RELOCAL

Resituating the Local in Cohesion and Territorial Development

D 6.2 National Report Germany

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Abbreviations

Cultural District	Cultural District Upper Lusatia- Lower Silesia (ger. Kulturraum Oberlausitz- Niederschlesien)
BBSR	Federal Institute for Research on Building, Urban Affairs and Spatial Development (ger. Bundesinstitut für Bau-, Stadt- und Raumforschung)
EC	European Commission
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Regional Development
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
eng.	Englisch
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
e.V.	Registered association (ger., eingetragender Verein)
ger.	German
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GG	German Constitution (ger. Grundgesetz)
GmbH	Private Limited Company (Ltd.)
INSEK	Integrated Urban Development Concept (ger. Integriertes Stadtentwicklungskonzept)
IKEK	Integrated Municipal Development Concept (ger. Integriertes Kommunales Entwicklungskonzept)
IT	Intelligent Technologies
LEADER	Liaison entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale (eng. Links between actions for the development of the rural economy)
NUTS	Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OWL	Ostwestfalen-Lippe
ROG	Federal German Planning Act (ger. Raumordnungsgesetz)
SCS	Smart Country Side
SGI	Services of General Interest
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
The Centre	Centre for Youth and Socioculture

Executive Summary

Background
What impact can place-based local actions have on a fair and equitable distribution of resources within a locality? This report aims to provide an answer to this question by bringing together research findings from the two German RELOCAL case studies. The first case, *Smart Country Side* (*SCS*), is an inter-communal, district-led initiative, which aims to support community life in rural villages of the region Ostwestfalen-Lippe through digital technologies. Within a regional development framework, the project concentrates on taking up and implementing local demands through civil self-organisation.

The non-profit youth association *Second Attempt e.V.* (hereafter *Second Attempt*), on the other hand, is a bottom-up initiative for the promotion of youth and socioculture in the remote German border town Görlitz. It is an interesting case for the potential of a local association by and for young people, which actively engages in local public affairs and seeks to involve young people in constructive forms of place-making and democratic engagement.

Findings
Reflecting the achievements of both actions and their impact on the localities, it is quite evident that the kind of localised actions which has been studied in the German context cannot counteract wider structural trends and processes (such as rural-urban divide, outmigration, etc.). However, it is also obvious that through their place-based and community-oriented development approach, both actions produced outcomes which could not have been achieved by conventional political-administrative (top-down) procedures.

Outlook
The case study actions show that community members need to be taken serious in their role as experts for their local environment. A fair process – in terms of transparent communication and cooperating with civil society initiatives on an equal footing – helps to establish mutual understanding and trust, which is important for co-operative local action. Moreover, research points towards the importance of embedding project-based actions into long-term local and regional visions and strategies to grant sustainability and explain the value of small-scale projects to the wider public.

Eventually, findings back arguments for a general shift of responsibilities to the local level, for example through the establishment of project funds and participatory budgets, and a stronger support to build and develop capacity at the lowest level of local communities. Nevertheless, such local commitment has to be coordinated and supported to some extent by an overhead structure such as professional contact persons in public administration and conceptual and financial backing through institutional structures. In a nutshell, this report argues for a better integration of civil initiatives and the knowledge and capacities of local communities into higher level structures – without however eroding the German social state and its responsibility to tackle structural inequalities and territorial disparities.

1. Introduction

In Germany, two case study actions have been explored for the RELOCAL project (see Deliverable 6.2, case studies n° 1/33 and n° 2/33: Kamuf et al., 2019; Matzke et al., 2019). Their aim is to illustrate spatial injustices taking place at local level and the efforts of local, regional, and national stakeholders to promote a more just territorial development.

The first case study is located in two administrative districts, Lippe and Höxter, of the region Ostwestfalen-Lippe in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia. Under the umbrella of the regional development plan *OWL 4.0*, the state- and EU-funded project *Smart Country Side* aims to support villages through modern digital technologies. In contrast to the other sub-projects of the development plan, *SCS* focuses on rural villages and is citizen-oriented. By offering new digital ways for civic engagement and social cohesion, the project tries to tackle issues of spatial injustice coming along with living in rural areas. In the districts Lippe and Höxter, those are amongst others the outmigration of mainly younger people, ageing, and insufficient access to SGI such as local food supply, public transport, and free time activities.

The exact use of technologies is decided through a bottom-up participatory approach, including village conferences and self-organised working groups. As main output, the project aims to establish a 'village app', adapted to the local demands of each community. The project is implemented in 16 villages that have been chosen through a selection procedure in Lippe respectively a tendering process in Höxter. Its goal is to transfer gained experiences to other rural areas in Germany. It runs from autumn 2016 to mid-2019.

The second case study action is the non-governmental association and youth initiative *Second Attempt e.V.* in the middle-sized town Görlitz, located in the federal state of Saxony. Especially young people have long not been integrated into political decision-making processes in the locality. Hence, the focus of the association, which is led by young people themselves, is on empowering youth and other citizens of the town through collaborative urban development and sociocultural activities. By improving the standing of young people and diversifying the cultural landscape of Görlitz, *Second Attempt* furthermore aims to change the local image and increase citizen's identification with their locality. Görlitz is peripherally located at the East German border to Poland and has been suffering from outmigration, high unemployment, and weak economic infrastructure.

The main project of *Second Attempt* is to establish a Centre for Youth and Socioculture (hereafter the Centre). A broad range of activities under the umbrella of the prototype for the Centre, *Rabryka* ("rot" (ger., red) + "fabryka" (pl., factory)), is already taking place on a former factory area. The Centre itself shall be opened in a neighbouring old industrial building by the end of 2019. Main sponsor of the action is the municipality Görlitz, with which *Second Attempt* is working in close cooperation.

The following report provides a cross-case analysis of these actions within the framework of national governance structures, policies, and strategies. With regards to the number of cases studied, it is not the goal to make generalized statements about spatial injustice and territorial development in Germany. Instead, it is evaluated what kind of similarities and differences emerge between two actions in different localities within the same national context. Eventually, the aim is to distil transferable lessons and analyse essential factors that promote or inhibit more just territorial development.

Firstly, in Chapter 2, the reader is introduced to the national context of Germany and given insights into the framing of spatial (in-)justice in the country. Furthermore, an overview of the most important national policies, programs and strategies relevant for questions of spatial justice in general and the abovementioned actions in particular is provided. Following the introduction to the German wider governance framework, an analysis of the two case study actions is presented out of a comparative perspective in Chapter 3. Thereby, the report explores similarities and differences of the two case studies regarding the local context, the implementation, and the impact of the actions in relation to spatial justice. Concluding in Chapter 4, implications of cross-case analysis for policies and strategies on a regional, national, and EU level are considered, including concrete recommendations for striving towards more spatial justice within the case study localities and beyond.
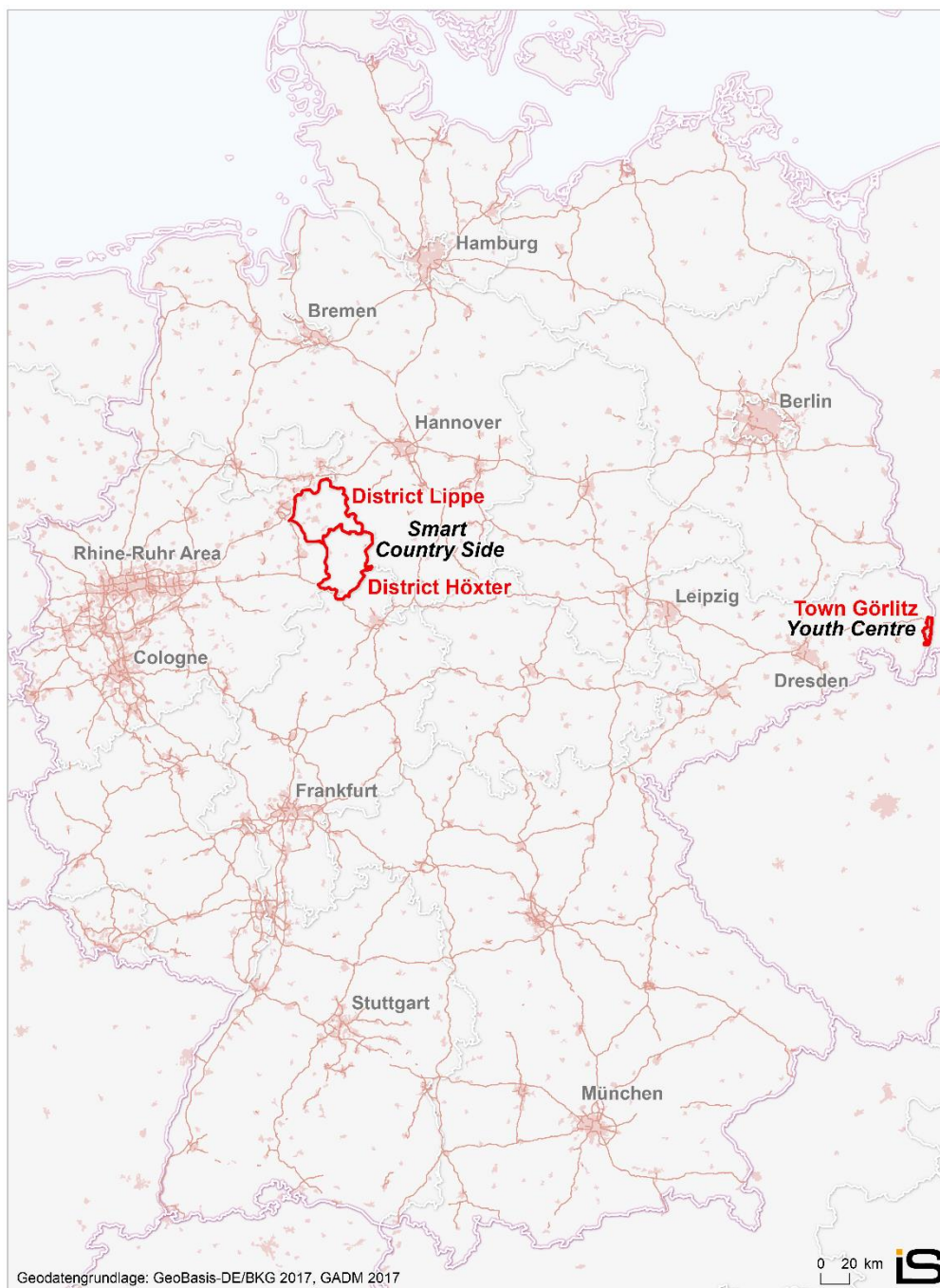
Map 1: The two case study locations in Germany

2. The Case Studies in a National Context

The Federal Republic of Germany is a federalist state that consists of the Federal Government and 16 federal states, which are divided into governmental districts, administrative districts, and municipalities. Each level has different responsibilities, yet generally, tasks should be delegated to the most local level possible. According to the principles of subsidiarity this means that municipalities are responsible "for all matters relevant to the local community in their own responsibility within the frame of existing legislation" (Kuhlmann, 2016). Tasks in the responsibility of the central government are noted in the *German Constitution* (ger. *Grundgesetz,* in short GG), while every federal state has its own legal constitution. Hence, states have relatively high autonomy in relation the federal level and certain tasks such as the field of education mainly lay in their legislative line of action.

