



A Visit to Stuttgart West

The City of Stuttgart in the south of Germany is aiming to be a Child Friendly City.

The Mayor of Stuttgart says,

“We want Stuttgart to become a preferred place for children’s and families by providing everything children need and families most desire”.

The goals for the policy include;

Each Child has enough space in his home and for outdoor play

Each child has the chance to grow up healthy and in a safe environment.

A new contract between the generations is reached to bring old and young in our city closer together.

Stuttgart – City for Children, October 2006

As part of a recent ‘Child in the City’ conference held in Stuttgart a study visit was arranged to the Borough of Stuttgart West. The Borough is Stuttgart’s second biggest with a population of 51,000 of which 10% are children. Stuttgart West is one of the most densely populated areas in Germany and is characterised by the number of car owners (1 in 2) and the shortage of public open space.

The City of Stuttgart has attempted to provide public spaces for children and families in the Borough. This has to be undertaken against the background of intense competition for public space. An innovative and creative approach was required with clear direction from political leaders in the city. Many relatively small areas have been created often requiring a change in the use of open space. This was only possible after extensive consultation and in some cases direction from the City.

Examples of projects are shown below.

1. Lercheplatze. A small city square has been created out of a former car par in front of the local Council buildings.



2. Friedrich Eugen Street. Part of the school playground has been renovated for use as an accessible play space that can be used by the general public.



3. Breitscheid Street. A reconstructed city space taking some of the road space and some of the private gardens to create this area with a playground and a seating area.



4. Adventure Playground. An adventure playground with an indoor and out door area has been reconstructed. Indoor areas include a sports hall, arts and crafts room, music room and quiet spaces. The outdoor area has not been developed fully as yet but it already includes a hut and fire pit. The adventure playground is adjacent to a public playground and sports pitches.





5 Natural Play areas. A natural play area has been created between blocks of flats with a car park underneath. A local committee of parents who live in the apartments runs the area.



6. A Multi-generational centre.

A community centre providing for the elderly and children has been built. The centre has flats for the elderly on the top floor, a 'kindergarden' and an outside playground that can be used by all.



Overall Impressions

- Small improvements can have a large impact but need to be planned for the whole area. One small change on its own will have a minor impact.
- Improvements can be expensive, underground car parks, new play parks and facilities.
- The improvements were completed but not without opposition, commitment from the City of Stuttgart, particularly the Lord Mayor, for making the City a Child Friendly City was crucial.

Steve Goode
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