

TRANSFORMCITY MODULE 1 – SUGGESTED TIMELINE ‘SPEEDY LEARNING’

Duration: 1 month

Time investment: 1 day per week

You are busy, but you also have a concrete urban transformation project that requires a different approach from what you are used to. Although your project already has targets and deadlines, you also need to bring in new knowledge, insights and frameworks for yourself to be able to realise better results in the project. Carve out one day a week during one month and equip yourself while also making direct improvements to your project strategy. This is learning by doing.

Week 1: Context & analysis

Morning

Content: Teaser (general intro course + intro module)

Assignments: explore local challenges

1. Make a rough sketch for yourself of the extent to which the three axes of complexity and unpredictability mentioned in the introduction videos are at play in your area. List all the themes, challenges and transitions that you need to tackle and the goals you want to achieve in the area:
 - Think about both spatial, social and economic topics and of course major transitions like energy, climate, biodiversity, etcetera
 - Think about both big and small topics
 - Think about both short, middle and long term
 - Start with the topics that are important to your own team and organisation and then add those that you suspect are important to other local stakeholders.
2. Put the topics in the right column of the ‘Local Exploration Canvas’. Cluster the ones that have a strong relation with each other.
3. To every topic you can now add which stakeholder groups are affected by them and/or needed for tackling them, including your own organisation. Where necessary, make a distinction between different departments.
4. Finally, add where the main risks, dependencies and uncertainties lie in tackling each topic. This gives you a very first idea of the force field in your project area.

Content: Chapter 1

Assignments: roughly map the ownership situation

1. Collect information about the ownership situation in your area. Who are the owners of the buildings and/or the land? Which owners have development plans (as far as you know)? Which buildings and/or land belong to the municipality?
2. Collect existing visions and documents about the area. What plans does the municipality already have, both for the entire area and for their specific property?
3. Find out if there are any initiatives in the area already. Are there concrete development plans? Is there some form of networking or cooperation between different owners? Or between other stakeholder groups? Is there already concrete action from the municipality? Are there any (potential) urban curators or bottom-up connectors active in the area? Can you already spot possible alliance partners in the area?

Content: Chapter 2

Assignments: rethink the relation between your team activities

Think about how you currently organise your projects. Do you have a (relatively) linear project approach? Do you have separate parts of your team or organisation working on different parts of the project or area? Can you imagine shifting this to a more parallel and lateral approach, mixing and connecting your

activities in a different way like in the Amsterdam example from the video? Do you see thresholds in your own organisation? Or do you feel resistance yourself?

Afternoon

Content: Chapter 3

Assignments: map the area

Make a local analysis using a map of your area and our Area Analysis Checklist. You can also use the 'Local Exploration Canvas' from week 1 as a reference. Try to find time to really go to the area, spend some time there and talk to a few people you meet about how they experience the area.

Content: Chapter 4

Assignments: fill in the Canvas Force Field Analysis

Fill out your own Canvas Force Field Analysis based on the map you made last week. Have a look at the force field you just sketched. Maybe you already see interesting relations, priorities, recurring themes or other promising components for your strategic approach?

Week 2: Strategy & action plans

Morning

Content: Chapter 5

Assignments: sketch the first outlines for your strategy

Sketch your own integral strategy on the 7-layer model canvas. You can use our manual to go from analysis to strategy.

Afternoon

Content: Chapter 6

Assignments: sketch the first outlines for your first year plan

Take your strategy from last week and translate it into your action plan for the first year. You can use the 'Local Exploration Canvas' from week 1 as a double-check for urgent, short-term topics you can use here. Note: Both your strategy and first year plan are first drafts, so don't worry if there are still some holes in them. We're going to refine them later.

Week 3: Team & organisation

Morning

Content: Chapter 7

Assignments: rethink the skills and responsibilities in your team

1. Do you have both expertise in marketing/communication/community and spatial design/analysis/strategy on your team?
2. Do you see any gaps in soft skills in your team that need to be tackled?
4. Does your team have sufficient commitment from and mandate within their own organization (especially important for externally hired urban curators or quartermasters)?

