participating initiatives, representatives of the public administration and other actors (including foundations) for their cooperation in this research project. We would like to thank the Volkswagen Foundation for supporting our research in this early phase of the process. We would also like to thank our institutions, the Hertie School, the Johannes Kepler University Linz and the Leuphana University Lüneburg, which have supported us in many ways. Finally, we would like to thank our student assistants Anna-Lena Schröder, Lukas Schmid, Tom Siebels, Sarah Nassabieh and Nils Heinemann.

Since March 2020, we, Johanna Mair, Thomas Gegenhuber, René Lührsen and Laura Thäter have been accompanying the Open Social Innovation formats #WirVsVirus and UpdateDeutschland. Our aim is to explore the potentials and limits of Open Social Innovation as a method. As a research team, we see ourselves as learning partners: In addition to regular exchange with the organizers, we created a respectful, collaborative environment for joint learning with all actors and institutions involved.

Since the beginning of the research project, we have conducted 250+ semi-structured interviews with all actors (initiatives, organizers, patrons and supporters, as well as political and civil society organizations), analyzed documents (e.g., media articles) and online data (e.g., the collaboration platform Slack), as well as participatory observations (about 1,300 hours of real-time monitoring, such as participation in events of the implementation program or regional formats in Bavaria, Lower Saxony and Hamburg).

In addition, together with ProjectTogether, we organized an event with selected teams and representatives of the public administration from municipalities, federal states, the federal government and foundation representatives to jointly reflect on the Open Social Innovation process.

Our analyses in this report are primarily based on the empirical data we collected in the context of UpdateDeutschland from March 2021 to December 2021, but are also based on the findings from #WirVsVirus.

CHAPTER 1

UPDATEDEUTSCHLAND AND OPEN SOCIAL INNOVATION

Open Social Innovation relies on the participation of individuals and stakeholders from different societal sectors in innovation processes to address societal challenges. In this process, citizens, organized civil society, private sector organizations, foundations and public administration work together in a "collective action" approach in the entire innovation process, from the identification of challenges to the generation of solution ideas and the scaling of solutions. This allows for the development of new solutions or scaling up of existing solutions.

Various societal sectors bring various perspectives on societal challenges to the innovation process, which fosters the development of a more refined and shared understanding of the underlying problem. Based on this shared understanding of the problem, participants from different societal contexts (e.g., public administration or civil society innovators) can learn together how to overcome social challenges within the Open Social Innovation space. The Open Social Innovation method not only allows for the development and implementation of innovative solutions, but also triggers a thinking and learning process that impacts society. Finally, collective action by individuals and institutions from civil

society, business, politics and public administration can lead to long-term oriented cooperation between the sectors. This enables joint identification of emerging problems and addressing them in a sustainable and effective manner.

OPEN SOCIAL INNOVATION AS A PROCESS

The Open Social Innovation process encompasses four phases (Figure 1). A closer look at these phases helps to better understand the process from challenges to effective solutions.

Mobilizing

This phase is primarily about identifying challenges and developing new ideas or finding existing solutions. An important task of mobilization is to encourage a diverse crowd to participate in the Open Social Innovation process. An open call in which organizers make the requirements clear helps potential participants to make an informed decision about joining the innovation process.

In UpdateDeutschland, individuals and stakeholders from all sectors were encouraged to submit challenges and participate in the program. Based on the mission "*Germany makes an update. Out of the crisis, into the future,*" the organizers wanted to address challenges of everyday social coexistence and sustainability. In the open call, the organizers emphasized that already existing initiatives as well as newly formed teams could participate.

A special feature was the involvement of the public administration. The organizers sought to talk to the public administration at the municipal, state and federal level and to involve them early on in the innovation process. Representatives of some public administrations had already been advocates of Open Social Innovation since #WirVsVirus, such as Ammar Alkassar, the Chief Information Officer (CIO) of Saarland. The German Association of Towns and Municipalities (Deutscher Städte- und Gemeindebund) helped with further mobilization. In particular, the Innovators Club, organized by Alexander Handschuh, helped generate access to municipalities.

In addition, ten federal states and individual federal authorities participated in the process.

Citizens received information about UpdateDeutschland about two weeks before the program started. In order to mobilize a group of participants that adequately represents German society, the organizers worked with ambassadors and people who function as multipliers for UpdateDeutschland. For example, inclusion activist Raul Krauthausen promoted UpdateDeutschland in his network. Since the kick-off event was not only intended to generate new solutions and prototypes, but also to strengthen existing initiatives, Project-Together also approached social enterprises. To mobilize them, the organizers leveraged networks of social entrepreneurship stakeholders such as Ashoka and SEND (Social Entrepreneurship Network Germany).

Additionally, the organizers approached universities and research institutes. Universities, for instance, participated with teams of students (who in some

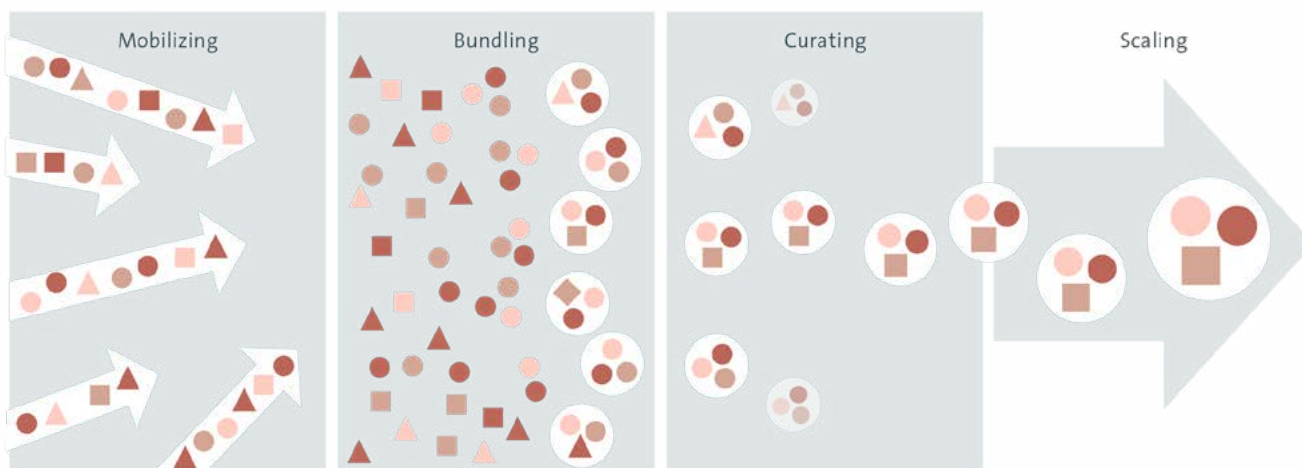


Figure 1:
Four phases in the Open Social Innovation process

cases could claim credit points for their study programs).

Bundling

In this phase, challenges, ideas and existing solutions come together. This requires a (virtual) space that offers participants an opportunity for exchange and collaboration.

The kick-off weekend took place digitally from 19th March to 21st March 2021.¹ The focal point of the Sprint weekend was the digital collaboration tool Slack. This platform allowed participants from all over Germany to work together and receive information from the organizers.

Curating

This phase determines which solutions will make their way into the implementation program. In order to promote the exchange between teams, the organizers sought to infuse the implementation program with a community spirit and enable opportunities for vivid exchange among the participants.

In UpdateDeutschland, the participants presented around 415 solution appo-

ches on [Devpost](#), a hackathon organizing platform, at the end of the Sprint. The access for the subsequent implementation program was rather open. This means that unlike in #WirVsVirus, there was no jury evaluation of the submitted solutions. Every team could receive a seat in the implementation program, regardless of their progress. The initiatives only needed to fulfill three requirements:

- First, relevance of the chosen societal challenge,
- second, a first plausible approach to the solution,
- and third, the solution appears implementable.

Of the around 415 initiatives, 330 took part in the implementation program. Importantly, existing initiatives that had not participated in the 48h Sprint weekend could also take part in the implementation program.

Scaling

In this phase, the solutions receive further support to unfold their potential for impact. Further support is vital, as the implementation and scaling of new ideas is resource-intensive.

Engagement Stipends	Community Exchange	Public Administration Check-in	Innovation Academy
Financial support for voluntary work on a solution Granted in two rounds	Regular digital exchange format for teams in the implementation program Community-building	Regular digital exchange format specifically for public actors sharing the learning process	Workshop series to teach methods and skills for the further development of an idea
Resource platform	Experts Feedback	Stakeholder Calls	Innovators Talks
Digital offers of contacts, consultations and coaching for teams in the implementation program	Curated networking between teams and experts Subsequent evaluation by patients	Regular digital exchange format for program supporters	Talks by experts and innovators

Figure 2: Overview of Offers in the Implementation Program

The UpdateDeutschland implementation program took place from 15th April 2021 to 17th August 2021. The implementation program consisted of three components:

1. Working together on challenges

The organizers encouraged initiatives to further develop their proposed solutions together with other initiatives. This strengthened the collaborative spirit and sought to prevent that several teams were working on the same solution in parallel.

2. Connecting initiatives, experts and implementation partners

Initiatives could find partners who further support them in piloting and implementing the solution.

3. Offering needs-oriented support

Support offers should help the teams move forward with their solutions. Needs-oriented support helped accommodating the initiatives' different stages of development. While newly established initiatives put efforts into developing their solution, initiatives with existing solutions were often more interested in networking.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the support offered in UpdateDeutschland.

Although the main elements of the implementation program were set from the beginning, the organizers emphasized their flexibility:

This is not a ready-made program. Let's shape UpdateDeutschland together.

Due to this flexibility, the implementation program was continuously re-adjusted to the needs of the initiatives.

In addition to the implementation program for the entire UpdateDeutschland community, the organizers coordinated with governmental stakeholders to launch decentralized "Update" formats at the level of federal states (UpdateBayern (Bavaria), UpdateNRW

(North Rhine-Westphalia), UpdateHamburg, UpdateNiedersachsen (Lower Saxony) and UpdateBaden-Wuerttemberg). In these regional formats, partners from the region networked with (mostly local) initiatives. Public representatives from the respective federal states (e.g., the State Chancellery of North Rhine-Westphalia in the case of UpdateNRW) took over the organizing role for these forms. ProjectTogether had a support role and provided impetus for these formats (e.g., through sharing experiences on how to set up engaging online community calls).

After the end of the official implementation program, however, the Open Social Innovation process did not end. Some of the emerged collaborations, local formats and exchanges between stakeholders continued beyond UpdateDeutschland. Figure 3 depicts the timeline of UpdateDeutschland.

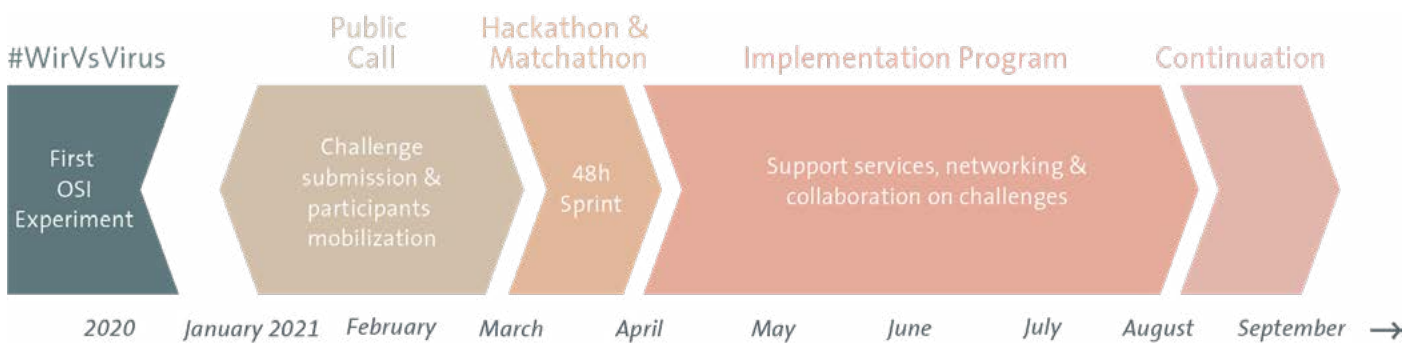


Figure 3: UpdateDeutschland over time

CHAPTER 2

CHALLENGES, PARTICIPATION & ACTIVITY

What happens in UpdateDeutschland and who participates and how? In this chapter, we analyze challenges, participation and activity to deepen our understanding of the Open Social Innovation method and UpdateDeutschland. First, we take a closer look at the challenges submitted from different societal sectors. Second, we look at participation in terms of the geographical distribution of participants in Germany. Lastly, we examine the activity of the participants on Slack, the digital collaboration platform where the entire UpdateDeutschland community met.

