

Civic Engagement at Heidelberg

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About me



Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Joachim Funke (retired),
from 1997 until 2019 full professor at the
Department of Psychology, Heidelberg Univ;
2015 Honorary Doctorate (Dr. h.c.) from Szeged University,
thanks to Benó Csapo

Research areas: Problem solving in complex situations,
thinking and feeling (=cognition and
emotion), creativity

Plan

- About Heidelberg
- About „Bürgerstiftung“ (civic foundation)
- Activities – Grants – Events
- Problems

Heidelberg: A small town in southwest Germany



Location of Heidelberg

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Heidelberg – view from Königsstuhl





Downtown Heidelberg

An aerial night photograph of Heidelberg, Germany. The Neckar River flows through the center of the city, with its lights reflecting on the water. A large stone bridge with multiple arches spans the river on the right. The city is densely packed with buildings, many of which are illuminated from within, creating a warm glow. The foreground is dominated by dark, silhouetted trees and hills, with some green lights visible on the left. The sky is dark with scattered clouds, and a few stars are visible. The overall atmosphere is serene and picturesque.

Downtown Heidelberg at night

Heidelberg

- In 2016, its population was 159,914, of which roughly a quarter consisted of students
- Heidelberg University, founded in 1386, is Germany's oldest
- Is a scientific hub in Germany and home to several internationally renowned research facilities adjacent to its university, including the European Molecular Biology Laboratory and four Max Planck Institutes

Heidelberg

- The city has also been a hub for the arts, especially literature, throughout the centuries, and it was designated a "City of Literature" by the UNESCO Creative Cities Network



Public trust „Bürgerstiftung Heidelberg“

- Founded in 2009 by 90 donators (the idea was: 1000 by 1000, i.e. 1000 donators give 1000 € each)
- Starting with a fund of 135 T€ (increased to 184 T€ in 2020)
- „Leitmotiv“: Enabling participation - strengthening responsibility - shaping Heidelberg
- Priority areas: “education and integration”, “old and young“, and „civic participation“

Organizational structure

- Executive board (3-5 persons, 4 years, max. 3 periods) -> responsible for the management
- Board of trustees (5- 9 persons, 4 years, max. 2 periods) -> advice and control
- Donors' forum (all donors together, meet at least 1 x per year) -> information about activities

Activities: Projects

- Project: „reading pleasure“ -> book shelves
- Project: Reminder signs for displaced Jewish citizens
- Project: Online tool for internship exchange („Jobbörse“, job exchange for internships)
- Public participation in city-relevant projects („Bürgerbeteiligung“)

Grants given by Bürgerstiftung

(selection)

- Funding competition for youth projects
- „Rock Your Life“ - Coaching for secondary school students in the transition to work
- Language courses for migrant women (IFZ)
- Art project at the Geschwister Scholl School (together with „Heidelberger Kunstverein“)
- Support for school libraries (Heiligenberg School, Waldparkschule)

Grants given by Bürgerstiftung

(selection)

- Material costs for the Emmertsgrund senior citizens' centre collection and delivery service
- Youth Meeting Point „City Cult“: School holiday project on the subject of „Heidelberg within World War 1“

Events (selection)

- Annual reception (with attractive speakers)
- Lecture series on integration and education (at the German-American Institute)
- Lecture and panel discussion on family, care, and career
- Lecture series: „The power of citizens“
- Readings at our public bookshelves
- District walks / Guided tours
- Donors' Forum



