GREEN SURGE

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URBAN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING

A GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

ENV-462 Urban Green & Blue Infrastructure and Global Warming - EXTRACT

Practitioners' guide to urban green infrastructure planning, based on research in European cities as part of the EU FP7 project GREEN SURGE.

URBAN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING – A GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

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A GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

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WHAT IS UGI PLANNING - AND WHY DO IT?

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Urban Challenge: Increasing Social Cohesion

Social cohesion can be understood as the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding inequality. UGI can play an important role in fostering inter-actions between different social groups, and in turn improving social cohesion.

While ethnic and cultural diversity are on the rise throughout Europe, local governments also have to respond to aging populations and growing social inequalities. All of these factors are expected to increase social exclusion. Countering this trend, and its associated negative effects, is a key priority on European, national, and local political agendas. Social cohesion is based on the principle that people from different backgrounds should have similar life opportunities and access to services, including green spaces[1].

At highest risk of social exclusion are those who are different from the majority of the population, whether through income level, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, age or health status; or who are otherwise vulnerable[2]. For a variety of reasons, such people tend to both be concentrated in specific areas of cities, and to experience limits in the extent to which they can travel beyond these areas[3]. This means that the quality of their neighbourhoods, and the interpersonal relationships within them, are of vital importance. In addition, since many urban areas (such as malls or pedestrian zones in commercial districts)carry the expectation that users will spend money, cost-free green spaces are of particular importance to lower-income groups[4].

UGI can counter social exclusion, and likewise build social cohesion, in different ways, such as by being free and accessible to all, providing space for social interaction, and fostering opportunities for volunteerism. Evidence also exists that UGI can relieve stress and fatigue, and facilitate attachment to specific places, promoting feelings of comfort and further adding to social cohesion[5,6].

Urban green spaces offer opportunities for relaxation, social contact and interaction. Get-together at an intercultural garden in Freising, Germany.
Credit: Emily Rall

Improved social cohesion through UGI can result in a range of avoided costs and other economic benefits. For instance, around high-rise apartment buildings, numerous studies have linked UGI to higher levels of social interaction and less crime and vandalism. A 2009 study in the UK estimated that a 1% reduction in crime as a result of increased social cohesion in England and Wales would save between €267-733 million7. Using monetary assessments of this kind to demonstrate the crime-reduction potential of UGI could convince governments struggling with limited financial resources to invest in UGI planning and implementation for social cohesion. (↖Green Economy, Assessing UGI networks). A range of assessment tools exists (↖Toolbox T3).

Counterbalancing exclusionary effects
Improving neighbourhood character through UGI can result in gentrification, with rising housing costs and property values ultimately displacing the disadvantaged social groups who

The Highline in New York City is a well-known example of an unusual green corridor on an elevated former railroad spur. It became a major tourist attraction within just a few years of opening. On the downside, it tends to be crowded and has been criticised for boosting property prices in the area – contributing to gentrification and displacing poorer residents.
Credit: Rieke Hansen.

were targeted as beneficiaries in the first place. Here, supporting 'anti-gentrification' policies such as rent stabilisation, housing trusts and local employment quotas have an important role to play. Another strategy that planners can adopt is the 'just green enough' approach[8], where UGI

projects are shaped by local community concerns rather than market-driven urban design conventions, and are modest enough not to attract speculative investment[9]. Striking this balance requires community involvement in design and planning (↖Social Inclusion).

BOX A4: GRANTON COMMUNITY GARDENERS

Granton Community Gardeners (GCG) is a grassroots community gardening initiative in a disadvantaged part of northern Edinburgh. It was started in 2010 by locals living in flats without gardens who wanted to grow vegetables close to home.

GCG operates largely independent of grant funding, and as a result is not bound by externally-imposed requirements. The City of Edinburgh Council does, however, provide ongoing, in-kind support in the form of land, and has given the group a letter of comfort approving their ongoing management of the spaces.

Since starting out, the group has gradually expanded activities from a single garden to nearly ten, involving people from a large range of cultural backgrounds who work together, sometimes across different plots, and share the produce.