The German state is characterised by a state-based welfare regime, meaning that there exists a tax-based and state-organised social insurance system for unemployment benefits, health care, social care, and alike (Taylor-Gooby, 2008). These social state principles are described in detail and regulated by law in twelve *Social Codes* (ger. *Sozialgesetzbuch*, in short *SGB I* to *XII*). However, despite being one of the most elaborate social welfare regimes in the world, the system has come under critique in recent years. While unemployment rates have been decreasing over the last decade, various studies show that labour earnings inequality in Germany is rising and that employment cannot solely prevent income poverty anymore (Fredriksen, 2012: 9; Grabka et al., 2019; Stein, 2017).

2.1 Unpacking Spatial Justice in a National Context

In the political discourse in Germany, the translation of spatial justice (ger. sozialräumliche Gerechtigkeit) is not commonly used. The most notable term comparable to the concept of spatial justice is "the equivalence of living conditions"[1], which appears in Article 72 of the *German Constitution (*Deutscher Bundestag, 1949: 57*)*. The term was introduced in 1975 into legislation and has its origins in the *Federal German Planning Act* (ger. *Raumordnungsgesetz*: Deutscher Bundestag, 1965) of 1965 §2 ROG, where it was stated that living conditions in all sub-regions of the Federal Republic of Germany should be "at least equivalent" (Wierer and Stauske, 2005: 6–7).

Although the meaning of 'equivalent' was never specified, after the reunification of East and West Germany, wording of Article 72 GG was changed from "preservation of the unity of living conditions" to "establishment of equivalent living conditions" (Deutscher Bundestag, 1949: 57; Prantl, 2010). This change should account for the challenging adaption of the new federal states to the capitalist economic system of Western Germany as well as strongly differing living conditions within the two formerly separated countries. The equality of opportunities should be put into focus instead of a (non-achievable) status of equal living conditions all over the country. Moreover, the term should better reflect the German federalist approach to shaping and pursuing equivalent living conditions (Lechleitner, 2018: 7). Notwithstanding the new concept, in Article 106 GG (concerning equalization payments between the state, federal states, and municipalities) and some federal

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[1] All citations from German-language publications, documents, and interviews in this report have been translated by the authors.

state laws such as the Bavarian and the Brandenburg, the goal of a "unity of living conditions" persists (Lechleitner, 2018: 7–8).

Although the Federal Constitutional Court never precisely defined the 'equivalence of living conditions', the term is regularly discussed and interpreted in national political discourse by the Conference of Ministers responsible for Spatial Planning, as this political body discusses and publishes the *Concepts and Strategies for Spatial Development in Germany* based on the *Federal Regional Planning Act* (BMVI, 2016), every six years.

There are various famous quotations of politicians, who stated that this basic spatial planning objective cannot be maintained anymore due to demographic change, segregation, and sub- and re-urbanization processes (compilation by Krappweis, 2018; Prantl, 2010). For example, then-President Horst Köhler told the weekly news magazine *FOCUS* in 2004 that reducing existing differences between living conditions will be „consolidating a state of subsidies and burden the young generation with an unimaginable debt load (*FOCUS Magazin*, 2004; Danielzyk, 2018). Similarly, Klaus Töpfer, a former Federal Minister (who interestingly grew up in the district of Höxter), stated in the context of the publication of the study *Diversity instead of equivalence* of the *Berlin Institute for Population and Development*, that Germany "has to say good-bye to the entitlement of equivalence and find alternative models" (*Berliner Zeitung*, 2010). Yet, most critics of the concept have been strongly criticised and the German government continues to pursue the objective in territorial development strategies.

Most recently and partly owing to the increasing academic discourse around the issue (see below; ARL, 2016), the current officiating Federal Government installed a *Commission of Equivalent Living Conditions* (see Fig. 3) in 2018, which shall develop policy recommendations within six sectors to achieve "effective and visible steps towards the objective of equivalent living conditions" (BMI, 2018a).
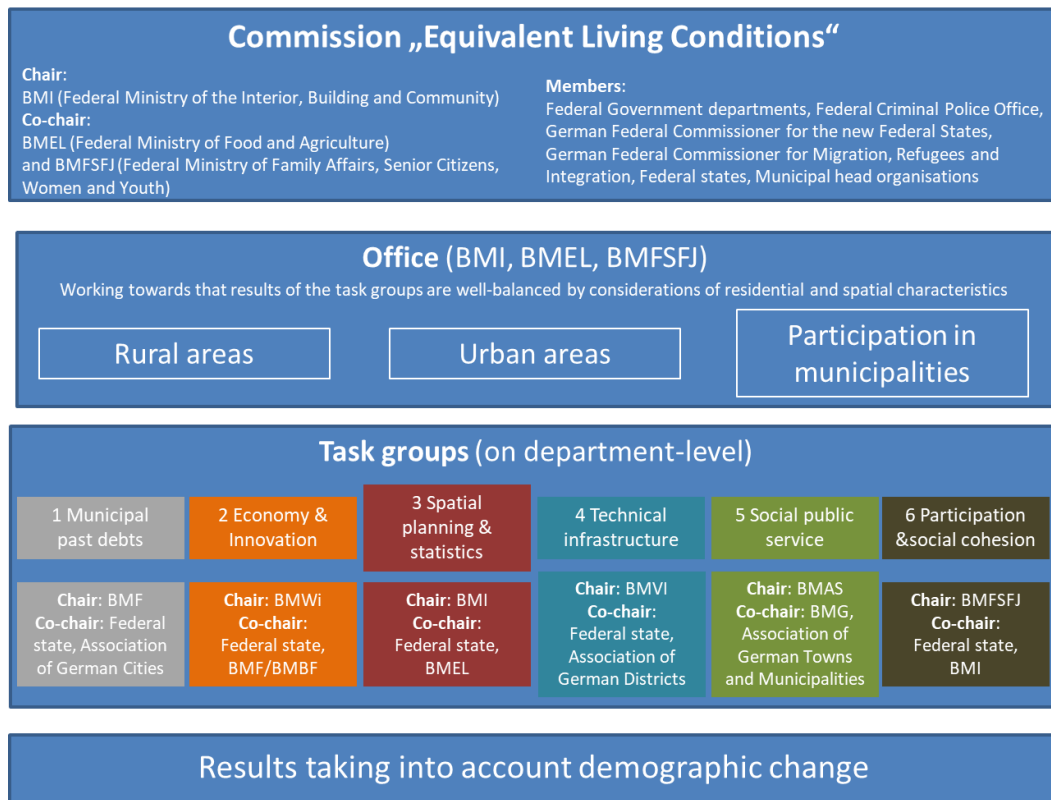
Figure 3: Structure of the *Commission of Equivalent Living Conditions* (BMI, 2018b; translated by the authors). Abbreviations: BMF (Federal Ministry of Finance), BMWI (Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy), BMBF (Federal Ministry for Education and Research), BMVI (Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure), BMAS (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs), Federal Ministry of Health (BMG).

In the abovementioned academic discourse and in accordance with the German social state principle (see above), there is a strong research focus on social inequalities and their underlying structural causes and spatial dimensions. Yet, few explicit references to the concept of spatial justice can be found.

The term spatial justice in Germany commonly refers to the spatial component of social justice and the debate appears to be normative and ethical, as the publications in the journal *ethics and society* and the involvement of Wolfgang Huber (former chairman of the protestant church in Germany and prominent intellectual in the field of ethics) suggest (Hahne and Stielike, 2013; Huber, 2017; Redepenning, 2013). Manfred Miosga, who holds a chair for urban and regional development and is engaged in Bavaria's regional politics for the *Social Democratic Party* (*SPD*), introduced spatial justice firstly as reference to the space-based public services to guarantee and enable 'equivalent living conditions' and secondly as a regional task of handling regional disparities and diversity (Huber, 2017: 7; Koppers et al., 2018: 25). In this context, the concept of "spatially-based social justice" is composed of distributive, procedural, and intergenerational justice as well as equal opportunities (Koppers et al., 2018: 30).

Similarly to the political discursive change in the understanding of 'equivalent living conditions' (see above), the primary understanding of social justice was subject to change in the past decades: it shifted from a "warranty of equal living conditions" to an "establishment of equivalent living conditions", putting equal opportunities to access resources into focus (Hahne and Stielike, 2013: 9–10; Koppers et al., 2018: 13–14). It appears that most of the authors portray spatially-based social justice as the state's task (Hahne and Stielike,

2013: 28; Huber, 2017: 7; Volkmann, 2017: 162). Its degree of achievement is regularly evaluated by reports of non-party as well as party-affiliated foundations. These reports explore socioeconomic disparities (*Friedrich-Ebert Foundation*: Albrech et al., 2017), economic development (*Bertelsmann Foundation*: Belitz et al., 2019), social and spatial cohesion (*Bertelsmann Foundation*: Arant et al., 2017; *Heinrich-Böll Foundation*, 2017), and the digital divide (*Bertelsmann Foundation*: Lobeck, 2018).