CHALLENGES

Challenges are of great importance in the Open Social Innovation process. They give participants a reason to gather for collective action and jointly reflect on social problems. In the case of UpdateDeutschland, the submitted challenges exposed the concerns of civil society and public administration.

The participants of UpdateDeutschland submitted a total of 581 challenges before the start of the 48h Sprint. The challenges came from four different areas: Citizens, public administration (various administrative levels from municipalities to the federal government), the private sector (e.g., private companies, foundations or organized civil society initiatives) and science (universities or research institutes). Figure 4 shows the shares of the respective areas in the submission of challenges:

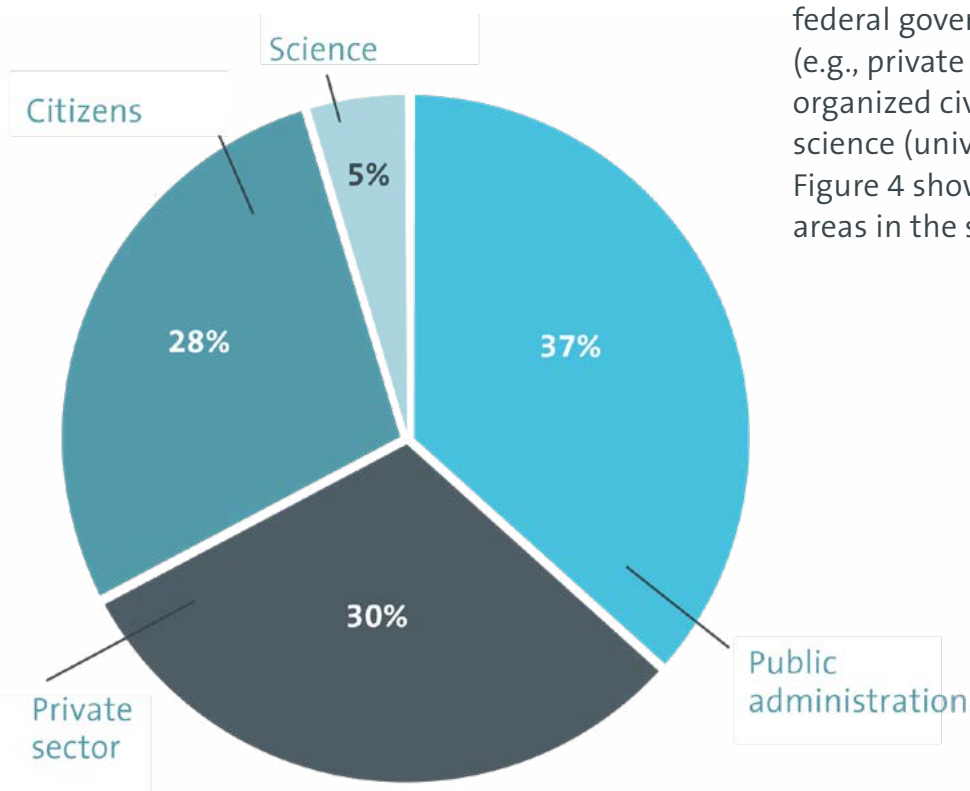


Figure 4:
Challenges according
to societal sector

Challenges could be submitted to six different thematic areas (Figure 5) with four to six subordinate fields of action from which participants could choose when signing up for Update-Germany. The organizers filtered out challenge proposals that were discriminatory or racist.²

More than a third of the challenges (37%) were submitted by public administrations. The public administrations generated many challenges on the thematic areas of urban and rural life. For example, the city of Karlsruhe asked:

How can we transform troubled stationary retail locations into new spaces of social life? On the thematic field of "digital state and digital consumer protection", most of the challenges also came from public administrations.

Citizens generated 28% of the challenges. The largest share of these were challenges on the topic of a climate-neutral, liveable future. In this thematic area, citizens showed a particularly high level of interest in the thematic field "circular economy." Citizens also submitted various challenges on the thematic areas of education, lifelong learning and modern work. For instance, one challenge submitted by citizens was: *How can we help the older generation to become part of our digital society?*

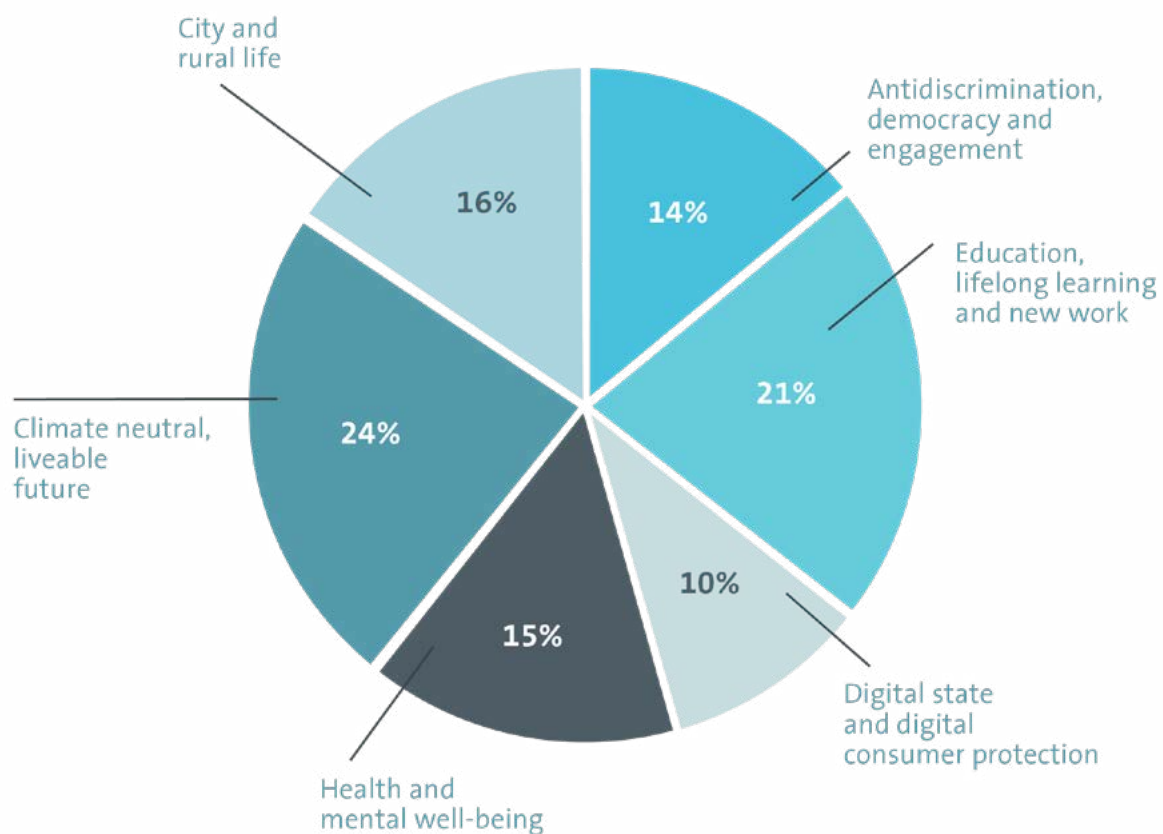


Figure 5:
Challenges according
to thematic areas

Distribution of the submission of the actors to thematic areas

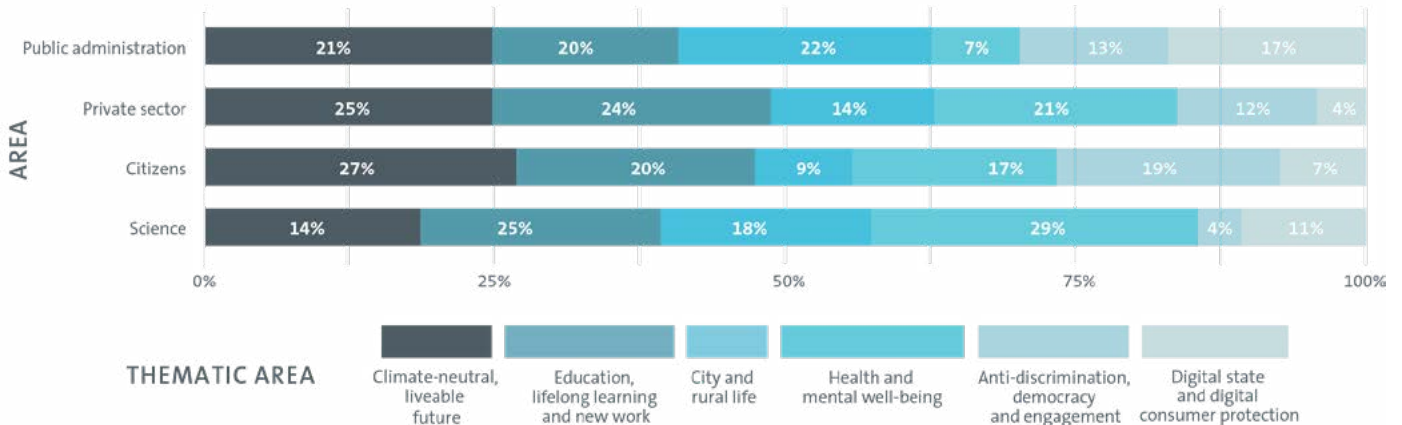


Figure 6:
Interest of the respective societal sectors in thematic areas

Private actors such as companies, foundations and non-profit organizations generated 31% of the challenges. The private actors also showed particular interest in the areas of a climate-neutral, liveable future, as well as education, lifelong learning the environment and modern work. The Hamburg Holistic Foundation, for example, posed the challenge: *How can we create incentives for the implementation of regenerative agriculture?*

With 5% of the challenges, science represented the smallest group of the challenge submitters. University departments and professors took the opportunity to submit challenges to UpdateDeutschland, especially in the areas of education, lifelong learning and modern work. Figure 6 illustrates the different areas of interest by sector.

PARTICIPATION

The question of participation is significant in the Open Social Innovation process, as the participants constitute the source of the creative potential for social innovation. As a digital and nationwide format, UpdateDeutschland aimed to mobilize participants from all over Germany. The analysis of participation shows to what extent the Open Social Innovation format has lived up to its own expectations.

A total of about 4,400 participants from almost all regions of Germany came together at the 48h Sprint weekend. Most participants came from the three most populated federal states (North Rhine-Westphalia, Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg). Relatively fewer people participated from eastern Germany and Rhineland-Palatinate (see Figure 7).

