

Green SURGE

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# INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE FOR URBAN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

## A GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS



SEVENTH FRAMEWORK  
PROGRAMME



# INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE FOR URBAN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE. A GUIDE FOR PRACTITIONERS

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# **CHAPTER 1:**

## **INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE AND THE PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNANCE FOR UGI**

## 1.1. WHAT IS UGI GOVERNANCE?

Contemporary society is an urban society. The majority of Europe's people now live in cities, towns and urban areas. The role of urban nature and urban green infrastructure (UGI) has never been more important to hundreds of thousands of urban dwellers. Individuals derive physical and mental health benefits from UGI such as public amenity spaces, and at a community level UGI supplies a range of other 'ecosystem services' that can support urban adaptation and sustainability in the face of climate change and biodiversity loss. Traditionally it has been local government and public authorities that held primary responsibility for urban green space planning, governance and management. Things have changed. There has been increasing political and social interest in strengthening liberal democratic processes; recognition of the shortcomings of instrumental top-down planning processes; reductions to public sector budgets which have challenged local government and public agencies' ability to deliver as many services and functions as in the past. All of these different factors have pushed forward the view that local communities, enterprises and other non-governmental stakeholders can also make important contributions

### DEFINING UGI GOVERNANCE

Participatory governance of urban green spaces concerns the arrangements in which citizens, entrepreneurs, NGOs or other non-governmental actors make decisions about and manage networks of urban green spaces at different levels, with or without the active involvement of government authorities and public agencies.

The arrangements include the different mix of:

- Actors: The specific people, organisations and agencies involved.
- Resources: What is required in terms of time, money, skills, and other tangible and intangible assets, who brings what, with what conditionalities, and what political and social relationships exist around those resources.
- Rules of the game: The way relationships are managed as well as the possibilities for action, including, e.g. legislation and regulation, social and cultural norms.
- Discourses: The beliefs, values, objectives and other main drivers of action.

to green space decision-making processes and management activities. This shift from more top-down approaches to ones which involve other stakeholders is described as a move from "government" to "governance".

This definition and description of the different elements of governance arrangements should make it easier to investigate and describe who it is that has the power and mandate to make legitimate and binding decisions at different scale levels (i.e. site, neighbourhood, city). For example, an actor (e.g. staff from the municipality), may be able to

use the rules of the game (e.g. a city level green space strategy), to support and promote the management of a local resource (e.g. a park), by other actors (e.g. a community group), representative of the local residents able to mobilise their own resources (e.g. volunteers and charitable funding). Decision making and power exist in different ways at different levels around any particular kind of UGI.

This move towards governance has resulted in new forms of interaction between government bodies, citizens and other non-state actors. There are now a wide

range of ways in which non-state actors can become involved in green space decision-making processes in Europe. These vary from: formal consultation in city or site level planning; through to the public transfer of management responsibility and co-governance of particular sites by civil society and volunteer groups; through to forms of self-governance where citizens and communities organise themselves around UGI decision making and management, and keep the role of local authorities more distant and facilitating<sup>1</sup>. European examples of non-state stakeholders playing a role in delivering UGI can be found at all scales, from very small sites such as tiny pocket parks, to much larger ones such as urban woodlands, to actions that cover neighbourhoods and those which are part of city wide green networks.

Moving to governance of UGI does not imply that the participation of

non-state actors is either a guaranteed or an easy pathway to success. The problems experienced by local government and public agencies will not automatically be solved. When thinking about transition to multi-stakeholder participatory approaches a very serious question must be asked. If experienced public agencies face financial and technical challenges managing UGI, then is it sensible to believe that civil society organisations and volunteers or businesses are likely to do better at bringing the management and resources required? It is true that governance or co-governance with non-state actors often involves very skilled, enthusiastic and motivated actors many of whom bring their professional competencies and perspectives to the issues. But, it is still important to be realistic about any assessment of what may or may not be achieved by different governance models in particular contexts.

Another important aspect of UGI governance is the idea of social inclusion and environmental justice. These principles are usually woven into UGI governance approaches and methods. It means that those building UGI governance need to pay attention to the relative power of people and communities, and of the legitimacy of representative bodies and organisations. It also means that there needs to be awareness that changes in relationships between stakeholders and organisations could mean that some are empowered while others are disempowered<sup>2</sup>. The implications of this for both people and place need to be assessed. Governance can also bring about the risk of a "democratic deficit" when a local decision-making process is not well connected with formal democratic decision-making institutions, for example if a committee organising UGI management works independently of local government councillors

*More and more European people now live in cities. It is vitally important to find ways to govern and manage green spaces, such as parks like the Tivoli Gardens in Ljubljana, so that they continue to service the needs of urban citizens.*



*Image: Blanca Ambrose-Oji*

and fails to take into account the views of the local population<sup>3</sup>. Changes to the balance of power and the outcomes for social inclusion may also alter significantly when the forms of governance applied rely heavily on financial mechanisms, and are then open to the imposition of the market and market rules, e.g. paying for access to public parks when volunteer groups and local government are unable to generate funds to maintain them.

## 1.2. PRINCIPLES OF UGI GOVERNANCE

In summary the principles of UGI governance are:

- Recognising the right for the public and non-state actors to take part in environmental decision making as conferred by the Aarhus Convention 1998,
- Ensuring decision making processes and active management work to deliver benefits to society and the urban environment,
- Providing opportunities for inclusion of stakeholders in governance decisions that affect them or their immediate environment,
- Facilitating meaningful ways for stakeholders to participate and become involved through processes and methods they want to engage with,

- Recognising the different needs and perspectives of individuals and communities and ensuring these are addressed in governance processes in a way which drives social inclusion.