The reports share the conclusion that spatial inequalities persist between East and West Germany since the reunification, as wide parts of the rural East are deprived in economic, employment, and demographic development as well as social cohesion (for social cohesion: Arant et al., 2017: 89). Moreover, spatial inequalities are detected between Northern and Southern Germany regarding unemployment (Albrech et al., 2017: 24), or cities and countryside (on peripherization see e.g. Barlösius and Neu, 2008; Weck and Beißwenger, 2014; on shrinking regions see e.g. Volkmann, 2017; Hahne and Stielike, 2013: 29). To be more precise, however, subspaces develop differently: the cities of Dresden, Leipzig, Jena, Magdeburg, Erfurt, and Rostock in Eastern Germany are all economically prospering (Franz, 2017: 32), while "peripheral rural spaces" (e.g. Western Palatinate), "economically successful but shrinking regions" (e.g. southern Westphalia), "post-industrial, peripheral regions" (e.g. northern Ruhr area), or "successful rural regions with overuse" (e.g. coastal regions) struggle with various challenges (Danielzyk, 2017: 21–22). Other popular research topics on inequalities are also of sociospatial nature, but focus on the social structure of cities or city districts and its changing processes. Examples are segregation and polarization within cities (see Aehnelt et al., 2009; Altrock and Kunze, 2017; Helbig and Jähnen, 2018) or the role of poverty (Huster et al., 2018).

2.2 Capturing Policies Promoting Spatial Justice in a National Context

Apart from the welfare system, which provides social security on an individual level, the *German Constitution* indicates the necessity of vertical (Article 106 GG) and horizontal (Article 107 GG) equalization payments between municipalities and federal states. In general, economically prosperous municipalities or states allocate parts of their tax income to less prosperous ones in order to achieve intra-regional convergence (Krappweis, 2018). Additionally, a variety of concrete policies aim towards intra- and inter-regional spatial justice.

In relation to urban agglomerations, the most important policy aiming at intra-regional convergence is the programme **Social City** (ger. *Soziale Stadt – Stadtteile mit besonderem Entwicklungsbedarf*), which is funded based on annual administrative agreements between federation and federal states. Since its launch in 1999, almost 900 disadvantaged areas in about 500 municipalities in all federal states have been funded (BMI, n.d.b). Aim of *Social City* is to "use an integrated area-based regeneration approach to improve the living conditions in disadvantaged neighbourhoods" (BBSR, 2017: 14). Thereby, the programme relies on different activities such as an "area-based approach, bundling of resources, integrated development concepts, neighbourhood management, empowerment, participation, neighbourhood funds, evaluation and monitoring, and the stabilization of regeneration strategies beyond the period of development grants being awarded" (BBSR, 2017: 14). Accompanying *Social City* is a wide range of model projects, to which *Social City* areas can apply for additional funding. Partly, these projects are co-financed by ESF measures. For example, *BIWAQ* (ger. *Bildung, Wirtschaft, Arbeit im Quartier*; eng. *Education, Economy, Work in the Neighbourhood*) or *JUSTIQ* (ger. *JUGEND STÄRKEN im Quartier*;

eng. *Encouraging Youth in the Neighbourhood*) are programme-accompanying project funds that tackle labour market integration and educational purposes (BBSR, 2017: 15).

Another policy, which mainly focuses on urban regeneration or restructuring and housing aspects is the programme **Stadtumbau** (eng. *Urban Restructuring*). Due to high numbers of shrinking cities in East Germany after the reunification, many urban districts were underpopulated. This process led the Federal Government to launch the programme *Stadtumbau Ost* (eng. *Urban Restructuring East*) in 2002, which should counteract problems which come along with shrinking processes, preserve older buildings, and generally improve conditions of accommodation. After a short experimental phase, a western counterpart was launched in 2004 called *Stadtumbau West* (eng. *Urban Restructuring West*) to support Western German cities and municipalities in a process of economic and demographic change (BMUB, 2014: 5–7). In 2017, both programmes were merged into one (BMI, 2019: 5). Overall, in *Stadtumbau Ost* and *West* almost 3 billion Euros for actions in over 1,000 cities and municipalities were spent (BMI, 2019: 11–12).

As the above-mentioned programmes merely focus on medium-sized and large cities, the programme **Kleinere Städte und Gemeinden** (eng. *Smaller Towns and Municipalities*) offers funding possibilities to smaller municipalities (BMI, n.d.a). Additionally, the spatial development programme **Aktive Stadt- und Ortsteilzentren** (eng. *Active Town and Village Centres*) is used by a majority of towns and municipalities, which do not exceed 50,000 inhabitants (BMUB, 2015: 29).

A strategy to achieve inter-regional convergence is the conceptualization of regional development policies. For the case studies in Görlitz and Ostwestfalen-Lippe, two policies are of particular importance. In Saxony, funding for cultural amenities can be applied for in **Cultural Districts** (ger. *Kulturräume*). These are voluntary associations of municipalities, forming a solidary partnership of convenience to fund cultural institutions of regional importance. Thereby, they receive financial support from the federal state of Saxony. This is a unique feature of the legislation of Saxony, implemented in 1994. The main purpose of the law is to maintain and foster the dense cultural landscape of the state, particularly in rural areas. Moreover, small towns, who benefit from cultural institutions of regional importance in spatial proximity should contribute to supporting these institutions (see SMWK, 2015).

Likewise, North Rhine-Westphalia has its own unique regional funding programme, called the **REGIONALEN.** Triannually, a variety of small-scale projects is developed and implemented under a common project framework in one region of the state. The aim is to activate regional structural change as well as more inter-municipal collaborations and learning effects. Regions to host the *REGIONALE* are selected through a competitive selection procedure. In 2022, the event will take place in Ostwestfalen-Lippe (MHKBG NRW, 2019).

Lastly, EU structural funds play an important role in fighting territorial disparities in Germany. In relation to the case study localities, especially ESF, ERDF and LEADER are of relevance. **ESF**-funded measures are integrated in 25 federal projects in Germany, like *BIWAQ* and *JUSTIQ* (see above, BMAS, 2018: 15–19). As ESF means are mostly affiliated to labour market integration projects, the funding scheme and its monitoring committee is chaired by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS, 2018: 11). The three main objectives in the current funding period in Germany are "getting people into jobs", "social inclusion", and "better education" (BMAS, 2018: 13).

The aim of **ERDF** is to transfer financial resources from more to less prosperous regions and invest in infrastructure or services (MWIDE NRW, n.d.). According to the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWI, 2019), ERDF means are mainly used to strengthen competitiveness of companies, job creation in SME, and actions supporting energy efficiency, research and technological development, and environmental protection. Funding priorities and thematic objectives are defined in Operational Programmes on the level of the federal states and there is thus some variation between the programmes and the targeted areas (Ibid.).

Thirdly, **LEADER** is a structural funding mechanism in the context of EAFRD, which tries to initiate innovative actions by experimental civil society-based projects. Local actors form local action groups (LAG), which together work out a regional development concept in form of a SWOT analysis. The regional development concept is the basis for the selection and funding of small-scale projects developed by local actors (BMEL, n.d.). In the current funding period (2014-2020) 321 LAG exist in Germany. The aims of LEADER include fostering networking and cooperation within as well as between regions (Netzwerk ländlicher Raum, 2019). Regarding the German case studies, in the administrative district of Höxter, the northern part of the district Lippe as well as in Eastern Upper Lusatia, the region around Görlitz, municipalities are collaborating under the framework of LEADER.

EU funding is most often used as a complementary tool to support national and regional development programmes in Germany. Overall, there is a German tradition of a comprehensive integrated planning culture (cf. Kieling and Othengrafen, 2009), which means that local and regional policies are well-fitted to national policy schemes. Accordingly, it is usually a pre-requisite for municipalities and regions to compile (vertically) integrated policy development concepts. The aim of this practice is to promote comprehensive allocation procedures. Yet, research has shown that the procedures leading up to such concepts can often be a burden, particularly for volunteering civil actors (see Dimension 2). For instance, interviewees pointed to an overload of bureaucratic regulations characterising funding applications and development processes.

The case study localities are eligible for regional development funding such as ERDF and LEADER (see 2.2). *SCS* is mainly supported via the *OWL 4.0* regional development scheme, which receives 6.6 Mio Euros from both ERDF and the state of Northrhine-Westfalia. Additionally, project coordinators achieved to acquire funding to realise digital training courses and allow for villages not selected through the tendering procedure to participate in certain events. Moreover, *SCS* cooperates with the LEADER coordinators of North-Lippe and Höxter.

Second Attempt is mainly funded by the municipality Görlitz and receives additional support via the *Cultural District of Upper Lusatia-Lower Silesia* (ger. *Kulturraum Oberlausitz-Niederschlesien*). Furthermore, from 2013 to 2016, the action was one of the model cases in the national research project *Youth.City.Laboratory* (ger. *Jugend.Stadt.Labor*)[2], which fostered sustainable participation mechanisms for youth initiatives in local governance. Most recently, *Second Attempt* started five projects as part of the ESF rehabilitation zone in the Inner City West of Görlitz.

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[2] The programme was supervised by the *BBSR*, a research institute advising the Federal State Ministry dealing with spatial development issues.

2.3 Framing the Cases in the National and RELOCAL Context

When looking at the national discourse around spatial justice and the policies aiming at more just territorial development, what makes the German cases interesting in both the national and the RELOCAL context?