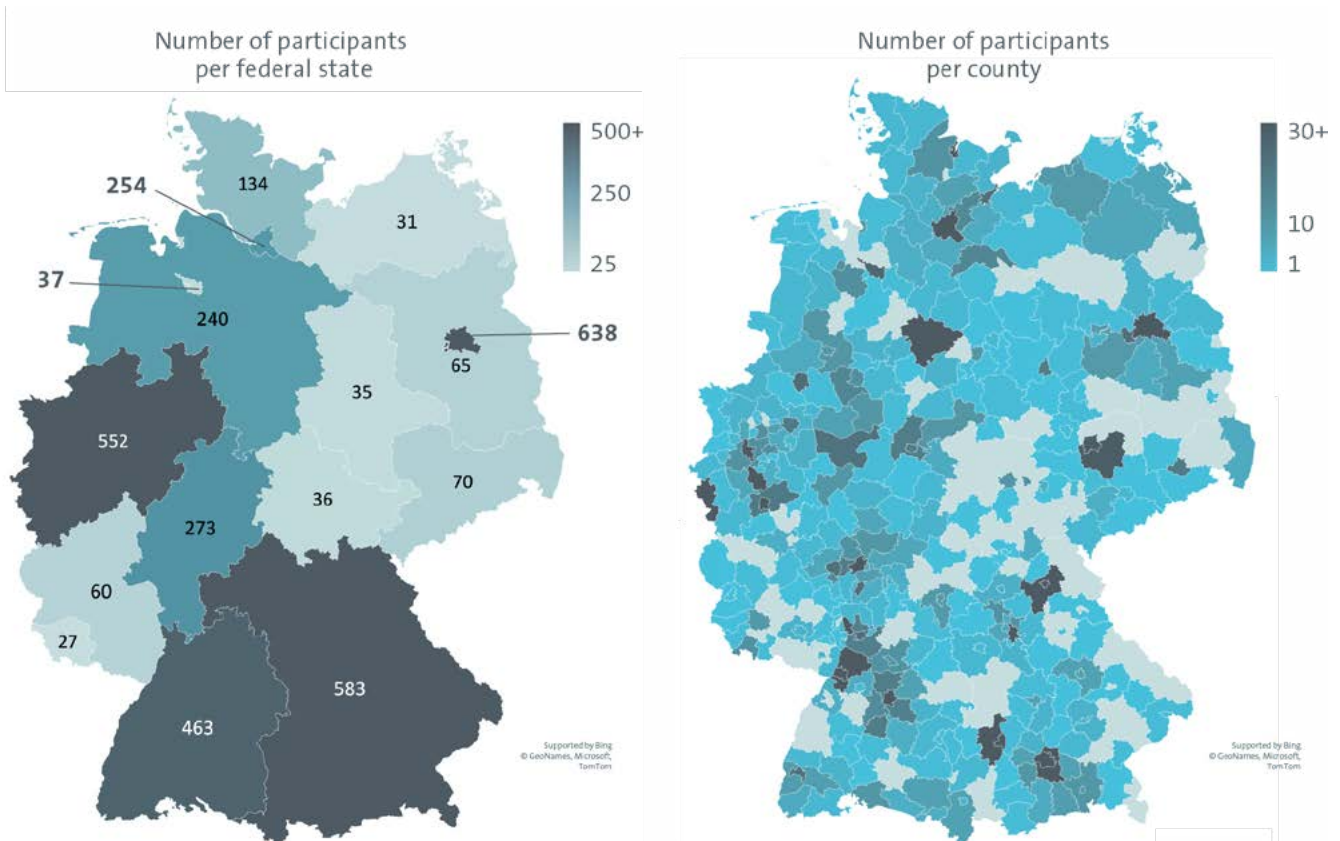


Figure 7: Geographical distribution of participants³

The majority of participants came from large cities and metropolitan areas (Figure 8). Berlin, Munich and Hamburg together accounted for almost a third (approx. 1,200) of the participants. However, UpdateDeutschland also managed to mobilize participants from rural regions.

At the beginning of the kick-off event, 63 municipalities participated.⁴ In addition to larger cities such as Hamburg or Munich, smaller towns like the town of Tengen or the district town of Stutensee participated. Figure 9 illustrates the participation of the municipalities according to federal states (left) and districts (right). A look at the districts illustrates that even within the individual federal states, many municipalities were not represented in UpdateDeutschland.

The 10 cities with the highest number of participants

City	Number of participants:
Berlin	638
Munich	281
Hamburg	254
Hanover	108
Stuttgart	103
Cologne	96
Frankfurt on the Main	88
Düsseldorf	64
Karlsruhe	58
Mannheim	52

Figure 8: Participants from big cities³

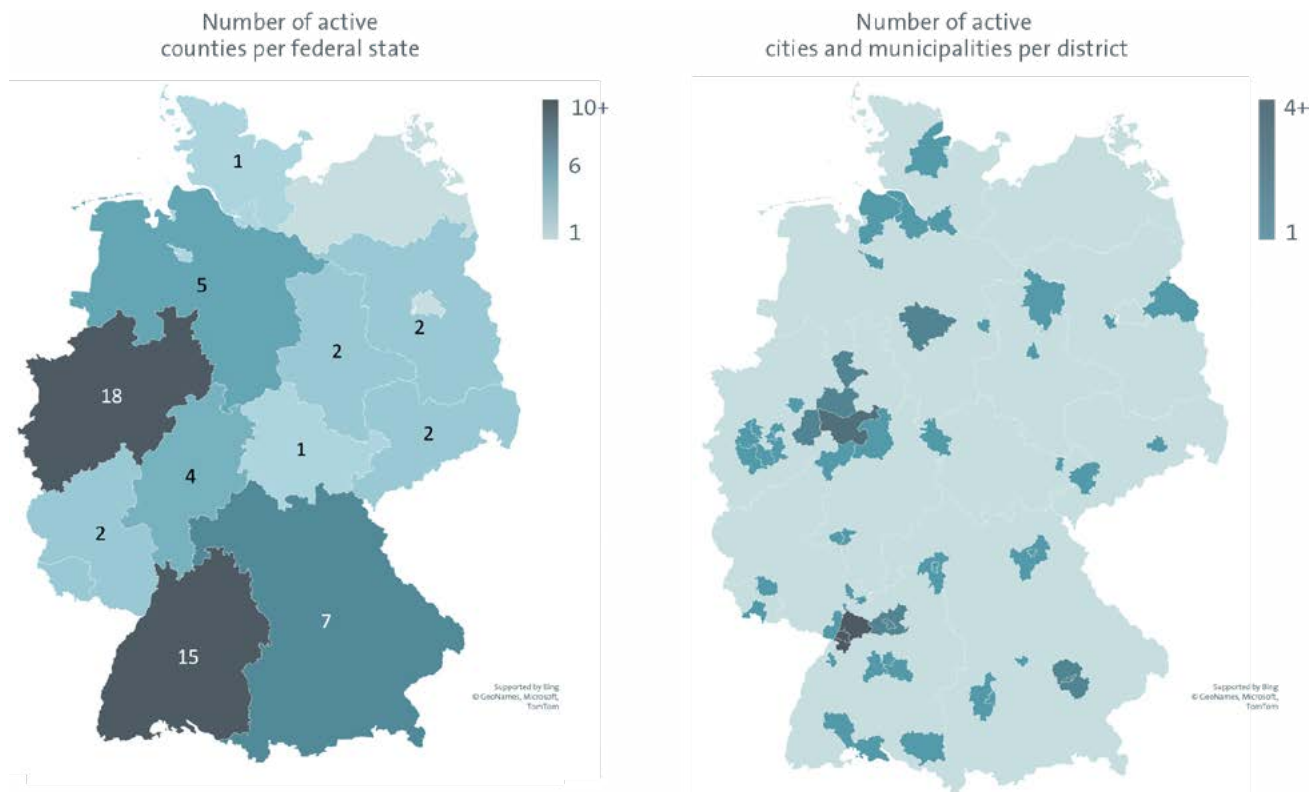


Figure 9:
Geographical distribution of participating municipalities

With regard to the federal states, a strong concentration of municipalities on a few highly populated federal states becomes apparent. More than half of the participating municipalities came from North Rhine-Westphalia and Baden-Wuerttemberg alone.

ACTIVITY OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The activity analysis of the participants illustrates how the energy unfolded during the Open Social Innovation process. Looking at activity and communication patterns reveals insights into the dynamics of the process.

The digital collaboration platform Slack served as a space where the community communicated and interacted. Figure 10 shows very high activity

on Slack during the 48h Sprint (left). During this opening weekend, the many participants came together, got to know each other, formed teams and networked. In these first days, an average of 29,700 messages per day were sent by 1,630 users; 2,470 users were active daily. In the implementation program, 111 messages per day were sent by 36 users on average; 165 users were active daily.

With the transition to the implementation program, the activity of individual users on Slack also changed. Users who wrote messages wrote an average of 18.2 messages per person during the 48h Sprint. This activity decreased significantly to 2.59 messages in the subsequent stage.

Most communication during the Sprint and in the implementation program took place in form of direct messages: 66% of all messages were sent as direct messages. At 77%, this proportion was even higher in the implementation program. Our observations also show that many initiatives switched from the main communication medium Slack to their own channels over time, once the teams had formed. Moreover, activity declined because some initiatives dissolved or they ended participation in the program.

The analyses show that challenges are the first step towards collective action. At the same time, the digital space plays an important role in bundling the activities of the participants who are spread all over Germany. In the next chapter, we will demonstrate part of what has emerged from the challenges and the collective action by means of exemplary impact paths.

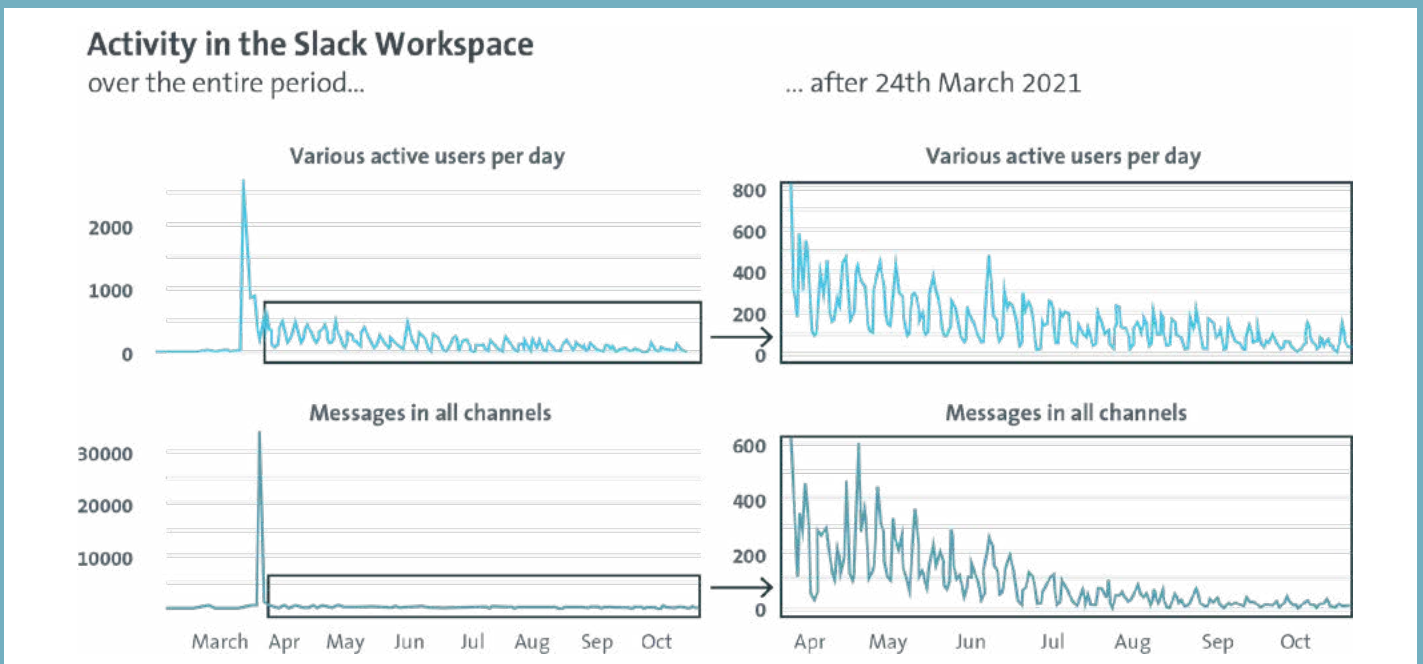


Figure 10: Activity in the Slack workspace. "Active users"⁵

CHAPTER 3

IMPACT PATHWAYS

In our #WirVsVirus Learning Report, we showed that the impact of Open Social Innovation is not only generated through the developed solutions, but also from the Open Social Innovation method itself (see first Learning Report chapter 4). In this chapter, we discuss this broader understanding of impact which also applies to UpdateDeutschland. Additionally, we highlight selected impact pathways. These impact pathways were exemplary for UpdateDeutschland because they center the participation of public administration as well as civil society initiatives. We illustrate the following four impact pathways with selected case studies:

- A. **Emergence of new cross-sectoral initiatives**
- B. **Amplification of existing initiatives**
- C. **Forging alliances between initiatives**
- D. **Strengthening local ecosystems**

These pathways exemplify how collective action generates impact.

A. EMERGENCE OF NEW CROSS-SECTORAL INITIATIVES

UpdateDeutschland enabled the emergence of new cross-sectoral initiatives. Citizens worked together with public administrations and other supporters to find solutions to the submitted challenges.

One example of a new initiative created in/within UpdateDeutschland is Lokalprojekte (Localprojects in English). Lokalprojekte's team members met each other during the 48h Sprint. The team consists of members with different professional backgrounds (public administration, business, IT sector, non-profit sector or federal defense).

They come from all over Germany, are aged between mid-20s and early 50s and the gender distribution in the team is balanced. The team became interested in the challenge that the town Eschwege submitted: *"How can we recruit modern administrative employees and recruit digital affine employees for our town halls?"*

Early during the Sprint weekend, the team got in touch with the challenge submitter, the mayor of the town of

Eschwege. The mayor and another representative from Eschwege were available for feedback and exchange with the team at any time during the weekend. The early exchange helped the team to further specify the solution idea to the mayor's challenge.

The mayor described the role of the public administration in the collaboration as follows: *"We provided the reality check - what works and what does not work."* With the administration's perspective on the one hand and the team members' diverse perspectives on the other, the shared understanding of the problem and the approach to a possible solution grew.

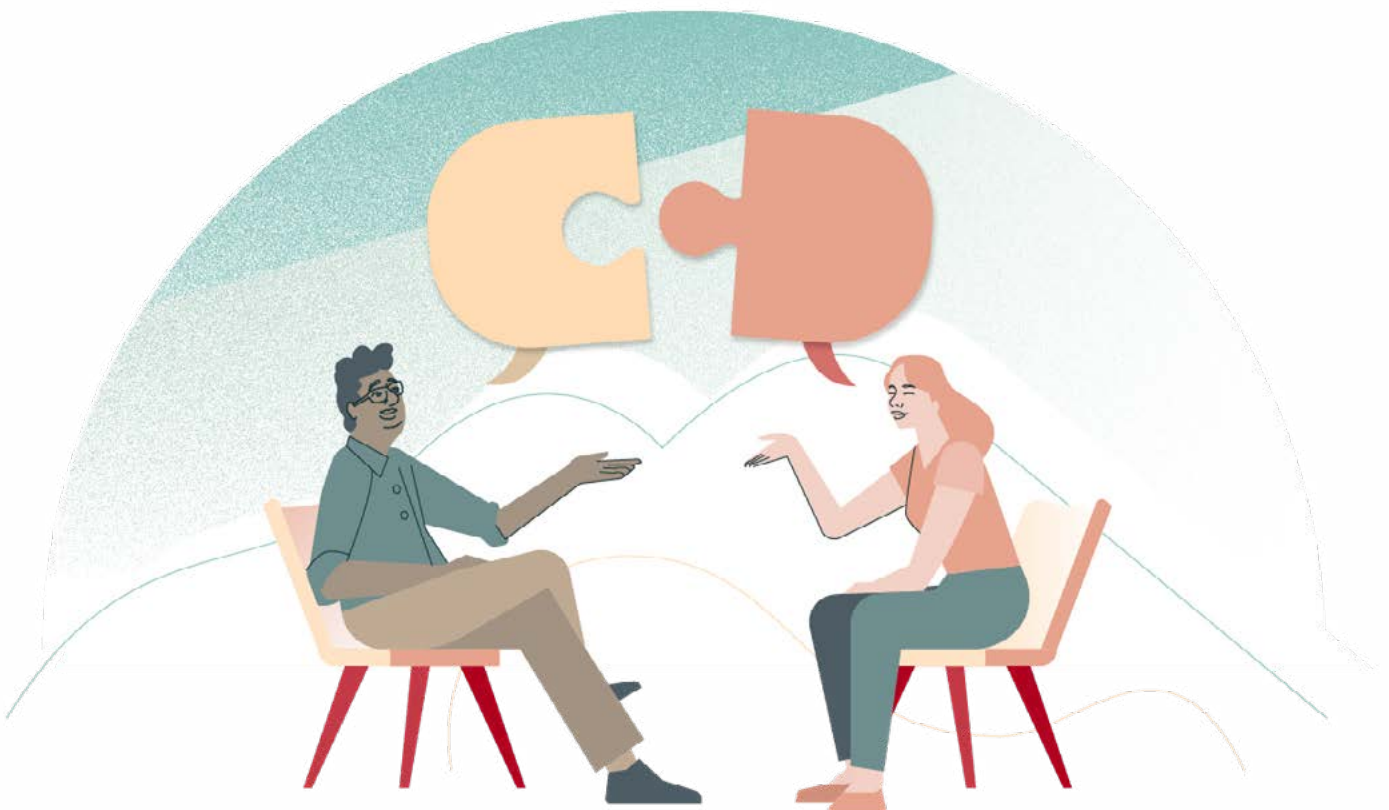
The team's openness in the process was a key success factor: *"People really listened to each other."* The support provided by the UpdateDeutschland program, such as the help of a mentor, offered the team further guidance:

"Our mentor moderated the open discussion rounds. This provided us with a certain structure, at least in terms of the speaking shares."

Finally, the idea of what later became Lokalprojekte matured in the team:

Lokalprojekte is a platform that connects experts from business and society with municipalities. Experts work in municipality projects on challenges concerning the future, bring in new competences and contribute new perspectives to the municipalities.

As part of the implementation program, Lokalprojekte received valuable support.



On the one hand, pro bono resources such as legal consultation helped the team set up the non-profit limited company (gemeinnützige Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung). On the other hand, the initiative received financial support through engagement stipends. The stipends allowed two people from the team *"to commit all of their time to work on the project."* Previously, they worked on the project merely on a voluntary basis.

To further implement the solution, Lokalprojekte needs open and innovative municipalities. Together with the team, Eschwege took the first step towards implementation. In addition to Eschwege, Lokalprojekte also acquired several other municipalities for their launch. The mayor of Eschwege sees municipalities as a key player in the Open Social Innovation process: *"In the municipalities, the problems are actually tackled. We are not the last, but the first level of government. Citizens' perceptions about public administration and democracy are shaped by us."*

Another example of a new cross-sector initiative from UpdateDeutschland is Sags der Polizei (in English "tell the police"). In this initiative, citizens work together with the local police department in Heilbronn on a strategic feedback tool, which other police authorities could use as well. The person in charge of the project at the Heilbronn police sees one of the success factors for the interdisciplinary and creative cooperation in openness:

"The openness on the part of the police as a challenge provider was important. We were not fixated on a specific ideal solution, but always said: We see how creative process plays out."

Lokalprojekte and Sags der Polizei illustrate that openness of public administration representatives, coupled with innovative and pragmatic interdisciplinary initiatives can lead to the emergence of new approaches.

In these new approaches, the administration's perspective and the citizens' diverse backgrounds converge. From the administration's point of view, Open Social Innovation offers an alternative way for developing sustainable innovations in public administration, as the example of Lokalprojekte demonstrates:

Usually, when I have a problem as a municipality, I put out a tender and receive a number of offers. And then I have to take the most economical one and in the end, I don't even know what I've bought. With Open Social Innovation, I put my challenge out into the big virtual space and those who respond are keen to take on the challenge! Everyone can only benefit from this mutual exchange.

Open Social Innovation gives public administrations the chance to look beyond their own boundaries and to exchange ideas with people who have different perspectives and experiences:

"Experiencing this enthusiasm, developing a solution with and for each other, really thrilled me. Being able to make a difference has been extremely enriching for me."

When and where else would I have met this range of people?

The team members of Lokalprojekte also gained much from the joint and cross-sector innovation journey. For many of them, working together sparked enthusiasm for social innovation:

The participants told us that the initiative would probably never have come together in this way without UpdateDeutschland. Germany lacks spaces in which administration and civil society collaborate from identifying the challenge to the implementation of a solution as equals. Open Social Innovation offers such a space and enables the emergence of new cross-sectoral initiatives.

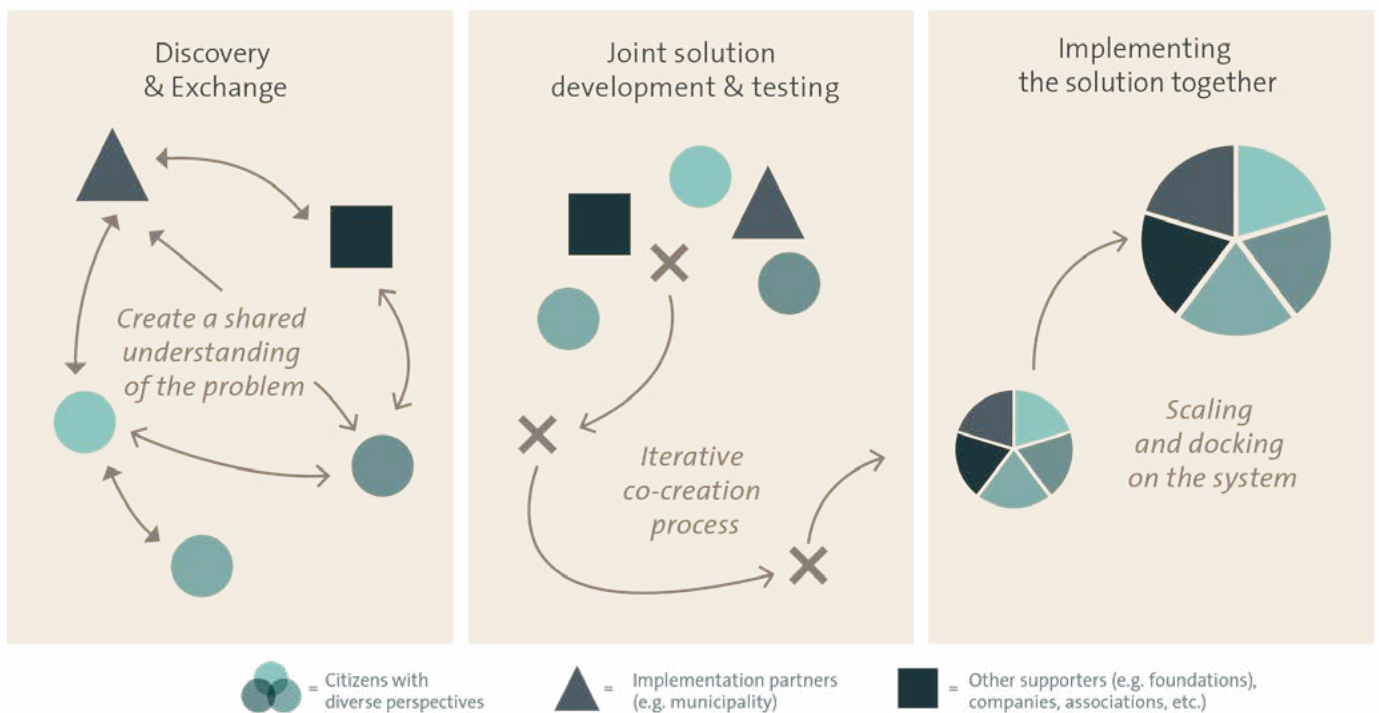


Figure 11: Impact pathway A: Emergence of new cross-sectoral initiatives

B. AMPLIFICATION OF EXISTING INITIATIVES

UpdateDeutschland enabled existing initiatives to network with individuals and institutions from the public and private sectors. Access to these networks allowed existing initiatives to amplify the impact of their solution.

One example is the initiative Mitwirk-O-Mat. In the summer of 2020, citizens developed a first version of the Mitwirk-O-Mat in the city of Lüneburg. With this project, they wanted to make visible *"that there is a great diversity of civic engagement and you can participate everywhere!"* Similar to the Wahl-O-Mat (Election-O-Mat, a popular tool for citizens to identify the party that matches their political convictions before elections in Germany), users answer a series of questions and, based on their answers, receive civic engagement offers in their area.

