



Analysing tool Participation process in the framework of Innocité

SWOT-Analysis workshop - January, 12th and 13th 2009

Participation process Bad Vöslau during the Analysing Phase of Innocité in Bad Vöslau.

The Participation Process promotes the identification with the City and with the work plan, that is going to be set up and then realized during the coming years.

In the Urban Regeneration Programme, Lower Austria has experienced good and sustainable results generated by processes similar to this.

Team of External Experts:

Dr. Walter Schubiger . Expert Business Development (Trade) and City Marketing since 1992

Christine Hofbauer . moderator

DI Helga Zödl . Innocité monitoring

The invitation was sent to all business owners of Bad Vöslau and some stakeholders within the administration and the city council of Bad Vöslau. The city of Bad Vöslau sent the invitations in cooperation with the Association for Economic Development in Bad Vöslau (VÖWI). The Association concentrates on the development of the city center and currently has about 30 members (businesses).

12 persons registered for the workshops, on the first evening the turnout was 22 participants. According to the experience of the external experts and city officials, this is a high number of people to take part in a working session. 12 of the participants were female.

The methodology described below is suitable up to a group size of about 25 participants.

When the number of people is higher, different methodologies have to be applied.

STEP 1:

Technical Input:

Structure and Goals of Innocité . DI Helga Zödl

Key success factors for City Marketing and preliminary work in Bad Vöslau (goals in the City Regeneration Process 2006/2007) . Dr. Walter Schubiger

Key success factors for City Marketing by Dr. Schubiger:

- Analysis methodology is not deciding the success of City Marketing
- Finances are essential . the costs for the individual business have to bring a direct benefit for the owners

- Professional structures are essential
- City management and city manager will be needed in the long term (at least part time contract)
- The cooperation must be formed in a formal manner (Association or Cooperation)
- Efficient meetings are necessary . structured minutes with a work plan in the end for each meeting
- Systematic and efficient organisation has to be built up
- Ideally, all activities in the city should be coordinated

The mission statement of Bad Vöslau has been determined two years ago and is:
Bad Vöslau . liveable spa town

The touristic image bases on the three images: woods . water . wine

STEP 2:

**Brainstorming with the group:
Strengths and weaknesses of Bad Vöslau economy**

Cards in white and red were passed around for everybody to put the ideas on paper.
The cards were pinned to 2 pinnboards and clustered in overall topics by the moderator.

Advantage of the method: everybody has the same chance for an input . even anonymous, if the person wants that.

Possible disadvantage: in some groups, people hold back, because of weak writing abilities.
If that is the case, an other form has to be chosen. (f.e. collage from papers/pictures, created in small working groups and presented afterwards).

The participants were very agile and playful during this step. There was a vigorous discussion during the clustering process.
External expert and moderator worked together in this step, as with 20+ participants, 2 moderators are recommendable (one for each pinnboard).

The result was a number of definitions of strengths and weaknesses of the economic situation in Bad Vöslau.

STEP 3:

Defining the goals of the group

The question to the group was:
What goals the group wants to reach in the next coming years, based on the strengths and weaknesses defined before?

Technical input:
How to set and define a goal!

Process:
Brainstorming for goals on cards

Aspects of Spacial Planning come into the discussion for the first time.

The brainstorming results were clustered and goals defined. During the discussion, they were set into relation with the topics of strengths and weaknesses.

After the goals were roughly defined, priorities were set by the group by giving points to individual goals.

This common setting of priorities is one of the most important steps in the process. It is a very democratic way to find out, which goals are important to most participants. Sometimes the results are very surprising.

In case of the Bad Vöslau working group, each participant could assign a total of 5 points, max. 2 points per goal.

Priorities set . end of 1st evening in Bad Vöslau

SECOND Workshop 13th of January 2009

STEP 1:

Summary of the results of the previous evening.

STEP 2:

The most prioritised goals were discussed in small working-groups.

Some goals, like common opening hours, were ruled out in a discussion process, because despite the given priority, the realisation is considered impossible or too long term.

4 topics (= 4 goals) are condensed down by working groups (4 participants in each group):

- Improve Cooperation between business owners
- Improve Variety of Shopping facilities
- Organise a Local Trade Fair to promote the local offer
- Improve facades (store fronts) and green areas in the city

STEP 3:

One question for each topic to discuss in the group . the question was asked by the external expert Dr. Schubiger

Cooperation . How to improve the cooperation between entrepreneurs? What projects can you think of?

Variety of Shopping facilities . Which shopping facilities are missing in Bad Vöslau? Which measures are needed to fill the lack of the missing shopping facilities.

Trade fair - How to organise a local trade fair?

Facades and green areas . What does Bad Vöslau need to get renovated facades and green areas?

STEP 5:

Presentation of results

Central questions:

Many questions were asked about financial support from the city or the state.

To this method:

Steps

Brainstorming and searching themes concerning goals with the group.

Working-groups with about 4 persons per group.

Presentation of the results with a flip chart.

Advantage of the method:

the discussion themes are worked out directly by the working group and are not proposed by an external expert. The needs and wishes of the participants are prioritised over an outside single opinion.

The participants have the chance to choose a working-group according to their individual interests to discuss one topic in detail, which causes a high motivation to participate and carry on working. It is very likely that the measures are carried out.

Possible disadvantage:

The aim should be a list of measures to meet the goals best. Measures, which are hard to carry out or are a hot+topic that nobody wants to touch or to hear about, are ruled out. The focus on the measures was often lost because of a very agile discussion about many different topics. It requires a lot of time and the moderator is pushed very easily into the role of the solution bringer+.

Innovations rarely stand in the beginning of such a process. The deeper people get into the topics, the more innovative the measures and goals become.

Mood&Results:

The participants were very agile, playful and motivated during the working process for the presentation in the end. External expert and moderator walked around to answer questions or to help wherever they could. The result was two working-groups for Bad Vöslau to implement the measures:

first to organise an trade fair and to improve facades and green areas. Measures were worked out.

In Conclusion:

Bad Vöslau needs:

- Support (also financial) for renovating the fronts of commercial buildings.
- Financial support for landscape planning projects.
- professional public relation and marketing projects
- a city manager for professional city management (marketing of town center)

3rd evening in Bad Vöslau on January, 29th 2009 – Discussing and Defining projects

The participants were working in small groups to define details, project ideas and concrete next steps.