The actions are located in a rural (Lippe and Höxter) respectively intermediate (Görlitz) region. At NUTS 3 level, which is equal to the administrative district level in Germany, both case study localities show lower population density than their surrounding region (NUTS 2 level; see Annex 6.1). One of their commonalities is the struggle with sufficient infrastructure provision, particularly in the mobility sector, and the outmigration of young people. Moreover, in a study by the Bertelsmann Foundation (Arant et al., 2017: 100–103), both wider regions around the localities scored relatively low for perceived social participation.

<u>What makes the cases interesting in the national context?</u>

Many rural areas in Germany are facing outmigration, accompanied by population ageing and a decrease in easy-to-reach SGI. Particularly in the district of Höxter, total population is declining[3] (see Annex 6.1). The objective of *Smart Country Side* is to tackle these issues by giving rural areas 'a new chance' through digitalisation.
Thereby, *SCS* focuses on soft factors that make localities attractive to live: community life and social cohesion. In a national context, digitalisation is most often framed in the realm of work, e-health, and the provision of broadband (cf. Der Demografiekongress, 2019). *SCS,* in contrast, provides important insights into citizens' ideas on how digital tools can enhance social communities. Especially elderly people can quickly feel digitally excluded in a world, where online services become an essential part of social life. Thus, village communities with an ageing social structure are interested in not being left behind global trends.
As a border town in rural East Germany, Görlitz experiences various socioeconomic disadvantages. Although unemployment rates have been decreasing in recent years, youth and long-term unemployment are still stagnating respectively increasing (see Annex 6.1). Due to a lack of future perspectives, particularly young people have been leaving the town. Furthermore, the voting district of Görlitz made national headlines after the German elections in 2017 due to the high numbers of votes for a right-wing populist party. Accordingly, the Bertelsmann study (Arant et al., 2017: 100–103) found the perception of justice in the wider region around Görlitz to be below average in a national context.

In this context, *Second Attempt* is an initiative by and for young people that promotes creativity and openness and aims to combat spatial injustice. Eventually, we can learn from this project how particularly young people can contribute to the political, social, and cultural empowerment of their local communities.

<u>What makes the case interesting in the RELOCAL context?</u>

Smart Country Side has been initiated top-down by the region Ostwestfalen-Lippe. Within that framework, *SCS* concentrates on taking up and implementing local demands through civil self-organisation. The amount of local social capital raised through the project could not have been mobilised by conventional administrative development projects. This set-up

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[3] In the administrative district Lippe, total population is increasing. This is mainly due to the influx of people to cities as the district capital Detmold (around 75.000 inhabitants).

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provides interesting insights into how top-down approaches can empower local stake-holders. It can also serve as a good example for new forms of governance to other localities.

Second Attempt directly speaks to issues of procedural justice by emphasising the need to involve youth in urban development. Moreover, local socio- and subcultural development is perceived as a pre-condition for long-term positive development in relation to both quality of life in Görlitz as well as the perception of the town in the wider regional and national context. Hence, similar to *SCS,* the action points towards the importance of soft factors for fair and inclusive local development.

3. The Studied Cases in a Comparative Perspective

3.1 Characterising the Cases

The following chapters present a comparative view on the two German case studies. If not referenced otherwise, the analysis is based on the information provided in the two case study reports (Kamuf et al., 2019; Matzke et al., 2019). The main source for these reports has been interviews with civil, public, private, academic, and media stakeholders from local and supralocal levels that are related to the case study actions in various ways.

The first and most obvious difference between the actions is their level of maturity. The project-based action *Smart Country Side* has been conceptualized since 2013 and is being implemented from 2016 to summer 2019. Previous initiatives of the umbrella organisation *OWL GmbH* have not been equally focused on social and community issues. The association *Second Attempt*, on the other hand, has been founded in 2003 and started developing projects in Görlitz in the same year. In reaction to local youth protests demanding more participation in urban development, they founded the platform Rabryka in 2013 to serve as a focal point for sociocultural activities in Görlitz. At the end of 2019, they will open a Centre for Youth and Socioculture based on the activities developed through *Rabryka*.

In terms of policy goals, *Second Attempt* focuses on promoting diverse cultural development in Görlitz and enhancing local capacities of young people to participate in local decision-making processes. Among their many activities are an annual music and culture festival, art and political education workshops, recording studios, urban gardening, and neighbourhood management. Thereby, the association aims to combat social exclusion of youth from difficult socioeconomic backgrounds by deliberately approaching them to take part in and develop their own projects. *Second Attempt* furthermore offers employment opportunities and training to young people graduating from high school or university.

The *SCS* project has the goal to promote equal access of services (in the fields of e.g. health, mobility, church, and free time activities) in rural areas through digital technologies. They focus on the soft infrastructure, not on the provision of broad band. Their wider aims include enhancing quality of life in rural areas and thus increasing identification of local citizens with their locality. In contrast to *Second Attempt*, *SCS* identifies elderly people as a particularly vulnerable group in terms of digital inclusion. Amongst other, cooperative relationships between citizens through voluntary engagement and capacity-building amongst local stakeholders in form of digital training courses shall help to bridge these gaps.

3.2 Findings from the Analytical Dimensions 1-5

Analytical Dimension 1: Perception of spatial (in-)justice within the locality

Research has shown that in both case study localities, stakeholders **perceive processes of spatial injustice**. Yet, as spatial (in-)justice is not a well-known term in Germany (see Chapter 2.1), most interviewees use other terms such as 'disadvantaged places', '(spatial) differences', or pointed to the question of 'equivalent living conditions' (see Chapter 2.1) when describing expressions of injustice, they observe in their locality. Such spatial and social disadvantages are always identified in comparison to other spaces and framed by

the position of the interviewee in geographic and institutional terms. The different perspectives on spatial injustices illustrate the multifaceted and temporal nature of places, which are established, shaped, and reproduced by actors interacting with each other within a locality.

One manifestation of spatial injustice observed by many interviewees is the influence of **topography** on the perception and development of places. For example, in mountainous villages in the district Lippe, providing sufficient infrastructure and building social ties prove more difficult than in more densely populated villages. Similarly, aspects of built environment such as the train tracks in Görlitz divide localities in physical and perceived terms. Less visible, yet equally divisive are political borders. In both localities under study, borders impact the **production of space** in terms of infrastructure provision, political cooperation, and social communities. Common interests such as the strengthening of rural areas in the case of *Smart Country Side* or the wish for more European cooperation in Görlitz and Zgorzelec can help to join forces between districts, states, and countries.

The argument for more cooperation points towards the role of a dedicated and stable **social community** for a locality. This narrative is particularly present amongst village representatives participating in *SCS*, who observe strong differences in development amongst neighbouring villages with varying levels of voluntary engagement. In contrast, when asked about disadvantaged places, many young and culturally engaged interviewees in the case of *Second Attempt* point to mainly residential areas with an old population, where 'nothing is happening'. Again, these observations show that the perception of disadvantages or injustices is highly dependent on the (self-)perception of the interviewee (e.g. young students in the case of Görlitz).

In both case studies, the question of **demographic change** plays an important role. Especially young and elderly people are perceived as disadvantaged age groups in terms of mobility and political participation. Hence, the common challenge is to make the locality attractive for young people and families, while caring for the elderly as well. Interviewees discussed both hard factors (e.g. sufficient public transport, educational institutions, and job opportunities) and soft factors (e.g. community life, dialogue-oriented municipal politics, and (sub-)cultural activities).

In relation to the former, local stakeholders perceive it as an injustice that public services are not sufficiently provided to rural and peripheral areas through institutional structures. In both localities, interviewees observed political and discursive treatment in such a way that **disadvantages were produced over time**. In Lippe and Höxter, expert interviewees complained about the allocation key of the state Northrhine-Westfalia, rendering urban agglomerations more money per inhabitant than smaller municipalities. Similarly, political actors from Görlitz criticise the 'lighthouse politics' that disadvantaged peripheral areas in Saxony in the past. These issues show that the wider national discourse of 'equivalent living conditions' between urban and rural areas is present in both case study areas (see Chapter 2.1). Additionally, in Görlitz, a few interviewees referred to the still-present divide between East and West Germany, when talking about the peripherization of the town in a national context.

However, although processes of spatial injustice (neglect through higher political levels, insufficient infrastructure provision, etc.) are noted by local actors, many of them refrain from labelling themselves or their surroundings as disadvantaged. Particularly in Lippe and Höxter, interviewees emphasized the **positive sides of rural life**. In Görlitz, civil actors perceive the 'unfinished nature' of the town as an inspiration to explore new projects

and experiment with the revival of vacant spaces. Subsequently, both actions under study aim to foster the soft infrastructure of their localities.

Lastly, in the case of Görlitz, the integration of **socioeconomically marginalised groups** plays an important role. For many years, the neighbourhood Inner City West, where the Centre will be located in, has been largely neglected by urban development measures, so that socio-structural problems began to aggravate up to the point of emerging pockets of poverty. This process is accompanied by a wide-spread public discourse, framing the area as an insanitary district with *"the socially weakest structures"* (Kamuf et al., 2019: 10). While larger structural issues cannot be directly tackled by a local civil initiative, *Second Attempt* aims to democratically empower the local population and turn around the negative image through their neighbourhood work.

Analytical Dimension 2: Tools and policies for development and cohesion

At first sight, the two case study localities show great differences in their **developmental trajectories**. Whereas the administrative districts Höxter and Lippe are embedded into the stable and striving economic structure of the region Ostwestfalen-Lippe, Görlitz and the region of Upper Lusatia have experienced strong economic decline, particularly since the fall of the GDR, and high unemployment rates. Nevertheless, at least parts of the administrative district Lippe likewise experienced a shortage of labour supply and outmigration after the main industrial branch, the furniture industry, has been declining since the turn of the millennium.

