

CO-CREATING OUR CITY

Young People and City Leaders Building
Next-Level Engagement

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2024

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A MISMATCH?

YOUNG PEOPLE

- Are engaged on an **issue-basis**
- Seek out **project-based** opportunities
- Use **online platforms** to express their ideas
- Often lack self-efficacy – who's listening?

CITIES

- Want to hear **young people's ideas** for vibrant communities
- Keen to engage especially **underrepresented** young people
- Sometimes lack **efficient ways** to engage with young residents





HOW TO ADDRESS THE MISMATCH BETWEEN WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SEEK OUT AND CITIES CAN OFFER?

Together, young people and city decision-makers generate concrete proposals for their cities to establish vibrant communities and mechanisms for next-level youth engagement.

NEXT LEVEL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Our collaborative project uses a novel **Citizen Science approach** to address the mismatch between opportunities for exchange offered in cities and what young people seek out in terms of engagement to realize their ideas of flourishing communities.

The project sees groups of selected **young people** (aged 16 to 19 years) **and city administrators** in two cities – Charlotte, NC, and Düsseldorf, Germany – investigate the needs and opportunities for youth engagement and make recommendations for tangible solutions to create vibrant communities in their own cities.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

01 KNOWLEDGE

- **Youth-led insights** into the needs and opportunities for youth engagement in cities
- **Ideas for vibrant communities** that young people and city decision-makers share
- Comparative insights into **what cities share** and what makes them unique

02 COMPETENCIES

- **Scientific** and **democratic literacy**
- Increased civic **engagement** and **political efficacy**
- Identity and **belonging** to their cities among participating **young people** and **city administrators**

03 SOLUTIONS

- City-specific and directly actionable **proposals for solutions** young people and city administrators would like to see
- Blueprint for a **future youth engagement process** that can be transferred to other cities worldwide

WHAT IS CITIZEN SCIENCE?

“Citizen science describes the **participation of individuals** in scientific processes who are **not institutionally bound** in that scientific field” (Bonn et al. 2022).

“Citizen science as a means for **democratization** of science, public engagement, **equity**, and **justice**” (Irwin 1995).

“Citizen science as the public’s involvement in scientific research, with members of the public partnering with professional scientists to **collectively gather, submit, or analyse** large quantities of data” (Bonney 1996).

CITIZEN SCIENCE

WHY SHOULD WE APPLY THIS APPROACH?

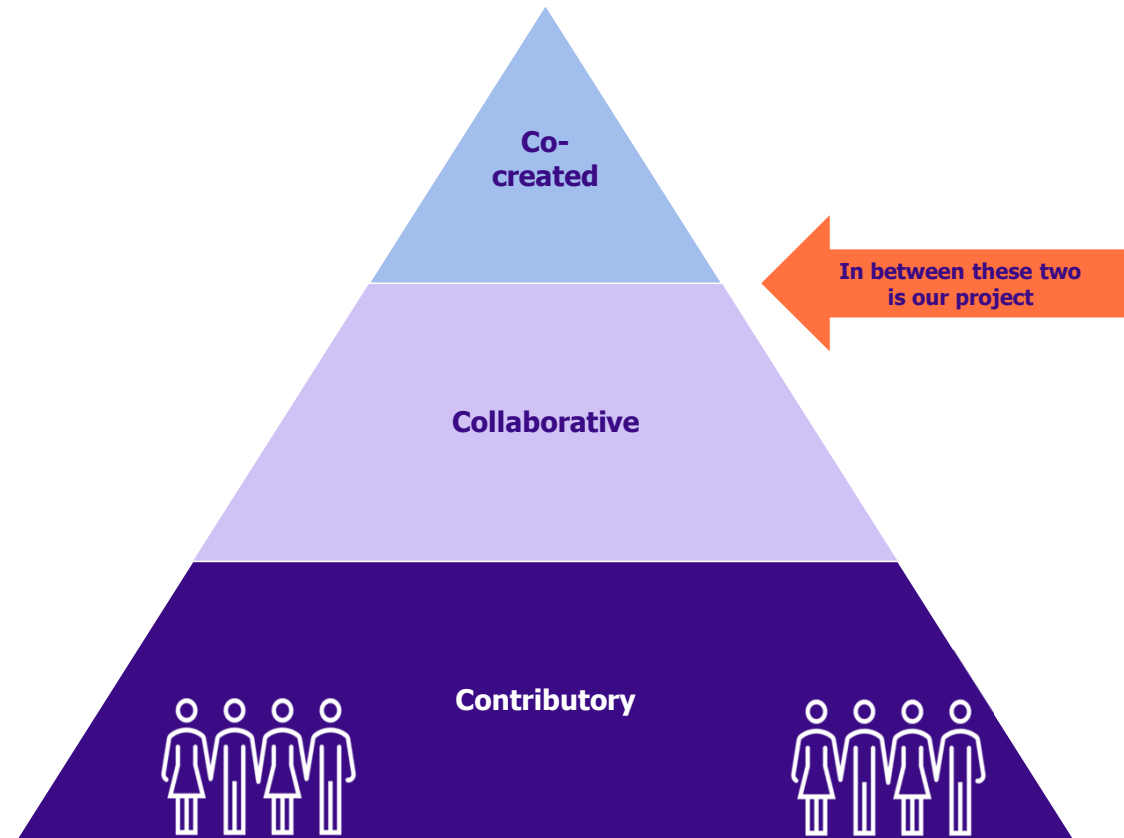
Table 3: Main benefits of CS for science, society, and policy analysed in international policy documents.