Content: Chapter 8

Assignments: think about how your project can become an independent local organisation

1. Write down for yourself the risks in your team of either being too close to your own organization or too far away from it with too little commitment? How can you limit these risks? Can you make agreements about them within your organization? Or can you come up with practical solutions, such as a physical workplace or project lab in the area instead of in the office?

2. Are there any of the existing networks or organisations in the area you can team up with?
3. Look at the name, tone of voice and visual identity of your project. Is this inviting enough to other stakeholders to adopt it or does it clearly breathe the DNA of your own organisation (for example, is it too technical, corporate or governmental?). Can you make some targeted adjustments to change this?

Afternoon

Content: Chapter 9

Assignments: spot the potential urban curators

1. Do you have someone on your team who can take on a natural role of urban curator?
2. Are there any potential urban curators active in the area? These can be completely independent or representing local organisations or key stakeholders.
3. Would it be interesting to hire somebody who can take up that role, maybe first as a quarter master? And do you see possibilities to do this in collaboration with the first active stakeholders in the area, so that it becomes a joint effort from the start?

Content: Chapter 10

Assignments: rethink the balance between autonomy and commitment

1. Which internal departments do you need and at what level do they need to be engaged? Try to involve one contact person per department. Are there people with intrapreneurial power there that you can hook up with? Can you meet briefly on a regular basis to catch up about the area, for example every six weeks?
2. Are there specific departments that need extra attention or explanation of the project in order to keep them on board and committed to your local goals and strategy?
3. Think about what the threats are if some departments are not properly engaged? Can they harm the project or the sense of collectivity in the area? How can you tackle these threats?

Week 4: Key insights, synthesis & action

Morning

Content: Chapter 11

Assignments: Rethink the soft skills and attitudes in yourself and your team

1. What are the most important insights for you when it comes to the culture of trying out, learning and working together? Do you feel safe in your organization to try new things and make mistakes in the process? To what extent does everything have to be SMART in your organization? How can you create more space for yourself there?
2. How do you yourself look at the different stakeholders in the area? Be honest in your own prejudices. Also think about what prejudices stakeholders might have about you. And which ones could they have about each other? Which stakeholders are you curious about? And who are you a bit apprehensive or even a bit afraid of? Don't hesitate to exaggerate this a bit, you don't have to share it with anyone, but it helps to become aware of any barriers you may feel to really build sustainable cooperation and trust.
3. Are there any thresholds that are holding you back from getting started with your area process? What can you do to resolve these? Can you, for instance, break them down into smaller actions for which you do not need formal permission in advance, can you first lighten the substantive agenda or make the scale smaller, do you first need to have a one-on-one conversation with a certain key stakeholder before being able to invite them to an event, etcetera.

Afternoon

Content: Review whole course

Assignment: Sharpen your strategy and action plan and get ready to start

1. Based on everything you've learned, refine your big strategy and action plan for the first year one more time. Do a check that you have given a place to all key stakeholders as well as all relevant internal departments.
2. Now go to your first-year action plan and refine your five very first actions. Make sure that these are actions that you should be able to start right away, tomorrow morning at nine o'clock so to speak, so that you don't need any additional budget, permit, support, or other permission. These actions can in themselves be very light with zero risk of failure, but they are aimed at giving your process an optimal kickstart and setting in motion as many other actions as possible in your strategy and action plan. For example, by meeting the necessary stakeholders in a light way or by testing an intervention in a certain location with a pop-up activity or creating a stir as the start of a larger local campaign. Make sure that at least one of these first actions has a festive and optimistic tinge and also gives you the opportunity to get further acquainted with the various stakeholders at your leisure without too serious content on the agenda.
3. Take a moment to realise you just finished this module and redesigned your complete strategy while also being busy with your regular work and projects. This is no small achievement, and you should definitely celebrate this. Whether you pop open the champagne or plan something nice for yourself, enjoy – and congratulations!