Scenario planning for small cities in Germany

Experience and results

Dr. Jens Hoffmann, University of Applied Sciences Neubrandenburg, Germany
Our mission

- identification of new potentials of small towns in peripheral areas
- methodological framework for scenario processes in eight cities
- implementation of the process and assessment of the results
- February 2016 – September 2018
Our approach

How to find new ideas for the cities?

(1) cooperation and participation, (2) use of creative techniques like scenarios

- scenario building as a intuitive participation process for the locals instead of an explorative process for experts
- holistic, integrated approach and creative step into the future
- narrative scenario as generally understandable and attractive way to present the ideas
- acceptance of the approach and the results
Phases of the scenario process

The step into the future

Analysis of the current state

Scenario 2030

Transfer of new ideas into the present
Vision 2030
Our experience and results

– New potentials? familiar topics in the light of new qualities, solutions, projects – cooperation and digitalisation as part of new solutions
– currently used potential – theoretical usable potential – realisable potential
– holistic strategic orientation – transfer into strategic concepts
– chance to implement a new culture of planning and decision making
– side effects, weak outcomes: initial impulse, collective learning processes, confidence and openness
– problem continuation – process and realisation of projects
A good city tells a story.

- A narrative approach allows to provide holistic views of the future, to pick up early signals of the coming future.

- This way of scenario building can be understood as inclusive activity. It “enables actors to co-construct shared understandings of what their situation is and what can be done.” (Rasmussen 2005)

- Stories can be catalysts for change. They are not supposed to replace analytical thinking. Instead, they may be seen as a bridge between the analytically oriented planning and the creatively oriented vision making.

- Small cities as alternative to metropolises. Therefore the small cities need attention, support and new, good stories.