



Based on crowd funded studies citizen's movements can play a much stronger role in co-creative processes by formulating well documented critics on government plans and delivering well-designed alternative concepts. By doing so in the Antwerp case concerning the completion of the ring motorway road citizens' movements succeeded in causing that the governmental project plans to be changed drastically.

Problem description

New style mobility planning is based more and more on co-creative processes, involving different stakeholders. To become an equivalent partner in these processes the citizen's movements feel the need to enlarge their expertise in order to be able to analyse planning documents and underlying studies produced by city administrations and their consultants and to deliver feasible alternative design concepts.

How does it work

Merriam Webster defines crowdfunding as the practice of obtaining funding (as for a new business) by soliciting contributions from a large number of people especially from the online community. As it is related to activities on the social media it is an innovative way of fund raising based on involvement of a hoped-for large participation of the public. Crowdfunding is based on the marketing term crowdsourcing. People that are favourable to the development of a certain product are asked to donate a small amount, so it is aiming at the support of large groups of people . In this way the crowdfunding action is also a way to attract people's attention towards a certain product and the producer of the product.

Related to urban mobility crowdsourcing based developing of new mobility concepts is a new way to attract the attention of citizens to alternative plans or projects, and also a way to strengthen the development of these alternatives by collecting extra financial resources to do so.



pic. 1: Scoreboard of second crowd funding call in Antwerp –showing results after three weeks on the site of the ‘Ringland’ citizens’ movement. Source: Ringlang.be (2018)

Benefits - and for whom they are

Crowdsourcing means that consumers determine what a product that is still in the development phase will eventually look like if consumers decide which marketing concepts are worthwhile. The latter is also what crowdfunding is based on. So apart from the availability of financial resources resulting from a successful crowdfunding campaign citizens' movements can make an appeal to citizens to show their support for a citizen's movement project or action. So clear benefits can be the strengthening the position of the citizens and their movements in co-creative planning processes. In the end, by deepening and developing the insight in impacts of different mobility solutions the quality of the planning process may be strengthened and that is a benefit for all partners involved.

Credibility , co-creation

Citizen movements credibility rises if a large number of citizen show their support by donating (even small sums of) money. The study results enhance the knowledge base of the movements and allows them to be more equal partners to the administrations in co-creative planning workshops and meetings with politicians within a negotiation process on which projects and project alternatives to support. The quality of the planning process may win by a more data based common ground of discussions between partners instead of a more sloganesque based opposition.



pic. 2 Alternative design for the Antwerp ring road launched by citizens' movements and taken on board in the government's and city's planning process, based on crowd funded feasibility study. Source: Ringlang.be (2016)

Legal framework

Legal frameworks for crowdfunding differ from state to state. Legally different types of crowdfunding platforms can be distinguished:

- platforms on which the public makes a donation to a project or a company/organisation,
- platforms on which the public deposits money with a view to receiving a consideration of some kind (a copy of the work, a commercial gift, ...) which is generally worth less than the amount deposited,
- platforms on which the public invests in a company, either through a loan or through a capital contribution with a view to receiving a possible profit.

In the case described in this innovation brief the first – legally least complicated form – applies.

Policy options for cities

Citizens' movements use the crowdfunding instrument to unlock a situation where the regular authorities' led approach of a project process seems to fail, often because of the complexity of a problem context. When citizens' movements can take stronger positions because of stronger arguments based on study work cities have more advantage in opting for co-creative processes, working together with citizens' movements instead of confrontation.

In some cities platforms for crowdfunding are supported by the City. E.g. the City of Ghent has a crowdfunding platform in the frame of its policy on appealing to its residents and other stakeholders for their commitment and solidarity to make and experience the city together. Via the platform project ideas are selected, calls for support launched and in some cases co-financed by the City.

In the Antwerp a citizens' movement took the initiative to launch an appeal for crowd funding independently.

Good/bad practises (short examples)

