How can cities benefit from and cooperate with grassroot actors

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About GreenDependent...

- Two organizations:
  - a 'proper' NGO (GD Association) and
  - a non-profit research organization (GD Institute)

- Membership in NGO, municipality and research networks

- Fostering discussion and exchange between these groups

- (low-carbon and sustainable lifestyles, behaviour change)

Municipalities and NGOs

- What kind of relationships can we talk about?
  - Peripheral
  - Participative
  - Municipality as Patron / Donor
  - Partnership *(partners with equal standing)*

- Obviously, we would like to aim for and strengthen **partnerships**

  (sounds obvious, not so easy to put in practice)

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Benefits for municipalities (examples)

- Better knowledge of population, its needs, challenges faced, solutions developed, etc.
- More direct link to the local population
- Access to more resources (human, expertise, tools, and material)
- Satisfaction of needs through delegation of tasks (commission tasks, not necessarily with resources) and providing up-to-date, relevant services – research shows it is often more efficient!
- Building of local alliances and thus potential for more development: *connects social with environmental sustainability*

But...

- Very different ways of working…, differences, e.g. in
  - Decision-making processes (incl. distribution of power)
  - Pace of decision-making
  - Project implementation, focus in project implementation
  - Evaluation of results – how achievement of aims is perceived
- Politics can be a problem… (municipalities wanting to build support and voting base)
- Resource dependence between NGOs and municipalities can undermine partnerships
- So: it is challenging to build real, well-working and lasting partnerships

Experience from a Transition Initiative in the UK

Transition initiatives are very much bottom-up!

…cannot wait for politicians to act, we must start change from the community, building on existing needs…

"It was never a desire of mine in the first place, but it has been an amazing learning curve. It's been fascinating. People working in local authorities don't feel very well connected with the public. They feel nervous of them, if not actually paranoid. But at the end of the day, they are ordinary human beings who need our assistance. My experience has been that Transition ideas are more in line with what they are doing than we may realise".

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Example: town of Tatabánya, Hungary

- first town in HU that had a Local Climate Change Strategy
  - the municipality involves the local climate club, a voluntary, informal non-profit organization in its implementation (i.e. delegated tasks)
  - provides some resources
  - employee of municipality involved in the club
- set up voluntary carbon offset system at regional level (called Climate Ticket),
  - local citizens and organizations, companies can calculate their carbon footprint and offset it through supporting
    local development projects

Vauban, Freiburg, Germany Whistler, Canada

- Vauban: creating a new sustainable living district for 5000 residents with the involvement of citizens
  - „learning while planning" approach
  - Forum Vauban
- Whistler: visioning a sustainable future for the community, and then
  - Whistler 2020 plan
  - The Centre for Sustainability Whistler
- Both build on cooperation of municipality and NGO(s) and started in late 1990s

Transferability of initiatives...

- Municipalities need to HEAR ABOUT innovative ways of doing things and their success (role for media??)

- Networks and EU initiatives with both Eastern/Western members + global networks

  (e.g. Covenant of Mayors, Transition Network, Resilient Cities)

  - May be good ways to foster both learning and skills development
  - More top-down: e.g. through expectations for compliance with network membership
  - Good practice databases and success stories

- Twin cities

- Green, cultural and design capitals – social innovation capitals?

Example: Sharing Cities Network

- Starting from the US
- Collaboration of top-down and bottom-up
- 10 members in Europe: e.g. Amsterdam, Athens, Vienna, Göteborg, Lisbon, Naples, Prague

What kind of sharing is there in a sharing city?

- E.g. Vancouver (Canada)
  - Car sharing
  - Bicycle sharing
  - Tool shed ➔ Tool 'library'
  - Unused garden/yard ➔
                allotments for gardeners
  - Empty rooms ➔
                Renting for others, 'hotel'
  - Sahred offices (hubs)
  - Renting of all kinds of equipment (e.g. special kitchen things, garden furniture)

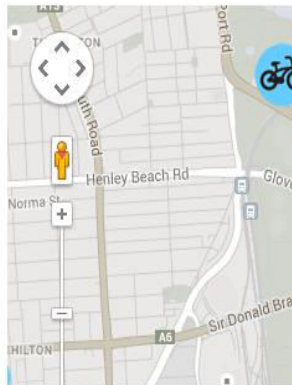# How can municipalities support sharing? (guidelines by network)

- Include it in strategy
- Establish an office to provide support for sharing – with employee paid by municipality *or* commission NGO to do this…
- Start and maintain website
- Remove legislative barriers (e.g. local tax rules)

NEWS N STUFF   ADD YOUR ACTIVITY
STORIES OF SHARING

EXPLORE   MAP

ALL

Why beneficial?

- no need to provide service themselves
- create employment and development from resources already existing in community – no need for major investment
- connects environmental, social and economic sustainability

Thank you!