

Local area development fund for Neu-Oerlikon ("New Oerlikon")

1 Short description of the activity/practice

- New Oerlikon is an illustration of how one of the biggest inner-city industrial areas in Switzerland was given a new direction as a residential and service area. The planning process began in 1988 in conjunction with the land owners, with the special building regulations implemented in 1998. Once the construction work is complete, the 55-hectare area will house 5,000 residents and some 12,000 employees.
- The New Oerlikon local area development fund was set up as an association as part of a public-private partnership between private investors and the City of Zurich. There was a clear room for improvement in the area, and it was agreed to work together to make the New Oerlikon area more attractive for residents, visitors as well as companies and their employees. The association's aim is to develop activities in the local area and to support projects that are run by the locals, for the locals.



Performance of the Swiss Artist Linard Bardill in the Oerlikerpark 2008

2 Detailed description of the activity/practice

What were the initial objectives?

- Make the public areas more lively by means of everyday services and cultural events that are tailored to the locals' needs.
- Develop the quality of the community spirit in New Oerlikon, support local area initiatives and strengthen the social fabric by means of activities that are both specific to and go beyond target-groups and by active participation in processes.
- Provide regular information about the development of the area and activities taking place there.
- Promote a positive approach among the residents as well as the companies and their employees towards New Oerlikon as a place to live and work.

How have these objectives been implemented?

The association has supported numerous local area projects which have contributed to the positive development of New Oerlikon and to making it a livelier place. Knowledge and information about New Oerlikon has been improved by providing financial support for the printing costs of an information package, the creation of a website and also guided walks of the area for new arrivals. Oerlikon's industrial history was recreated on illustrated information boards which tour guides can implement in their tours of the local area.

Open parks played host to seasonal cultural events such as open-air cinema screenings, street parties, concerts and a Christmas market. Programme-sponsoring as well as the improvement of the infrastructure (i.e. weather-proofing) meant that the public was happy and the events received more attention. When the funds were being allocated, care was taken to make sure the programme appealed to various age groups and that different forms of artistic expression were featured, such as entertaining and instructive shows, musical and dance performances, theatrical productions and readings.

Recent local area initiatives, volunteer associations and NPOs which promote a sense of community in the local area by means of non-commercial activities were assigned financial start-up aid from the local area fund or co-financed using extraordinary expenditure.

The local area fund was also used to encourage local residents and employees to work together to develop the area by means of sponsorship for events and platforms where concerns and ideas on the design and uses of the Oerlikon Park were collected. Support was also given to a project for a seasonal bistro within the park which added to the choice of catering.

How are partners and citizens involved?

Ever since the local area was converted from an industrial area into a modern residential and office location, the City of Zurich has been in regular institutionalised contact with the land owners and investors. The idea of creating an association came about during mutual discussions over ways of improving everyday quality of life.

Establishing a local area office run by the City of Zurich which is also responsible for managing the New Oerlikon association local area development fund provided direct contact between the local population and the companies located there. While the dialogue between the City of Zurich and the land owners was going on, those carrying out urban community development work organised an open-space event with partner organisations from the local area to improve the quality of living and working. Numerous projects were born out of the process which were then supported by the local area development fund.

A representative from the residents of all the various housing estates was elected to the board of the association via an information platform.

The fund was well publicised in the local area and local committees were regularly informed about what the association was doing.

How successful has the activity/practice been? What difficulties have been faced? Have any changes been made as a result of an evaluation?

Successes

- Levels of trust between the stakeholders from various spheres of life (economic – social – cultural – residential construction – City of Zurich) were further strengthened.
- The sense of responsibility of investors and land owners for the development of new residential areas was increased, both in terms of the construction and also the social aspect. A common understanding of how the area should develop was created.
- Almost all stakeholders identified more strongly with the local area.
- Numerous local projects were supported which promoted a sense of community within New Oerlikon, with meeting points and well frequented areas being given support as well as social and cultural events which make the public area a more lively place and promote more user-friendly interaction.
- The events and celebrations that received support not only contributed to the improvement in image – the fact that there was a fund in place set new standards in terms of innovative public-private participation projects.

Difficulties

The difficulties which were encountered were based on the fact that the local area development fund was originally a sub-project that was part of a comprehensive package of measures which included wider infrastructure, traffic and construction-related issues. Implementing this package proved more complex and time-consuming than originally planned and communications between the City and the various investors ground to a halt. Although the fund was separated from the original process, the management board of the association showed real interest in the other measures.

Some projects are based on volunteer commitment and are being taken on by NPOs. The fund was able to provide start-up help and co-finance investments which went beyond budgetary constraints. The local area fund cannot influence the continuity of anything organised on a volunteer basis.

Cooperation as a way to sustainable development

- Financing of local area development projects and improving of everyday quality of life by land owners and investors over three years.
- The realisation that at the outset, the qualitative development of the local area was not running optimally, either from the City or from the investors/ land owners.
- Involvement of the investors during the planning and implementation phases.
- Involvement of and assignment of responsibility to other stakeholders (resi-dents, companies, cooperatives etc.) during the "operating phase".
- Activities make public areas more lively, contribute to their optimisation, strengthen the sense of community and improve the locational quality.
- Good, clear and transparent management of responsibilities both for the as-sociation board as well as between the board and the local area office.
- Transparent external communications via flyers, website section on www.neu-oerlikonkret.ch plus other measures.
- Totally transferable to other cities

How long has the activity/practice been operational and what is the predicted duration in total?

The association was created in autumn 2006 and constituted for a period of three years, until the end of 2009.

How is the activity/practice funded and what is the total budget?

The association's income is made up of member contributions from investors and users as well as donations/ voluntary contributions from sponsors. Owners of the residential and office spaces as well as companies based in New Oerlikon make up the members of the association. Individuals can also become members – the association currently has six members and ten sponsors. As a rule, annual membership costs CHF 5,000 (EUR 3,300) for three years, meaning that around CHF 65,000 (EUR 43,000) per year are available to finance and support the projects.

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