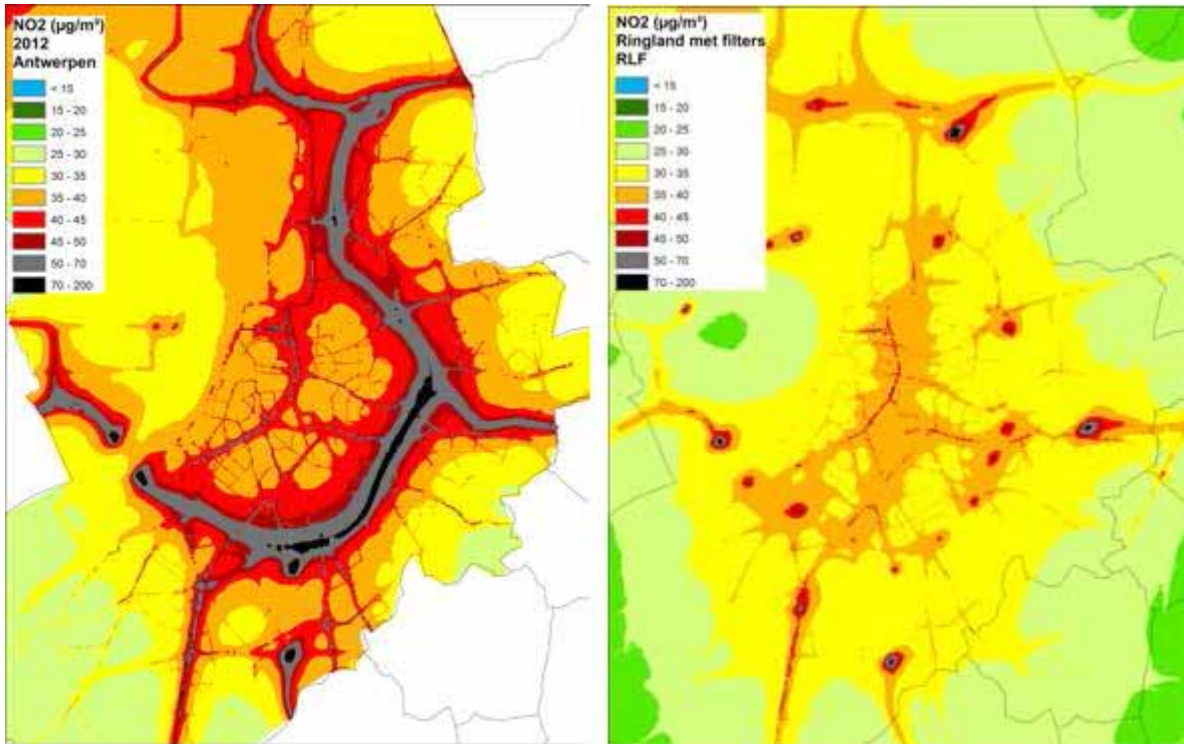
In the Antwerp case one of the citizen's movements – called Ringland - opposed the governmental ring road project and launched an alternative design concept. Through regular actions commonly used by citizen's movements (hearings, mailings, press conferences, street actions, free pop festival, legal opposition, ...) the support for their alternative view on the project steadily grew. As a next step they decided to launch a call for crowd funding of four studies that were aimed at strengthening and deepening their alternative design concept. The final goal was to convince the government to adapt their plans in a way as close as possible towards the citizen's movements proposal. The call was launched via social media (twitter, Facebook), direct mailing and also during mass activities, organised by the citizens' movements to oppose the governmental project and promote the alternative concept.

A targeted sum of 100.000 euro was reached within a short time period of six weeks, allowing Ringland to commission specialised research institutes and consultancy groups to perform four studies:

- A traffic engineering study on the feasibility of the capping and downgrading of the ring road based on a new mobility concept (dividing the ring road in a parallel system of an urban and through traffic motorway, building of a bypass international motorway north of the city and obtaining a modal shift of -20% point car traffic in 2030)
- A health impact study of the governmental and alternative designs, consisting of mapped simulations of NOx and noise emission in the ring road corridor
- A financial feasibility study of the citizens' movements project, including the capping of the whole of the ring (length), indicating alternative financing mechanisms such as land value capturing and road pricing an tolling schemes

- A landscaping and urban design study, articulating in the capped ring road area a major park structure and urban development including housing for more than 25.000 new inhabitants.

In 2018 a new call to donate was launched in order to finance two more studies:



pic. 3 Crowd funded study result showing NO2 emissions related to the existing traffic and infrastructure (left) in Antwerp and after the capping the ringroad and the traffic restructuring proposal launched by citizen's movements . Source: Ringlang.be and VITO (2016)

- Alternative (more compact) design of some interchanges
- Tunnel design in view tunnel safety but also maximizing capping length of road segments.

Time frame

A typical time frame for gathering the funding is some months. On a regular basis a type of promotion has to be repeated. It seems possible to repeat calls for financial support (in the Antwerp case after two years). The study results can be used within different stages project planning process, e.g. environmental impact analysis, feasibility study, (pre) design of the project... .

So both of the second stage studies are design oriented. At least the first study already resulted in changing the governmental plan for one of the new ring road link interchanges into a more compact layout. In this way a park area and an industrial heritage site could be saved from demolition.

Costs

The aim of the crowdfunding action is of course to obtain financial resources, in the Antwerp case the first time some 100.000 euros were collected for four studies, the second time 60.000 euros for two more studies. People are asked to donate small sums e.g. 20 euros. Of course also larger sums were welcomed. Costs can be reduced by involving research institutes such as universities that can participate in the study work based on their own funds.

Open questions

One can discuss to what extent it is the duty of public authorities to cover study work for the whole of a SUMP and the related projects, instead of leaving 'blind spots' in the mobility planning that have to be financed by citizens that already pay taxes that may be supposed to cover the development of public infrastructure adapted to the mobility needs in a city.

Possible future developments

As planning processes evolve in many cities into more co-creative approaches, involving stakeholders with different ambitions and interests become more important. Citizens' movements will be confronted with the need of a knowledge base to participate as full partners within planning processes.

How and where does it fit into a SUMP?

Crowd funded studies can be useful in any step of a SUMP where discussion points or frictions arise between citizens' movements and the ongoing planning approach led by a city or other actors in the mobility field (e.g. public works departments of a ministry responsible for main road building). As citizens' movements often concern large infrastructure projects with impact on city life and the environment also the crowd funded studies are most likely to be useful related to impact assessments of proposed projects and the generation and the feasibility of alternative concepts.

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