Spotlight on Lusatia

How Lusatian citizens and mayors are engaged for a just transition. Field reports, achievements and hurdles.

Photo: Franziska Stölzel
1. Who we are
2. Lusatia in transition
3. The example of Weißwasser
   • Strengths and opportunities
4. Citizen participation
   • Criteria
   • Examples
5. Outlook: Coal phase out regions have similarities
Who we are..

Franziska Stölzel

- Social change and transformation processes
- Weißwasser
- "REBOOST - A boost for rural lignite regions"
- Different platforms
- Co-author of this year’s „Lausitz-Monitor“

„just transition implies parity, transparency and sustainability“
Who we are..

Valentina Troendle

• Lausitzer Perspektiven e.V.
• EUKI project with Polish Green Network (lead partner) and Green Future Institute Foundation
• Studied Cultural Work, Management and Social Communication and Urban Futures in Potsdam and Krakow
• Social change, sustainable urban/regional development, urban-rural migration and civil society participation
Lusatia

- German states
  - Brandenburg (Lower Lusatia)
  - Saxony (Upper Lusatia)
- Seven districts
- Parts in PL and the CZ
- 11.727km²
- 1.143.955 Citizen (31.12.2020)
The last 30 years...

https://www.welt.de/geschichte/article121393564/Das-war-die-groesste-Dreckschleuder-der-DDR.html#cs-Pilotvorhaben-zur-CO2-Abtrennung.jpg
WEISSWASSER/O.L. – a town between times

Photo: Marcus Henschel
**Future perspectives**

- Settlement of federal administration
- Expansion of the county administration
- Cooperation with research institutions and universities
- Infrastructure measures
- Designing attractive housing
- Increase attractiveness for SMEs to settle in the area
Mayor of Weißwasser, Torsten Poetzsch

This new quarter [of the town] will be the driving force for our entire town. We want to achieve several things - future, energy, ideals and tradition. We want to think about various future topics of our society and currently, we gain further partners for this idea. It is an exciting process and a new part for our European model region. [own translation].

Source: sas-sachsen.de/oberburgermeister-torsten-potzsch-im-gesprach/ [26.08.21]
Strengths and opportunities

- Nature and tourism
- Diversity
- Universities and research centers
- Just transition for coal workers (APG)
- Strong and transparent leadership
- Encourages public participation and visible successes
Citizen participation in the transformation process in Lusatia
Criteria for “good citizen participation”

1. Formulate clear framework conditions
2. Start early
3. Make the process as accessible as possible
4. Choose methods that fit the goals of the process
5. Make sure, that the process is transparent
6. Be responsive and approachable
Criteria for “good citizen participation”

7. Take the concerns of those involved seriously and value good moderation
8. Form working groups that work independently
9. Document and archive the process and its results
10. Remain flexible, do not stop making offers and do not give up
11. Trust and hire professionals
Conclusions

• Competent participation entails a wide range of tasks. It needs **time, capacities** and **professionals**.

• Many participation efforts fail because these resources are **not available**.

• Still: **transition needs to be socially just**, too. Only then people will accept it on the long run.
Conclusions

• To be successful, participation has to be **wanted and anchored** by the administrative management

• „welcoming culture“ and special support might be 1st step to **integrate citizen participation**

• Examples of competently implemented participation processes in Lusatia:

  **Boxberg (SN) and Spremberg (BB)**
Mayor of Spremberg, Christine Herntier

"... is sure that every citizen is concerned about his or her immediate surroundings. And sometimes the situation is seen more clearly than in administration and politics. Involving the people is therefore also based on the hope of getting suggestions that can only come about through an exchange of different perspectives“ [own translation].

Examples from practice: What do we implement concretely?

• Mediation between „structural change actors“
  www.lausitzer-perspektiven.de

• Coordination/support structure for engaged people & initiatives
  www.buergerregion-lausitz.de

• Knowledge transfer & capacity building for engaged people & initiatives
  www.transition-lausitz.de
Coal phase out regions have similarities...

- Work for emigration of youth
- More networking necessary
- Education
- Tourism and nature protection
- Renewable Energy
Thank you!

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