

WORKSHOP DOCUMENTATION

PROJEKTE STARTEN: Wie kann eine "Halle* für alle" Berliner:innen dabei unterstützen, gemeinschaftlich ihre eigenen sozial-ökologischen Projekte zu entwickeln?

Open Assembly THF, Saturday, 25. Feb 2023, 14-16h

Written by Juli from Urban Heat Studio

February 2023: We're living in times of multiple crises, Berlin is about to form a new government, one of the most significant climate referendums is underway. Meanwhile, the old airport hangar at Tempelhofer Feld is (mostly) unused, stuck in renovation and bureaucratic hell. The large multi-purpose hall whose original raison d'être expired as the airport closed down and turned into a park in 2008 – today quietly and desperately looking for a new purpose.

The transformation alliance *Transformationsbündnis Tempelhofer Feld* is campaigning for a "Halle für Alle" – a space for all Berliners to house the transformation – unite and support all the existing and bubbling initiatives in the eco-social transformation. **But how could the "Halle für alle" support all Berliners to collectively develop their own eco-social projects?**

To answer this and other questions, Anne and Ricardo, two organizers behind the Transformationsbündnis, gathered their many

transformation allies and other Berliners in the beautiful Start.bahn in Neukölln for a Future(s) Workshops.

As a design futures researcher and designer for transformative adaptation, I was asked to run a two hour workshop to uncover what support is needed to incubate transformative initiatives. Two hours are short, so I went back to our experience at Urban Heat Studio, when Francesca and I asked ourselves how a city could support the transformation, and celebrate all the transformation creators in the NATURECULLTURE Festival at the rewilded Tempelhofer Forst. The challenges that we faced were: what initiatives contribute to the transformation that we had we envisioned? And how could these be supported to flourish? Based on this, I saw two main goals for the session:

Goals for the session

1 – Identify what type of initiatives can shape the eco-social transformation in Berlin – and what do we, the people present, even mean by an eco-social transformation? Do we align on this?

2 – Uncover the (shared) needs of transformation initiatives – how can the Halle incubate them and create synergies among projects?

We spent about an hour each exploring these questions. In between, people were free to switch tables and topics, so as we gathered in the upstairs seating area with a green and leafy backdrop, our little group varied from question to question.

When we say “eco-social transformation in Berlin”, what are we transitioning to?4

First, we explored what we each mean by a eco-social transformation – What are the big eco-social challenges that Berlin is facing? Who is affected from various population groups to more-than human actors, such as fields and canals, animals, fungi and plants, to infrastructure? What do they each need? Looking across their collective needs, do we see any patterns or overarching questions to guide the initiatives we’d like to house at the Halle? That’s the questions we wanted to focus on:

- How can our structures and lifestyles work for, not against us?
- How can we provide affordable housing for everyone?
- How can we become more resilient to growing climate impacts and inequalities worldwide? How can we produce and distribute more goods locally, sustainably and equitably?
- How can everyone define their life model and express it?
- (Wildcard: This is the space for a need or question that may have not been voiced, or did not emerge in our super-speed sense making process. Maybe there is something that our gut is telling us we need, but we first need to uncover what it is, and why?)

To be fair, **this list is far from exhaustive** and was created by mostly white folx from various parts of Europe, and surely carries our own biases and our images of desirable futures. This was a very, very fast process and in order to define *some* constraints for what initiatives are within (or outside) of the eco-social transformation. It would be absolutely lovely to dive deeper into this with a more diverse group of people, informed by other expertise, perspectives, practices and lived experiences. This could be a fantastic opportunity to create (one or multiple) visions of desirable futures to align us in our transformation efforts.

What kind of support is needed by some exemplary initiatives working towards our transformed Berlin? What can the Halle für Alle offer, and what synergies are there between projects`?

Roughly guided by our questions we had previously defined, we started looking for exemplary initiatives (!) that already work on those challenges. It could be initiatives the participants have worked on, or other ones we've heard of. We were not looking to create the initiatives themselves, but take them as an example to think through what support structures they may need.

Need: Self-expression and ability to define your own life

Initiative: Kiez Burn (<https://kiezburn.org/>)

- Temporary orgs need to store temporary stuff (→Depots/Storage)
- Finding organizers / initiators, the people who call others to "the fire". Open questions: What kind of funds or rewards do they need? (→Gathering People / Volunteers, Scouting)
- (Countryside) spaces and locations (leave no trace). Organized listings for co-created festivals (→Spaces, Scouting)
- Connecting to disadvantaged artists
- A self-organizing school (→ training)
- Shared →materials such as tents, energy (generators??) (→ basics)
- Shared →transportation

Open questions: What are Kiez Burns biased towards, who are they including and who are they excluding? What other initiatives are there to support self-actualization and self-expression? What needs might these have?

Need: Affordable housing

Initiative: Squatting

- Knowledge about housing laws (legal support/lawyers)
- “The basics for living”: Water, food, energy, heating (→ water tanks)
- Ability to spot / find places to squat / use

Open questions: feel free to add :)

Need: Resilience - local production and distribution

Initiative: Community Supported Agriculture – SoLaWi “Plantage” / Food Sharing

- Sustainable Transportation*
- Info Point / Gathering volunteers *
- Delivery points / Storage *
- Skills for new city gardeners *

Open questions: Apart from food, what else do we aim to produce locally? Local production can be good for local resilience, is it also the most carbon-positive, best for biodiversity, most equitable and circular?

Need: Wildcard! (Care of natural resources, resilience)

Initiative: Rainwater tank initiative in Essen

- Design
- Engineering (scientists)
- Re-used materials
- Legal aspects
- How is going to be manufactured?
- Prototype development (Engineering, Regulation / legal)
- 200-400k Budget for the prototype
- Goal: Standardisation to replicability

Shared needs & synergies

Some needs we heard were common among two or more initiatives, though in detail they may need different strategies that work for each initiative:

- Storage (for food brought into the city from surrounding farms, for regularly and infrequently used materials for Kiezburns)
- Skills / training (for new city gardeners, new organizers)
- Legal support (housing laws, where/how to place rain water tanks)
- Volunteers (gathering them, organizing)
- Sustainable transportation (for locally produced food and other goods, to bring stuff to & away from Kiezburns, etc)
- “Basics” such as energy, heating, water, food (for squatting, for kiezburns)
- Locations (for temporary events such as Kiezburns, at various scales)
- Scouting (people, locations, etc.)

Some synergies we found were:

- Use of food from SoLaWi for housing and Kiezburns, use of rainwater for SoLaWi, housing, and Kiezburns

Learnings and observations

- **We know what we want, but what needs are we trying to cover with that?**

Some - many – of us have been in this space for so long, it seems like certain “demands” have become commonplace: community supported

agriculture, affordable housing, etc. But those are already solutions - what are the needs behind them? They are often multisolving - solving more than one need at the same time - and that's already making them good concepts, but unless we specify what the needs behind them are, we are not able to find new synergies or yet remix needs to find other alternatives. Given different scenarios on the political landscape, and other world developments, it may help to keep the needs in mind, not stick with the solutions. **Suggestion: Keep on asking "why" (e.g. with the 5 whys exercise) to uncover the needs behind the strategies.**

- **Needs are universal, strategies may be individual**

More than one initiative may have the same need, e.g. need for storage, need for training. However, the strategies that work for a certain initiative will be individual. How these needs are fulfilled may differ from initiative to initiative, and **(suggestion!) we have some case-by-case co-creation ahead of us:)**

- **This process was very fast and the outcome is surely biased in the lived experiences of people who joined.**

I observed that we were mostly white from various parts of Europe, able bodied, young (20ies/30ies), most in our group were male, I assume we were mostly very well educated and of similar political values. And 2 hours is very short :) See more on this above.

Suggestion: dive deeper into this with a more diverse group of people, informed by other expertise, perspectives, practices and lived experiences. This could be a fantastic opportunity to create (one or multiple) visions of desirable futures to align us in our transformation efforts.