In this context, the dependency of a region on merely one or two major employers (e.g. *Siemens* and *Bombardier* in the case of Görlitz) has been critically noted by some local stakeholders. They demand stronger support for a diverse economic structure and the creative sector in particular. Hereby, universities and other academic institutions can serve as 'germ cells', which build capacities amongst local youth, attract newcomers, and diversify the region's labour market through niche studies (e.g. 'Cultural Management' at the University Zittau/Görlitz). Moreover, stakeholders in both cases were very aware of trends in living and working such as work-at-home models, the desire for vacant, 'unfinished' spaces, or the tense housing markets of urban agglomerations. These trends are perceived as **chances for a positive future development** of the localities (see also Dimension 1).

In both localities, researchers observed a **very active civil society**. On the one hand, citizens feel the need to engage and organise themselves due to a lack of sufficient public infrastructure (see Dimension 1). On the other hand, voluntary engagement facilitates the articulation of interests and demands of local actors towards institutional political levels. Consequently, civil initiatives are first and foremost perceived as positive forms of empowerment and expressions of high self-efficacy.

Nevertheless, public and civil actors regard the transfer of municipal responsibilities to the civil level as an injustice as long as structural issues are not dealt with on institutional levels. Eventually, local civil stakeholders demand a better integration of civil society into local, regional, and supra-regional decision-making processes. When asked about the commission for 'equivalent living conditions' (see Chapter 2), interviewees welcomed the increasing attention to rural areas, but could not evaluate the outcomes of these recent developments yet.

Civilly engaged actors in Görlitz consider the current local politics a good example for how to positively influence development of a locality in cooperation with civil society. Since a new mayor has been elected in 2012, the relationship between young people and the municipal government has been improving a lot. Youth and family issues are given more attention, which in view of many local actors made the town more attractive for these groups. In both case study localities, interviewees welcome local policies that foster political participation and support civil engagement (e.g. neighbourhood participation boards in Görlitz, LEADER in North-Lippe and Höxter). However, local stakeholders argue that in addition to specific projects, a **strategic plan or a vision for the locality** would support just development. Additionally, a clearly communicated vision can facilitate public debate in the community in contrast to highly detailed urban restauration plans.

Already existing measures such as IKEK and INSEK[4] programmes do not fulfil these demands yet. Both public and civil actors criticise insufficient integration into already existing strategies and policies and, most importantly, a lack of visible impact. Hence, citizens participating in the programmes become frustrated and hesitant to participate in further civil participation measures. These observations point towards the need for a general rethinking of civil participation in urban and regional development. Instead of repetitive Q&A sessions, **civil actors demand a more active role accompanied by decentralised support**. Funding shall support local projects, while giving stakeholders independence in experimenting with their ideas. Moreover, full-time support at the municipality or the district through people, who directly approach civil associations, shall alleviate the burden of application bureaucracy and lower the obstacles to participate in projects.

Analytical Dimension 3: Coordination and implementation of the action in the locality under consideration

The **coordination** of the two actions under study is focused on fostering bottom-up participation in urban and regional development, yet from different angles. In the case of *Second Attempt*, the non-profit youth association itself is a bottom-up movement that developed into a relevant local stakeholder within the municipality of Görlitz. Their self-organised youth and cultural activities have proven them capable of organising large-scale projects. Furthermore, the municipality noticed their potential in acquiring funding and mobilising parts of the population, especially young people, who could not be reached by communal politics so far. Hence, they gave them the mandate to establish a Centre for Youth and Socioculture in Görlitz. The contents of the Centre are developed by members and volunteers of the association, in a largely non-hierarchical **mode of leadership.** Hereby, Second Attempt has deliberately decided to shift its focus from being the 'maker' to being the 'capacitator', thus supporting young people in autonomously developing their own projects with their financial and strategic capacities.

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[4] IKEK is the abbreviation for an integrated municipal development concept (ger. Integriertes Kommunales Entwicklungskonzept), while INSEK stands for integrated urban development concept (ger. Integriertes Stadtentwicklungskonzept). They are important instruments for rural and community respectively urban planning strategies, whose main purpose is to develop measures aiming at a mutual future strategy for all villages of a municipality respectively neighbourhoods in a town or city. The package of measures is mostly created on the basis of a SWOT analysis where opportunities and challenges are locally defined, which justify funding from a state, national, or EU level. That is why IKEK, INSEK and other community development programmes are often co-funded by means of EAFRD, ERDF or ESF (cf. MBWSV NRW: 2015).

Smart Country Side, in contrast, is a project initiated top-down by public actors from the district administrations of Lippe and Höxter. It forms part of a regional development scheme and has a limited life time. Yet, while the project is coordinated through the district, activities and output are defined and developed by representatives of the participating villages. Thereby, project coordinators approached villages and civil associations that have already acquired a certain level of know-how in participative programmes such as LEADER to be able to build upon this knowledge in short time.

Both actions are thus shaped by the **cooperation between public and civil actors**. These relationships have been described as unique, new, and difficult, as the two stakeholder groups express strongly differing demands, wishes, and expectations towards development projects. Particularly in the case of Görlitz, however, the relationship between *Second Attempt* and the municipality has been perceived as a fruitful learning process by the respective actors. Thereby, multiple interviewees emphasized the **importance of an intermediary** in the municipal administration to facilitate communication and 'translate' between the different positions. Similarly, the project coordinators of *SCS* took over the role of intermediaries, when communicating the interests of village representatives to their political board and the established structures of the districts' administration.

The political board of *SCS* illustrates **expressions of power** experienced by actions with a strong focus on bottom-up participation. While political stakeholders genuinely appreciated the participative nature of the project, they nevertheless tried to shape *SCS* with their own interests and demands. Thanks to their extensive knowledge on place-based circumstances and needs of the participating villages, project coordinators could successfully advocate against strong political influence through the board. It must be noted, however, that *SCS* is not dependent on the support of political district representatives, as the action is funded and given relatively free hand by the regional development agency *OWL GmbH*. *Second Attempt*, in contrast, does depend on the backing and financial support of the municipality Görlitz as its main sponsor. Nevertheless, the association likewise showed **capacity to negotiate** with members of the municipal administration and thus brought the relationship at eye level.

Networks with other actors and associations at different levels have proven important in supporting the actions' work as well as their visibility to the wider public. The project coordinators of *SCS* combined different funding schemes to provide village representatives with quick tangible output and increase the impact of the project beyond the participating villages. In comparison, *Second Attempt* is active in a variety of local and regional networks and committees, enabling them to voice their interests with stronger force.

Analytical Dimension 4: Autonomy, participation and engagement

In bottom-up projects, one of the essential challenges is to facilitate easy **participation and engagement** of an ideally wide and diverse range of local actors. Both case studies provide good examples of how to mobilise citizens, while at the same time showing up the obstacles that come with this task.

Second Attempt focuses on the activation of local youth. Yet, young people are not a homogeneous group and show a wide variety of interests and capacities. Hence, the association encompasses a diverse **mixture of activities**, from open and informal meeting places via low-threshold, but regular working groups to professional projects such as the ESF projects in the Inner City West of Görlitz or the organisation of yearly festivals. This modular

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concept provides future perspectives in the form of jobs as well as personal identification with a project to a variety of people. Hereby, the balancing of the informal character, which attracts *Second Attempt's* core clientele, with a more professional, institutionalized coordination, allowing them to acquire funds and establish themselves as relevant urban development actor, remains a continuous challenge.

Project coordinators of *Smart Country Side* likewise aimed to facilitate participation of a wide range of citizens through a diversity of activities. After the open village conferences, villagers could choose whether to commit to one of the subsequently founded working groups or just participate in singular events on digitalisation or use the IT media centres installed in each participating village. Furthermore, to secure sustainability of the action, digital training courses capacitated a number of village representatives to become 'digital experts' and transfer this knowledge to their fellow citizens. This model of 'train the trainer' provides participants certain **autonomy, i.e. self-efficacy** in integrating digital knowledge into community life.

Nevertheless, both actions struggled with diversifying their group of volunteers. Interviewees in Lippe and Höxter indicated that many of the village representatives are 'the usual suspects', mostly middle-aged men and women, who are already very involved in community life and volunteer initiatives. The project did not achieve to attract a high number of young people under the age of 30. The core clientele of *Second Attempt*, on the other hand, largely still consists of university students and youth from middle-class backgrounds.

The question is: do the actions have to represent the largest diversity of users possible or are they still **legitimized** by representing only certain groups or a specific milieu? Particularly in the case of the Centre, the political opposition as well as the media criticised the municipality for spending so much money on *"clientelism politics"* (Kamuf et al., 2019: 12) and other associations feared the centralization of municipal funds in one project. In contrast, other interviewees argued that the action draws its legitimacy from its uniqueness and its focus on a specifically vulnerable group – young people.

Interviewees from other civil associations pointed out that it was a lack of clear communication of the goals of the Centre through the municipality, which opened the door for critics. Consequently, the association started dialogue events to clarify responsibilities and discuss the values of the Centre in a common effort. Open and transparent dialogue as well as a clear explanation of the values and responsibilities of a project foster the integration of all citizens into the debate and can thus grant legitimacy. Yet again, this debate is not concluded, as the accountability of *Second Attempt* to the *Cultural District* requires the action to implement intergenerational activities and prove its regional importance, which again influences and alters its contentual profile.

Regarding the question of legitimacy and resulting from the selection procedures, a feeling of competition was observed amongst villages in the *SCS* project. Moreover, as villages with pre-existing knowledge in similar projects were chosen, the question arises, whether the action actually increases already existing inequalities between local communities. Project coordinators try to prevent this by offering other villages to participate in certain events or digital training courses. Additionally, experiences from the project shall be transferred to other rural areas all over Germany.

However, the more pressing issue for project coordinators of *SCS* was the **management of local expectations**. As indicated in Dimension 2, many volunteers in the locality made

negative experiences with previous programmes that did not sufficiently integrate local capacities and could not provide visible impact to villagers. Thus, when *Smart Country Side* experienced delays with the implementation of the 'village app', some village representatives were disappointed. Quick tangible outputs such as the digital training courses could partly alleviate the frustration.

