Future City Lab - Realworld Laboratory for a sustainable mobility culture

Stuttgart, Germany

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Project Description

The Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts (MWK) recently began funding a new model of cooperation between science and society. These “Realworld Laboratories” make the city a space for cooperative experimentation. This comparatively new research format focuses not on researching and observing human patterns of behaviour but asks researchers to work together with local citizens to develop and initiate real transformation processes in order to derive relevant practical knowledge and concrete solutions for the broader challenges facing society in the future. The Future City Lab Stuttgart has made the cultural dimension of sustainable mobility its central theme. Here industry, city administration, businesses and citizens work together to jointly develop a culture of mobility that aims not only to reduce the consumption of resources but also to promote health and physical activity, to encourage social interaction and to cultivate a new quality of life and urban realm in the city and the region. The Realworld Laboratory for a Sustainable Mobility Culture was initiated with this in mind: together with a committed network of partners, the Realworld Laboratory aims to put ideas, visions and concrete projects for a good, sustainable culture of mobility into practice. Our Realworld Laboratory for a Sustainable Mobility Culture is both a Futures Lab and a cooperative platform. It pools disparate knowledge and makes it available for wider discussion: both as a digital network on the web platform as well as through real-world cooperation between different initiatives and stakeholders. Together, we address the question of how the needs and rights of every individual to mobility can be implemented in such a way that later generations can also benefit from a healthy, liveable and intact environment. Our focus lies not on technologies or strategies for optimising traffic and transport systems but on engendering a culture of mobility and activity that, in line with a broader understanding of prosperity, has the capacity to enhance our quality of life at a personal level and in the city as a whole. A special role is played by so-called “Transformation Pioneers”: people in society who are actively developing and implementing social innovations and innovative sustainable projects. Their actions have the capacity to change how we live on a day-to-day basis and serve as inspiration for others. The aim of the Realworld Laboratory is to strengthen, promote and link up suitable projects and initiatives – and to jointly reflect on the experiences and results of the Realworld Experiments.

Laboratories are for experiments. In a Realworld Laboratory, the experiments take place in an actual (spatial) environment to explore what effects new ideas can bring about. We then examine how these influence a range of ecological, technical and social boundary conditions. As such, the Realworld Laboratory for a Sustainable Mobility Culture invites the people of Stuttgart to tackle the challenges of urban mobility and try out new possible solutions in the form of Realworld Experiments.