Science	Members of Society	Policy
Science Project level <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Increase in amount and scale of data· Validation of data· Cost-effectiveness	Increase of <ul style="list-style-type: none">· understanding of science, scientific principles, and scientific challenges (scientific literacy)· individual learning· topical knowledge· interest in a scientific career	Improvement of <ul style="list-style-type: none">· policy decision-making processes· implementation of policy Increase of <ul style="list-style-type: none">· knowledge about policy issues (political literacy)· societal relevance of policy· interest in policy decision-making as well as the acceptance of policy measures Support of (environmental) stewardship and activism (civic empowerment)
Science – Society Interface <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Increase of public engagement, interest in research, and public awareness of science· Inclusion of diverse sources of expertise, perspectives and experiences (broad knowledge domains)		

Haklay (2020)

HOW ARE WE GOING TO DO RESEARCH?

Classification of participation in Citizen Science



Bonney et al. 2009, Shirk et al. 2012

WHO IS JOINING THE PROJECT?

Different roles in Citizen Science

Researchers

- Lea Gronenberg
- Christine Hübner
- Anna Soßdorf

Organize and conduct research

Citizen Scientists

- Young People
- City administrators
- Elected politicians

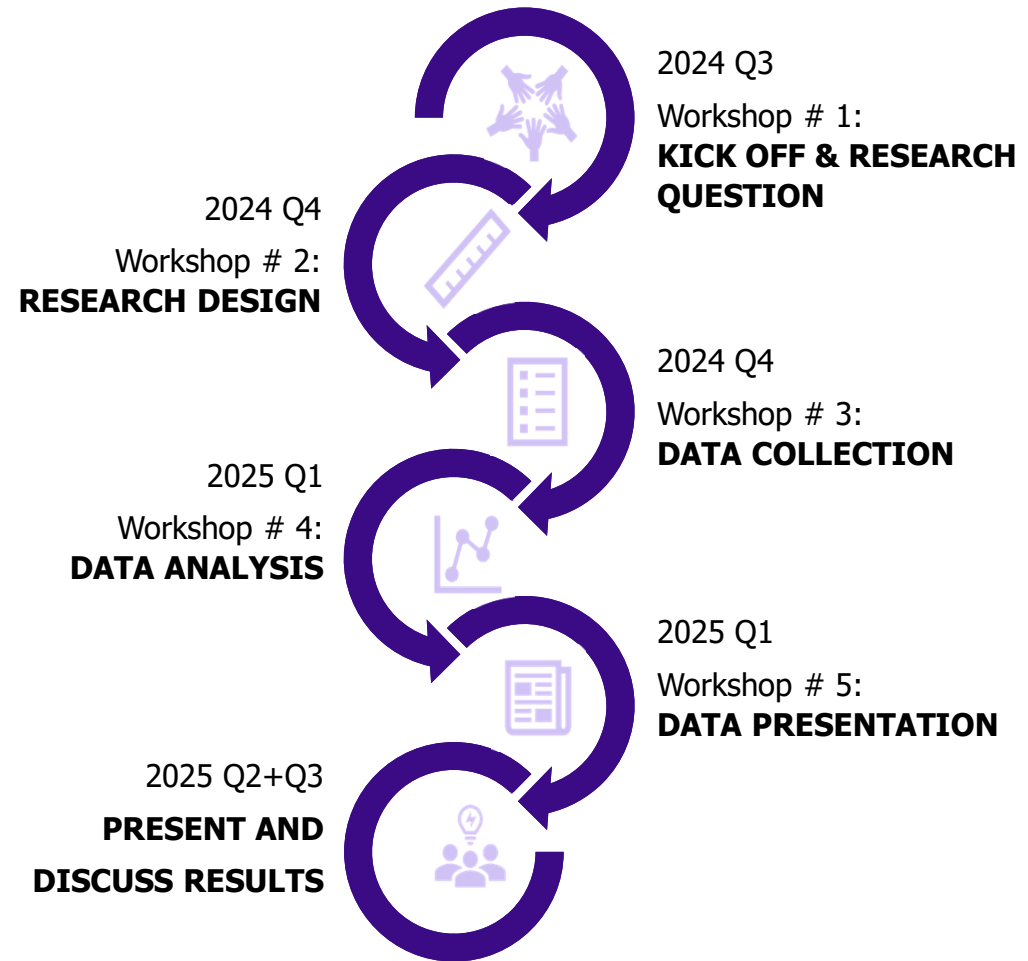
Engage in and enrich research with local knowledge