The city of Gütersloh and the Bertelsmann Foundation had submitted the following challenge together: *"How can we get more young people involved in civic engagement?"* Already during a networking session in the digital 48h Sprint, the Mitwirk-O-Mat, the city and the foundation came together. Through a dialogue between the three parties, it soon turned out that the Mitwirk-O-Mat could be a suitable complementary solution for Gütersloh:

The approach to the solution exists in the form of a prototype, but the requirements for the solution are not yet clear because of different necessities in the individual municipalities. During the implementation program, the team therefore looked at how the Mitwirk-O-Mat could be adapted to the needs of the municipality and the local initiative and volunteering landscape. The initiative realized:

This will not be exactly the same process as in Lüneburg. We want to further develop the Mitwirk-O-Mat.

The municipal representative made valuable contributions to the further professionalization of the solution approach.

During the 48h Sprint, an experienced mentor supported the team behind Mitwirk-O-Mat. Her expertise from several previous hackathons (including #WirVsVirus) helped the team:

She has been very supportive in making sure we get the project wrapped up by Sunday evening.

I liked this tool very much from the beginning!

During the joint project work, the team had to bridge different working realities and logics. A good division of labor within the team and an open mindset balanced the collaboration. At the same time, the already existing prototype reduced uncertainty for the public administration. Being able to showcase initial successes can help the initiatives to win over public administrations' commitment to collaborate.

In the Mitwirk-O-Mat team, the public administration, a foundation and citizen innovators worked side by side:

It's really exciting how this project group emerged. And it's nice how competences complement each other.



The municipal administration brought in profound knowledge about and experience with the local voluntary work landscape. At the same time, the municipal representative also took on operational tasks: She activated local associations and organizations. Public administrations can also support existing initiatives by taking on coordinating tasks.

The competences of the initiative and the administration were complemented by a representative of the Bertelsmann Foundation, responsible for the Engagierte Stadt program (in English "engaged city program"). The aim of the program is to build a learning network between German municipalities to exchange experiences about voluntary work. Currently, 100 cities and municipalities cooperate in the program. Through cooperation, the initiative was still able to establish and expand important networks within the framework of UpdateDeutschland, which are particularly valuable for scaling the solution. Operational foundations can provide important support in the Open Social Innovation process. Mitwirk-O-Mat showed that support from foundations can go beyond financial resources. By providing advice, networking opportunities and established information channels, foundations can support civil society initiatives enormously.

In addition to Mitwirk-O-Mat, other established initiatives were able to gain supporters from public administrations or foundations to amplify their projects. In all of them, the convergence of different competences and an open mindset towards the innovation process played an important role. For instance, a cooperation was established between the City of Heidelberg and the initiative Silberdraht (in English "silver wire"), which was also supported by the Körber Foundation. Silberdraht is a telephone service for senior citizens that provides digital information on local offers, events and services. Similar to the Mitwirk-O-Mat, the service benefits from the deep understanding of local services that municipal representatives contribute.

What I definitely take away from the project is the multi-professional cooperation and the openness

Within UpdateDeutschland, the initiative from Lüneburg gained new insights into the potential impact of the Mitwirk-O-Mat through cooperation with the city of Gütersloh and the Bertelsmann Foundation and was encouraged to professionalize its solution. One of the initiators of the Mitwirk-O-Mat in Lüneburg saw this as a *"great change of mind"* for the initiative.

The Open Social Innovation format created unique teams that probably would not have come together without UpdateDeutschland.

Although the teams had to continuously bridge the diverging work realities of the members, they were able to unite a broad spectrum of competences.

UpdateDeutschland amplified initiatives to further develop the solution and to increase the potential impact by carefully adapting it to the requirements of public administrations.

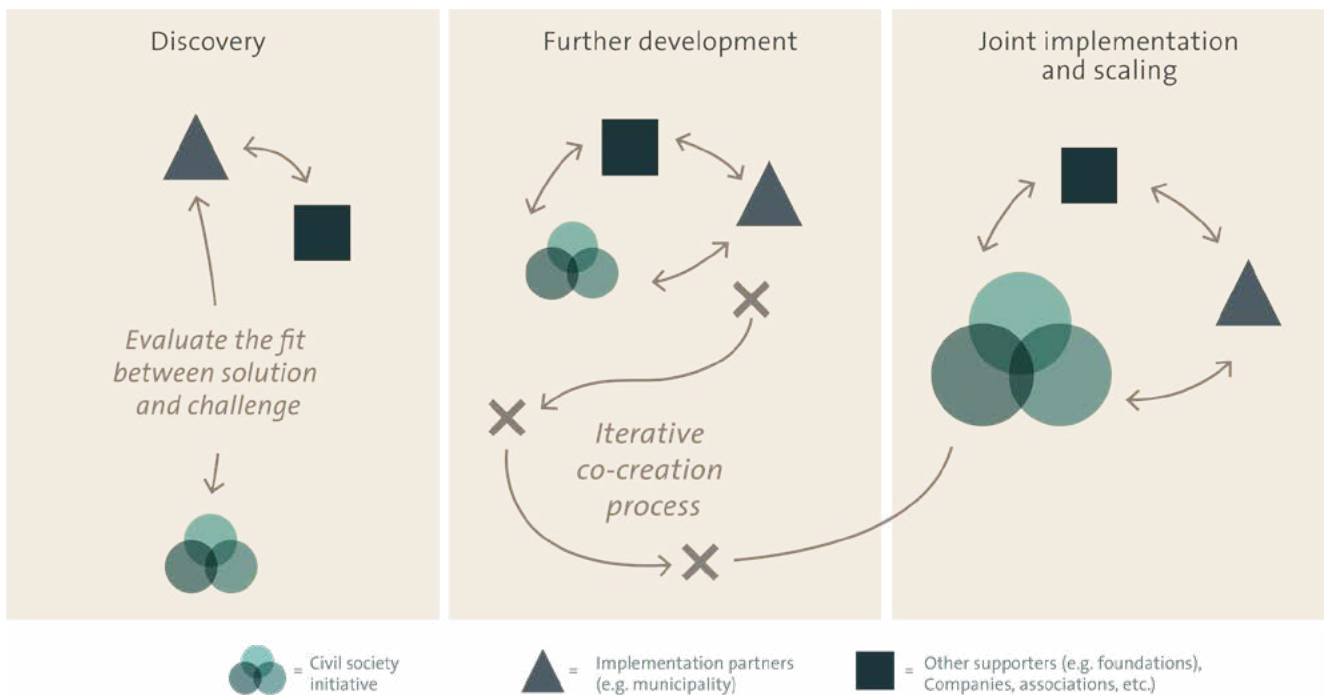


Figure 12: Impact pathway B: Amplification of existing initiatives



C. FORGING ALLIANCES BETWEEN INITIATIVES

UpdateDeutschland forged new alliances between initiatives by networking and promoting cooperation. Civil society initiatives recognized that together they can create more awareness for their concerns. This made it easier for them to convince other stakeholders, such as public administrations, businesses or scientific institutions, of the concerns' relevance and encourage them to develop or support solutions.

Within UpdateDeutschland, for example, the alliance UpdateAlter, (in English "UpdateAge") emerged. UpdateAlter deals with social participation in old age and wants to change society's perception of ageing and the elderly. Two of the initiators, SilberFILM and

KULTURISTENHOCH2, had already recognized the need for an alliance to draw more attention to the topic of ageing in society before UpdateDeutschland: *"There are alliances for care and for health, but with the social life of older people and the questions: 'How do we age? What do we need to foster social participation?', there is nothing."*

To find possible alliance partners, the initiatives used the virtual rooms provided by UpdateDeutschland: *"I got to know the initiative KULTUR-ZEIT-los through one room. In another room, I got to know the initiative humaQ."* By networking and mobilizing different initiatives over the weekend, it was possible to bring together existing initiatives from all over Germany. In this way, nine initiatives came together and decided to collaborate on challenges of age discrimination and foster social cohesion:

It was such a cool atmosphere and then we said: Yes! Let's form an alliance here and now.

However, what exactly the commitment of the alliance and the cooperation should look like was still unclear at that time.

Despite all the uncertainties, the abstract common goal had a lasting positive effect on the alliance between the initiatives: *"Everyone realized that what we were doing was valuable. The fact that we simply dared to do it was the spirit that can still be felt today."*

During the implementation program, the alliance developed a purely digital social dialogue and created a new, nationwide offer with it.

The format invites local initiatives, experts, citizens and municipalities at city level to develop project ideas for their respective cities: *"Everyone can have their say here - we meet as equals in these dialogues."* The results will be published on the alliance's website and sent to the local authorities as a suggestion.

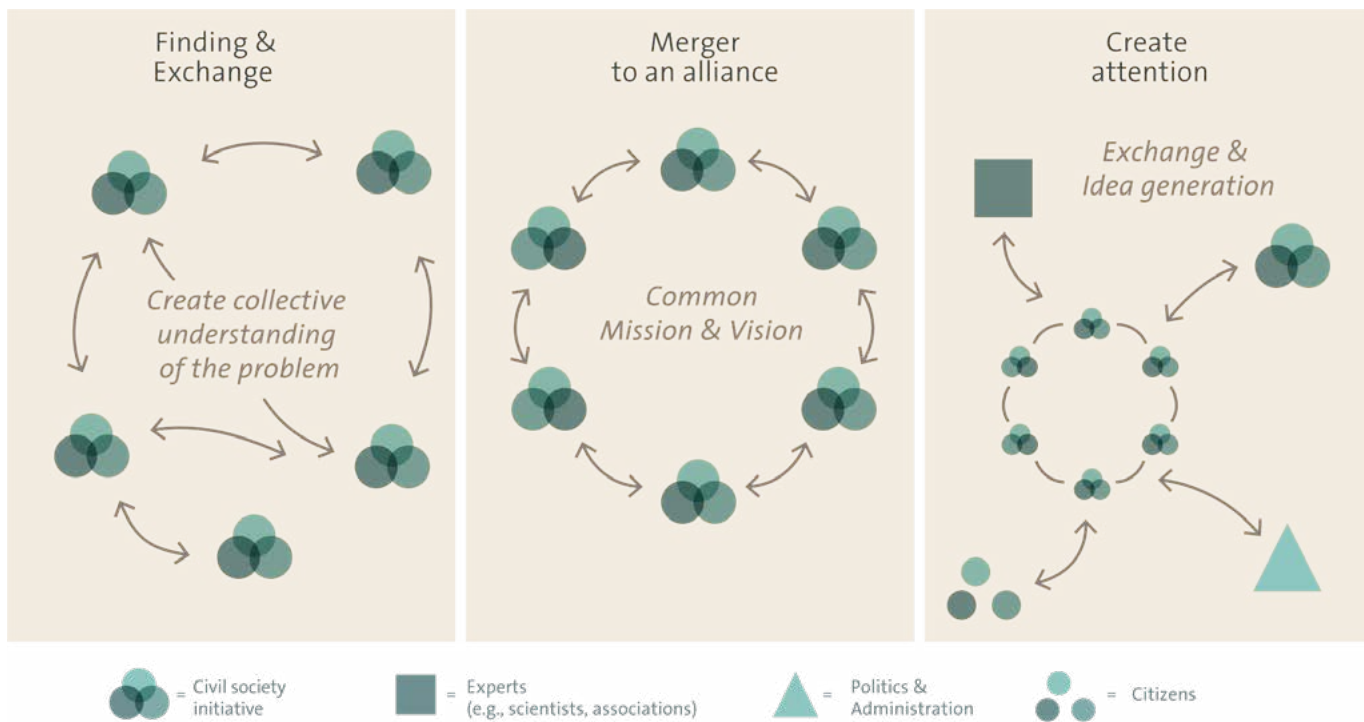


Figure 13: Impact pathway C: Alliance building through initiatives

We have created a prototype with that workshop. But we also created a guideline so that other initiatives can use our prototype as well.

Politicians also support the alliance:

We have received a greeting from Dorothee Bär [former Federal Government Commissioner for Digitalization] in which she speaks out in favor of this.