The contemporary challenge is for innovative UGI governance to work to those principles whilst also delivering a range of significant functional benefits. The best and most innovative approaches to UGI governance see complexity as a positive thing and build on it to deliver:

- Conserving biodiversity
- Adapting to climate change
- Promoting the green economy
- Increasing social cohesion

The challenges to be overcome in any given context include:

- Finding the most appropriate approaches to engage with non-state stakeholders,
- Building integration between decision making processes of non-state actors with the formal and codified systems of government,
- Finding non-state actors with the capacity and capability to engage in governance and active management – this will be a particular issue in areas where people are living with deprivation or vulnerabilities,

- Avoiding narrow interests dominating governance processes and making sure they are inclusive rather than exclusive,

- Finding ways to manage trade-offs between the local site specific views and the needs for local government and public agencies to maintain city-wide or regional strategic views, or between the generation of income and green economy initiatives against services that have traditionally been free,

- Adjusting to the transfer of power and responsibility from local government and public agencies to other non-state stakeholders which may mean that local government and public agencies less influence and even less recognition as e.g. as branding etc changes,

- Building governance approaches that are sustainable and can maintain the quantity and quality of UGI into the future and through social, economic and environmental circumstances which are increasingly uncertain.

### **1.3. WHAT IS THIS GUIDE AND WHO IS IT FOR?**

This guide aims to provide a tool for navigating through some of these important UGI governance questions and issues. The guide synthesises results from the European research project GREEN SURGE on the current state-of-art of knowledge and innovative practice of UGI governance (see also: [www.greensurge.eu](http://www.greensurge.eu)). It addresses the interests of a broad range of urban stakeholders and practitioners, but the primary audience are those urban planners and decision-makers from various departments and areas who deal with urban green spaces.

The guide might also be of use for allied professionals working in the larger field of community development and community involvement in land management and sustainable urban development. In order to address this diversity of the guide's potential users, it intends to offer a careful compilation of material, tools and information that may be tailored to individual interests, capacities, backgrounds and needs.

The guide is organised into seven chapters (in addition to this introduction) as follows:

#### **→ CHAPTER 2: KINDS OF GOVERNANCE**

Deciding why and how to build governance is important. The range of different, innovative and evolving types of UGI governance arrangements across Europe is described. A typology of governance arrangements explains the governance context and opportunities for municipalities to engage with different types of governance. The concept of Active Citizenship is introduced.

#### **→ CHAPTER 3: CITIZEN-LED GOVERNANCE**

This chapter looks at innovative initiatives that are initiated, developed and led by citizens, civil society organisations and organisations, and what they offer in terms of potential benefits for UGI and municipalities. The challenges to for municipalities are outlined.

#### **→ CHAPTER 4: INVOLVING BUSINESS**

Introduces ways in which businesses can be included as part of UGI governance. The concept of Green Barter is investigated in some detail, so show what municipalities and UGI can gain when businesses are involved in the delivery and maintenance of urban green spaces.

#### **→ CHAPTER 5: SOCIAL INCLUSION**

The cross-cutting issue of social inclusion is described in some detail, and examples are given which show how different kinds of governance through active citizenship can have different kinds of outcomes for different groups of people in society at different scale levels.

#### **→ CHAPTER 6: STAINABILITY ISSUES**

Place keeping and continuity in UGI governance is discussed in this chapter, covering ideas and examples of how different kinds of active citizenship address the maintenance of UGI through time.

#### **→ CHAPTER 7: BENEFITS OF GOVERNANCE**

The social, economic and ecological benefits of active citizenship associated with different kinds of urban greenspace is explored. The chapter shows how different green spaces can provide multiple benefits depending on how the interaction with active citizens, civil society groups and businesses is organised.

## 1.4. HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is not produced as a step-by-step guide to building participatory governance processes. It is a resource that outlines some of the key questions and principles that those involved in green space governance should be considering. Evidence and good practice examples developed in different parts of Europe make up a large part of the guide to demonstrate how and why innovative governance approaches are successful.

Each chapter provides:

- Headlines
- Overview of the topic area
- Technical know-how
- Practice examples using case studies
- Key messages for policy makers
- Resources

**TABLE 1:  
PRACTICE EXAMPLES BY TOPIC COVERED AND LOCATION IN THE GUIDE**

<b>INITIATIVE, CITY, COUNTRY</b>	<b>TOPIC COVERED</b>	<b>CHAPTER, PAGE NUMBER</b>
Participatory budgeting, Lisbon, Portugal	Municipal led social mobilisation around budget allocation for UGI	Chapter 2, <a href="#">Page 21</a>
Active Neighbourhoods, Plymouth, England, UK	Municipal led social mobilisation to build and maintain access infrastructure in city green spaces	Chapter 2, <a href="#">Page 20</a>
Granton Community Gardeners, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK	Creating better quality UGI on municipal land, through a grassroots initiative	Chapter 3, <a href="#">Page 31</a>
Stopping-place, Szeged, Hungary	Creating new social and green spaces through organisation initiated grassroots activities	Chapter 3, <a href="#">Page 30</a>
Urban farming, Hyllie, Malmö, Sweden	Creating new potential for UGI in a development zone, through a Green Hub	Chapter 3, <a href="#">Page 32</a>
Lodz, Poland	Green Barter, involving business in governance	Chapter 4, <a href="#">Page 42</a>
Oredea, Romania	Green Barter, involving business in governance	Chapter 4, <a href="#">Page 43</a>
Hamburg, Germany	BID, involving business in governance	Chapter 4, <a href="#">Page 44</a>
Green space planning in Utrecht, The Netherlands	Social inclusion in a city-wide project, through social mobilisation and co-governance	Chapter 5, <a href="#">Page 54</a>
Neighbourhood Planning, Bristol, England, UK	Social inclusion in a neighbourhood level planning process, through co-governance	Chapter 5, <a href="#">Page 58</a>
Barrhead Water Works, Glasgow, Scotland, UK	Social inclusion in a site level project, through social mobilisation and co-governance	Chapter 5, <a href="#">Page 56</a>
Boscoincittà, Milan, Italy	Place keeping through co-governance	Chapter 6, <a href="#">Page 67</a>
De Ruige Hof, Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Place keeping through a grassroots initiative	Chapter 6, <a href="#">Page 69</a>
Duddingstone Field Group, Edinburgh, Scotland, UK	Place keeping through a grassroots initiative	Chapter 6, <a href="#">Page 71</a>
River Stewardship Company, Sheffield, England, UK	Social and economic benefits of city-wide governance of urban green and blue infrastructure, co-governance involving a social enterprise	Chapter 7, <a href="#">Page 85</a>
Arnos Vale Cemetery, Bristol, England, UK	Social, cultural and economic benefits of site-based governance by a grassroots initiative	Chapter 7, <a href="#">Page 87</a>

