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Traffic-Forum Salzburg

Abstract:

This Project is chosen for presentation not for extraordinary sustainable solutions in traffic problems, but for its character as a model of consensual approach in citizen participation by mediation. The Traffic-Forum Salzburg was established in the fundamental believe that solutions of sustainability can only be successful in practice, if they find the agreement of large parts of the people concerned.

Almost 10 years ago, in 1986, the city-council of Salzburg decided on goals and measures for a new policy of traffic development. The goals of reducing the individual motorised traffic and promotion of the environmental traffic modes like public transport, biking and pedestrians caused violent conflicts among interest groups and citizens in town. During the local elections of 1992 the dispute on traffic development played a major role and after the elections Salzburg had a political stalemate situation, where no substantial decision on traffic subjects could take place. The demand of the construction of a tunnel through the Kapuziner mountain (worth 100 Mio DM) stood in the center of dispute and divided political parties, interest groups and the public.

In this situation the vice-mayor of Salzburg, Johann Padutsch, decided at the end of 1994 to undo this knot by installing a Traffic-Forum as a model of consensual citizen participation. The model was developed and carried out by the mediator Reinhard Sellnow, Nuremberg, and Dr. Walter Spielmann, director of the International Future Library in Salzburg. The basic idea of the model was to bring the hole conflict in one room and to involve representatives of all interest groups, public administration, politicians and experts to discuss, negotiate and - if possible - overcome and solve the difficulties and problems of traffic development in Salzburg.

The flow of information and the decision making process were organized like this: input by computer experts (simulation model), internal and external experts, literature, group interests and examples of other cities, discussion in the traffic-forum prepared by working groups and output as recommendations for the City Council, the public administration and the citizens. The idea was, to find out first of all where immediate agreements on traffic topics are possible (and we were astonished about the huge amount of more than 50%), then to achieve consensus on controversial topics after dialogue and finally to end up with lasting divergent votes and incompatible standpoints. If the first two categories were big enough, it should be of great help for the final political decisions of the City Council of Salzburg.

For this purpose there were two categories of members: the representatives of interest groups in an inner circle and the members of public administration, politicians and ex-

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Durchführung von Bürgerforen u. Agenda 21-Prozessen, Zukunftswerkstätten und -konferenzen, Methoden kreativer Lösungssuche und Entscheidungsfindungsverfahren.

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perts in an outside circle. The members of the inner circle had priority as to unlimited speech and decision. The outside circle's role was, first of all, to support the inner circle with additional information and to listen to its way of discussion and finding decisions.

The 21 members of the inner circle were selected as to their ability to represent a certain interest in the field of traffic development. First we defined the necessary interests like: pedestrians, bikers, user of public transport, cardrivers, children, juveniles, women, disabled people, seniors, inhabitants of the city, inhabitants of the adjoining region around, commuters, shopper, tourists, economy/employers, economy/employees, environmental protection, city-planning, health and common security. In an open process we thereafter looked for interest groups in town to represent with a speaker one of these interests in the Traffic-Forum. The 3 major groups (economical, social and environmental groups) elected each 1 member to join a planning team with the mediator and a representative of the public administration to prepare the content and process of each meeting (papers, experts to invite, modes of discussion etc.).

The forum started in January 1995 with an agreement on the model and process, procedure and the „rules of the game“, signed by every representative and member of the traffic-forum (including elected officials and public administration). As to the content the inner circle first developed a notion of all traffic problems in Salzburg to solve. Following up in spring there was a collection of „immediate measures“ that could be carried out quickly, because they were cheap and out of dispute. After a discussion on criteria, how to measure successful solutions in traffic development, the inner circle started a long discussion and negotiation on goals and priorities in summer which lasted for several months. In winter 1995/96 the groups developed consentaneous typical traffic-measures to achieve these goals and finished the Traffic-Forum in March 1996. The whole process was accompanied by press and media.

The model of the Traffic-Forum, the process and the results were written down in a documentation and given as a recommendation to the politicians in the city council of Salzburg.

All in all the members of the Traffic-Forum did an extraordinary voluntary work of more than 1000 hours. For 13 months they met every 3 weeks (16 times) for at least of three hours at night to discuss the problems and possible solutions of traffic affairs in Salzburg in a new way of listening, arguing and negotiating.

They ended up in March 1996 with a vision of the future traffic in Salzburg, containing 62 precise qualitative and quantitative goals, whereby only five of them found no consensus. They defined 72 consentaneous typical traffic-measures to achieve these goals. They found a consensus on 92 „immediate measures“ that were cheap and could be carried out within a year. A remarkable detail: the heavy dispute on the controversially seen construction of a tunnel through the Kapuziner mountain was no topic any more. Everybody was convinced that the tunnel (for more than 100 Mio. DM) had no adequate effects on the traffic problems of Salzburg. So this demand was given up.

Doing so, the members of the Traffic-Forum Salzburg reached a high degree of understanding the different interests and found, nevertheless, a high consensus on traffic solutions that were disputed before. The city council evaluated this successful result of citizen participation in September 1996 and decided to accept almost all of it as the official future traffic-policy for the City of Salzburg.