

Application by the City of Dortmund - Initiative Dortmund Talent – to take part in the Smarter Cities Challenge

Dortmund is the largest city in the Ruhr Region with almost 580,000 inhabitants and is one of the largest and most important cities in Germany.

<http://www.dortmund.de/en/index.html>

The Ruhr Region with its heavy industry, which was at the core of the Federal Republic's recovery after World War II, is now facing the great challenge of structural change as it transforms itself from a society dominated by industry to become a modern service and knowledge-based society. Dortmund was also a key force in the Ruhr Region during the so-called "Wirtschaftswunder" economic boom years because of its coal, steel and beer industries. Now the city is right at the heart of the latest transitions, having taken up the challenge at an early stage to develop into an innovative metropolis for new technologies (information and communication technologies, logistics and micro-technology).

http://www.dortmund.de/en/economy_and_science/home_es/index.html

Demographic change, and the shortage of a skilled workforce which goes with it, is now confronting us and our society with even more challenges.

How can we stay attractive enough to compete with others and how can we continue to be such a great city to live in? How can we offer the people who live here good professional, educational and development chances while simultaneously providing the companies with well-trained, skilled staff? How can we ensure that the potentials of all the people in our city are recognized and supported? How do we support talent in Dortmund? How do we ensure there is continuous adaptation and change? How can we get the citizens of our city to join in and get involved?

In "Technology, Tolerance and Talent" we see an engine for economic well-being which shapes the attractiveness and the future of our city and region significantly. We are searching for new ways to develop the full potential of these three "T"s and want to find out how they can complement and multiply each other.

<http://www.thing-net.de/cms/artikel303.html>

In Dortmund we are increasingly focusing on yet another **T**: "Transparency" - in the sense of open communication. The inclusion of citizens in the city's planning and decision-making processes is turning out to be an important requirement for making the most of the potentials involved in technology, tolerance and talents. Dortmund has been heading along this path with its transparent municipal politics for many years now. The local "Action Areas" have been and are being shaped and developed in cooperation and in dialogue with the citizens as part of the "Social City Action Plan".

http://www.dortmund.de/de/rathaus_und_buergerservice/lokalpolitik/aktionsplan_soziale_stadt/startseite_aktionsplan/index.html?

http://www.dortmund.de/de/rathaus_und_buergerservice/buergerinteressen/ombudstelle/start_os/index.html

In Dortmund we are particularly committed to awakening the potentials of the people who already enjoy living here and to developing these potentials together. In this context early childhood education and successful educational processes at school and in apprenticeships play a key role. There are many good educational and

integration programs in Dortmund, however, some are not sufficiently interlinked with each other and they tend to be dependent on the initiative of individual persons or organizations.

Systematic, strategic and above all sustainable continuing development of talent promotion and the activation of potentials is therefore an essential municipal target.

That is why we see the **Initiative Dortmund Talent** as the focal point for discovering and promoting the talents, abilities and strengths of the people in our city.

The initiative was started in October 2011 by the central Office for Lord Mayor and Council Affairs with the aim of developing the talents and potential of all Dortmund people of whatever gender, nationality, religion, educational background or parents' income and to enable them to lead a self-determined and economically independent life in our city. The existing schemes, approaches and programs are to be supported, networked and further developed according to people's individual life situations.

All of this encourages companies to set up and settle here – which in turn attracts other ventures and is therefore crucial for the continuing economic development of this city.

The jobs follow the people.

To help us to develop the information needed for efficient planning and to target schemes and programs for discovering and supporting talent, we must ask ourselves a series of questions:

- What do we know about the talents, potentials and skills of people in our city?
- What schemes, approaches and programs are there in Dortmund for discovering potentials and for promoting children, young people and adults?
- How can we initiate discussion about talent in Dortmund which will lead to a mutual understanding of the term "talent" and which favors a talent-promoting attitude?
- Which partners in Dortmund promote the development of talent?
- Where can we find possible approaches for further development?
- What is hindering all the institutions and organizations involved from sharing their experience, knowledge and ideas?
- Where can we expect to meet with resistance?
- How can providing information at an early stage, giving explanations and participation help?
- How can a sensible compact data-system be developed to cover the topic of talents, skills and abilities: to provide information and communication for all citizens, to provide transparency for the worlds of business and politics and to enable scientists to carry out analyses?
- How do we utilize the creativity and dedication of our citizens to achieve continuous development?
- How can we include them in the changes, how can we achieve a willingness to change and adapt?

Support from the Smarter Cities Challenge would give us an independent view of our findings and ideas so far. An external team could also lead more unencumbered discussions between different stakeholders and existing institutions, in order, on the

one hand, to identify possible obstacles and objections at an early stage, and, on the other hand, to reveal solution approaches which come from the different points of view from municipal, non-profit and commercial institutions.

Together this could result in a plan which can be supported by all stakeholders and thus form a basis for successfully implementing individual schemes. Such a municipal masterplan would give us, together with other cities in the region, the basis for an answer to the pressing question of how to accomplish structural change in the Ruhr Region.