These observations indicate that visibility of projects as well as **transparent and clear communication of goals** is essential to the success of a participatory project that brings together public as well as civil actors. Surely, many participatory actions operate in an experimental manner, including the two cases under study. Nevertheless, particularly if following a method of trial and error, this must be clearly explained to all relevant stakeholders, including the wider public, so that no false expectations arise.

Analytical Dimension 5: Expression and mobilisation of place-based knowledge and adaptability

Research in the two German case studies has shown that a high level of **place-based knowledge** and the **capability to adapt to (changing) place-based circumstances** are essential factors for the success of the actions under study. In order to mobilise local citizens to participate in their activities, both actions needed to acquire certain knowledge about local needs and interests. In the case of the Inner City West in Görlitz, many inhabitants have not been actively engaged in urban development so far and are still reserved towards the action. Thus, *Second Attempt* has learned to use **informal approaches** (a neighbourhood shop, local events, personal talks, etc.) to attract people to their projects and gain knowledge about the neighbourhood. Hereby, they focus on collecting information to then **adapt their activities to local needs**.

The *Smart Country Side* project, as a project-based action, was not able to collect place-based knowledge over a long period of time. Hence, surveys and **gate-openers** were used to promote the project in the villages, facilitate communication with local volunteers, and gain knowledge about communities' interests. The gate-openers were mostly leaders of larger village associations and local political representatives. This method was also helpful in distributing responsibility to village representatives, who would then take the lead in self-organising activities within the villages. Additionally, it was observed that **digitalisation as a cross-sectional topic** in combination with the open and participative conceptualization of the project allowed to accommodate a wide range of already existing projects within the villages. Nevertheless, project participants in one village reported a partial mismatch between project activities and local demands; an issue that became visible over the course of the action only.

In both cases, project coordinators emphasized that locals knew best what their problems are. Hence, actions focused at more just territorial development should collect this knowledge and involve citizens in tackling these issues instead of imposing prescribed solutions onto communities.

However, actions do not only need to adapt to the demands of local citizens, yet likewise to the interests of financial sponsors and political stakeholders. Hereby, both *Second Attempt* and *SCS* have shown the capacity to negotiate with municipal administrations and other political representatives (see Dimension 3). In Görlitz, civil and public stakeholders reported a **shared learning process** that helped both sides to form a relationship and adapt to each other's interests. Additionally, the dialogue events (see Dimension 4) were an im-

portant learning effect for *Second Attempt* after the establishment of the Centre sparked criticism. In Ostwestfalen-Lippe, interviewees working at a district level emphasized the positive effects of **intercommunal cooperation**, bringing together two districts with shared interests, yet different mentalities.

Regarding funding requirements, the municipality of Görlitz as well as the *OWL GmbH* provided the projects with the flexibility to use their knowledge of place-based circumstances to develop their activities. The other sponsor of *Second Attempt*, however, the *Cultural District*, demanded higher adaptability (see Dimension 4). Hereby, the **association has learned** that in order to guarantee the resources for and sustainability of their action, they need to be adaptable to the civil and political context. This might include doing projects that project team members might personally not like.

All in all, both actions showed openness and ability to collect place-based knowledge and adapt to local circumstances. In the future, however, it has to be seen, in how far the two projects can prove sustainable. *Second Attempt* does not regard their action to be ever finished; instead, the **ongoing process** of developing projects, cooperating with other associations, and involving the citizenry of Görlitz is perceived as a goal in itself. Hopefully, these positive developments can hold up against changing circumstances such as shifts in local politics over the next years.

The project *Smart Country Side*, on the other hand, will surely conclude in summer 2019. Project coordinators are working on solutions for (and have already been partly successful to secure) subsequent funding of some activities and village representatives are motivated to keep the momentum up through their own self-organised projects. At the same time, however, interviewees observe an overload for very active citizens, which are already engaged in several projects, and see the need to acquire new volunteers to keep the project going. Additionally, the next years will show, whether experiences from *SCS* can be successfully distributed to other villages of the region and beyond.

3.3 Findings from the Synthesising Dimensions A-C

For both actions, we conclude that they have been successful in deploying place-based capital and resources for local development. On the one hand, this success is dependent upon a set of favourable conditions and opportunities which are not easily replicable elsewhere (for instance, the existence of a university branch, or a local culture of voluntarism), and thus results and effects are contingent upon time and place. On the other hand, the success of the researched actions is also due to the specific way how the local, place-based resources have been capitalised, and thus a range of transferable elements in this process can be identified as being crucial for the way how the actions unfold and affect local populations in both places.

Synthesising Dimension A: Assessment of promoters and inhibitors

A main factor influencing the impact of the action on procedural and distributive justice within the locality is the level of civic engagement. The achievements of both actions could not be explained without the **existence of a critical number of very active volunteers** with personal networks and know-how, partly originating from their professional background.

In the case of Görlitz, without the presence of a nucleus of engaged young professionals, partly linked to the existence of the 'Cultural Management' branch of the university, the *Second Attempt* initiative would not have been able to develop into a main driver for sociocultural development in Görlitz. In the case of the *SCS* project, the engagement of village representatives and already existing local civic initiatives provide a strong background for the successful implementation of the *SCS* action. Both cases thus show the potential of civil society engagement in local development processes, but – in terms of transferability – they provide no short-term solutions for places with widespread resignation, frustration, and low civic engagement.

However, lessons can be drawn from both actions with regards to the **factors which promote and sustain civic engagement over the long run** as a resource for co-operative (civil society and public sector) local action. Community members need to be taken serious in their role as experts for their local environment. The case of the *SCS* project shows that community members expect concrete results and outcomes in return for their investments and get easily frustrated in participation processes which ask for their opinion but afterwards do not take up these results and actually deliver to the local community (see Dimension 2). The case of *Second Attempt* is different, as the initiative is autonomous and consequently followed its own local agenda. The support of important political actors in the town of Görlitz, who have been sympathising with *Second Attempt's* local agenda, has backed the initiative. At the same time, it is true to say that the town Görlitz has not always or unanimously supported the action in times of conflict. In both cases, **a fair process** – in terms of transparent communication and cooperating with civil society initiatives on an equal footing –helps to establish mutual understanding and trust, which is important for co-operative local action (see Dimension 5).

Likewise, both cases show the **importance of flexibility and adaptability** as promoting factors (see Dimension 5), specifically in the German tradition of a comprehensive integrated planning culture (cf. Kieling and Othengrafen, 2009). In the case of Görlitz we have argued that adaptability and organisational learning are of critical importance for explaining the way how *Second Attempt* has managed to strategically pursue their wider aims over time. In the case of *SCS*, a project-based set-up has enabled flexibility and adaptability in managing the action in co-operation with village representatives.

Responsiveness to local needs and opportunities are enabled, as both actions show, by allowing initiatives to develop according to their own priorities, and at the same time, enabling **reflection and common learning processes**. *Second Attempt* would not have developed to its current state, if it had not – though consequently following its own vision – invested in local networks (e.g. with other civil associations, or with political actors in Görlitz) and networked actions (see Dimension 3). The set-up of the *SCS* project is different, as coordinators are integrated into the established structures of the districts' administration. This set-up potentially allows for cross-fertilisation between the project management and the districts' regular administration, and thus organisational learning effects. This is not to argue in general for project-based funding. The project-based funding of local development initiatives needs to go hand in hand with **a strategic and long-term vision** to which projects are contributing in order to avoid project-cycles of repeating model project rounds. Hence, there needs to be a clear strategy from the beginning on how to mainstream and sustain positive experiences and effects.

Synthesising Dimension B: Competences and capacities of stakeholders

Both actions have **ambitions to empower local communities**. They started from quite different baselines, however, and take different perspectives on empowerment, too. The villages under study in the *SCS* project show a remarkably high level of (formal as well as informal) civic engagement. They partly have been chosen to participate in the *SCS* project for their level of engagement. This engagement includes civil society initiatives such as establishing and running a local supermarket, a village hall, or community centres. Partly, these are autonomous actions by the community; partly they are developed in the frame of LEADER or in co-operation with local authorities or the local church.

The aim of the *SCS project* has been to realize the potential of digitalisation as a tool to promote civic engagement and capacity-building in rural villages (see for instance, the role of 'digital village experts', Dimension 4). Given the limited life-time of the project, it has been particularly challenging to combine a participative bottom-up approach while at the same time maintaining reasonable project efficiency. The management of expectations from the side of the village communities (on return in form of concrete results for their invested time and resources) has turned out to be a critical factor in the whole process. Village representatives generally appreciated the bottom-up character of the action, yet called for a higher degree of autonomy and giving village people more rights to decide about needs of the villages.

In Görlitz, *Second Attempt* started from a perceived gap or lack with regards to the participation and empowerment of young people in public affairs, which had not been covered by formal politics before. The initiative actively lobbies for greater attention towards the interests of young people in urban development, and has a clear political ambition: to promote the active and democratic engagement of young people in local politics. Additionally, the management of expectations plays an important role. The initiative needs to balance becoming a 'professional' urban development agent on the one hand, with remaining credible and trustworthy for their clientele on the other hand. The modular concept of *Second Attempt*, including highly professionalised project modules on the one hand, among self-organised, autonomous, and informal activities on the other hand, helps to bridge this dilemma. Nevertheless, the question whether civil engagement, as visible in the diverse activities of *Second Attempt*, should always strive towards institutionalised forms (in order to increase legitimacy and accountability of the association) or whether such institutionalisation would not rather undermine its legitimacy for its clientele, remains an open and interesting question for debate.

The chosen actions provide an impressing window into the **potentials of localised action** and the resources of civil society actors. These achievements need to be integrated in and supported by wider policy approaches in order to raise their potential and local impact. Without the financial and conceptual support of the municipal government, and without the positive influence of regional, national, and EU funding programmes, it would not have been possible for *Second Attempt* to achieve the importance and role it has today in socio-cultural development in the locality of Görlitz.

