



Deutsches Institut  
für Urbanistik

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Annual Review







Dear reader,

In the past, we have provided complete and detailed reports of our activities. This time, we are making a change and presenting you a brief and precise selection of our work over the last year, important results from our research and also some highlights from our seminar and event series. However, you will not miss out on the general overview or the interesting details: you can find everything that you want to know about Difu on our new website.

Coronavirus has hugely changed the way we work at Difu. Yet our role as a partner and ideas provider for the municipalities has remained. We are pleased that our expertise has been in high demand both despite and because of coronavirus. Already at an early stage, we participated in the new discourse with numerous activities of our own. 2020 was demanding for us in terms of research and further training – and pleasingly, it was also economically successful.

Luise Adrian should be credited with the economic success at the institute since last August. After holding various positions at Difu and in industry, she is now a member of the institute management as the commercial director.

Her predecessor, Busso Grabow, has taken “semi-retirement” after over 35 years at Difu and has kindly offered to drive forward the future topic of sustainability at the institute for some time. We have been addressing this topic for many years. It has an important role in many of our research projects. Now, it is a question of making better use of synergies better and increasing the visibility of our skills.

At this juncture, it is not an obligation but a profound need to thank those whose support

make our work possible. The Association for Municipal Research (Verein für Kommunalwissenschaften e.V. - VfK) or rather ultimately the Association of German Cities is our shareholder in more than just a formal sense. We feel the special appreciation of the Association of German Cities and our connection is a tremendous help in recruiting the towns and cities for our applied research. Of course, that applies to a special degree for the 100 plus donor cities and organisations, who also want to financially express their partnership with Difu. In addition, we are supported by the German government and the Berlin Senate, for which we expressly thank them.

Our academic advisory board offers assistance in the form of ideas, and we are supported in our daily work by numerous cooperation partners in the various research projects. A friendly and competent setting is certainly necessary to work successfully. For it to function, one thing is irreplaceable - motivated colleagues at the institute. And for that reason, I want my final thanks to go to those colleagues who fill this institute with motivation and enthusiasm every day.

I hope you will feel inspired reading this report.

Yours faithfully

Carsten Kühl  
Director of Research, Managing Director



# Annual Review

## Highlights from Difu research in 2020

Can a pandemic change our society in the long term?

In any event, the exceptional circumstances which we have been experiencing since spring 2020 have forced us to rethink. And they show us that we can change social practices and rules, if necessary within a very short period of time.

It is an important experience with regard to other no less serious crises of our times: cities, which are drowning in traffic, increasing social and socio-spatial inequalities and above all climate change.

Through our research, we seek to give impulses to the municipalities that play an important role in dealing with changes and crises, and to promote a sustainable and socially-just urban and regional development with forward-looking ideas even, or precisely, in times of crisis. On the following pages, we shall present a selection of our projects and activities from last year.

## Opportunity for the transport revolution

2020 was a year dominated by the pandemic. A year that has greatly changed life in the municipalities in many ways. The consequences of the coronavirus crisis were instantly evident in urban traffic. Initially during the lockdown, there were hardly any cars on the road. In turn, there were more people on bikes or on foot. However, there was not enough space. Cities, like Berlin, Munich and Cologne, reacted quickly and designated the suddenly car-free areas as provisional cycle and pedestrian paths. Suddenly, we saw different cityscapes with fewer jams, less noise and fewer emissions. Instead there were temporary play streets and people enjoyed their coffees outside where cars had previously parked. In September 2020, in cooperation with Agora Verkehrswende, the Association of German Cities (Deutscher Städtetag), the German Association of Towns and Municipalities (Deutscher Städte- und Gemeindebund) and the Association of German Transport Companies (Verband Deutscher Verkehrsunternehmen), Difu called for the chance to be used and for a wide-ranging reform and investment offensive for sustainable transport to be commenced. At their core, the measures concern the redivision of public space, including the provision of more room for pedestrians and cyclists, and the expansion of public transport. We have drawn up relevant guidelines in the study "Ein anderer Stadtverkehr ist möglich" (A different urban traffic is possible).