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## 1.5. RESOURCES

### Research papers

1. Arnouts, R., M. van der Zouwen, and B., *Analysing governance modes and shifts — Governance arrangements in Dutch nature policy.* *Forest Policy and Economics*, 2012. 16: p. 43-50.
2. Swyngedouw, E., *Governance Innovation and the Citizen: The Janus Face of Governance-Beyond-the-State.* *Urban Studies*, 2005. 42(11): p. 1991-2006.
3. Bond, S. and M. Thompson-Fawcett, *Public Participation and New Urbanism: A Conflicting Agenda?* *Planning Theory & Practice*, 2007. 8(4): p. 449-472.



## **CHAPTER 2:**

# **A TYPOLOGY TO MAKE SENSE OF INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE FOR UGI**

## 2.1. INTRODUCTION: MAKING SENSE OF GOVERNANCE FOR URBAN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

It is well argued that bringing different groups of people and organisations together to work on specific issues can lead to social innovations that drive the ecological, economic and social development of European cities<sup>1</sup>. As we explained in the introductory chapter the idea of including citizens, civil society and other groups or entities in governance (i.e. decision making and management of specific resources) has gained recognition as “a good thing to do”. There is a general perception that including citizens and civil society organisations in governance means that UGI decision making and management will be more democratic, provide better quality green space open to more people, and help the municipality to save costs.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Active citizens, civil society organisations and businesses can contribute to the objectives of municipalities around green space creation and management
- Power relations between municipalities and other stakeholders differ as do their objectives for getting involved in UGI governance.
- Grassroots initiatives tend to act autonomously, while in co-governance approaches power is shared between all actors.
- Sharing power also includes losing certainty or control over the outcomes
- To fully acknowledge the potential of working with active citizens, civil society organisations and businesses, municipalities need to acknowledge diverging objectives and organisational styles
- Making sense of this diversity can be helped through the tools that characterize and make clear differences in objectives and power

These general assumptions and perceptions need to be examined very closely. Municipalities need to ask some key questions about governance which will help to define their approach and provide clarity in the actions they should prioritise. These questions include:

- Why should municipalities support or facilitate governance with citizens and civil society groups?
- Whose objectives will be realised, and how do these relate to the objectives or strategic functions of UGI of interest to municipalities?

- How does participatory governance of UGI relate to other wider policy objectives and strategies the municipality may be trying to achieve?

One of the many traps that municipalities fall into is forgetting that involving citizens does not mean involving everybody, all the time, in all levels of decision making. By defining WHY citizens and civil society groups might be included, and whose objectives are being served, it becomes easier to identify who specifically could or should be included. If for example, there is clear and defined requirement to accommodate the

overlapping objectives and priorities of the municipality, the community, and citizens in a particular space, facilitating governance involving all these groups is appropriate (Figure 1). The degree to which municipalities involve themselves in the governance process can vary. Whether municipalities or citizens take the lead in developing UGI governance there will always be a cost.

Holding meetings, dialoguing and communicating, negotiating agreements, building consensus, facilitating work on the ground, all carries a cost in time and money. Involving citizens and civil society organisations can then increase up-front costs in the short term. Many municipalities have found they do not have the time and resources to build governance processes themselves. In many situations they find that their role is evolving away from the hands-on management of governance, to a more facilitating role, overseeing the decision making and management of UGI from a distance, and relying on civil society organisations to act as go-betweens in the governance process.

#### Different governance models

All of these issues suggest that there needs to be clarity in understanding the different models of governance that might be applied in different situations, and to meet the different objectives identified. The most common scheme for doing this is the spectrum of involvement. This

defines roles by the degree of power and power sharing between government and non-government actors. At one end of the spectrum there are roles and forms of governance where there is greater government influence and control of objectives and processes. At the other end of the spectrum there is greater civil society control of processes and the realisation of objectives.

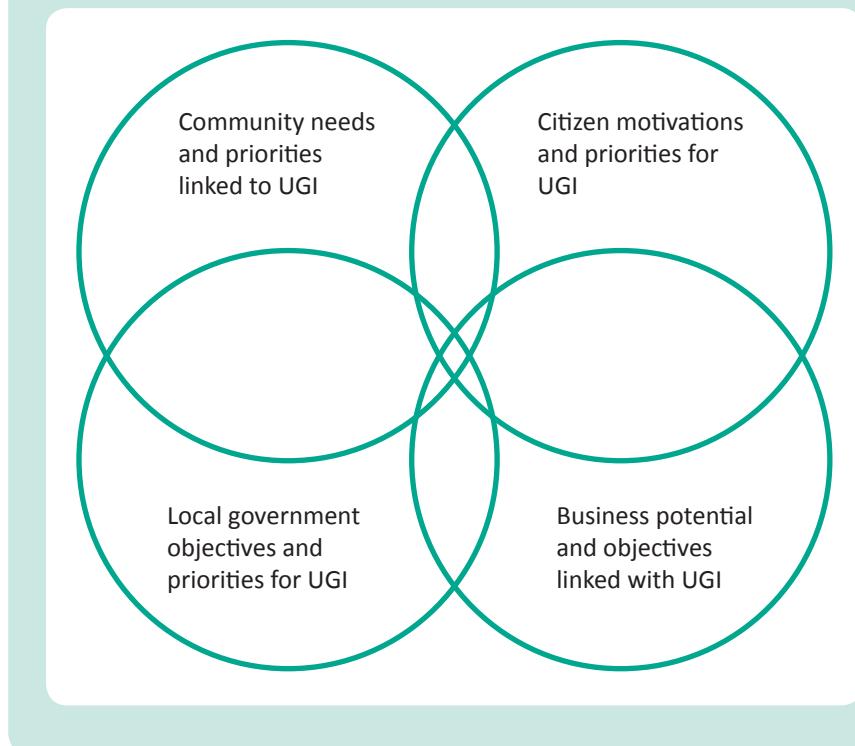
Figure 2 illustrates this, providing an explanation about the role of government and non-government actors, as well as naming the associated types of governance.

This scheme may be very familiar. However, that does not mean it is not relevant or useful. A scheme like this has great value when used as a tool for individuals working in public agencies to

explicitly articulate and clarify the model of governance that is preferred, or to understand more about the model of governance that has already emerged at a site. Being explicit about whether the objectives are mostly those set by the municipality rather than civil society, and agreeing what the role of civil society is, enables clear discussion and decision making.

If the objective is for the municipality to transfer responsibility for UGI creation, maintenance or management to civil society as a resource saving measure, then organising a way to transfer responsibility and/or assets, and support co-production or citizen led governance may be the better option for meeting citizen, community, and business objectives too. If the objective is

**FIGURE 1: WHOSE OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES ARE SERVED BY UGI GOVERNANCE?**



for the municipality to keep control over a process because the outcome needs to be assured or aligned with their processes and objectives, then the better options are to be found at the government-led or co-management end of the spectrum.

The important point is for municipal actors to be clear about what they are working towards. Being explicit and unambiguous then leads the way for finding the appropriate practice tools for making it happen<sup>3</sup>.

## 2.2. TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW: ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IS FUNDAMENTAL TO GOVERNANCE

Active citizenship is about individuals and civil society organisations taking an active role in community life and making a positive contribution to society. Ways in which individuals can achieve active citizenship include taking part in voluntary work, involvement in community organisations and engagement with local and national politics<sup>4</sup>. Civil society organisations and social enterprises are part of the active citizen mix where they provide opportunities for active citizenship, or where they lead or guide a community to develop

active citizenship initiatives. Businesses may also involve themselves in active citizenship where they provide opportunities for their employees and staff to take part in voluntary programmes, or where they sponsor projects, initiatives or activities that provide some public or community benefits. Active citizenship can become a powerful way of meeting citizen's needs and priorities. By bringing in untapped community resources, involving enterprises and organisations and the resources they are able to offer, and working to provide bespoke solutions to local issues linked with UGI, active citizenship can achieve better outcomes than traditional models of green space governance.

**FIGURE 2: SPECTRUM OF GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENT ROLES IN DIFFERENT GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS<sup>2</sup>**

<i>Government actor role</i>	Leading ← → Enabling					<i>None/regulatory</i>
<i>Form of Non-government actor participation in governance</i>	Information	Consultation	Involvement	Partnership	Empowerment	
<i>Non-government actor role</i>	Provide information and views about UGI plans and projects as part of decision making process		Some involvement in planning, management, care and maintenance of UGI	Shared roles and responsibilities around planning and management of UGI	Leasing or purchasing of public land	Management agreement, leasing or purchase of private land
<i>Governance model</i>	Government actor led Consultative Democratic processes		Co-management	Co-governance/ co-production Consensus oriented	Non-government actor led governance Self governance	

## Expressions of active citizenship in governance of UGI

Including citizens, civil society groups, social enterprises and businesses in active citizenship means that there is a significant diversity in the arrangements and ways in which active citizenship is organised. Citizens may act together as loose collectives, or as informal or formalised community groups. They may

work with different degrees of connection with established non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and charities or other associations. Citizens will also have different perceptions about the amount of contact they wish to have with municipal authorities and local government. The same will be true of the NGOs, other civil society organisations, social enterprises, and businesses.

**FIGURE 3: TYPOLOGY CHARACTERISING DIFFERENT KINDS OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP APPROACHES IN UGI GOVERNANCE**

<i>Governance model</i>	<i>Active Citizenship approach</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Non-Government led approaches</i>	<b>Grassroots initiatives</b> 	Relatively small scale initiatives, focused on a specific site, usually located on public or municipal land. Initiatives are normally started and maintained quite autonomously by local residents. Serve citizen and community objectives.
	<b>Organisation initiated grassroots initiatives</b> 	NGOs or social enterprises mobilise active citizenship and community action. Usually conducted on public or municipal land, or on land with public access. There is power sharing between the organisation and citizens and there may be some coordination with municipalities. Serve citizen and community objectives. May serve strategic municipal objectives.
	<b>Green Hubs</b> 	Experimental, creative coalitions of public and private organisations, social enterprises, businesses and citizens building networks and creating knowledges to develop UGI on public and private land that serves community and municipal objectives.
<i>Co-governance</i>	<b>Co-governance</b> 	Partnerships between citizens or citizen organisations and municipalities with power being shared between those involved. Usually located on municipal land and may involve additional public assets. Sites may be large as well as small. Serves municipal as well as citizen and community objectives.
	<b>Green Barter</b> 	Businesses develop and/or maintain green space in exchange for a formalised right to use the values of those spaces for business purposes and profits. May involve small as well as medium sized sites. Serves municipal as well as business objectives. May serve community objectives.
<i>Government led processes and co-management</i>	<b>Municipalities mobilising social capital</b> 	Municipality led initiatives which invite grassroots and individual citizens to participate in strategic or site level actions, which may be about consultation and information sharing, involvement in planning, or contributions to management and maintenance (i.e. place keeping) of green spaces. Primarily serves municipal objectives, but also serves community and citizen objectives.

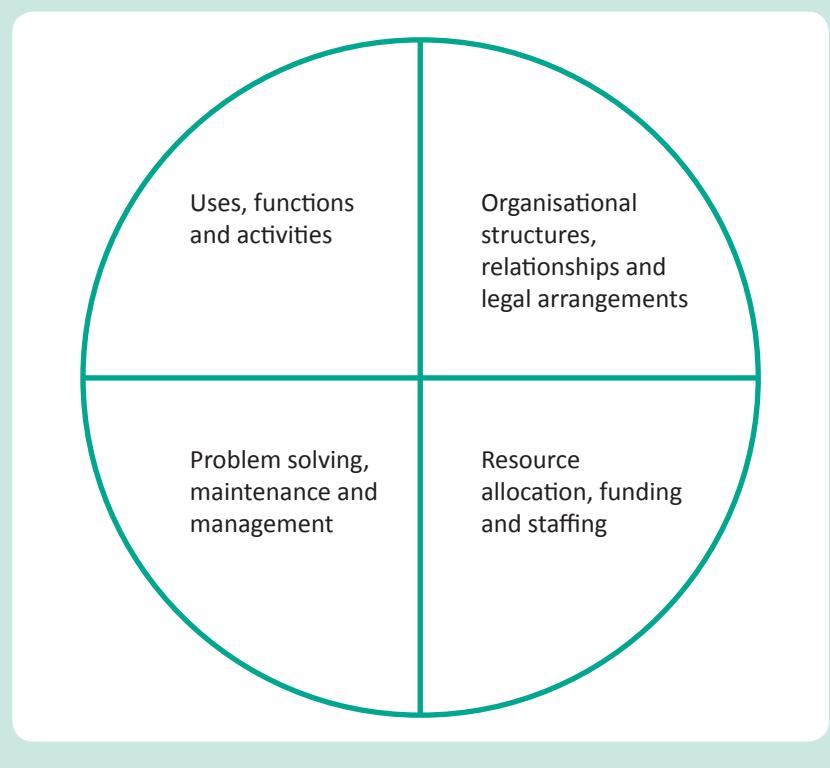
However, the diversity in active citizenship arrangements and the objectives that they are working to delivers different kinds of benefits. In addition this broad range of arrangements means a diversity of people with different motivations, perspectives and skills will be included. The resources, capacity and capability they have, and what they are able to do in different greenspaces will vary accordingly too. Some active citizen groups involve people who are highly knowledgeable and experienced, while others may still be developing their skills and expertise. The involvement of civil society organisations, social enterprise and businesses will add a different level of capacity and capability, which can often reinforce the potential for innovation, and the opportunity to work at different scale levels. Cities and municipal authorities therefore have much to gain from supporting a large variety of types of active citizenship to be present. However, it is exactly this diversity in the array of active citizenship arrangements in the city that makes it a challenge for many municipalities to understand, connect and collaborate with active citizenship initiatives.

It is useful to distinguish between the different active citizenship arrangements to see where opportunities to allow, support and collaborate might exist. The typology of active citizenship arrangements we present here may help municipalities to do this. The typology makes reference to the governance models presented in the spectrum of government and non-government roles shown in Figure 2. The typology is based on research investigating and characterising UGI governance across 12 European countries, and uses case studies from that research to provide concrete illustrations of the different types of active citizenship groups, organisations, partnerships and agreements<sup>5</sup>. Although this typology may not capture the full diversity of active citizenship

arrangements, it does represent what emerged through the research to be the six most frequently occurring models concerned with urban green space encountered across Europe. The six models and how they relate to the spectrum of governance are described in Figure 3, they are:

- Grassroots initiatives
- Organisation-initiated grassroots initiatives
- Green Hubs
- Co-governance
- Green Barter
- Municipalities mobilising social capital

**FIGURE 4: AREAS OF INNOVATION IN THE GOVERNANCE OF UGI**



Some of these active citizenship arrangements might be easy recognisable, grassroots initiatives for example. However, these examples may incorporate one, or a number of the four key areas of innovation shown in Figure 4. For example:

1. The green space initiatives themselves may be innovative, involving new ideas about the creation, function and use of greenspaces – examples are common amongst *Grassroots initiatives* and *Organisation initiated grassroots initiatives*.
2. The connection between local authorities or public agencies and the citizens, groups and other stakeholders involved in an initiative may be based on new or innovative relationships, partnerships, or legal arrangements – examples emerge in *Grassroots initiatives*, *Co-governance* and *Green Barter* arrangements
3. New methods may be used to support decision making and resource allocation for UGI – examples emerge in *Co-governance approaches* and where *Municipalities mobilise social capital*
4. The initiatives involve experimentation with new ideas, concepts and principles to tackle particular challenges in the governance of UGI at specific scale levels – examples are found with *Green Hubs*

## 2.3. EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE

The following sections look at some examples of the active citizenship arrangements in the typology. Specific attention is given to examples of municipalities who have developed explicit strategies to encourage the development of grassroots organisations and improve collaboration through the mobilisation of social capital. Other Chapters in the Guide look at active citizenships through non-government led approaches ([Chapter 3](#)) and co-governance, specifically Green Barter ([Chapter 4](#)).

### Non-governmental led approaches

Most forms of active citizenship consist of approaches in which citizens, not municipalities are in the lead. If indeed citizens have initiated the project and are the lead actors, we speak of *Grassroots initiatives*. Sometimes larger NGO's take the initiatives to activate citizens and communities to self-organise. We have named these *Organisation initiated grassroots initiatives*. An additional category is the recently emerged *Green Hubs*, which focus on innovative solutions for sustainability issues, including UGI, by creating experimental and



Image: Forestry Commission 2019193

creative partnerships. These forms of non-government led approaches have significant potential to push for innovation in governance, so are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. Just a short description of three different arrangements is given here.

### i. Grassroots initiatives

Grassroots initiatives exist in some number in probably all cities in Europe. Some examples include urban agriculture projects<sup>6</sup> and guerrilla gardening, in which citizens improve wastelands without formal approval of the owners<sup>7</sup>. Other examples focus on the development and maintenance of existing natural areas. For example, a local community group in Wales, UK, has protected and restored the Penllergare Valley Woods on the northern fringe of Swansea, Wales' second largest city. The Trust was formed by local people in 2000, and they began to care for the Valley Woods without either ownership or a secure

tenancy. The Trust concentrated on promoting the need to protect the site, locally and nationally, and also on improving the understanding of the history and nature of Penllergare whilst building up a body of volunteers to take on maintenance and management tasks across a 100 hectare historic cultural landscape, consisting of a rich variety of trees, shrubs and exotic plants, two lakes and a waterfall which functions as a green corridor for a diverse range of wildlife. At that time the majority of the valley was owned by the Llysdinam Trust, with other parts of the site owned by Swansea City Council. The Trust undertook their work on the basis of ad hoc informal agreements, or no agreements at all. The leases of Valley Woods were finally assigned to the Trust on 26 April 2012, effectively securing them for public benefit until 2116, i.e. for around 100 years. Securing these leases meant the Trust could apply for funding, which they did and

secured £2.4m by the Heritage Lottery Fund through its Parks for People programme to support the first phase of an ambitious £2.9m restoration scheme focused on the upper end of the valley.

### ii. Organisation-initiated grassroots initiatives

Sometimes NGO's feel the need to actively engage with local communities to empower citizens and stimulate active citizenship. For example a small NGO in the Netherlands (Steenbreek; To break stones in English) stimulates local communities to organise and actively seek for small patches of paved land along road verges or offices, to remove the paving and transform this into small patches of green.

### iii. Green Hubs

Green Hubs are innovative coalitions between citizens, businesses, and non-governmental organisations. Green Hubs often play a brokerage role in the exchange of resources such as knowledge, creativity and money. They are engaging stakeholders with various social and professional backgrounds. An example of Green Hubs are several groups in the Netherlands who started to actively organise the diversity of active citizen groups in cities or across the country. For example Green Wish started as a small Green Hub organising and connecting knowledge about active citizenship across the Netherlands. Based on their social networks they developed expertise about effective self-organisation. Green Wish has now developed into a network of small



social enterprises and individuals. Other examples include the experimental ‘Gardens of Art’ approach in Poland, which developed a method with art and theatre to be used in participatory governance in order to stimulate stakeholders past stalemates in conversations and negotiations<sup>8</sup>. In another example, during 2015 Groundwork London, the London Borough of Hackney, creative landscape architects and artists all partnered with businesses across Shoreditch to create and implement new ways to raise funds for parks. ‘ParkHack’ developed a method for businesses to contribute to, and

benefit from parks, in the long term. The team used open engagement techniques to gain interest and enable businesses to develop ways to improve the green park squares in and around Shoreditch. The goal was to ensure business and community benefitted. One of the first deliverables of the project was the establishment of the TreeXOffice in London’s Hoxton Square. The TreeXOffice was a contemporary shared work and meeting space that could be hired out by business and raise money that was reinvested in the Borough’s parks and green spaces.

## Co-Governance approaches

Co-governance approaches, including Green Barters are discussed in detail in [Chapter 4](#) (Green Barter) and [Chapter 6](#) (Place Keeping) where the focus is on innovation around Place Keeping. The two categories in the typology include:

### i. Co-Governance

Co-governance is a partnership between a local municipality and non-government actors, including non-governmental organisations, grassroots organisations and active citizens. The coalition

## STEPPING STONES AND ACTIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS, PLYMOUTH, ENGLAND, UK

The Stepping Stones to Nature project was a £1.065 million partnership project that ran between 2009 and 2013. The objectives of the project were to deliver improved opportunities to access urban green space in and around the city of Plymouth. The City Council worked with communities to plan, then build and manage access improvements to green sites including the installation of paths, bridges, information boards and new areas of planting.

The project was based around an innovative partnership that included professionals with expertise from public health, parks, protected landscapes, neighbourhood renewal, play, rights of way, and outdoor education. Communities and citizens were encouraged to take part through the efforts of

Community Outreach Officers “mobilising” a volunteer workforce. The City Council also expected to see sustainable change to some of the organisations involved in the way that managers and community health professionals worked together to mobilise and connect with the active citizens and citizen volunteers in the most deprived neighbourhoods where the initiative took place. This innovative approach has brought lasting change: The initiative continues as Active Neighbourhoods, with a City Council team continuing to support green space management activities through the work of a Community and Volunteer Officer and Urban Ranger (i.e. the equivalent of a Countryside Ranger, but looking after urban green spaces, woodlands and animal habitats, while giving entry to the public).



Image: Pixabay

Volunteers are being encouraged to develop their social capital one step further and set up friends groups to take more ownership, and help improve the quality of five natural green spaces for both people and wildlife. The initiative is moving into a different governance model of co-management.

between the partners is formalised, but at least some of the power and decision-making processes are shared between municipality and the organisations involved. Across Europe, numerous such co-governance structures exist. For example the active citizen group *Mooi Wageningen* (Beautiful Wageningen), the local association of agrarians, The State Forest Service and the province of Gelderland in the Netherlands collaborate in a co-governance agreement for the development of 300ha of

wetlands and low intensity meadows, in which citizens and agrarians collectively take the responsibility for the development and maintenance of the area.

## ii. Green Barter

Green Barters are partnerships between a local municipality and a private business. The partners are sharing risks and responsibilities equally. In most cases these partnerships are formed over the short-term, e.g. for a renewal of a green space. But in other cases the

relationship may continue for longer. The business partner is allowed to profit in a certain way if the services are delivered according to agreement.

## Government led approaches and co-management

There is one key arrangement in the typology presented here:

### i. Municipalities mobilising social capital

This type might be considered the most "classic" top-down method

## PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING, LISBON, PORTUGAL

The Participatory budgeting in Lisbon is a city-scale project started in 2009 where any citizen can submit their ideas about developing local public spaces. The municipality set aside a 2.5 million Euros budget to implement the winning proposals. The project was established to improve participatory planning and give local residents an opportunity to have a say in what should be done in their city. Every resident in Lisbon older than 18 years could participate via SMS or a website. For people with less technological knowledge and access the municipality organizes regular events where they explained the process and where citizens could submit their ideas. After submitting the ideas the municipality first evaluated them and selected those which could actually be realized (technical evaluation mostly).

After the municipal evaluation the plans were presented to the citizens and everyone could take a vote on the one which he or she liked the best. The plan that received the most votes was the one that was implemented. In the first years of the programme, environmental and green space projects made up the majority of the ideas put forward and voted for. As such the programme has had a major impact on green infrastructure in Lisbon, for example through the park and gardens created as an ecological corridor linking Monsanto Forest Park with Eduardo VII Park.

In the 2013 edition the restoration of Lisbon Botanic Garden was funded. The innovative aspects of this case study centre on the policy practice and process implementation. Lisbon was the



first European city to try Participatory Budgeting at such a scale. Innovations in voting and ranking methods and the outreach techniques used to diversify the kinds of people engaged have widened the base of cultural and environmental values incorporated in the successful projects.

of including citizens. It is often included as part of formal planning processes with a different degree of flexibility towards citizens. It also always happens on a bigger scale – city-wide or including many neighbourhoods. For these projects a strong commitment is required from the municipality to engage local citizens in a planning and/or implementation process. The power in decision-making is mostly in the hands of the municipality, however, with some level of flexibility and every citizen is entitled and invited to get involved. In some cases the municipality developed the structure and method for the citizen involvement, but citizens were in charge of defining the more specific activities and aims.

## 2.4. KEY MESSAGES FOR DECISION MAKERS

A generic approach to including citizens, civil society organisations and businesses in UGI governance does not serve municipalities well. It is important for local government to think through the reasons why they are looking to support or encourage innovative governance approaches, to fully acknowledge the potential of active citizenship that the cultural diversity of urban citizens and the diversity of organisations and businesses have to offer.

Adopting a typology that organises and describes different forms of governance and different ways in which the diversity and dynamics of active citizenship is included, is a useful tool for municipalities to focus on exploring what kind of active citizenship arrangement they are looking to support, for what purpose and in what UGI context. Making this explicit helps with spotting opportunities, prioritising the use of municipal resources, and identifying what actions the municipality should be taking to bring about the ecological and the social aims of both municipality and citizens, civil society groups and businesses. Municipalities will then be able to make better decisions about how active citizenship arrangements can be aligned:

- As part of existing municipal services

- Through the development and delivery of new projects involving partners who can bring different social and capital assets, and creative perspectives that can lead to innovation in approaches
- By creating the right conditions for active citizenship to flourish beyond municipal involvement such as:
  - Joining up similar initiatives or active citizenship groups
  - Replicating and disseminating the best innovative ideas after trying them out
  - Finding innovative ways to remove barriers to citizens, organisations and businesses using public spaces
  - Supporting initiatives with knowledge, skills, training and other resources that can facilitate and promote active citizenship



*Image: Shutterstock*

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## 2.5. RESOURCES

### Guides and tools

The Community Planning Toolkit a guide for municipalities to help them understand and plan their working with civil society to align efforts supporting public assets and services [www.communityplanningtoolkit.org](http://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org)

Ambrose-Oji, B., et al., 2011, *Public Engagement in Forestry: A toolbox for public engagement in forest and woodland planning*. Forestry Commission: Edinburgh. [www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox)

The Sharing Cities Network connects local sharing activists in cities around the world for fun, mutual support, and movement building. [www.shareable.net](http://www.shareable.net)

The Fellowship for Intentional Community (FIC) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to supporting and promoting the development of intentional communities and the evolution of cooperative culture. [www.ic.org](http://www.ic.org)

The Beautiful Solutions Gallery and Lab is an interactive space for sharing the stories, solutions and big ideas needed to build new institutional power and point the way toward a just, resilient, and democratic future.  
<https://solutions.thischangeseverything.org>

Maker city – A practical guide for reinventing our cities. <https://makercitybook.com>

### Research papers

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## **CHAPTER 3: ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP AND NON-GOVERNMENT LED APPROACHES**

### 3.1. WHAT IS NON-GOVERNMENT LED GOVERNANCE?

Cities across Europe have for some time looked to increase public participation in green space management. However, in more recent years, the involvement of citizens in green space governance has developed from a focus on public participation in government and local government policy initiatives towards much more active citizenship. A major innovation in UGI governance emerging in many European cities, is the way that municipalities are becoming much more comfortable with the idea of recognising and supporting grassroots or community organisations where they are working to enhance the quantity or quality of urban green spaces<sup>1</sup>. This is particularly true where citizen-led initiatives fit in with the general objectives of local government and city authorities. But, where are the opportunities for citizens to take the lead? What does this mean for municipalities and local government? Is it possible for citizen-led initiatives to fit in with the way municipalities organise their planning and UGI responsibilities? These are the key questions we focus on in this chapter, by looking at examples of how citizens and civil society groups are the initiators and drivers of UGI initiatives.

