

# 10 STEPS TO BUILD A LOCAL COMMUNITY FROM SCRATCH

## 1. Identify all different stakeholder groups in your area

Don't limit yourself to stakeholders who seem most directly relevant for the project, like the municipality, property owners and developers. Also include local big and small companies, local organisations, infra/utility companies and citizens. At one point you will need all of them and they will need each other.

## 2. Make a thorough inventory of existing local networks and channels

At first glance they may not be visible but in most cases, there will be something. Even if they don't seem relevant for you because they are small, not very professional or they have nothing to do with urban development, they can play a crucial role in your process, both in kickstarting it, growing it and in safeguarding it sustainably.

## 3. Explore the possibility to join forces with existing networks in some way

Reach out to get to know each other and explore collaboration. Overlooking existing networks and putting something next to them may bring them out of position, damaging the delicate work they probably have been doing for years. That will backlash to you, while joining forces can give your own project a real head start..

## 4. Spot the gaps in your outreach

Probably you cannot reach everybody via existing channels. Who do you miss? Do you know who they are and how and where you can reach them? Also think about how they perceive the area and its transformation. Can you address them directly or you need to make quarters first, using low-threshold narratives and actions?

## 5. Plan one-on-one conversations with different key figures

Try to find key figures within each stakeholder group. Take your time for elaborate one-on-one conversations and listen attentively. This will give you a kaleidoscopic and very real understanding of the area. Besides, they may connect you with others, also beyond the usual suspects.

## 6. Keep an eye on diversity and inclusivity

The more diverse the group of conversation partners, the more representative your understanding and the more adequate your approach can become. Double-check whether you have the whole area covered. Beware that some key figures may only represent a specific part of stakeholder group, so you may need to talk to more.

## 7. Be present and approachable both online and on-site

Make sure you are approachable for other people too. Build a (storified) campaign through social media and sociable on-site actions. They can be very low-profile but they create a positive buzz and allow you to talk to a lot of people. Document them well so that you have nice photographs for your future communication.

## 8. Structure the growing network in a local database

Keep track of all people you meet. Ask for business cards, connect on social media and structure the different personal and contact data in your database. This will grow over time and you can use it to send out newsletters to keep everybody updated, invite them to future events and ask them to bring colleagues, friends, etcetera.

## 9. Spot overlapping interests and cross-fertilisations in the input

Make profound reports after every conversation. As soon as you have spoken to a substantial number of different stakeholders, you can start identifying overlapping interests and potential cross-fertilisations.

## 10. Start bringing different stakeholders together

Start to bring different stakeholders together around these overlaps. Start small and light and allow the different stakeholders to first get to know each other. With every step the relations, trust and sense of community grow.