The same applies to the *SCS* project. The project is part of a regional action programme (called OWL 4.0 and supported by regional state and EU funds) which fosters digital transformation processes in the region Ostwestfalen-Lippe. It can be seen as part of national and federal state strategies to ensure equal living conditions in urban and rural areas and there is quite some interest from other German regions in its approach. One of the biggest challenges for *SCS* in the regional context at the time of writing this report is to learn from

the experiences and use this knowledge to mainstream practices which have proven to be successful into the established structures of the districts' administration.

Synthesising Dimension C: Connecting the action to procedural and distributive justice

Reflecting the achievements of both actions and their **impact** on the localities, it is quite evident that the kind of localised actions which has been studied in the German context, cannot counteract – in terms of material outcomes – wider structural trends and processes (such as rural-urban divide, outmigration, etc.). However, it is also obvious that through their place-based and community-oriented development approach, both actions produced outcomes which could not have been produced by conventional political-administrative (top-down) procedures. Both cases thus show how the way in which the actions are set up influences their outcomes and the question of whether deeply localised resources can be raised for local development.

In terms of direct outcomes for local communities, the *SCS* project supports local capacity building (see, for example, the 'train the trainer' approach, Dimension 4) and enables villagers with low capability to access and use new technologies, thus enhancing digital inclusion specifically of older adults. The fact that – within a predefined portfolio of funded activities – villages could decide on the local priorities has been a decisive factor for raising engagement of village representatives. The outcomes of the project are thus directly linked to the way how the project was set up and organised as well as its openness to include locally specific interests.

In the context of an ageing region, the project's focus is well chosen and in interviews with local village representatives, the opportunities linked to the project for villages, specifically the opportunity to remain vital and attractive places to live, also for younger population groups, were emphasised (see Chapter 2.3). The action has the potential to improve living conditions, specifically for elderly and immobile population. At the same time, there was some discontent that villages could not decide more autonomously on investment priorities. Some villages are on the verge of losing key infrastructure (such as the last local school) and against these structural counter-developments, a digitalisation project promised comparably modest effects. There is no clear-cut answer or solution to this dilemma. A further dilemma of the action is the fact that for the participating villages, all of them showing high levels of voluntary engagement, the action provides opportunities which strengthen their relative position, but should not be achieved at the expense of other villages in the district (see Dimension 4). Thus, a sustainable roll-out strategy or a complementary strategy for the digital inclusion of less active villages is needed (for example, through inter-communal transfer activities). Otherwise digitalisation projects may become a means to create new or widen existing inequalities.

A most important achievement of the *Second Attempt* initiative has been to provide creative, alternative spaces for young citizens in Görlitz. In terms of material and visible outcomes, the initiative has developed the platform *Rabryka,* as a focal point for sociocultural activities, and has promoted the future establishment of the Centre in the Inner City West. In providing formal and informal meeting places and opportunities for democratic empowerment and civic engagement of young people, *Second Attempt* reacted to an obvious lack of opportunities for young people to take a more active part in public affairs of the town Görlitz. Against the background of large population groups in Görlitz which seemingly feel marginalised in political and structural developments of the last years and the in-

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terest to make young people stay in the town, the achievements of *Second Attempt* are quite relevant for the future development of Görlitz. According to our evaluation, the specific social capital of the association, such as its credibility among its clientele and the network relations with other sociocultural initiatives in the town, is directly linked to the associations' including, open, dialogue-oriented, and transparent ways of acting.

4. Conclusions

What is being achieved in terms of delivering greater spatial justice to the respective localities?

Research has shown that both German case studies are examples for the positive effects of place-based local actions on achieving greater spatial justice within their localities. In relation to procedural justice, the actions mobilised local social capital and fostered local capacity-building through their participative and (partial) bottom-up approaches. In comparison to other place-based initiatives, the actions stand out due to their strong networks with other associations as well as their ability to acquire and interlink various funding schemes. In distributive terms, their localities profit from these networks, as resources flow into the communities that local governments would not have been able to raise otherwise. Moreover, the representation of the actions in regional and national committees and events increases visibility of the localities on a supra-regional scale. For example, results from *SCS* were discussed at the International Green Week of the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture in Berlin and *Second Attempt* forms part of the *Regional Association for Socioculture Saxony* (ger. *Landesverband Soziokultur Sachsen e.V.*).

In developing and implementing their activities, both actions profited from already high levels of local civic engagement. Moreover, through their modular concepts of informal and more professional activities, they were able to provide tangible outputs to citizens and mobilise volunteers. Hereby, *SCS* project coordinators as well as the *Second Attempt* team proved great organisational learning capacity in adapting to changing circumstances such as local expectations, funding requirements, and exertion of influence by political actors. This task was particularly challenging for *Smart Country Side*, as project coordinators had to balance regulative restrictions with a participative bottom-up approach, while at the same time maintaining reasonable project efficiency. *Second Attempt* had more time to experiment with different participation formats and mitigate criticism. When conflicts arouse around the legitimacy of the Centre, *Second Attempt* initiated dialogue events, which started a still ongoing public conversation about youth and cultural politics in Görlitz. These experiences of self-efficacy in place-based local actions changed the perception many actively engaged actors have of their locality and convinced them that a positive future development is possible.

How do the actions contribute to mitigating territorial disparities in the national context?

The focus of the actions lays on fostering the soft infrastructure of their localities (i.e. local social and cultural structures and visibility of the locality). Nevertheless, they do have an impact beyond their territorial context. Both initiatives are presented as good or even best practice examples of new forms of local governance and cooperation between civil and public actors. In the case of *Second Attempt*, it has already been reported that the initiative inspired and motivated other youth organisations from the region.

Active participation and involvement of local communities in policy development does not have a very strong tradition in Germany. The *SCS* approach of integrating participative local development into a top-down initiated regional development project is a procedural innovation that could be translated to other localities. However, it has yet to be seen in how far such transfers prove successful, specifically to communities that show lower levels of pre-existing civil engagement. In terms of procedural justice, and in the context of

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larger theoretical discussions, the question can be raised, if competition (in application for funds) and reliance on voluntary engagement (as a non-ubiquitous resource) can ever create more spatial justice? There clearly is a need for concrete transfer strategies for a digital inclusion of all rural areas.

On a more conceptual level, *SCS* is one of few projects in the national context, which explore the effects of digital tools on strengthening civic engagement and quality of life in rural areas. In the framework of a larger public debate around potential advantages and dangers of digitalisation, the action thus sheds more attention on the socio-spatial implications of digital technologies. At the same time, the project points out the need for quick and sufficient broad band supply as a prerequisite for inclusive digital transformation.

As both actions are represented in committees and events on various institutional levels, actors have the capacity to push these ideas into public discourse and exert influence on territorial development in Germany. Amongst other issues, *Second Attempt* demands more financial and conceptual support for socio- and subcultural organisations. Moreover, during a workshop by the children and youth association of Saxony (ger. *Kinder und Jugendring Sachsen*), in which *Second Attempt* participated, actors emphasized the need for more youth participation in local decision-making and urban development. More generally, local civil stakeholders in both case studies demand a better integration of civil society into local, regional, and supra-regional decision-making processes.

What are the policy changes ahead for bigger impact?

As discussed above (see Chapter 2.1), there is a vital discourse on the essence of and the means to achieve 'equivalent living conditions' in Germany. The two German case studies are exemplary for this goal, as they focus on providing the same opportunities to their local communities that other localities already have. In striving towards 'equivalent living conditions' for their localities, they deliberately collect and use place-based knowledge for the development of their activities. The vertically integrated structure of German planning policies and development programmes supports their work, as the actions profit from a variety of interlinked funding schemes. Thus, they translate higher level goals in relation to territorial development into local practice.

Yet, bureaucratic regulations of funding applications, particularly in relation to EU funds, burden local civil actors. Funding shall support local projects, while giving stakeholders independence in experimenting with their ideas instead of forcing them into institutionalised structures. Hereby, **decentralised professional support** through the municipality or the district should be installed to alleviate the burden of application bureaucracy and lower the obstacles to participate in projects. Research has shown that **intermediaries,** who can translate between institutional structures and civil society, are essential to the success of place-based actions. Moreover, research points towards the importance of **embedding project-based actions into long-term local and regional visions and strategies** to grant sustainability. Hereby, it is essential to transparently and clearly communicate the goals of these actions and their value for the locality to the wider public.

In a nutshell, findings back arguments for a general shift of responsibilities to the local level and a stronger support to build and develop capacity at the lowest level of local communities. To achieve this, it is important that institutional actors build trust with civil stakeholders and local communities. Measures such as **project funds and other forms of participatory budgets** can give the local level more autonomy and allow local actors to use their place-based knowledge to purposefully mobilise local resources.

In the end, however, it must be noted that **civil engagement shall not be responsible for the tasks of the state.** Structural issues such as the erosion of public infrastructure and socioeconomic inequalities need to be solved at the institutional level and cannot be made up for by civil actors. Instead, civil initiatives fulfil an important role in pointing out and clarifying local needs to higher level public actors, so that these can act upon the demands in participatory and joint undertakings. The way how these relations between public and civil actors are formed, has been described as unique, new, and difficult in both case studies. The cases thus provide an inspiring view on localised actions and the potentials of civil initiatives, while also raising new questions, such as issues of legitimacy, or the role of civil engagement in the context of welfare state retrenchment.