The crisis showed how unevenly the spaces in our towns and cities are distributed. Therefore, the transport revolution encompasses considerations about how we want to use the public spaces in towns and cities. As car parks? We don't think so! As part of the Park4SUMP EU project we have joined together with 16 European cities to demonstrate the advantages of strategic parking policy for sustainable urban mobility. We want to encourage the cities to use this very important instrument. And we want to support cities with a new tool: we developed the ParkPAD certificate to help towns and cities to strategically align and sustainably improve their own parking policies. In 2020, Freiburg was the first city in Germany to be awarded the certificate. Difu carried out the auditing process and worked with Freiburg to put together a parking action plan.

A city where people renounce parking spaces, where they share cars and bikes, and in turn where they create space for trees, greenery and beautiful spaces. Model districts in Hamburg and Munich show that City2Share is more than just a utopia but can become a reality. The objective: less traffic, fewer emissions and instead more quality of life and more options for mobility. Among other things, electromobility stations have proven to be a suitable instrument. Example in Hamburg: car and bike sharing are offered together in Hamburg at central urban interchanges and in residential districts. Now, the city provides a full, integrated service with its 73 switch points. The first signs of easing in the traffic situation can already be felt. In Munich, the Zenettiplatz, which was hitherto blocked with parked vehicles, has been redesigned as "Piazza Zenetti" and is now a place where people enjoying meeting.

Digital technologies can also make an important contribution to the transport revolution for they have the potential to control public transport more efficiently and to combine mobility services, such as bus, rail and shared taxis. But how will it work? Using the Hanover region as an example, we are currently studying how public transport on demand can work. The first Difu Sonderveröffentlichung about the chances and challenges has now been published. Besides, the most environmentally-friendly mode of transport is your own two feet. And this mode of transport is booming, not just since coronavirus. At Difu we have already been addressing what form strategies and measures concerning municipal planning for pedestrians could take for quite a while. And the high demand for our seminars on the topic shows among other things that we have our finger on the pulse of the times.

## The climate crisis forces us to act

If we want to implement the agreed sustainability goals by 2030 and be climate neutral by 2050, we have to take comprehensive measures. One of our central objectives is to qualify municipalities to implement climate change mitigation measures. The Skills Centre for Municipal Climate Change Mitigation (Service- und Kompetenzzentrum: Kommunaler Klimaschutz (SK:KK)) within Difu is the point of contact for all matters concerning municipal climate change mitigation. On behalf of the German Federal Ministry of the Environment, we advise municipalities and municipal stakeholders how they can implement and support ideas



Traffic-calmed living in the urban district of Vauban in Freiburg

The crisis showed how unevenly the spaces in our towns and cities are distributed.

and projects in the framework of the German Climate Initiative. Through our events, we connect and additionally promote the exchange of experiences within the climate change mitigation community. In 2020, the SK:KK once again expanded its services, for example, it offers weekly office hours on current funding topics. In the context of a whole series of further projects, we have especially supported financially weak communities, which constitute approximately one quarter of the municipalities in Germany! In doing so, we showed that it is possible for municipalities to improve their CO<sub>2</sub> balance, how to do it and at the same time also provide for local value creation. For example, by leasing the roofs of municipal buildings for solar installations or taking the burden off car pools by way of local electric car sharing.

Another important topic that municipal policy must address is climate change adaptation. Extreme weather, such as strong rain, flooding or persistent draught, is increasingly frequent. Regarding the municipal contribution to climate change adaptation in North Rhine-Westphalia, our team in Cologne provides targeted support on behalf of the North Rhine-Westphalia environment ministry to towns, communities and districts in North Rhine-Westphalia to help them become active in climate conservation. Many municipalities in the federal state have already adopted exemplary measures, such as the “grüne Mitte Essen” (green heart of Essen), which is a new district, where almost one third of its area is green or water. The water is exclusively from rain water. When it rains, the water is collected and on hot days, the water has a cooling effect. Twice as useful.



above: The "grüne Mitte Essen", where almost one third of the area is green or water.

left: Green roofs are easy to maintain and comparably easy to implement.

According to the OB Barometer 2020, climate change is the most important future topic for the municipalities. Innovative climate change mitigation and integrated climate adaptation make important contributions to sustainable urban development.

