

The Hanover PLATZprojekt

Hannover with a population of about 500.000 people is the capital city of Lower Saxony, Germany. The city has a rich history of engagement with and for sustainability. It signed the Charta of Aalborg (<http://www.sustainablecities.eu/the-aalborg-charter/>) and 20 years ago it hosted the 3rd European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns, leading to the 'Hannover Call'

(https://sustainablecities.eu/fileadmin/repository/Conferences/Hannover/Hannover_call.pdf).

One recent interesting initiative, 'PLATZprojekt', provides a creativity lab in the city: it is a container village providing space for experimentation, a place to try out ideas for different ways of working, sharing, and organizing.

The initiators won a grant of 120.000 euros for urban renewal projects, to be spent over the course of three years. The money was used mainly to build infrastructure (water, electricity, and internet) for a container village on a former wasteland. To participate, prospective PLATZprojekt members needed then to organize a discarded container sheltering their own projects. PLATZprojekt is an urban experimental space for doing, for implementing ideas. It pursues economic, social and ecological aims, experimenting with alternative ways of living and simultaneously (re-)shaping the wider urban landscape. A guiding question was and is how to envision future living: How do we want to live and work together in the future? How do we want to experience and grow 'communality'?

PLATZprojekt is a place nested in the city for citizens, it is recognized by citizens as being different. For some, it is a beacon project for citizens' participation in urban development, for others it is an incubator for ideas.

Current challenges are to maintain momentum and to organize resources to allow PLATZprojekt to continue.