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6. Annexes

6.1 List of Indicators

		Dresden (NUTS 2)	Görlitz Landkreis (NUTS 3)	Görlitz Stadt	Detmold (NUTS 2)	OWL SCS Höxter (NUTS 3)	OWL SCS Lippe (NUTS 3)
Indicator 1_1							
Name	Income of households	DED2	DED2D		DEA4	DEA44	DEA45
	(2013)	17,900.00	16,792.00	n/a	21,100.00	19,708.00	21,016.00
	(2015)	18,700.00	17,668.00	n/a	21,900.00	20,513.00	21,772.00
	(2016)	19,200.00	18,287.00	n/a	22,400.00	21,148.00	22,239.00
Indicator 4							
Name	Economic activity rates	DED2	DED2D		DEA4	DEA44	DEA45
	(2013)	80.6	n/a	n/a	76.8	n/a	n/a
	(2016)	81.4	n/a	n/a	76.9	n/a	n/a
	(2017)	81.6	n/a	n/a	77.2	n/a	n/a
Indicator 5							
Name	Employment rates	DED2	DED2D	SJG16	DEA4	DEA44	DEA45
	(2013)	74.7	56.3	52.0	72.9	54.5	55.5
	(2015)	75.8	57.9	53.9	73.1	55.9	57.4
	(2016)	77.3	58.8	54.2	73.8	56.5	57.7
	(2017)	78.0	60.4	n/a	74.1	58.9	59.4
	(2018)		61.6			60.4	60.7
Indicator 6							
Name	Unemployment rates	DED2	DED2D	SMG	DEA4	DEA44	DEA45
	(2013)	7.2	12.0	18.2	5.0	5.4	7.7
	(2016)	4.9	10.1	16.1	4.1	5.0	7.0
	(2017)	4.3	9.2	15.0	3.9	4.6	6.6
	(2018)		8.5			3.9	6.1
Indicator 7							
Name	Youth unemployment rates	DED2	DED2D		DEA4	DEA44	DEA45
	(2013)	9.8	8.6	n/a	8.8	5.5	7.7
	(2016)	n/a	8.5	n/a	6.1	5.6	6.8
	(2017)	n/a	8.6	n/a	7.4	4.5	6.7
	(2018)		8.1			3.4	6.1
Indicator 8							
Name	Long term unemploy-ment rates	DED2	DED2D		DEA4	DEA44	DEA45
	(2013)	51.2	43.1	n/a	40.0	29.9	42.3
	(2016)	54.9	46.8	n/a	38.9	34.2	43.6
	(2017)	49.5	45.5	n/a	40.4	34.2	42.7
	(2018)		46.9			34.5	44.3
Indicator 10_1							
Name	Life expectancy	DED2	DED2D		DEA4	DEA44	DEA45
	(2013)	81.0	n/a	n/a	80.9	n/a	n/a
	(2016)	81.7	n/a	n/a	81.2	n/a	n/a
	(2017)	81.7	n/a	n/a	81.2		
Indicator 14							
Name	NEET	DED2	DED2D		DEA4	DEA44	DEA45
	(2013)	9.7	n/a	n/a	8.8	n/a	n/a
	(2016)	6.9	n/a	n/a	9.5	n/a	n/a

	(2017)	8.2	n/a	n/a	8.4	n/a	n/a
Indicator 24_1							
Name	Total population	DED2	DED2D	SJG16	DEA4	DEA44	DEA45
	(2013)	1,591,320	264,673	54.440	2,025,415	143,709	346,496
	(2016)	1,602,754	260,000	55,255	2,057,996	144,010	350,750
	(2017)	1,600,155	258,337	56.246	2,054,205	141,855	348,933
	(2018)	1,598,573	256,587	n/a	2,054,343	141,565	349,069
Indicator 28							
Name	People at risk of poverty or social exclusion	DED2*	DED2D		DEA4*	DEA44	DEA45
	(2013)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	(2016)	19.5	n/a	n/a	19.2	n/a	n/a
	(2017)	19.8			16.9		
Additional Indicators							
Name	Area (km²)	DED2*	DED2D*		DEA4*	DEA44*	DEA45*
		7931	2106	67,5	6525	1202	1246
Name	Population Density	DED2*	DED2D*		DEA4*	DEA44*	DEA45*
	(2013)	200,65	125,68	806,52	310,41	119,56	278,09
	(2016)	202,09	123,46	818,59	315,40	119,81	281,50
	(2017)	201,76	122,67	833,27	314,82	118,02	280,04
	(2018)	201,56	121,84	n/a	314,84	117,77	280,15

Table 1: List of socioeconomic indicators[5] for the case study localities and their higher-level statistical units (Compiled from Eurostat, Statistische Ämter des Bundes und der Länder, and Stadtverwaltung Görlitz).
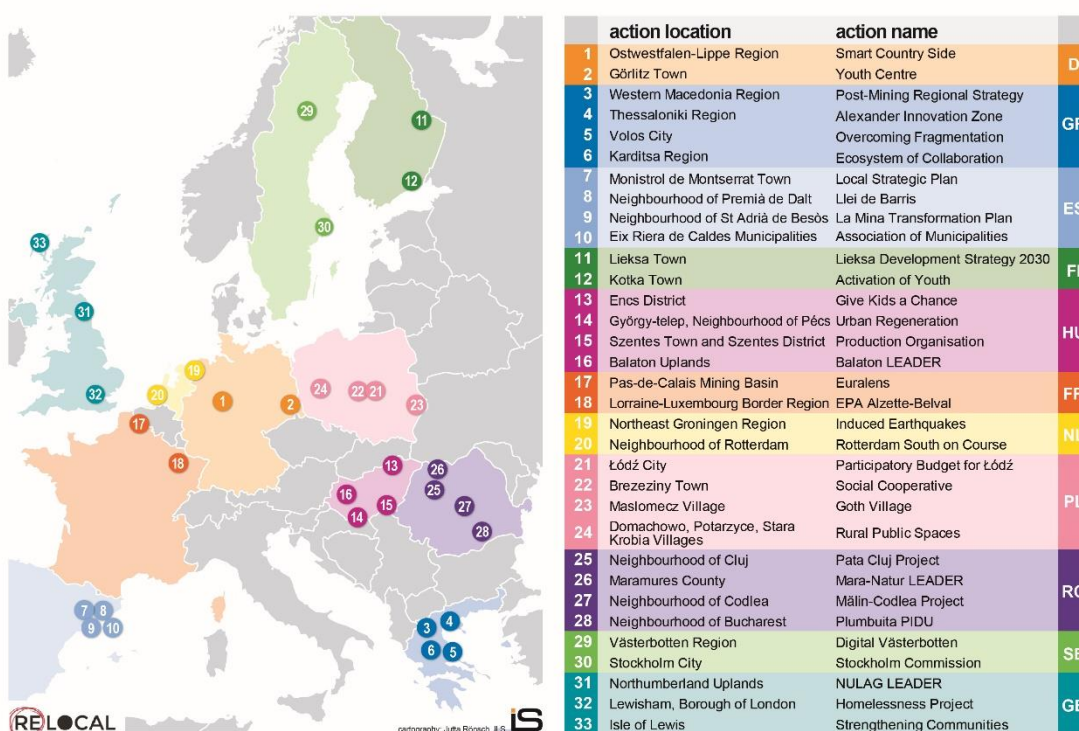
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[5] The precise definitions of all indicators can be found in RELOCAL Deliverable 2.1.

The RELOCAL Project

EU Horizon 2020 research project '**Resituating the local in cohesion and territorial development**' –**RELOCAL** aims to identify factors that condition local accessibility of European policies, local abilities to articulate needs and equality claims and local capacities for exploiting European opportunity structures.

In the past, especially since the economic and financial crisis, the European Social Model has proven to be challenged by the emergence of spatially unjust results. The RELOCAL hypothesis is that **processes of localisation and place-based public policy** can make a positive contribution to spatial justice and democratic empowerment.

The research is based on **33 case studies in 13 different European countries** that exemplify development challenges in terms of spatial justice. The cases were chosen to allow for a balanced representation of different institutional contexts. Based on case study findings, project partners will draw out the factors that influence the impact of place-based approaches or actions from a comparative perspective. The results are intended to facilitate a greater local orientation of cohesion, territorial development and other EU policies.

	action location	action name	
1	Ostwestfalen-Lippe Region	Smart Country Side	D
2	Görlitz Town	Youth Centre	
3	Western Macedonia Region	Post-Mining Regional Strategy	GR
4	Thessaloniki Region	Alexander Innovation Zone	
5	Volos City	Overcoming Fragmentation	
6	Karditsa Region	Ecosystem of Collaboration	
7	Monistrol de Montserrat Town	Local Strategic Plan	ES
8	Neighbourhood of Premià de Dalt	Llei de Barris	
9	Neighbourhood of St Adrià de Besòs	La Mina Transformation Plan	
10	Eix Riera de Caldes Municipalities	Association of Municipalities	
11	Lieksa Town	Lieksa Development Strategy 2030	FI
12	Kotka Town	Activation of Youth	
13	Encs District	Give Kids a Chance	HU
14	György-telep, Neighbourhood of Pécs	Urban Regeneration	
15	Szentes Town and Szentes District	Production Organisation	
16	Balaton Uplands	Balaton LEADER	
17	Pas-de-Calais Mining Basin	Euralens	FR
18	Lorraine-Luxembourg Border Region	EPA Alzette-Belval	
19	Northeast Groningen Region	Induced Earthquakes	NL
20	Neighbourhood of Rotterdam	Rotterdam South on Course	
21	Łódź City	Participatory Budget for Łódź	PL
22	Brzeziny Town	Social Cooperative	
23	Maslomecz Village	Goth Village	
24	Domachowo, Potarzyce, Stara Krobia Villages	Rural Public Spaces	
25	Neighbourhood of Cluj	Pata Cluj Project	RO
26	Maramures County	Mara-Natur LEADER	
27	Neighbourhood of Codlea	Mălin-Codlea Project	
28	Neighbourhood of Bucharest	Plumbuita PIDU	
29	Västerbotten Region	Digital Västerbotten	SE
30	Stockholm City	Stockholm Commission	
31	Northumberland Uplands	NULAG LEADER	GB
32	Lewisham, Borough of London	Homelessness Project	
33	Isle of Lewis	Strengthening Communities	

The RELOCAL project runs from October 2016 until September 2020.

Read more at https://relocal.eu

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