# At [www.sdg-portal.de](http://www.sdg-portal.de), municipalities can check the status of the local sustainability goals.

In Düsseldorf, in the course of renovating the roof of a building complex, a total area of 6,900 square meters was turned into a green roof. Green roofs have several advantages: they provide habitat for plants and animals, absorb pollution, naturally hold back water in the case of heavy rain and do not heat up as much when the weather is hot.

Measures concerning heat protection are also a component of municipal health promotion. Environmental pollution can cause illness. Pollution is not just heat but noise as well. It can be very loud in urban districts with mixed use, where homes are built in close quarters side by side with trade, gastronomy and leisure facilities, and where there is the additional roar of the traffic. Solutions are needed. We have shown how compact and at the same time low-noise districts can be planned and achieved on behalf of the German Environment Agency on the basis of eight case studies in our donor municipalities, among others in Mainz, Stuttgart and Wiesbaden. Environmental pollution is also the result of a too high consumption of resources. The newly created website [www.ressourceneffizientekommune.de](http://www.ressourceneffizientekommune.de) informs of opportunities how the municipalities can deploy resources in the most sparing or rather efficient manner, in particular the potential relating to procurement, car pools, own properties and services for the supply of water and energy.

## **Infrastructures: sustainable, resilient, digital**

Climate and resource conservation and a healthy life are important sustainability goals of Agenda 2030. Municipalities can now check online where they are on the way to more sustainability. The working group "SDG-Indikatoren für Kommunen" (SDG Indicators for Municipalities), in which Difu is represented with five male and three female scientists, has not only reworked and updated the indicator catalogue, it has also developed and tested it with municipal practitioners. It also relaunched the internet portal. At [www.sdg-portal.de](http://www.sdg-portal.de), cities, towns and communities with over 5,000 residents and all districts in Germany can see where there is a

need for action. And learn from other municipalities: for example, Stuttgart shows how to get the people in the district involved for example with the "Salz und Suppe" (Nosh and Natter) initiative. And children in Trier learn through play why bees are important and rubbish is valuable as part of the "Zukunftsdiplom" (Future Diploma), which gives them valuable lessons on ecological sustainability.

Not only a consistent policy for green roofs and façades, parks and unsealed open areas, but also man-made ponds and water features are effective measures to tackle climate change. And they become part of the urban infrastructure. Therefore, urban development that respects the climate does not only drive on the targeted expansion of these "green" and "blue" infrastructures but combines them with technical solutions, for example with water pipes and sewers. We are studying the feasibility of integrated and networked urban and infrastructure planning using the water infrastructure as an example in cooperation with Berlin and Norderstedt. The study is now in its fourth module and is part of the netWORKS 4 project supported by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Now more Germany municipalities are to benefit from the experiences of our partner cities.

There is an urgent need for action in the field of urban renewal concerning energy. In order to achieve the climate policy goals of the German Federal Government, the comprehensive transformation of the urban energy system including the energy renovation of buildings cannot be avoided. In an expert report for the German Advisory Council on the Environment, we pointed out the value of urban districts for sustainable urban development and recommended strengthening the district level, which would be advantageous due to its synergy effects. The district Brühl with Gründerzeit architecture in Chemnitz is an already implemented, innovative example in practice for urban renewal concerning energy.

Investments in the expansion of the digital infrastructure, in education and in climate change mitigation are not just a part of a sensible crisis policy, they also strengthen the resilience of towns and communities.

In order to drive an ecological and socially compatible transformation, investments in the expansion of infrastructure are essential. However, even before the pandemic, the Germany-wide investment deficit in the districts, cities, towns and municipalities was most recently 147 billion euros and was thus 9 billion euros more than the previous year according to the result of the “KfW-Kommunalpanel” produced by Difu. The coronavirus crisis has been a huge stress test for municipal finances. It harbours the danger that the municipalities will now further reduce their investments and that the investment backlog will increase. Even future investments, with which impulses for the transformation of towns and cities have to be driven in such crisis situations, could be deferred. In our additional survey on the impact of the coronavirus crisis in April 2020, around 50% of the municipalities said that if necessary they would delay available spending. Investments in the expansion of the digital infrastructure, in education and in climate change mitigation are not just a part of a sensible crisis policy, they also strengthen the resilience of towns and communities. In the memorandum “Post-Corona-Stadt” (Post Coronavirus City) we presented what form a resilient and above all sufficient development of cities and regions could take, i.e., development which consciously backs the sparing consumption of energy and raw materials. We published this memorandum in June 2020 in the course of implementing the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research’s City of the Future flagship initiative and together with further accompanying projects from the same ministry’s support initiatives.