Success factors include powerful community buy-in, an explicit focus on intergenerational and intercultural cooperation; a flexible, independent approach; and use of various communication channels and events (such as workshops and community meals) to engage local residents.

Volunteers in a GCG street corner garden.
Credit: Granton Community Gardeners 2015

Find out more...

🔗 **Community Gardening overview and map on the Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust website**

KEY MESSAGES: UGI FOR INCREASING SOCIAL COHESION

Access
Access to UGI includes both geographic proximity to green space (e.g., Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard recommends a distance of no more than 300 metres from one's home, ↖Toolbox T3) and access to it via public transport, especially for vulnerable residents (↖Connectivity).

Welcoming places
Visitors must feel safe and welcome, and find green spaces attractive and of interest for use. Careless planning and management may neglect the many gender-based, ethnic, and disability-related barriers to use. For instance, ethnic minorities and women may feel more threatened or unsafe in secluded spaces[10]. Planners need to take into account the needs, motivations and preferred uses of a range of groups (↖Multifunctionality). To ensure these interests are represented, different user groups need to be engaged in UGI planning (↖Social Inclusion). Communication with and outreach to local communities can be decisive factors for attracting people from a range of socio-economic backgrounds (↖Box A4 Edinburgh and C6 Milan).

Space for social encounters
Urban green spaces can provide a platform for social contact and interaction, which helps to prevent loneliness and to extend social networks[11], and may reduce social tensions[12]. To really be successful, however, UGI must provide adequate amenities in connection to existing economic and social networks, instead of being limited to design. Local attachments to existing spaces should also be considered, instead of trying to solve perceived 'anti-social' behaviour by displacing it elsewhere[13].

Fostering engagement and self-regulation
Bringing people together for a common purpose, whether through cultural events, volunteer activities, or even by providing some basic amenities, can catalyse social interactions. Active engagement in the design and/or management of UGI can help to build local skills and lead to cleaner, safer, active spaces[14]. Local governments can act as facilitators and support bottom-up initiatives by promoting self-management and defining framing conditions (↖Box C3 Utrecht). UGI designs should be flexible, leaving room for self-organisation and initiative (↖Box E6 Berlin). Urban gardening is a good example (↖Box A4 Edinburgh and B5 Ljubljana).

See Toolbox T3 for exemplary methods and tools to increase social cohesion

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B

CORE PRINCIPLES OF UGI PLANNING

Green-grey integration
Connectivity
Multifunctionality
Social inclusion

PRINCIPLE SOCIAL INCLUSION
Collaborative and Participatory Planning

> **KEY OBJECTIVES**
>
> *Social inclusion...*
>
> *...aims at including all social groups in the planning process of UGI, while putting a special emphasis on the most vulnerable ones.*
>
> *...seeks not only to ascertain the interests of different stakeholders but also to balance them.*
>
> *...intends to facilitate more equitable access to green space services.*

"In many countries the main tendency in recent years has been to shift the balance between government and society away from the public sector towards doing things together instead of doing them alone."[1]

UGI planning aims for collaborative, socially inclusive processes. This means that planning processes are open to all and incorporate the knowledge and interests of diverse parties.

Social inclusion in general refers to the involvement of a wide range of social groups (including vulnerable ones that are often excluded) in all spheres of life. Making UGI planning socially inclusive demands attention to the needs of these different groups. Of particular concern are those with the most difficulties accessing information and articulating their interests, such as immigrants or ethnic minorities; or people who are homeless, unemployed or poor. If not carefully managed, initiatives to involve citizens in planning produce results that favour some and not others, by further empowering those in advantaged positions, or encouraging resistance from narrow interest groups to policies designed for the public interest[2]. In order to avoid these pitfalls, it is essential that governing institutions are capable of not only listening to a range of interests, but also channelling and balancing them.

Social inclusion is related to social cohesion, yet these are not the same. The latter concerns the *outcome* of UGI planning with regard to its social effects (↖Social Cohesion), while socially inclusive UGI planning is instead a *process* of including all social and cultural groups people in decision-making – one end goal of which is UGI that is equally accessible to them and meets their various needs (↖Multifunctionality).

Working group at the XII. Kunbábonyi Summer University, Hungary, exploring spatial development from the community perspective.
Credit: Hajnal Fekete

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BOX B5: BEYOND THE CONSTRUCTION SITE, LJUBLJANA

Beyond the Construction Site (BCS) is a project facilitating local resident involvement in planning and governing an abandoned urban construction site in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Grassroots beginnings

BCS was kick-started in 2010 by neighbourhood activists from the NGOs KUD Obrat and Bunker Institute as well as voluntary facilitators with backgrounds in sociology and design. Initiators called for the public to 'co-create' the site. An offer of urban gardening proved successful in attracting interest, appealing to an existing Slovenian cultural attachment to community gardens. A socially inclusive planning process was then facilitated using methods such as interviews and focus groups to determine the site's use as a community garden and event space.

As the development process went on, facilitators encouraged users to take on increasing levels of responsibility by ensuring that all contributions were valued. In this way, coordinating roles were gradually transferred to the users, demonstrating that citizens are capable of taking on responsibility for both the planning and the ongoing management of an urban green space.

Actors and support channels

The site is used by immediate neighbours and residents from other parts of the city. The city council enables use of the land at no cost, through a yearly contract with KUD Obrat. Council also provides some material support (e.g., water supply), while other small donations have come from the European Fund for Regional Development, the national Ministry for Culture, and a seed company.

Success factors

The project's success was aided by the facilitators' good working relationship with the city council (based on experience with similar initiatives) as well as ongoing political support for participatory urban planning and governance. Other factors have been the commitment of local citizens, as well as the practical aspect of land availability. In Ljubljana, abandoned sites can remain unused for lengthy periods – sometimes up to 20 years – creating a particular opportunity (and imperative) for locally-driven uses.

Results

The process has brought new value to a derelict site, improved neighbourhood relationships and, importantly, been carried *beyond the site*. As a result of the project's successful engagement with the city council, a temporary use amendment has been introduced to local planning regulations: paving the way for the possibility of similar initiatives to take off in the future.

Find out more...

🔗 **Project summary in English.** KUD Obrat, 2010.

Beyond the Construction Site facilitators used various methods to encourage project participants to co-create the site.
Credit: KUD Obrat Archive

The place of social inclusion in planning

Social inclusion is often talked about in association with the term 'governance', a concept entailing a widening of focus from state-centric government, to further include the role of non-state actors. The concept of governance has emerged in a context where the distinction between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' is becoming increasingly harder to see. Instead, both approaches are often in play at the same time, e.g., when a local government authority moves to institutionalise a grassroots initiative (see Deliverable 6.1).

Even though governance is emerging across Europe, recognition of the concept does not automatically lead to the involvement of all population groups and equal consideration of their interests, nor does it mean that social considerations are always given high priority. Recent studies on peri-urban development in Europe found that economic growth motives continue to dominate land use planning decisions, and, while ecological protection is of growing policy interest, social justice concerns receive very little attention[3]. Local authorities have a crucial role to play in mainstreaming social inclusion in

UGI planning, working together with members of civil society who are empowered not only to participate, but also to take action[4].

WHY GOVERNANCE?

For more on UGI governance, see 🔗 **Innovative Governance of Urban Green Spaces – Learning from 18 innovative examples across Europe.** Deliverable 6.2.

BOX B6: TELEKI SQUARE, BUDAPEST AND HELMHOLTZ SQUARE, BERLIN

Two public space redevelopments in Berlin, Germany and Budapest, Hungary, reveal the dramatically different outcomes that can result from a participatory planning process. Both originated in disadvantaged parts of each city.

Advocacy planning in Budapest

The redesign of Teleki Square, Budapest, was initiated by a group of young planners, who, with the consent of the local government, successfully engaged residents in the process. As a result, a residents' association formed to manage the square's ongoing maintenance. However, the new design and operation of Teleki Square clearly reflect the aspirations of some residents, while excluding others. Street furniture was designed to prevent sleeping; eating and drinking are forbidden; guards monitor the space and remove anyone who disobeys the rules. The result can be interpreted as a new exclusion for already-disenfranchised groups (such as the Roma, homeless people and alcoholics).

Equity planning in Berlin

The regeneration of Helmholtz Square was initiated in the early 2000s, as part of a district funding program for deprived neighbourhoods (⬉Box C6 Berlin). The funding paid for a community office, which initiated a planning process involving representatives of all groups using the square, and resulted in a genuinely inclusive design. Since then, however, the impact of gentrification has threatened these achievements. The area lost its funding priority status, and likewise its community office. Some marginalised groups who had occupied central parts of the square are now facing less tolerance from middle class groups, whose voices are growing increasingly dominant. How this mounting conflict will be solved is not yet clear.

While the two approaches differ (the first being a good example of advocacy planning, and the second of equity planning – see Key Terms Box over page), their shortcomings highlight the distinction between inclusion and cohesion.

A participatory planning process is a good start, but will not in itself foster a socially cohesive public space. Actively identifying and engaging all user groups and supporting their ongoing coexistence in the same space are important further steps.

The redesigned Teleki Square is an attractive place, yet some groups no longer feel welcome there.
Credit: Iván Tosics

Find out more...

🔗 **URBACT article 'Participation or Inclusion?'** Tosics, 2015.

Levels of participation: from information to empowerment

Many levels of participation in planning are possible and these have often been represented along a spectrum, starting at one end with simply informing citizens, all the way to complete citizen control in decision-making at the other end – with several steps in between (e.g., see the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum[5]).

In European cities, information and consultation processes are usually dictated by laws or regulations. Despite their formality, these processes can help to reveal citizens' concerns and ideas. However, ensuring that they sufficiently reflect all residents' interests requires different efforts to engage people. Further, trust is built when participants feel that their voices are actually being considered instead of just heard.

Consultation tends to be less formal in cities where citizens' demands are part of the public policy culture and strengthened by bottom-up initiatives. To promote collaborative decision-making, some cities, such as Aarhus, have agreed on guidelines for citizen involvement from the outset of all municipal plans, strategies and projects[6].

Co-governance

Another way to think about participation is in terms of co-governance, where power is distributed between authorities and citizens (see Deliverables 6.1 and 6.2). Citizens can be rewarded with increased influence over decision-making processes and outcomes, while governments may benefit from building trust with citizens and accessing non-traditional forms of local knowledge. Examples in practice have included participatory budgeting or public-led priority green space projects for neighbourhood plans (↖Box E5 Lisbon and C3 Utrecht).

Allowing for and considering citizens' concerns and ideas in the planning process is a step towards more socially inclusive planning, especially if included in a co-governance framework. Yet, there is more a practitioner can do to improve inclusivity in the planning process. In recent decades, even more radical approaches to citizen participation have been formulated, such as advocacy, empowerment or equity planning (see Key Terms Box, ↖Box B6 Budapest and Berlin)[7].

When it comes to realising social inclusion in UGI planning practice, there are many ways to increase the willingness of citizens to express their preferences and participate in different stages of the planning process (↖Toolbox T7, Box E3 Aarhus).

KEY TERMS[8]

Advocacy planning: attempts to offer residents opportunities to take part in negotiations with private developers. and public authorities.

Empowerment planning: seeks to enable community organisations to influence investment decisions by bringing together the concepts of participatory action research, direct action organising (where those affected by a problem mobilise to find a solution), and popular education (raising critical consciousness among disadvantaged groups) as part of a process to redress power relations and bring about social change[9].

Equity planning: involves planners working inside government who use their position and expertise to influence views, mobilise groups that are underrepresented, and advance policies with the aim of redistributing resources to the poor.

One of Berlin's most well-known community gardens, the Prinzessinnengarten is co-managed by a small team of employees and hundreds of volunteers on land rented from the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg municipality.
Credit: Rieke Hansen

BOX B7: PPGIS AS A TOOL FOR PARTICIPATION, LISBON

Although urban planning has traditionally been top-down in practice, many cities are moving to adopt more participatory methods: gathering residents' knowledge, ideas, values, and needs to inform decision-making processes. It is also increasingly recognised that information about citizens' perceptions, experience and use of spaces can help to achieve better planning outcomes, especially when spatially-focused methods are employed.

To meet this demand, a group of tools has emerged in the last two decades, known as Public Participatory Geographic Information Systems (PPGIS). In essence, PPGIS integrates geospatial technologies with public knowledge (belonging to individuals, local groups or communities) to produce spatial assessments and help planners to make better decisions about land-use, management and resource allocation. Such tools can also support greater citizen involvement in assessing and planning urban green spaces, e.g., through mapping the uses of such spaces, their perceived environmental quality or ecosystem services (↖Box C1 Berlin). PPGIS can be used at different planning stages: during a visioning exercise or baseline assessment (e.g., to determine the existing or preferred uses of a place), or to evaluate or monitor a project upon implementation.

Low-tech and high-tech options
There are two main types of approach: 1) hardcopy maps or aerial images, where participants mark points or areas of interest with pens, markers or stickers, and 2) digital mapping, typically using web-based mapping software (including many free programs, ↖Toolbox T7). Some platforms also combine PPGIS with web-based survey tools, so that the spatial information can be complemented with information about survey participants.

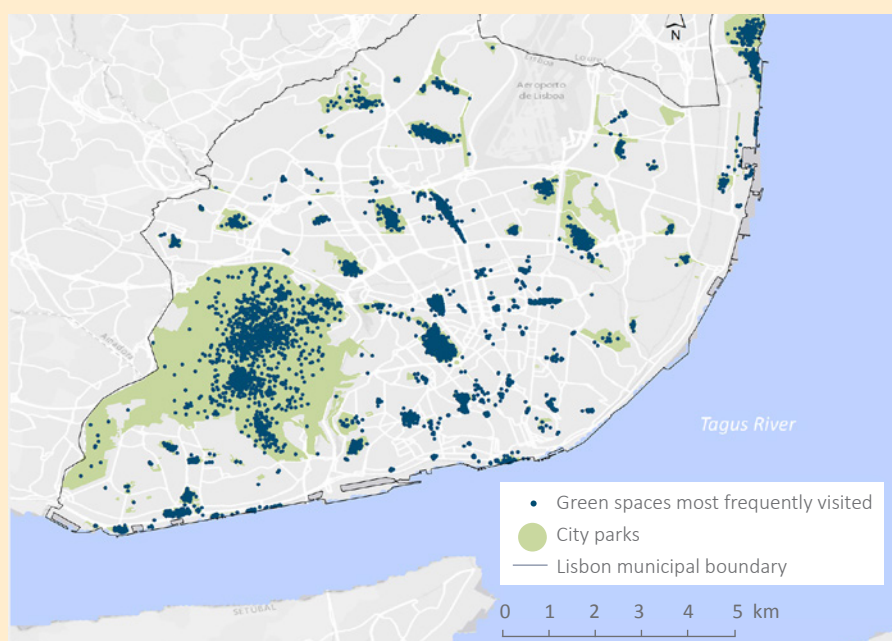**"Do you have ten minutes to evaluate Lisbon's green spaces?"**
In 2017, as part of GREEN SURGE research, a PPGIS survey was conducted in Lisbon, Portugal, with the aim of supporting local UGI planning and management (see map below). The survey assessed those green spaces frequently visited, those avoided, and those perceived as having high levels of cultural diversity or biodiversity. It was led by the Centre for Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Changes (cE3c) at the University of Lisbon, in collaboration with the municipality of Lisbon. At the time of writing, analysis of the survey responses was still in progress. Preliminary results showed that about 70% of respondents were not aware of the municipality's strategies and plans for its green infrastructure, indicating more work is needed to raise local awareness of UGI planning.

Advantages of PPGIS in promoting public participation

1. *Enables many residents and stakeholders to more easily participate in planning processes, especially those without the time or confidence to attend traditional forums.*

2. *Can promote dynamic interaction between stakeholders.*

3. *Is relatively inexpensive and easy to conduct.*

4. *Offers maps as a tangible outcome to support planning and management decisions.*

Map showing the results of the PPGIS survey in Lisbon.
Credit: Ana Catarina Luz

Legend:
• Green spaces most frequently visited
● City parks
— Lisbon municipal boundary
0 1 2 3 4 5 km

Tagus River

KEY MESSAGES FOR INCREASING SOCIAL INCLUSION

Match the level of participation to the scale, context and intended outcome
A voluntary, bottom-up initiative can empower local people and, in some cases, result in local residents taking responsibility to manage an urban green space (☜Box B5 Ljubljana). However, this approach may not be suitable at a much larger-scale, where participatory methods need to complement, rather than supplant, conventional planning approaches.

Identify under-represented groups and appropriate tools and strategies to engage them
Participatory approaches can easily lead to an unbalanced level of involvement, excluding less powerful groups. These groups need to be identified and a bundle of dedicated tools and strategies employed to involve them, such as special participatory offers for young people, women, or ethnic minorities (☜Box E3 Aarhus). One of the easiest ways is to increase citizen involvement is to decrease the burdens of participation, i.e., to make it as simple as possible for people to get involved. ☜Toolbox T7 provides a range of tools that can help.

Address skill and resources barriers
To move from formal consultation to strategic involvement, barriers to efficient public participation need to be dealt with. These might be lack of financial and human resources, time constraints, insufficient representation of interest groups, lack of social facilitation skills among city officials and/or non-governmental actors, or the limitations of policy frameworks. To this end, possible strategies are engaging a dedicated facilitator, or advocating to higher political levels and other departments for more policy mechanisms and resources to support participatory planning.

Social inclusion goes beyond the planning process
After plans are developed and implemented with an inclusive approach, ongoing investment is needed to ensure that green spaces continue to be available for the use of all groups. This may include physical maintenance programmes, but also social work (☜Social Cohesion).

☜Toolbox T7 for methods and tools to help foster social inclusion.

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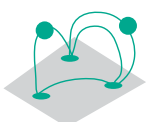
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C MAKING IT HAPPEN!

Embedding UGI in the planning process
Assessing UGI networks
Developing plans
Engaging stakeholders
Implementation

ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS
Cross-sectoral and inclusive UGI planning

UGI planning requires the involvement of a variety of actors, not only public authorities but also businesses, civil society and citizens. Active engagement can promote a sense of shared responsibility for local green spaces, towards co-creation, co-management and co-governance arrangements (↖ Social Inclusion).

KEY MESSAGES

Cooperate with other departments and external experts.

Collaborate with non-governmental stakeholders and support co-governance arrangements.

Partner-up with a variety of stakeholders and find meaningful ways for them to become engaged.

Cooperation with other departments and external experts

Interdisciplinary cooperation between urban planners, green space planners, infrastructure planners and others is a critical aspect of UGI planning and an especially important success factor for green-grey integration approaches, where the complexity involved cannot be effectively addressed by a single discipline alone (↖Integration). In Berlin, an informal planning strategy illustrating a vision through visually-engaging graphics and collages has promoted cooperation with other departments, because the plan content was presented in an unusual and easily accessible way (↖Box E6 Berlin). Elsewhere, there is evidence that collaboration between planners social workers may be a productive avenue (↖Box C6 Berlin, ↖Social cohesion).

Networking, forming partnerships between different departments and sectors and integrating (external) experts early-on can also be especially helpful for developing UGI strategies at the city level. Effective local responses require knowledge of the context and potential paths forward as well as motivated actors to implement actions. Universities and other scientific institutions can also play a role in providing the relevant knowledge and measures (↖Box A1 Almada, A2 Helsinki, and B1 Szeged).

Staff from various departments in the City of Malmö discuss UGI strategies for Malmö's peri-urban farmland with a GREEN SURGE researcher and other external experts.
Credit: Anders Mårsén

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Collaboration with non-governmental stakeholders

Fostering co-governance arrangements can lead to new roles for local government, e.g., as a facilitator and supporter responsible for enabling frameworks and funding programmes, but also providing ongoing oversight and guidance to ensure that public spaces remain safe and accessible. Such an approach requires a framework, rules and sufficient resources for implementation (see Deliverable D6.2). In Berlin, the Urban Landscape Strategy built upon an existing 'DIY'-culture to engage citizens in pilot projects (↖Box E6 Berlin). Where such a culture does not already exist, an external facilitator can be a reliable partner in fostering a new approach, engaging individuals in new roles. The extra efforts required can foster beneficial two-way learning processes, can lead to unexpected planning solutions and often unburden local authorities from the full scope of monitoring or instructing tasks (↖Box B5 Ljubljana, C5 Milan).

LESSONS FOR UGI DEVELOPMENT WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ACTORS

Based on the experience of organizing DIY-projects on public green space, city officials in Berlin gained practical lessons that may be of relevance for other cities.

- *Determine rules for public access far in advance and review these periodically to balance public and private/user needs.*

- *Concentrate projects in areas which have good infrastructure and that are close to a potential base of users.*

- *Cluster and advertise temporary uses so people are aware of them.*

- *Factor in a lot of coordination, discussion, and oversight of projects.*

BOX C5: URBAN REFORESTATION WITH LOCAL RESIDENTS, MILAN

Boscoincittà (The Forest in the City) is an urban reforestation project located in Milan, Italy, conceived to counter the negative effects of urbanisation and to foster community well-being.

Established in 1974 on 35ha of abandoned farmland, Boscoincittà has since grown to over 120ha. The site offers 150 allotment gardens, available to local citizens upon application. There are also bike and footpaths and horseback riding trails; recreation areas; and event spaces available for local community hire. Hiking and cycling tours take place regularly, as well as workshops for schools and community groups.

The project is managed by the non-profit organization Italia Nostra (Our Italy) and supported by thousands of volunteers involved in planting, maintenance and other initiatives. This has reduced the maintenance burden on the municipality of Milan (which owns the land) and enabled the project to expand, It has also fostered opportunities for local citizens to grow food, and to interact with nature and with each other. The positive results for the local economy, for citizens' health and for community ties (↖Social Cohesion, Green Economy) have inspired a new generation of parks (e.g., Giretta Park) in the surrounding green belt of Milan.

Before (top) and after (bottom). Buildings on the site have been transformed through community-driven management.
Credit: Centro Forestazione Urbana archive

Find out more...

🔗 **Italia Nostra website** (in Italian)

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BOX C6: UGI DEVELOPMENT WITH THE HELP OF SOCIAL WORKERS IN BERLIN

Since 1999, the City of Berlin has been running an urban regeneration endeavour called the Neighbourhood Management Programme as part of the national 'Social City' initiative.

Programme overview
Right now, 34 deprived areas of the city are being assisted through neighbourhood management offices, which usually employ between two and four social workers. These offices are well-informed about the problems of their local residents and some also have considerable experience with different types of green interventions, such as nature-based educational programmes or contests for small green projects within their neighbourhoods. Most projects aim to make direct contact with residents on-site.

Social effects of local greening projects
GREEN SURGE analysed the role of six neighbourhood management offices in neighbourhood greening projects. Investigating these cases showed that greening can improve social conditions in dense inner-city areas where public or semi-public spaces are scarce. Re-greening an inner courtyard, a public square or a playground offers a chance to involve residents in the design and maintenance of the space, as well as creating a new meeting place. For instance, the neighbourhood management office in Berlin-Neukölln initiated a programme called 'Hidden Places – Beautiful Courtyards' encouraging both landlords and tenants to re-green their courtyards with the help of planners and some financial assistance. These opportunities can be particularly valuable for low income residents, who are often socially segregated.

The role of social workers in overcoming obstacles
Obviously, a number of challenges are likely to arise: landlords need to be convinced, tenants are sometimes less interested in bottom-up neighbourhood improvement initiatives than owners, resident councils often become dominated by 'middle-class ideas' in their decisions, while planning departments are often too bureaucratic and not open to innovative approaches. However, in this context, social workers can play a key role in identifying and counteracting such challenges before they become major problems. In addition, established links between the social workers and local residents with various demographic and cultural backgrounds are often crucial to the longer term sustainability of greening projects.

The cases studied here reveal that social workers can help UGI planners to achieve positive social impacts with small, up-scalable green projects, activating different groups and engaging them in the design and long-term management of local green spaces.

Otto Park in the very dense Moabit-West neighbourhood management area.
Credit: Iván Tosics

Find out more...

🔗 **Neighbourhood Management Programme**

🔗 **Hidden Places - Beautiful Courtyards.** Video about the project (in German).

TOOLBOX

T1: Tools for Protecting Biodiversity

T2: Tools for Promoting a Green Economy

T3: Tools for Increasing Social Cohesion

T4: Tools for Green-Grey Integration

T5: Tools for Connectivity

T6: Tools for Multifunctionality

T7: Tools for Social Inclusion

T8: Funding Tools and Mechanisms

T7: TOOLS FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

METHOD/ TOOL	WHAT FOR?	FIND OUT MORE
TOOLS FOR ASSESSMENT AND VALUATION		
Stakeholder Analysis	Method to ensure that relevant stakeholders are contacted in an action-planning project.	🔗 **The URBACT II Local Support Group Toolkit**, p64-65.
Importance/ Influence Matrix	Method to prioritise stakeholders, as well as to think about the right approach to take with each of them. Often used in combination with a stakeholder analysis.	🔗 **The URBACT II Local Support Group Toolkit**, p66-67.
TOOLS FOR PARTICIPATING IN PLANNING		
Forestry Commission public engagement toolbox	Resources and guidance for fostering public participation in planning, prepared by the UK-based Forestry Commission. The toolbox is aimed at managers of forests and woodlands, but also useful for other practitioners involved in green space planning and management.	🔗 **Public engagement toolbox on the Forestry Commission website**
Community planning methods	The community planning website provides an A to Z of possible methods to employ for greater social inclusion in the planning process. Selected options are outlined below.	🔗 **Community Planning website**
Charette or 'inquiry by design' workshop	A workshop where stakeholders come together to identify issues, deliberate about preferred outcomes and create plans for the future.	🔗 **Engaging Communities Toolkit.** West Lothian Community Planning Partnership, 2015, p15.
Citizens' juries	A group of citizens is selected, based on special criteria, as a representative cross-section of a wider community. Much like a jury in a legal context, they are required to meet as a group, receive information, deliberate together and ultimately make recommendations about an issue of public importance.	🔗 **Active Democracy website**
Photovoice	Cameras are provided to community members to identify and record their community's situation and experiences through photography. The emphasis on visual objects makes it easier for populations without strong command of the local language to participate.	🔗 **Community Toolbox website: Implementing Photovoice in Your Community**
Participatory Budgeting	City residents are given the chance to decide how to spend part of a municipal budget. Besides increasing transparency and educating citizens about the costs of public management, this can increase engagement and empowerment.	🔗 **Participatory Budgeting Project website**
Neighbourhood Green Plans	Communities work together on developing projects and/or plans for more livable neighbourhoods. Examples range from more traditional, top-down approaches with strong community involvement to completely community-led initiatives which then go for city council approval.	🔗 **How to resource your neighbourhood plan.** Planning Aid. 🔗 **A Guide for Developing Neighbourhood Plans (Neighbourhoods Alive!).** Manitoba Government, 2002.
PPGIS	**For flexible mapping:** options include Wikimapping (free), ArcGIS Story Map Crowdsource℠ app (license-based) and Maptionnaire (paid subscription). **For citizens' requests and complaints:** options include Fix My Street and Improve My City (both free).	🔗 **Wikimapping** 🔗 **ArcGIS Story Map Crowdsource℠** 🔗 **Maptionnaire** 🔗 **Fix My Street** 🔗 **Improve My City**