Selected Activities

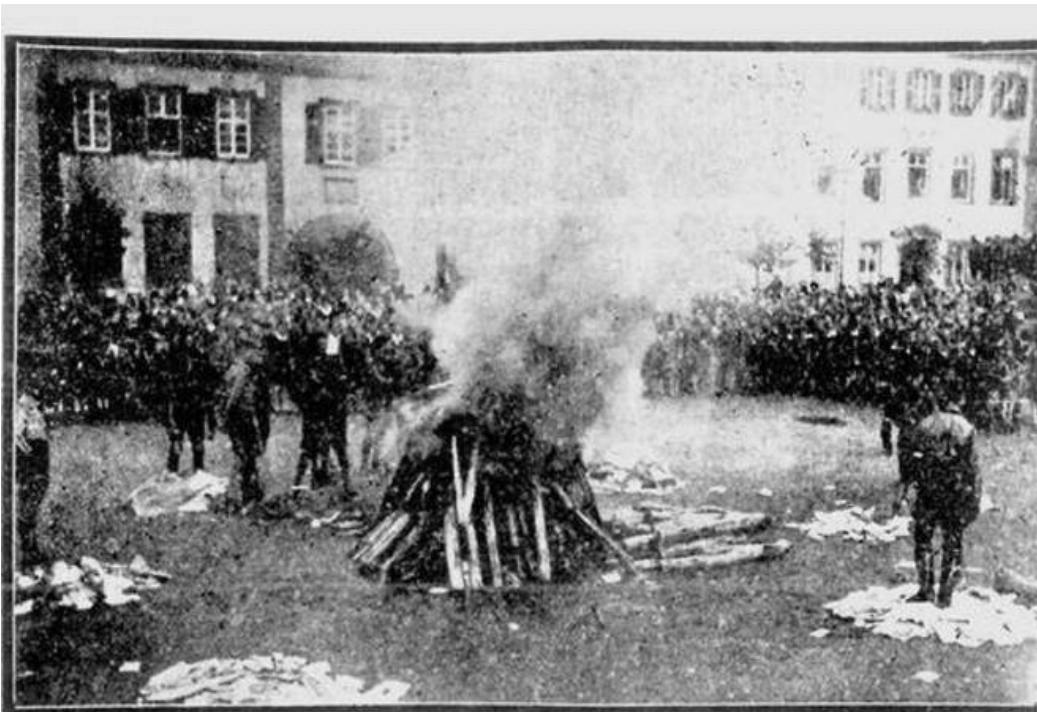
First public bookshelf in Heidelberg in the old town

- Since then, a series of public bookshelves emerged:
- Altstadt, Wilhelmsplatz (Weststadt), Turnerstraße (Südstadt), Rohrbacher Rathaus (Rohrbach), international bookshelf within „Intercultural Center“ (Landfriedgelände).



Activities: memorial plaque

- Laying of a memorial plaque for the book burning on May 17, 1933, on the university square



May 17, 1933



May 17, 2011

Activities: Public singing



Corona: Tablets for elderly people



Gudrun Jaeger, Doris Fritz-Sigmund und Thomas Herz von der Bürgerstiftung (v.l.) übergeben die Geräte an das Team vom Haus Philippus (v.r.): Matthias Dürr, Esther Süs, Peter Gehre. Foto: privat



Finally: Problems...

- How to find donators (1000 citizens x 1000€ did not work)
- How to make money out of the assets of our foundation in times of low interests?

Thank you very much, and ... go for donating!



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Activities

- First public bookshelf in Heidelberg in the old town
- Development of a proposal for a procedure to find a location for a conference centre
- Participation in the guidelines for civic participation
- Laying of a memorial plaque for the book burning on the university square
- Public bookshelf on the Wilhelmsplatz

Corona: Tablets

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Nähe schaffen in harten Zeiten

Bürgerstiftung spendet Tablets für Heidelberger Seniorenheime

RNZ. Nur zwei Wochen, nachdem die Bürgerstiftung Heidelberg ihr Projekt „Connect – Wir stiften soziale Teilhabe“ gestartet hatte, konnten nun die ersten sechs Tablets an die Bewohner des Haus Philippus in Handschuhsheim übergeben werden. Sie sollen helfen, in Zeiten der Isolation Verwandte und Bekannte über Videotelefonie wieder zu sehen.

„Eine unerwartete und umso großartigere Hilfe für die Bewohner in dieser wirklich schwierigen Situation“, freute sich der Leiter des Heims, Mathias Dürr. Die Initiatorinnen, Gudrun Jaeger und Doris Fritz-Sigmund von der Bürgerstiftung, waren selbst überrascht, dass es so

schnell gelungen ist, über 10 000 Euro an Spenden zu sammeln. Neben den Spendern hatte insbesondere Thomas Herz von der Firma Business Point Herz maßgeblichen Anteil daran, dass alles so schnell gelang: Er stellte die Geräte nicht nur zum Selbstkostenpreis zur Verfügung, sondern richtete sie auch gleich ein. So konnten am Wochenende schon die ersten Telefonate geführt werden und die Senioren sehen die Gesichter der Kinder und Enkel wieder.

Insgesamt kooperiert die Bürgerstiftung mit zwölf Heidelberger Heimen und will in den kommenden Wochen 50 Tablets übergeben.



Gudrun Jaeger, Doris Fritz-Sigmund und Thomas Herz von der Bürgerstiftung (v.l.) übergeben die Geräte an das Team vom Haus Philippus (v.r.): Mathias Dürr, Esther Süss, Peter Gehre. Foto: privat



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