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Co-producing urban sustainability transitions knowledge with community, policy and science

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Abstract

This viewpoint presents insights on designing, engaging with and researching multi-stakeholder engagement spaces based on the experience of the ARTS project (2014–2016), active in five European cities also relevant for a broader European scale. We argue that those spaces represent an important new instrument of participatory governance that can elucidate the way different actors like community initiatives relate to and employ planning and policy contexts for working towards sustainable urban futures. The multi-stakeholder engagement spaces are analyzed regarding three functions they fulfill: co-creating new knowledge for action, making sense of contemporary transitions, and, exploring how sustainable solutions impact transitions. The lessons learned focus on the roles of different actors within those spaces as well as the link between the multi-stakeholder engagement spaces and a broader local context. We name three caveats including deeply entrenched mistrust between local transition initiatives and local government representatives, existing power imbalances and inclusivity.

Keywords

Co-production Urban transitions Civil society Trust Openness Participation Transition initiatives