So far, the UpdateAlter alliance has invited people to the social dialogue in Nuremberg, Hamburg and Wiesbaden. The cities were chosen strategically: All three cities are home to one of the alliance's initiatives. This ensures that there is a network with relevant contact persons on-site. The UpdateAlter initiators placed particular emphasis on activating older people and working together with old people's homes or assisted living facilities. At the same time, it is important to have a relationship with the local public administration so as to involve them as directly as possible. In this way,

the responsible person from the administration engages in the idea generating process and can possibly foster the idea implementation later on: *"We make sure that we always dock locally with a functionary's office during the social dialogues."*

Many of the initiatives involved in UpdateAlter received an engagement stipend that allowed them to further invest time in the alliance. UpdateAlter as an alliance itself also received a grant that allowed one person to work full time on the development and implementation of the social dialogues. The end of the implementation program now poses some challenges for the alliance:

We need funding for the continuation so that we can further offer our workshop in as many cities as possible. So far, we have received five more requests.

In addition to the UpdateAlter initiative, other alliances were formed in Update-Deutschland. Alike UpdateAlter, they join forces to address societal problems.

For example, the FaktenAllianz (in English "FactsAlliance") is working against misinformation, the INÖG (Public Health Innovation Network)⁶ for modernization in the health care system and the Initiative GemEinsamkeit (in English "Initiative Togetherness") against loneliness. The alliances face similar challenges and opportunities, but they differ in their strategic orientation. Unlike UpdateAlter, Initiative GemEinsamkeit, for example, positions itself as a national voice on loneliness. The alliance aggregates many experts, institutions and initiatives, who developed a common vision for Initiative GemEinsamkeit during UpdateDeutschland. By bundling the heterogeneous landscape of initiatives into one alliance, it is easier for public representatives to find the right contact person.

UpdateDeutschland offered civil society organizations the opportunity and space to form alliances. Through exchange with citizens, experts and representatives from politics and public administration, alliances raise awareness for a specific problem and share the newly gained understanding of the problem. The individual initiatives benefit from the access to a larger network and, above all, an amplified voice. In this way, they can make themselves heard as an alliance better than they could individually.

D. STRENGTHENING LOCAL ECOSYSTEMS

As part of UpdateDeutschland, a wide variety of people and stakeholders from the same geographic region came together. Thereby, local ecosystems were formed or consolidated at the level of cities, districts and federal states. Various organizations and stakeholders such as state governments, foundations or associations were able to intensify their cooperation to work together on regional issues.

One of the ecosystems benefiting from UpdateDeutschland was Hamburg. Key players were the City of Hamburg, the Hamburg Social Entrepreneurship Netzwerk Deutschland e.V. (SEND) (in English: "Social Entrepreneurship Network Germany"), the Holistic Foundation and initiatives from Hamburg's civil society. The three institutions (city, SEND and Holistic foundation) were already working together on a new innovation strategy for Hamburg before UpdateDeutschland started.

When the organizers approached the City of Hamburg to get them involved in UpdateDeutschland, the head of office of the BWI (Authority for Economy and Innovation in English), saw the opportunity to *"really implement part of our innovation strategy."*

The idea behind UpdateDeutschland fitted into Hamburg's current innovation strategy: *"We want to be bold, we want to think big and we need a strong commitment."* Together with the local partners (SEND and Holistic Foundation), the city decided to participate in UpdateDeutschland. Even before UpdateDeutschland started, the administration mobilized a budget of 500,000 Euros for UpdateDeutschland. This was done, contrary to the usual procedure in public administrations, prior to clarification of the specific expectations of the process and eligibility criteria.

The City of Hamburg submitted 16 challenges to UpdateDeutschland. Immediately after the 48h Sprint, however, no suitable solutions were

found for any of these challenges. Nonetheless, those involved believed in the process behind UpdateDeutschland to offer opportunities for unconventional and experimental approaches to societal challenges. The City of Hamburg decided to stay involved and to discuss with the organizers and partners: *"How can we make the best of it?"* A momentum of its own developed from this: *"We started to go our own 'Hamburg way'"*. They quickly realized that the existing funding opportunities were insufficient for the planned project: *"The existing funding programs were not suitable for the format. We need to build something of our own."* In a very short time, the public administration, together with the Investitions- und Förderbank (IFB, in English "investment and development bank"), set up a new [funding program](#).



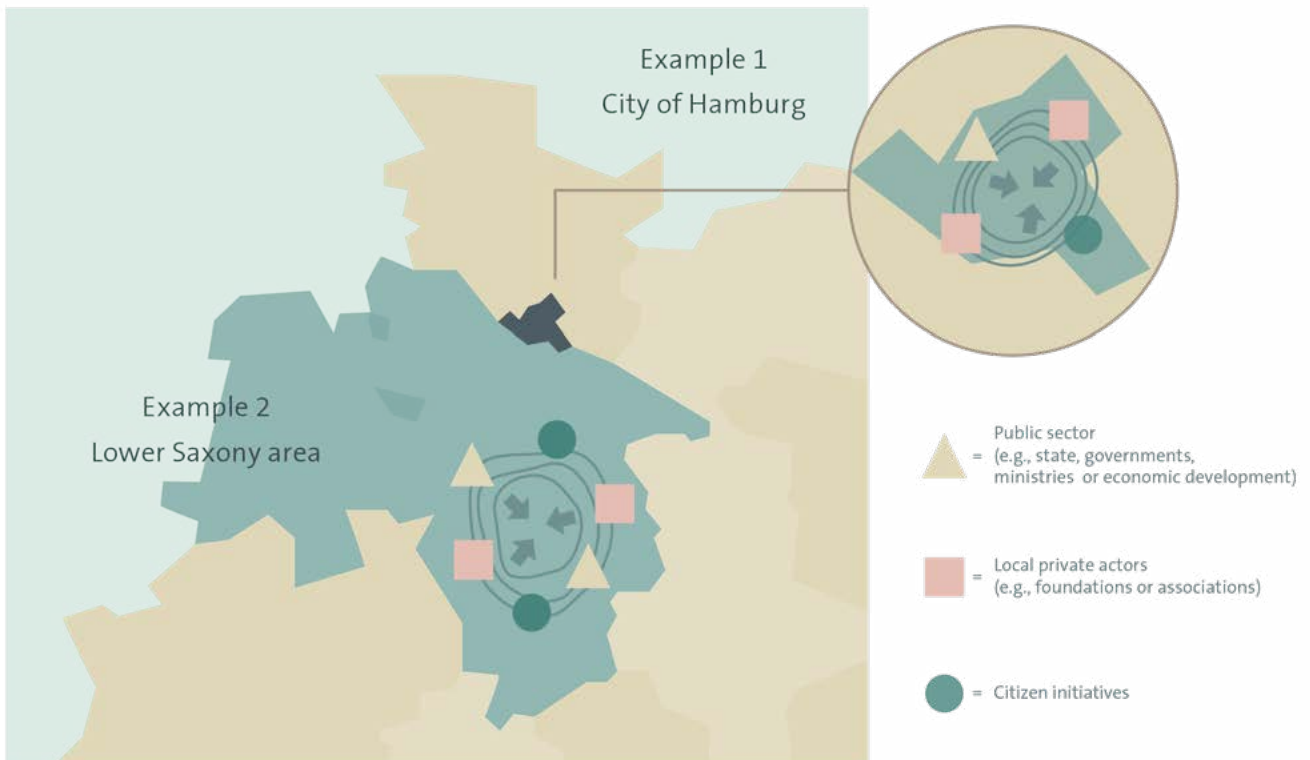


Figure 14:
Impact pathway D: Strengthening local ecosystems

The City of Hamburg does not walk this walk on its own: *"With our partners, who are very supportive, we were certain: Something will come out of it."*

In weekly exchanges, the partners developed a joint strategy together with the city to further strengthen the Hamburg ecosystem. The cooperation enabled a direct exchange between initiatives, the network of the two organizations and the Hamburg administration. The administration gained access to practical knowledge about the societal challenges and needs in Hamburg.

We can still think about it, but they know, because they come from the network and know the people.

The Hamburg administration, together with the IFB and with the support of SEND as well as the Holistic Foundation, developed selection criteria for the newly established fund: *"It was also a novelty for us to staff the decision-making committee with external partners."* From 75 applications, the committee selected 11 initiatives, each of which was funded with up to 50,000 Euros.

The funding guideline was not only a success in the short term, but also remains in place for the funding of future projects - that would not have been feasible in this way before. Although there were existing cooperations between the city and the various partners in Hamburg, it is clear that UpdateDeutschland ...

... brought a lot of speed, a lot of momentum,

The process offered us an opportunity to actually implement part of our new innovation strategy and also the chance to raise awareness for the innovation strategy.

The Hamburg example shows that Open Social Innovation processes can have a lasting impact by strengthening the local ecosystem. Beyond Hamburg, similar ecosystems emerged and grew stronger.

In Lower Saxony, a local partner had already made positive experiences with

#WirVsVirus in the previous year. Inspired by this experience, the local network, consisting of members from the administration, state initiatives and private sector incubators, decided to offer information events on UpdateDeutschland before the 48-hour Sprint. Together they presented the program to potentially interested parties, called for participation in the program and the submission of challenges and offered support as a regional implementation partner. Over the course of the 48h Sprint and the subsequent implementation program, the partners continued to network internally and offered online formats to connect local initiatives and partners. Such ecosystems also emerged in other regions, such as North Rhine-Westphalia, Baden-Wuerttemberg or the city of Munich.

UpdateDeutschland offered local ecosystems an opportunity for collaboration and learning moments outside the usual administrative structures. This created impact that went far beyond short-term direct funding and support for social initiatives.

CHAPTER 4

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS

Public administrations are valuable partners for developing and disseminating innovative solutions for societal challenges. However, public administrations sometimes find it difficult to engage effectively in this process. On the one hand, they are often reluctant to support novel solutions, especially when the solution's impact is highly unpredictable. In addition, public administrations might lack the flexibility required when working with citizen innovators. On the other hand, citizen innovators are often skeptical of public administrations' effectiveness in innovation processes. But what if both the public administration and citizens were involved in the innovation process from the beginning?

UpdateDeutschland mobilized and invited the public administration to contribute to tackling societal challenges early on. In autumn 2020, some representatives of public administration were involved in the UpdateDeutschland planning process. Already two months before the start of the Open Social Innovation initiative, the first public administration representatives supported the format.

ROLES OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN OPEN SOCIAL INNOVATION

During the 48h Sprint and the subsequent implementation program, the public administrations took over many roles (simultaneously):

Ambassador

Many public representatives from municipalities, states and the federal government announced their participation in UpdateDeutschland before the start, which aided in mobilizing participants. For instance, the state of Schleswig Holstein posted on 25th February 2021 on Twitter and LinkedIn: *"With smart ideas into the future: Schleswig Holstein joins UpdateDeutschland."*

Challenge Submitter

213 challenges (approximately 37% of the total number of submitted challenges) came from the public administration. Of those, 110 challenges (52%) came from municipalities, 64 challenges (30%) from states and 28 challenges (13%) from federal ministries and a further 11 challenges (5%) from other public administration stakeholders.

Sparring partner

The role of the challenge submitter was particularly beneficial in the Open Social Innovation process when

challenge submitters from public administration could help the teams to further sharpen their understanding about the challenge (see impact pathway A in previous chapter). In sparring or feedback sessions, the understanding of the problem and a possible solution grew on both sides.

Networker

Participants from the public administration connected civil society initiatives with other persons and institutions of relevance to the innovation. For example, the initiatives established contact to relevant authorities, offices and representatives from the municipality or region.

Expert

Representatives from the public administrations have relevant expertise that is helpful for some teams in developing their solution. The expertise ranges from knowledge about regulations to knowledge about local boundary conditions or responsibilities within the local authorities. One administrative representative described her role as follows: *"Apart from my challenge, there were a lot of questions I could answer [...] that was also a nice experience."*

Implementation partner

Some public administrations, especially municipalities, implemented the solution and accompanied a solution's piloting phase. They became the first customers of the project and thus helped the teams learn more about their solution (and the problem). In some cases, such partners-

hips also served as the first success stories for the citizen innovators. For example, the Federal Chancellery implemented a pilot project for an intelligent search engine together with the open social innovation initiative [CoVerified](#).

Supporter

Public administrations sometimes supported initiatives either with pro bono resources or financial resources. One form of pro bono resources was the offer of consultation hours with in-house lawyers or specialists. In some cases, initiatives could be supported financially with funds from existing funding schemes.

Moderator

Representatives from the administrations were involved in the planning at an early stage and independently moderated the regional UpdateDeutschland events. For example, they conducted the regional format UpdateNRW (Update North-Rhine Westphalia), moderated breakout sessions and thus transferred the idea of UpdateDeutschland to the state level.

As shown above, public administrations can engage in Open Social Innovation processes in a variety of roles and develop solutions together with civil society in the public interest. Public administration is a valuable partner in the development and implementation of solutions in their mandate (e.g., administrative services), but can also support civil society initiatives through networking and expertise (see also the first [Learning Report](#)).

BENEFITS FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The benefits of Open Social Innovation processes for public administration are manifold and go beyond finding solutions. Many participants from public administration expected finding solutions for their submitted challenges. Consequently, many of the participants from the sector initially limited the expected outcome of Open Social Innovation to solution-finding. Some of them succeeded, but for others, the participants showed no interest in developing a solution for the issued challenge. This sometimes led to disappointment for public administrations. In some cases, it also led to the

realization that their submitted challenge did not fit the Open Social Innovation format. For others, formulating a challenge started an important reflection process. In the following, we present a broader understanding of benefits.

Gaining new perspectives

Through the insights into interdisciplinary projects, representatives of public administration could get exposed to new ideas. The different backgrounds of the citizens involved in Open Social Innovation may inspire public administrations.



Shaping the agenda for innovation

By participating in Open Social Innovation, public administrations get a better understanding of how to modernize certain administrative processes to improve their *"social innovation"* capacities. Open Social Innovation exposes weaknesses in existing policies and processes. Public administrations can also use this as an opportunity to rethink their innovation agenda.

Getting to know new ways of working

Civil society innovators often work in an agile way and in iterative Sprints. They rapidly develop prototypes, which demonstrate potential for improvement and results early on. Public administrations can learn from this co-creation process for their own everyday work.

Getting to know a culture of openness

Representatives from public administrations were able to immerse in a different culture by participating in Open Social Innovation. This culture is characterized by openness, working non-hierarchically and the acceptance of mistakes. This stands in stark contrast to the traditionally formal and hierarchical culture in public administrations.

Networking with each other

Public administrations get to know other public administrations across administrative levels. Municipalities, states and ministries are given the opportunity to engage in an exchange at eye level.

Public administrations can learn from and with each other and share best practices and experiences. Open Social Innovation processes can thus complement other forms of networking in the public sector.

Signaling willingness to innovate

Participation in innovative formats signals openness and willingness to change to employees and citizens. Nevertheless, it is necessary that politicians and public administrations 'walk the talk' and do not instrumentalize their engagement for PR purposes only (see Conclusion Learning Report 1.0).

HURDLES FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The openness of the Open Social Innovation process and the systemic conditions in which public administrations operate pose various hurdles for their representatives. In the following, we describe some of these hurdles and show how administrations taking part in UpdateDeutschland have dealt with them.

Scarce resources

Public administrations plan their budgets long term and in fixed cycles. This makes it difficult for them to mobilize financial resources ad hoc for Open Social Innovation. One administrative employee described: *"Well, I didn't have any resources of my own for this, so I'll put a strain on my own budget first."*

Even if the public administration was willing to support and promote a solution, in some cases, there were simply no funds available. An administrative employee described why a concrete cooperation between his municipality and an initiative did not emerge:

That would have been very expensive. The costs are in a range that is not affordable for most municipalities.

Human resources are also limited

and leave little room for being spontaneous. One mayor expressed: *"The employees are of course already very busy with all the everyday tasks and do not have the resources to do much extra work on top."*

In some cases, the public administrations that participated in the UpdateDeutschland process found solutions to this hurdle. In order to mobilize financial resources, they often turned to ministries at the federal and state level, where grants were approved for a limited period of time. In response to staff shortages, existing projects were put on hold during UpdateDeutschland or administrative staff worked overtime.

Uncertainties

Representatives of the public administration were confronted with the uncertainty of how existing regulations must be interpreted in the context of Open Social Innovation processes and how the permissible scope of action is defined. Uncertainties were especially precarious with regard to procurement guidelines because they were not designed for an open-ended process. One administrative employee problematized: *"Although a hackathon has a certain dynamic, where I want to interactively develop creative ideas, it is difficult to prepare such ideas for a public tender."*

The main concern here is the fear of unlawful preferential treatment: *"There are always questions: Who do you talk to, who don't you talk to?"*

In response to this hurdle, the City of Hamburg, for instance, developed a new funding guideline.

This funding guideline is more flexible:

In this way, smaller projects and initiatives that develop promising solutions to societal challenges and have a positive impact on the innovative capacity of Hamburg and its economy can be supported at an early stage.

The UpdateDeutschland organizers also supported public administrations in clarifying the arising uncertainties. For example, a workshop with experts was offered to explain how the existing regulations can be applied within the framework of UpdateDeutschland. In some cases, the legal framework allows more flexibility than most would assume.

Digital infrastructure

Another hurdle was the insufficient and partly missing digital infrastructure. UpdateDeutschland used various digital applications and tools. For data protection reasons, many of these applications, such as the video conferencing tool Zoom, could not be used on the work computer of public administration representatives. This complicated participation. Many representatives found a pragmatic, but nevertheless suboptimal solution and resorted to their private technical equipment.

Planning difficulties

Lack of experience of participating in open-ended processes made it difficult for many public administrators to prepare themselves. The public administrations underestimated the proactive workload that participation in UpdateDeutschland required. For example, some administrations submitted a large number of challenges and consequently were un-

able to manage them during the 48h Sprint as human resources were very limited. The organizers of Update-Germany sought to mitigate this through expectation management (see chapter 5) by sharing experiences and best practices.

Internal support

Often, administrative staff who wanted to promote innovations had difficulties promoting the topic internally or getting the necessary support for participation. Therefore, the participation of the public administration was largely dependent on the willingness of senior administrative staff to innovate: *"You also need a corresponding position to be able to do this."* Those without a higher position needed persuasiveness and stamina to convince their superiors to participate.

Participation in UpdateDeutschland enabled administrations to better understand what they can do to make public administration fit for opening up their innovation processes. At the same time, many (structural) challenges certainly remain.

CHAPTER 5 DESIGN CHOICES

The ability to implement and coordinate Open Social Innovation formats on the scale and complexity of UpdateDeutschland heavily depends on early decisions regarding the design of processes, structures and support services. Although the organizers of UpdateDeutschland drew on the experiences and lessons learned from the previous format #WirVsVirus, a "copy-and-paste" approach is not feasible. Rather, it is important that organizers adapt the processes, structures and support services to the objectives and specifics of each format.

In the following, we highlight four selected organizational challenges that are central to the design of Open Social Innovation formats. There is no right or wrong answer to these organizational challenges. Addressing them is a process of weighing up different options, which differs for every Open Social Innovation format. Figure 15 illustrates the four challenges we face in terms of design decisions.



Figure 15:
Four design choices in Open Social Innovation



HOW TO FACILITATE DIVERSE PARTICIPATION?

UpdateDeutschland aimed for a high diversity of participants and tried to "reach as many people with different perspectives as possible." Throughout the Open Social Innovation process, design choices led to unintended effects that affected the participation of specific societal groups.

Measures to promote participation

The inclusion of underrepresented or marginalized social groups in social innovation processes requires targeted mobilization. The UpdateDeutschland organizers tried to reach underrepresented groups early on, before the start of the program.

One of the ways they did this was by promoting UpdateDeutschland at events that would appeal to people outside the usual "*tech scene*." For example, there was a one-hour Instagram Live conversation between ProjectTogether and TV journalist Jenke von Wilmsdorff. Various ambassadors also promoted UpdateDeutschland in their networks (see chapter 1). How citizens are addressed directly influences who feels addressed. Against this background, the organizers avoided a technical wording like "hackathon" when addressing the public and instead focused on the term "48-hour Sprint." There were also efforts to make the framework of the 48h Sprint more accessible.

For example, [the community events](#) were accompanied by a sign language interpreter. In addition, during the 48h Sprint, an awareness team offered the opportunity to report and talk about discriminatory experiences. This was to create a safe space for affected participants.

Measures impeding participation

In some cases, however, design decisions also lead to ineffective mobilization processes for some groups. This is especially true when compromises must be made that do not suit every participant or social group equally. For example, while avoidance of the term "hackathon" may make the project more accessible to some participants, it may be less appealing to tech-savvy developers and programmers. The same applies to the automated assignment of the participants to teams at the beginning of the 48h Sprint weekend. This measure aimed to assist participants who would otherwise have had difficulties finding a team on their own. However, many of the automatically assigned teams did not even start because participants did not show up or were already looking for a new team. This, in turn, made the others feel

insecure and made team forming more difficult. Another example of unintended effects is the choice of a digital online format. While on the one hand, a large number of participants from all over Germany was able to participate (see Chapter 2, Figure 6), on the other hand, many participants experienced difficulties with the use of digital tools. Interviewees across all sectors told us that they faced enormous challenges:

I was completely overwhelmed with Slack!

Diverse mobilization in the population is the basis for any Open Social Innovation format. It is therefore important to target marginalized and hard-to-reach groups. At the same time, it makes sense to create an awareness that design decisions can have unintended effects that make it difficult for some to participate.

HOW TO OFFER SUPPORT?

Another key issue in the organization of Open Social Innovation is the provision of support and resources. With the inclusion of 330 initiatives in the implementation program, the organizers of UpdateDeutschland faced the challenge of distributing the available resources appropriately among the large number of participants (see Chapter 2: Support Services in the Implementation Program for an overview). Not every initiative could be supported to the same extent, both in terms of community management and in view of the limited availability of resources.

Offers for all

Some of the support services were made accessible to the whole community. This included the community exchange meetings, the innovation academy, the expert feedback or the offers of the ProjectTogether resource platform. The broad distribution of support offers to a variety of initiatives led to different effects in the community. Some initiatives missed competitive aspects and wished for a selection mechanism by a jury. However, the majority of the initiatives were satisfied:

I used nearly all of the support offers. Normally, you would have to pay a lot of money for such workshops or for a conversation with a marketing expert. That would be unaffordable for me. That's why I try to take advantage of as many offers as possible.

Support services and resources for the whole community thus provided a common structural framework for staying involved after the 48h Sprint weekend.

One interviewee reported:

"You need ProjectTogether, they offer a super broad range of services, so that you can stick with the idea. For projects that face difficulties, this is an important offer, because without these spaces where people continue to meet, they don't continue to work on their projects."

Individual support

Some of the support offers were limited and could not be made available to the whole community. These include the engagement stipends. Considering the large number of people involved in UpdateDeutschland, the funded individuals only made up a small share of the community. However, for those individuals, stipends were essential for the success of their projects:

Project continuation would be very difficult without them.

For teams that did not receive financial support from UpdateDeutschland, on the other hand, the rejection for a stipend often led to disappointment: *"We would have desperately needed a stipend because we are at a point where things are really starting to take off."* In addition to the engagement stipends, the organizers linked selected initiatives with possible partners for implementation or financing. Either in the form of 1-to-1 networking or in small groups, such as digital events with foundations, where initiatives could pitch their ideas. Based on experts' feedback, status updates requested by organizers and organizers' impressions, it was decided which initiatives were mature enough to be introduced to external partners. Those initiatives that were convincing during the program received more targeted support than others. One organizer described these two forms of support as a two-tier model:

We have a two-tier program. One tier which works well for the whole community and where everyone gets added value. But we also have small speedboats that are intensively supported.

Given limited resources and support, Open Social Innovation requires a balancing act between support for the whole community and individual support. Limited individual support for curated teams inevitably leads to inequalities. These inequalities are not per se illegitimate, but in most cases part of the innovation process (e.g., initiatives are at different stages of development or show different levels of motivation to continue). Organizers can react to this by trying to manage the expectations of the community in the best possible way.

HOW TO MANAGE DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS?

We observed different expectations among the participants of Update-Germany. These expectations were mainly reflected in the participants' demands and wishes related to UpdateDeutschland and its organizers. The expectations ranged from networking with other municipalities or initiatives to finding solutions for submitted challenges to creating new partnerships to scale solutions. Some participants found it difficult to clearly understand the intention of UpdateDeutschland and especially the implementation program:

At first, we didn't know exactly what to expect, what we would have to do ourselves or what we would be allowed to do ourselves, what would be provided?

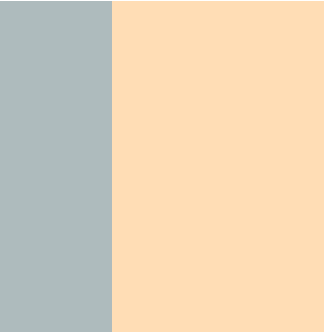
In view of these different expectations of UpdateDeutschland, there is no one modus operandi that suits all participants. While organizers can manage the expectations of the program through clear communication, not every part of the program is suitable for every participant; partly because of the different speeds at which citizen innovators develop solutions. In the case of UpdateDeutschland, the organizers relied on guidance

through the process, on the one hand, and offered a diverse catalogue from which the participants could pull offers whenever needed, on the other.

Guidance

For some of the participants in UpdateDeutschland, it was particularly important to receive guidance on how to use and participate in the program. Especially for those participants who had little experience with Open Social Innovation, guidance was important to make the best use of the implementation program and to engage effectively in the Open Social Innovation process. Accordingly, the organizers offered different types of guidance during the process.

In the 48h Sprint, mentors ensured that every team had an experienced contact person solely concerned with guiding the team through the Open Social Innovation process. For people from the public administration, for example, the organizers offered "check-ins," where representatives from the public administration had the opportunity to ask questions, report on their experiences and thus learn about the potential of Open Social Innovation through the sharing of best-practice examples.



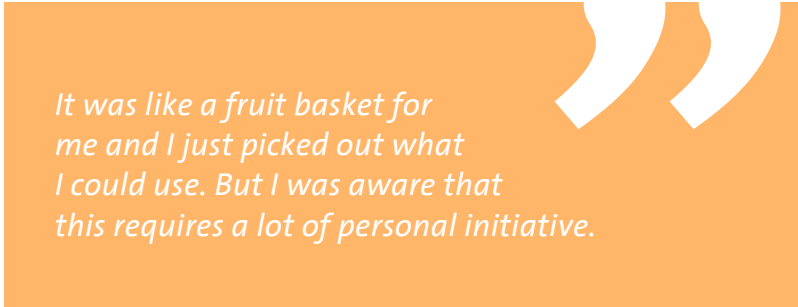
Thereby, public administrators were able to see how others were using the program and align their expectations accordingly. As the implementation program progressed, the organizers introduced important milestones, such as a community call at the halfway point of the implementation program, which provided guidance to the whole community.

Catalogue

Other participants saw UpdateDeutschland more like a catalogue from which they could choose what their initiative needed. The catalogue contained individual modular offers to be chosen on demand. Initiatives that were at an earlier stage of the project thus made use of other offers than those initiatives with more developed solutions.


Participants who already had experience with Open Social Innovation formats, such as #WirVsVirus, found it easier to use the offers in UpdateDeutschland.

Designing Open Social Innovation like an open catalogue is especially helpful for those participants who are familiar with the format or know what they need for their individual project progress. One participant described it like this:



It was like a fruit basket for me and I just picked out what I could use. But I was aware that this requires a lot of personal initiative.

In order to meet the different expectations, a mix of different program components can be offered: For one, program components that serve as an orientation guide for the participants along the process; moreover, freely available components that the participants can tap in according to their needs.



HOW TO BRIDGE DIFFERENT WORLDS?

UpdateDeutschland brings municipalities and cities as well as state and federal ministries together with civil society initiatives. These two groups operate in very diverging working realities and act according to different organizing logics: Concretely, there is the rather bureaucratic world of public administration which is structured by clear regulations (for example, fixed budget cycles and tenders).

In contrast, there is the more dynamic way of working of early-stage civil society initiatives. These initiatives often work with agile methods, Sprints and fast testing loops to advance their projects. To engage in collective innovation processes with both worlds, it is necessary that organizers raise people's awareness to the differences between the two worlds, while creating spaces that enable the two worlds to meet.

Raising Awareness

In order to prepare initiatives and public administration for cooperation with civil society and to make them aware of the differences, there were formats for civil society initiatives or for public administration only.

During a community exchange in these formats, initiatives could learn what the internal public administrative structures and processes look like (e.g., the longer planning cycles, the need for accuracy and fair processes, the budgeting processes), among other.

When you work in administration, speed is really a huge challenge because certain processes run slowly. Start-ups, for example, are incredibly fast and error-friendly. That's completely different in administration.

For the public administration, the organizers set up "public administration check-ins" in which they shared best practice examples of cooperation with civil society initiatives. Open questions were answered as well.

Shared spaces

The encounter and exchange between public administration and initiatives can create a better understanding for each other on both sides. Already during the 48h Sprint, the challenge submitters were able to introduce themselves to the initiatives and vice versa. During the implementation program, regional formats in particular offered the opportunity to get to know each other and exchange ideas. In addition, the organizers served as mediators for both sides throughout the entire process. The most important things were "openness" and the "willingness to learn." The exchange between the two worlds triggered a learning process on both sides. One initiative reported:

My developers, of course, would love to have twenty feedback loops until the final product is ready. But you can't do that with a public administration. So, I collected a lot of things, consolidated them and then checked them off in one or two meetings with our partners from the public administration.

On the part of the public administration, the exchange encouraged reflection on internal processes. This reflection exposed rigid processes and allowed for redesigning them to better fit into an open format such as Open Social Innovation. An administrative staff member recounted:

We used the impulse and asked ourselves: 'What should one consider when tendering?' Because I noticed how difficult it was to prepare such a scope of services for a public tender, which basically almost expects me to know perfectly what to tender for.

Both the awareness and the shared spaces helped bridging the different worlds of public administration and civil society initiatives. Only through mutual understanding, Open Social Innovation can have a long-term impact.

CHAPTER 6

OUTLOOK: TRANSFORMATION POTENTIAL OF OPEN SOCIAL INNOVATION

#WirVsVirus and UpdateDeutschland demonstrated the potential of Open Social Innovation formats. As a response to crises, #WirVsVirus opened a window of opportunity for testing collective social innovation approaches. In #WirVsVirus, politicians and other stakeholders gained insight into the innovative forces of citizens and their commitment, competence and willingness to tackle societal challenges. UpdateDeutschland built on this momentum and mobilized a diversity of stakeholders (citizens, public administrations, private actors and academics) from all over Germany. UpdateDeutschland would not have been possible without a handful of pioneers from public administration and civil society who believed in the impact of the method.

What do we know about the impact of these two Open Social Innovation experiments? The process allows stakeholders, such as public administrations facing challenges, to connect with initiatives that have an idea for a solution. However, the image of bringing together or "matching" falls short of complexity.

Open Social Innovation aids the joint identification, tackling and better understanding of societal challenges through regular interaction and open exchange. Citizens can find solutions together with public administrations and other relevant persons and institutions – if both sides bring in the necessary openness, capacities and skills. In some cases, these efforts paid off: Some initiatives have managed to get funding from ministries, acquired support from states or have won prestigious awards. These new forms of public-civil partnerships bear promise.

However, it also became clear that some of the prototypes developed and hours invested do not necessarily lead to immediately tangible outcomes. It is in the nature of open innovation processes that not all innovative efforts and solution ideas will be successful. While failing is frustrating, it is particularly so if the prototype works, but funding dries up and public administrations lack cooperation capacity. Therefore, Open Social Innovation is viewed critically by some. One criticism is that these

processes cannot work because the public administration does not have the competences and resources to go through innovation processes together with external parties. This criticism is partly understandable and in line with our [policy paper](#) published in the first quarter of 2021: Therein, we suggested that Germany's public administration requires structural improvements. The administration must expand its capabilities and modernize itself. At the same time, it makes little sense to push for cooperation between the public administration and civil society only

when sufficient resources are available everywhere (since such reforms may take a while). In fact, we observed that many solutions were supported by innovation- and future-oriented pioneers in the public administration. Due to their commitment and the skillful mobilization of resources, they could effectively support solutions. Finally, it should be noted that the Open Social Innovation method enables learning and exchange between all participants, which can support capacity building. In particular, an exchange as equals and across administrative boundaries was very instructive for many public sector staff members.



Another point of criticism is that Open Social Innovation is about the state shirking its responsibility and outsourcing the solution of social problems to the citizens. The idea of Open Social Innovation presupposes that the public administration has integration and implementation capacities (especially for solutions that fall within the government's mandate).

Building capacity and resources in the public sector while empowering civil society to (co-)develop new solutions to social problems are not mutually exclusive. In this case, to speak of outsourcing would be misleading. In view of the many societal challenges we face, we advocate leaving a simplified sectoral "either-or" thinking behind.

Therefore, as in our first Learning Report, we appeal for a broader understanding of the impact behind the Open Social Innovation method. The potential for impact triggers new things: Learning processes on an individual, organizational and systemic level; radical exposure of the weak points in existing structures and causes for reform; decision-makers from politics gain an understanding how to leverage the citizens' innovative capacities.

**In short:
Open Social Innovation holds
transformation potential.**

One example of how UpdateDeutschland was transformative at the system level is the further development of the funding and financing culture. Hamburg, for example, developed a new funding guideline that allows for funding of open-ended, innovative processes.⁷ This funding guideline departs from the previous "we fund a solution that meets criteria XY" and focuses on the problems according to the principle "*we fund a solution for problem XY,*" instead.

Another aspect is that the initiatives driving the solutions work for Hamburg, but do not necessarily have to come from Hamburg.

This approach deviates from a strictly territorial funding principle of states and allows thinking about scaling societal innovation across federal state borders. UpdateDeutschland has also contributed to the (further) development of regional innovation networks in North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony, Hamburg or in Bavaria. These regions adapted the Open Social Innovation process to their local needs and also launched their own initiatives. The approach of bringing together different stakeholders from various societal sectors and working together on social innovations creates a space in which new things can emerge. And these new things can have an impact beyond UpdateDeutschland.

We are confident that the insights from the two Open Social Innovation formats can be used to further advance social transformation processes and collective cross-sectoral cooperation. The method has the potential to trigger a change in how we think about social innovation policies in Germany.

In October 2021, citizens, municipalities, foundations, academia and social entrepreneurship stakeholders signed a joint position paper calling on the new German government to consider the collective approach of Open Social Innovation for a mission-oriented innovation policy. The coalition agreement indicates that this call has been heard. It states:

State action should become faster and more effective and promote and integrate economic and social innovation processes. We want to establish a new culture of cooperation that is also fueled by the power of civil society.

Whether these lines will be followed by concrete action remains to be seen, but they increase the chance that the Open Social Innovation journey in Germany will open a new chapter.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 In addition to ProjectTogether, N3xtcoder was involved in the planning and implementation of the 48h Sprint.
- 2 A total of 709 challenge proposals were submitted, of which the organizers preselected 581.
- 3 The analysis is based on 3,600 valid postcodes taken from registrations prior to the weekend.
- 4 Municipalities with at least one challenge and commitment to participate in UpdateDeutschland through, for example, a letter of intent.
- 5 Active users = users who have read at least one message on a given day.
- 6 The innovation alliance was already formed during #WirVsVirus and got involved in UpdateDeutschland as well.
- 7 Hamburg was inspired by the Prototype Fund when designing the policy. The Prototype Fund is an innovative tool for promoting open-source projects, which in turn was inspired by a template from the Knight Foundation.

IMPRINT

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