Enablers

- 1 city lead in Düsseldorf
- 1 city lead in Charlotte
- 1 contact person from City administration in Düsseldorf and 1 in Charlotte
- GMF & Gambrell Foundation

Support the logistics, organization and process of the research

PHASES



ACTIVITIES

Citizen Science process

Summit
in Charlotte, NC

BarCamps
in Charlotte, NC,
and Düsseldorf, Germany

Toolkit

Dissemination

ACTIVITIES

01

Citizen Science process

Insight-generating Citizen Science process that engages up to fifteen citizen scientists (young citizens and political representatives/ city administrators) in each city for a period of 6 months and includes exchange with and advice from a network of experts as well as virtual exchange with citizen scientists in the other city;

02

Next-level Youth Engagement Summit

3 days in Charlotte, NC that sees a select group of citizen scientists (young people and city administrators, up to 10, incl. guardians where required) from Düsseldorf, Germany, travel to Charlotte, NC for three days to discuss youth-led insights from their research with citizen scientists in Charlotte as well as invited experts (up to 40 people);

ACTIVITIES

03 BarCamp

One city-wide BarCamp in each Charlotte and Düsseldorf as a final event, inviting a wider group of young people and city decision makers, local experts, interested stakeholders and citizens in each city to debate the proposals and further specify solutions for next-level youth engagement for their city (around 100 people);

04 Toolkit

Development of a toolkit describing the youth engagement process and best practices to enable other cities to develop solutions that fit the needs of young people and city administrators alike;

05 Dissemination activities

Dissemination activities (according to specific modes and spaces of youth and city administration: social media, peer-to-peer-video, accompanying project blog) with support of design/creative professionals.

Month	Planned activities	Actors involved
May-Sep 2024	Project setup, incl. recruitment and training of citizen scientists	Project team, Gambrell Foundation, and city authorities
Oct 2024 - Mar 2025	Citizen Science research period, accompanied by a dedicated researcher in each city includes up to three virtual exchanges between citizen science teams (kick-off, mid-project and pre-BarCamp)	Project team & Citizen Scientists
Apr 2025	Next-level Youth Engagement Summit in Charlotte, NC 3-day programme with Citizen Scientists from Düsseldorf and Charlotte and invited experts to discuss youth-led insights from their research	Project team, Citizen Scientists, city authorities, expert network
May-Jun 2025	BarCamps in both participating cities	Project team, Citizen Scientists, city authorities, wider public
Jul-Aug 2025	Toolkit development and reporting	Project team with input from Citizen Scientists
Sep-Oct 2025	Dissemination activities incl. blog, video creation & social media activities by researchers & citizen scientists	Project team, selected Citizen Scientists

PARTNERS



Funded by the Gambrell Foundation

The US-American Gambrell Foundation is based in Charlotte, North Carolina

Since 1988, it has managed the endowment of department stores' heiress Sarah Belk Gambrell, who died in 2020, and invests it in projects to balance social inequalities in the spirit of the founder, a lifelong philanthropist.

The foundation is led by Sally Gambrell Bridgeford, the founder's daughter, and Brian Collier

Its history and reputation are to some extent comparable with those of major German private foundations such as the Hertie Foundation.

PARTNERS

d | part

d|part is a non-profit, independent and non-partisan think tank. The focus of our work is to research and support different forms of political participation. We contribute to a democratic society in which all people can voice their opinion, participate in and contribute to political processes.

GMF

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, transatlantic organisation headquartered in Washington, DC. GMF envisions a democratic, secure, and prosperous world in which freedom and individual dignity prevail.

SCI:MOVE

Science on the move is a consulting agency for citizen science and science communication.

GMF Cities and Cities Fortifying Democracy

The collective trust that is essential to a vital democracy is built locally. Experiences with city government and the authenticity of community engagement are part of what shapes individual attitudes about whether democracy works. For example, when cities actively engage residents to develop effective solutions to problems in transparent ways, the confidence generated helps create an ongoing dialogue that in turn fosters innovation and a strong sense of community.

In the face of growing concerns over the strength of democracy worldwide, GMF has been working to identify ways in which cities can fortify underlying institutions and principles. Cities have a unique freedom to experiment with innovative approaches that can be replicated and scaled up to the state or national level. This has earned them a well-deserved reputation as “laboratories of democracy”.



- Combatting Disinformation at the City Level
- Fortifying Local Journalism
- Advancing Multi-Racial Inclusive Communities
- Building Common Ground
- Addressing Youth Disenchantment with Democracy.

PROJECT TEAM



Lea Gronenberg

d|part
project management



Dr Christine Hübner

d|part and
University of Sheffield



Dr Anna Soßdorf

SCI:MOVE
Science on the Move



Tarsi Dunlop

GMF Cities

YOUR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS