

German Habitat Forum, Berlin 2016

Summary:

Workshop A2 – Innovations in Urban Mobility

Convener: Sustainable Low Carbon Transport Partnership (SLoCaT)

Panelists

Clarence Rupingena / City of Windhoek

Dario Hidalgo / WRI

Isabel Flores / Ally

Steven Dale / Creative Urban Projects

Cornie Huizenga / SLoCaT

Guest Speakers

Sebastian Schlebusch / Nextbike

Jagan Shah / Director of National Institute of Urban Affairs, India

Moderator: Cornie Huizenga / SLoCaT

Pate: Armin Wagner / GIZ

Rapporteur: Mathias Merforth / GIZ

Co-Rapporteur: Daniel Moser / Greenpeace

Key messages:

- Innovation in urban mobility includes, but goes beyond ICT and the use of renewable energy. It includes smart policies, management as well as planning and decisions-making processes that favor the equitable access to walking, cycling and public transport. Innovation helps to improve decision-making and planning through open data, better information and higher transparency.

- Innovation in urban mobility arises from searching solutions for particular urban challenges and often happens in a participative manner. Creating room for innovation as well as identifying, evaluating and implementing solutions requires understanding the potential and limitations of innovative solutions in the specific contexts.

- To foster innovative urban mobility solutions, the wider co-benefits through improved social inclusion, better air quality, lower GHG emissions, less congestion and more attractive urban livelihoods have to be considered by policy-makers and in financing mechanisms.

Speakers and participants from various backgrounds came together to discuss the topic of innovation in urban mobility. Key questions for discussion were:

- What constitutes innovation in urban mobility?
- How do developed and developing cities view urban transport innovation?
- What are the key drivers of and barriers to innovation?
- How does innovative urban mobility support the New Urban Agenda?

Cornie Huizenga highlighted **various examples for innovation in urban mobility** from the 80 Days Campaign on Climate Action in Transport¹ and invited **participants and speakers to share their views** as well as urban mobility innovations from their working context. It became clear that **innovation not only comprises technological solutions, but stretches also on innovation in management, policies and operation of transport services**. Next to mobility apps for gathering better data for planning and decision making, smart urban freight solutions reducing empty miles, cable cars creating better access to remote urban districts as well as electric modes of public and private transport helping to decarbonize the transport sector; the participants pointed out that political commitments, such as targeting 20% of all road construction funds to walking and cycling, congestion charges, ultra-low emissions zones or regulatory reforms, street design guidelines civic participation and capacity-building approaches should be considered as urban mobility innovation in many cases. It was stated that innovative approaches and solutions have a **wide-range of co-benefits which are often neglected** in policy making, such as better inclusion and equitable access to mobility, better air quality, lower GHG emissions and congestion as well as improved urban livelihoods.

Further, it was outlined that **innovation in urban mobility is often a social and participative process** which can lead to creative **out-of-the box solutions** which target a wide set of development challenges in the urban context. To create **room for this creativity**, cities should think about how to overcome barriers to innovation in administration and decision-making processes, e.g. by bringing different stakeholders together and jointly discuss challenges and possible solutions. This would also allow overcoming walls in the mind of planners and decision-makers which often focus on particular technical solutions. An interesting point was the discussion about the **impact of political will – is there a general lack of innovative thinking?** A participant responded that this is not generally true. Often it is easier for politicians to present large-scale infrastructure projects to the public than intelligent, smart concepts and low-scale but high-impact solutions. **Innovation in urban mobility can thrive**, when new partnerships of experts, businesses, civic society and decision-makers work together on campaigning integrated and innovative solutions for transport challenges in urban areas.

¹ <http://www.ppmc-transport.org/80dayscampaign/>

On the other hand, **innovation takes place continuously** and often responds to inadequate mobility offers. While this often leads to controversial discussions, e.g. regarding the start of Uber in many cities. **Governments need to understand the potential and limitations of certain innovations in order to act wisely.** Otherwise, it cannot be guaranteed that transport is inclusive and serves overarching policy objectives. Governments should also take an active role in promoting ICT as backbone for many mobility innovations. This would allow **to make use of the high potential that an increasingly connected society possesses**, e.g. through the spread of smart phones and mobile internet. **National levels can help a lot**, e.g. by providing a proportion of capital investment or supporting project preparation and capacity-building.