

## **Making city together? INVITATION to the Berlin STADTFORUM VON UNTEN**

Dear initiatives and interested people,

The Senate for Urban Development and Housing is organizing a new edition of the Stadtforum Berlin (Berlin City Forum) taking place on 26th of June based on the slogan "*Participate! How do we talk about urban development in the future?*" Have you got ideas, but didn't get an invitation. Or weren't able or didn't want to follow the call of the organizers to submit a poster and to be selected for one of the 20 stands at the "*Ideenmarkt*" (market of ideas)?

We neither. We don't want to present our ideas & experiences in competition for attention, but we would like to discuss the question "*Which requirements and resources does participatory urban development need?*" with all interested parties. Therefore we will use the official City Forum and complement it with an independent format: **DAS STADTFORUM VON UNTEN**.

We – the *Initiativkreis Stadtforum von unten* – invite you to discuss the requirements and framework conditions for participation in urban development in an open assembly from 4 to 5:30 p.m.

**When?** 26th of June 2017, starting at 4 p.m.

**Where?** Markthalle Neun (Kreuzberg, Eisenbahnstraße 42/43)

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The Berlin City Forum is an official starting point for the "*development of Berlin's guidelines for participation*"<sup>1</sup>, which was laid down in the coalition agreement. But regarding the first step – designing the event itself – we, the city-users, were once again not appropriately and sensibly involved. Thus, the most important requirement for strengthening the "*structures and processes of citizens' participation*"<sup>1</sup> has been forgotten: **the participation in the participation!**

This is how an event concept came into being, that wants to draw on our "*expertise and cooperation*"<sup>2</sup> and wants to present them on demand – reduced to the "*Ideenmarkt*" and far away from the podium onto which we are not invited. The organizers are attempting to develop a "***new Berlin participation culture***"<sup>2</sup> with the currently unsatisfactory methods of participation; and in that way they reveal the lack of awareness for the city-users as equal actors.

The central question "*How do we talk about urban development in the future?*" also hides the core of the debate. What is required instead of participatory communications, is to **institutionally embed our participatory rights** in politics and administration. The further expansion of the "*online participation platform mein.berlin.de*"<sup>3</sup> into an "*understandable information source*"<sup>3</sup> will not enable and organize our impulses in the real urban space.

So before we go into the development of guidelines and of quality criteria for citizens' participation, **let's take a step back!**

<sup>1</sup> Weblink [Koalitionsvereinbarung „Berlin gemeinsam gestalten“, 2016-2021, S. 31](#)

<sup>2</sup> Weblink [„initiativenaufruf – Wie reden wir zukünftig über Stadtentwicklung“, S.2](#)

<sup>3</sup> Weblink [Wortprotokoll „Ausschuss für bürgerschaftliches Engagement und Partizipation“ 24.04.17, S. 47](#)

You know best what is needed: Therefore we ask all interested participants to prepare **short inputs (max. 3 minutes) for the assembly regarding following questions: "Which requirements and resources do we need to participate?" and "How can a City Forum (from the bottom) look like in the future?"**

In the short 2 hours of time we would like to start making the invisible visible together, and to work on a first overview of and outlook on **participatory urban development**. Representatives of the assembly can take the intermediate results to the official podium, which starts at 6 p.m. We firmly believe, that there will be place for us up there!

**Please forward this invitation to your networks! We hope that all initiatives and people that are active in the city, will contribute their experiences to the assembly!**

**We still need helpers** for the set-up of the assembly, transcript writers, translators and other kind of supporters - if you feel addressed, contact us!

**Last but not least:** Bring along your seat cushions – for sitting or for a pillow fight!

Best regards,

Initiativkreis *Stadtforum von Unten*

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