On account of the crisis, almost all municipalities expect an advance in digitalisation, which we are also aware of from the municipal panel. Furthermore, stakeholders, particularly in disadvantaged areas, require support in dealing with the impact of digitalisation, e.g., online shopping. That became evident from a Difu study on local economies. These small, locally established businesses are greatly important precisely

in such districts. Namely, they do not only give people employment but also ensure local supply. Furthermore, they offer space for personal encounters, allow a neighbourly togetherness and additionally ensure a social solidarity. Support for education, economic activity and work in the neighbourhood, as pursued by the Bildung, Wirtschaft, Arbeit im Quartier – BIWAQ (Education, Economy, Work in the Neighbourhood) federal programme from the European Social Fund in Germany (ESF) therefore has a great added value to cities, towns and communities.

### Municipal solidarity

Investments in digital and climate friendly infrastructure, in education, in the expansion and renewal of public transport as well as limited financial resources - many municipalities are currently facing very similar challenges. Generally, these challenges do not stop at the border to the next municipality. Synergies can be created through cooperation in regional development. But how can a fair balance of cost and benefits work? In October, Difu started a three year long process in the greater Munich area under the motto “region is solidarity”. Together with the municipalities in the region, we want to try and further develop practical approaches to inter-municipality cooperation. An initial stock-take of instruments and best-practice examples has already taken place.

Solidarity is also the social glue in our towns and cities. However, many people can simply no longer afford their city on account of high rents or they just cannot find a home. Numerous cities are trying to counteract this trend, for example, by increasing their housing stock. From the 20 municipalities, in which we have conducted studies on behalf of the Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (BBSR) and in cooperation with RegioKontext GmbH, we know that despite all the differences in the urban spectrum the biggest difficulty in almost all municipalities is the

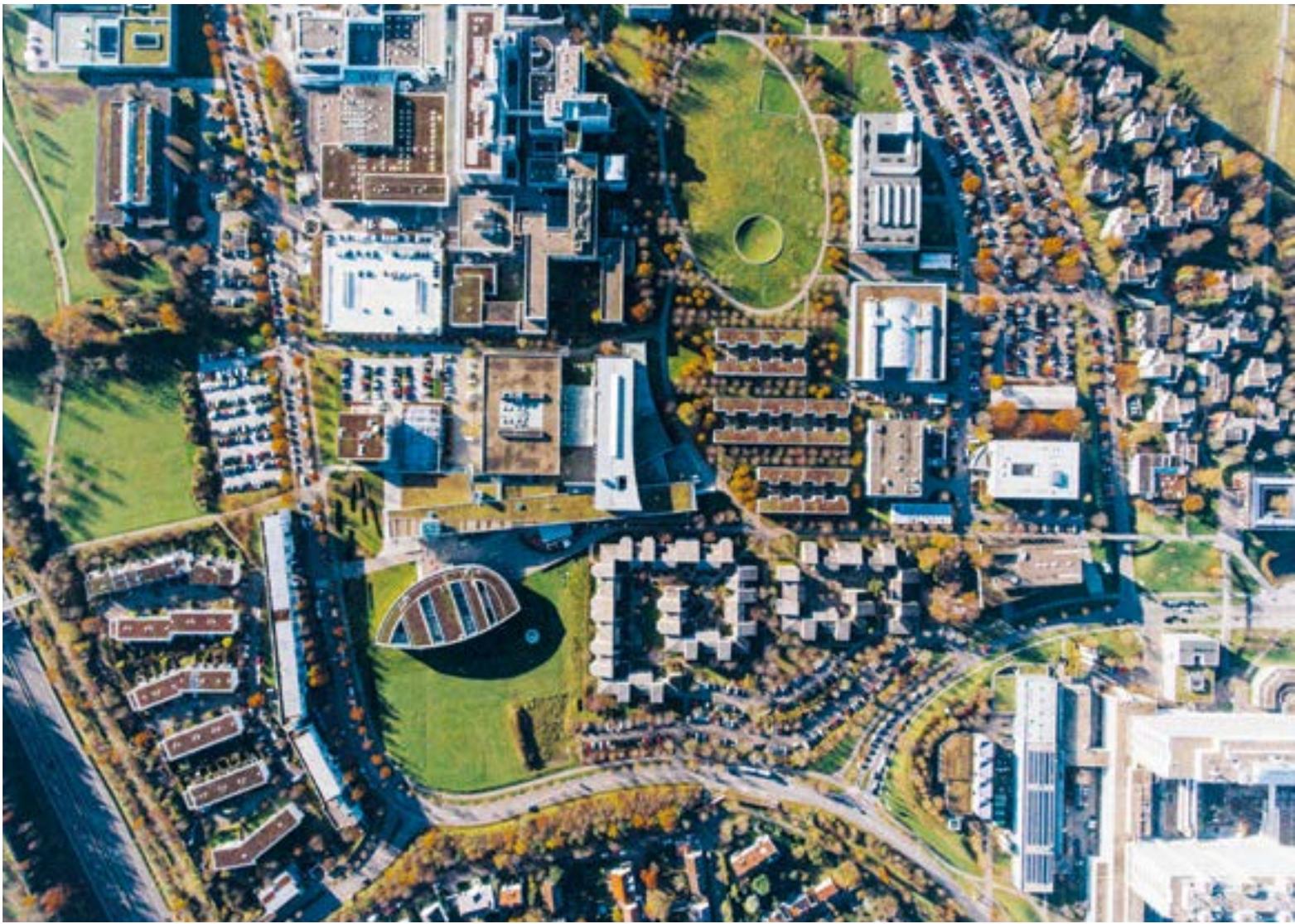
above: For urban renewal concerning energy, the district level provides synergy effects.

below: energy efficient new build



same: in many places there is a lack of urban land. However, you cannot have new builds without building land. The rapidly increasing land prices make it almost impossible for municipal housing associations to purchase land. However, it is urgently needed. The population is growing and the demand for nurseries, schools and above all social housing must be met. The lack of land means that financing such central tasks, such as the provision of public utilities and services, is becoming increasingly more difficult. In a study, which we initiated together with the Association of German Cities we show how municipalities can gain more influence on urban development through a strategic land policy.

14 towns and cities have started their journey of evaluating and further developing the land policy. For us, it is certain: an integrated municipal land policy is needed for towns and cities to be able to remain capable of acting in the medium and long term. Cities like Münster and Ulm have been demonstrating for years how it can work. From our point of view, urban development must bring together the instruments of property policy with those of urban development law and use them to create an effective municipal land policy.



In 50 years time, the towns and cities should still be able to start developments on their own land what cannot be expected from other stakeholders on the market.

It is only in this way that towns and cities can fulfil their responsibility regarding the common good and guarantee the provision of public utilities and services in the long term.

A home of your own - for many new immigrants, e.g., recognised refugees, that is not taken for granted. They have particular difficulty on the housing market. Therefore, participation in society is denied to them. However, solidarity requires spaces, as we established in our research cooperation with the University of Stuttgart. Although inclusive housing projects, such as the Klarissenkloster in Cologne Kalk, a former

monastery complex in which refugees live side by side with locals, are still not very common, they could play an important role for societal integration. In connection with (new) immigration, in another research project we studied the question how small and medium-sized towns shape the community life of various segments of the population, and in doing so, we arrived at the conclusion that good governance is of central importance for societal integration and believable communal integration policy. The fact that in 2020 the German Federal Government appointed Difu to its expert committee and we were able to contribute our expertise to the report on



left: Together with 14 towns and cities, including Stuttgart (shown in photo), Difu studied the opportunities of a changed municipal land policy.

right: Solidarity needs spaces: An inclusive housing project has been established at the site of the former monastery Klarissenkloster in Cologne Kalk.

the framework conditions for the ability to integrate encourages us to further investigate this topic, which is relevant for the municipalities: 2021 in an EU project on the topic of inclusive housing.

You can find an overview of all Difu projects and Difu publications online:

[difu.de/projekte](https://difu.de/projekte)  
[difu.de/publikationen](https://difu.de/publikationen)

Older people can often only partially participate in society too. It is often due to financial reasons. Old-age poverty in Germany is increasing. The municipalities are directly confronted with the consequences. Taking Bielefeld, Hamm and Kiel as examples, we have studied the importance of the topic of old age poverty for current and future municipal practice and have drawn initial conclusions regarding the needs and opportunities for action at a municipal level. Accordingly, we are convinced that a more detailed academic study would be suitable to raise awareness of the topic and to provide the municipalities with more conceptual support in this important area of action.

However, solidarity also applies to the younger generation. A real milestone is the planned modernisation of the German law on child and youth welfare. Difu has been monitoring the current reform process since 2017. The new child and youth welfare laws are likely to come into force in mid 2021. A seven year phase of implementation in three stages is envisaged for the implementation of inclusive child and youth welfare with assistance from a single source for children and youths both with and without disabilities. How these and other new regulations are specifically passed down to the municipal practice will be shown in the near future. In any case, we are keeping an eye on what happens!



Building with wood protects resources and the climate: closing gaps and adding stories using wood construction

# Knowledge transfer – Exchange of experiences – Networking

Knowledge comes from exchange. In the context of events and training sessions, we bring together an expert audience from the fields of administration, politics, research and practice with the objective of sharing knowledge, experiences and ideas with each other.

In our Difu seminars and Difu dialogues, we address the whole range of topics in urban affairs. In addition, large projects under the umbrella of Difu, such as the Dialogforum Jugendhilfe (Dialogue Forum for Youth Welfare), the Fahrradakademie (Cycling Academy) and the Skills Centre for Municipal Climate Change Mitigation (Service- und Kompetenzzentrum: Kommunaler Klimaschutz (SK:KK)) offer relevant topical events.

On account of the pandemic, in spring 2020 we had to close our doors for events in our building in Zimmerstraße in Berlin Kreuzberg. However, we were still present for the municipalities and invited them to events: webinars, online dialogues and virtual municipal conferences. Our conclusion after almost a year of online meetings and video conferences: they work! But we are already greatly looking forward to seeing you in person again.

## Difu seminars

In our Difu seminars, we keep municipalities up to date and at the same time offer the opportunity to shape the urban discourse as part of a large network. In the course of the first lockdown, unfortunately some seminars had to be cancelled. Subsequently, we quickly moved our programme online and in the context of this new format, we reached a larger group of people than previously: of the more than 30 originally planned seminars for 2020, 19 of them took place with more than 1,050 registrations.

In regard to topics our programme covers a broad spectrum of the issues that are currently relevant for municipalities. In 2020, the following seminars were particularly in demand: From 13th to 14th February, the seminar “Wissenschaft in der Stadt. Chancen, Grenzen, Pers-

pektiven beim Miteinander von Kommunen und Hochschulen“ (Academia in the city. Opportunities, limits and perspective in the cooperation between cities and universities) took place in person in Berlin. A good cooperation between universities, city administrations, politicians, the economic sector and urban society can contribute in a multifaceted and complex manner to positive effects on a competitive urban development. But how does it look regarding the stakeholders and their interests? Where and how do synergies come about and how can they be used? Elke Bojarra-Becker and Beate Hollbach-Grömig in cooperation with the city of Nuremberg addressed these questions.

In order to meet societal challenges, such as demographic change or collapsing traffic systems, the cities, towns and regions need to set the course for the long term. How trend analyses,

model calculations and scenario analysis can provide support and how future scenarios can be combined with ongoing planning and steering processes was shown by Stefan Schneider and Rüdiger Knipp from 9th to 10th March in the Difu seminar "Visionen greifbar machen. Auswirkungen strategischer Entscheidungen abschätzen" (Realise visions. Gauge the impact of strategic decisions).

Artificial intelligence, interactive, database supported - in the course of digitalisation it is not only the towns' and cities' way of functioning and their structure that change, but also how they are planned. A range of digital planning instruments are already today changing the communication about urban development, the sharing of planning foundations and the prognosis for urban development processes. In the webinar "Stadtplanung im digitalen Umbruch" (Town planning during digital change) from 26th to 27th March, Jan Abt and Julia Diringler explained tools and trends for digital planning.

Even in "normal times" participation is not an easy task. But how can the good municipal practice of participation be maintained in a time, in which routines are disrupted and resources may be lacking? Stephanie Bock and Bettina Reimann discussed this question in the webinar "Beteiligungskultur in der Krise?! Erfahrungen und Reflexionen zum aktuellen Stand der Bürgerbeteiligung" (Participation culture in crisis? Experience and reflection on the current status of citizen participation) with more than 80 experts from 4th to 5th November.

### Difu dialogue

The Difu dialogue series, which was actually conceived as a means for personal exchange, addresses topics and questions about the future of cities predominantly from a Berlin-specific perspective. We have been gladdened all the more by the large Germany-wide response with which our 2020 online dialogues were met. This year, we organised a total of seven Difu dialogues with over 1,050 participants.

For example, on 11th March the topic was the situation of the Berlin industry. At the fully booked in person Difu dialogue "Wir ziehen um! Zukunft des Gewerbes in begehrten Stadtteilen" (We are moving! Future of industry in sought after city locations), the Difu academics Ricarda

Pätzold and Sandra Wagner-Endres examined the question whether a rent control for industry could protect against displacement. The platform guests were Christof Deitmar from IHK Berlin (Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Berlin), Andy Hehmke, district councillor from Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, Daniela Wagner, member of the Bundestag for BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN and David Weißert, head of division for Senatsverwaltung für Wirtschaft, Energie und Betriebe (Berlin Senate Department for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises).

The Difu online dialogue of the Fahrradakademie (Cycling Academy) on 29th April discussed "Krisenfestes Radfahren: Die Corona-Pop-up-Radwege in Berlin" (Crisis-free cycling: the coronavirus pop-up cycle paths in Berlin). Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg was the first district in Berlin to make a name for itself with a "infrastructure resilient to pandemics". The responsible bicycle traffic coordinator from the Berlin Senate administration, Peter Broymann, and Felix Weisbrich from the district administration of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg spoke to Dagmar Köhler, head of the local mobility team at Difu about the fast implementation and the question whether Berlin's mobility will be more sustainable when it exits the pandemic. The event was broadcast via livestream and also recorded. It reached several hundred participants from municipal politics and administration.

You can find an overview of all events online:

[difu.de/veranstaltungen](https://difu.de/veranstaltungen)



Among the prize-winning measures of the competition "Klimaaktive Kommune 2020" (2020 climate active municipalities) were Dresden's commitment "Dresden baut grün" (Dresden builds green) to make façades and roofs green when planning municipal construction (left) and the climate change mitigation campaign "München Cool City" (right).

## Two highlights of the 2020 event year were the two large municipal conferences.

The question which lessons could be learnt from the pandemic regarding the traffic of the future was the topic of the 14th Fahrradkommunalkonferenz (Municipal Bicycle Conference), which Difu and the German Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure held in cooperation with the municipal umbrella organisations on 10th November and had a record number of participants. Around 665 mobility experts from municipalities, regions and state authorities met virtually in the host city of Bremen. Under the heading "Radverkehr zwischen Rückenwind und Flächenstreit. Was bleibt vom Hype?" (Bicycle traffic between tailwind and dispute for space. What remains from the hype?) it primarily discussed the question whether the current traffic policy enthusiasm in the German communities would last. This year the focus of the discussion forums was on the topics of the municipal ability to act, the design of cycleways and the financing of new cycle infrastructure. Keynote speeches were delivered by Ute Hammer, Managing Director of the German Road Safety Council in the form of a systematic look at safety and by Groningen councillor Benni Leemhuis on the change in his city from a radical idea to a blue print for cycle cities worldwide.

In the framework of the Kommunale Klimakonferenz (Municipal Climate Conference) held by Difu from 30th November to 2nd December Rita Schwarzelühr-Sutter, parliamentary state secretary in the German Federal Ministry of the Environment announced the winners of the "Klimaaktive Kommune 2020" (2020 climate active municipalities) competition. In 2020, a total of 176 entries reached us from the municipalities - twice as many as in the previous year. That shows the crucial role that the municipalities are already playing in climate change mitigation. Unfortunately despite our plans, we were unable to congratulate the winners personally in Berlin. Instead, without further ado we produced a film presented by graduate meteorologist Sven Plöger. Among the prize-winning projects, two came from our Difu donors: the "München Cool City" campaign and the Dresden directive "Dresden baut grün" (Dresden builds green). Afterwards, we discussed in online forums for three days with experts and climate stakeholders from the municipalities, and provided expert input – this year it was on the topic of climate change mitigation and youth, the use of photovoltaics and also successful climate communication.

# Urban research: current and close to practice

The German Institute of Urban Affairs is the largest urban research institute in the German-speaking region. We advise municipalities on all tasks that they face now and in the future. Independent, objective and well-founded.

## **We have been a reliable partner for the municipalities for over 50 years.**

Difu was founded in 1973 on the initiative of the member towns and cities of the Association of German Cities (Deutscher Städtetag, DST). Difu is a non-profit limited company under German law and has offices in Berlin and Cologne. Alongside the German Federal Government and the state of Berlin, more than 100 municipalities are its donors. Its sole shareholder is the Verein für Kommunalwissenschaften (VfK - Association for Municipal Research).

## **We address the complete spectrum of municipal topics.**

From new forms of mobility and housing to municipal climate change mitigation and environmental protection and from policies for the development of building land to smart cities. We target our research towards the needs of the towns and cities: We implement planning games and law impact assessments, undertake application research, evaluate programmes and develop qualified training opportunities and work tools for municipal practice.

## **We tackle the municipalities' future topics at an early stage.**

It is our aim to give the towns and cities new impulses to solve upcoming challenges and to contribute to sustainable urban development with innovative ideas – through research, training and exchange of experiences.

## **We bring different perspectives together.**

Complex societal problems can only be solved if we work together. Therefore, we work closely with our partners from worlds of politics, civil society and the economy, and integrate their expertise in the research process. Together we discover sustainable solutions suitable for practice.

## **We research in an interdisciplinary manner and benefit from a broad network.**

Researchers from different subjects work together at Difu on current municipal matters. Be it urban and regional planning, law, geography, social sciences, economy or environmental sciences – we look at the municipalities' topics from different points of views. And we benefit from an excellent network of cities and municipalities, with the research community and with our partner institutes in Germany and abroad.

# Organisation

## Institute management

Prof. Dr. Carsten Kühl  
Director, Director of Research and Managing Director

Dipl.-Geogr. Luise Adrian  
Commercial Director

Prof. Dr. Arno Bunzel  
Deputy Director of Research and authorised Representative, Head of the Urban Development, Law and Social Affairs Department

## Research, knowledge transfer and administration

Department Urban Development, Law and Social Affairs  
Head: Prof. Dr. Arno Bunzel

Department Infrastructure, Economy and Finance  
Head: Dr. Jens Libbe

Department Mobility  
Head: Tilman Bracher

Department Environment  
Head: Cornelia Rösler

Further Training  
Head: Ulrike Wolf

Knowledge Management  
Head: Susanne Plagemann

General Administration  
Commercial Director: Luise Adrian

You can find an overview of all our employees online:

[difu.de/institut/menschen-am-difu](https://difu.de/institut/menschen-am-difu)

## Difu 2020 in figures



2 offices: Berlin and Cologne



190 employees, including 31 students



103 ongoing research projects, of which 32 have been newly started



We research, educate and network: almost 2,110 participants at our Difu seminars and Difu dialogues



Innovative urban research for more than 100 donors with a population of approx. 25 million people



Over 20,000 downloads of Difu publications



Around 7,400 subscribers to the Difu magazine "Berichte"



Almost 593,000 visits to [difu.de](https://difu.de) and 195,000 page impressions on [repository.difu.de](https://repository.difu.de)



More than 8,000 subscribers to the Difu newsletter



Almost 5,850 followers on Facebook and Twitter

## Difu donors 2020

Aachen	Jena	Trier
Amberg		Tübingen
Aschaffenburg	Karlsruhe	
Augsburg	Kassel	Ulm
	Kiel	Unna
Bad Homburg	Koblenz	
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