Citizen and civil society led active citizenship emerges from local communities where groups of people feel motivated to act to

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Active citizenship may manifest in many different kinds of organisation, diverging in aims, cultures and experience
- Non-government led active citizenship initiatives require municipal authorities and public agencies to be flexible in the application and interpretation of municipal rules and regulations if the diversity of aims and cultures of these innovative arrangements are to be part of the landscape of green space governance.
- In this way active citizenship can be a valuable addition to the green space development and maintenance efforts of municipalities
- Non-government led active citizenship contributes to environmental education, empowers individuals, communities and organisations, strengthens local social networks, and builds trust between municipalities and citizens

improve their local community or a particular neighbourhood, or to use UGI as a setting or resource for activities and programmes that can bring benefits to particular groups of people in a locality<sup>2</sup>. As such, active citizenship in these contexts does not usually start from government interventions. Citizens may themselves be the main actors in the governance approaches, or it may be civil society organisations and NGOs or charities that take the lead. Most citizen-led initiatives are not focused on multi-scale, city-wide initiatives. They tend to be site and locally specific. There is the possibility for citizen-led approaches to contribute to more strategic aims of municipalities, such as the connectivity of green

spaces across urban areas, but this of course suggests that municipalities would need to stimulate this through pro-active and flexible coordination activities. In addition, although autonomy is a key feature of these citizen led approaches, financial contributions or supply of other resources from municipalities can help to focus citizen effort. Because citizens and civil society groups integrate both ecological and social objectives, active citizens contribute to the multi-functionality of urban green spaces. They often seek innovative combinations of ecological improvements with environmental education, recreational use or actions in support of social cohesion.

## 3.2. TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW

### Motivations for active citizenship in non-government led governance

The motivations for individuals and organisations to involve themselves in urban green spaces activities are very diverse. They will be related to the individuals' interests or the organisational objectives. Many examples across Europe show that it is the threats to urban green space or to local biodiversity, as well as an absence of functional green space which are the main motivators for active citizenship. Other than that citizens and organisations gain pleasure and satisfaction from getting involved in nature, having the opportunity to do practical things outdoors, take part in activities that have real tangible outputs, and doing something worthwhile for the local area. Active citizenship may also be driven by social benefits such as collaborating with other local residents, building new relationships with people and organisations, developing local networks and also gaining new skills and knowledge<sup>3</sup>.

### Reasons for municipality support for citizen-led governance

For municipalities a common motivation for allowing, facilitating or supporting citizen-led governance is the perception that there will be significant benefits, for example, cost savings in the creation or improvement of new green spaces, as well as the maintenance costs associated with

existing greenspaces. Indeed the value of the amount of time volunteered by active citizenship initiatives is shown to be very significant in many European cities, particularly towards the day-to-day running costs of green space management. There are other benefits. It has been shown that when citizens are involved in creating and maintaining public spaces, the sense of ownership and responsibility to the space can increase and the occurrence of vandalism reduces<sup>4</sup>. People who

live close to the space care most deeply about it, and they usually spot opportunities or problems first. Municipalities may also be able to achieve some of their strategic regional and national level governmental policy goals through active citizenship.

Including civil society organisations and social enterprises as part of the active citizenship mix can have particularly significant benefits. Urban regeneration and social



Image: Forestry Commission 2011438

development objectives may be facilitated by such organisations. The urban farming case in Malmö described below illustrates how the creative power of social enterprises may contribute to innovative solutions for challenges in urban development and regeneration.

The focus in this chapter is on the three different kinds of citizen-led or civil-society led arrangements, illustrated in the typology presented in Chapter 2, i.e:

- Grassroots initiatives
- Organisation-initiated grassroots initiatives
- Green Hubs

to illustrate the details of the active citizenship governance arrangements and the particular benefits and challenges offered to municipalities.

### Grassroots initiatives

Grassroots initiatives are always started autonomously by citizens volunteering their energy, commitment, time and resources. The overwhelming majority of examples involve initiatives on relatively small areas of public land. In many cases the initiation of the activities will not involve discussions with, or the consent of the local municipality. However, in many successful examples they quickly gain the permission or consent of the municipality to continue with their activities. In many examples, the municipality may even provide financial or some other form of support. However, there is likely to be minimal formal contact between the municipality and grassroots initiatives. The decision making and management rests with the citizens, even though the municipality may hold legal

ownership or tenure over the land and have some legal responsibilities for the UGI. Active citizenship in this model may be through informal groups, but groups may also establish themselves more formally as a means to access resources or comply with specific legal requirements (e.g. acquiring insurance and managing volunteer safety).

Benefits for municipalities can be found in both the environmental and social outcomes of such initiatives. Through free labour, citizens produce environmental benefits beyond governmental efforts. This may contribute to the creation of new greenspace, or the restoration, enhancement and maintenance of existing green<sup>5</sup>. In addition, grassroots initiatives empower actors, strengthen local social network and social cohesion, and build trust between municipality and citizens. Both



Image: Forestry Commission 1042983.012

*Local people often spot opportunities to get involved in the governance of UGI through active engagement. From the point of view of municipalities, this can be useful in achieving strategic objectives in both the environmental and social outcomes of such initiatives.*

environmental and social improvements can also contribute to an increasing value of real estate in the area<sup>6</sup>. Grassroots initiatives often work independently from municipalities and tend to focus more on the small scale solutions in local neighbourhoods, business parks or development areas. They have weak ties to institutions and sometimes also to other grassroots organisations. Connectivity to the wider urban green infrastructure may be overlooked. The biggest challenge for municipalities is to find the balance between letting go and trying to coordinate in order to improve the environmental outcomes of grassroots initiatives and their contribution to policy aims. Continuity of citizen involvement through grassroots initiatives may also be an issue, although many show incredible flexibility and sustainability (see for example [Chapter 6](#) on co-

governance and place keeping). Whilst their efforts may be recognised, the ground they work on is not automatically protected.

### Organisation-initiated grassroots initiatives

In this active citizenship arrangement, initiatives are developed, implemented and guided by a civil society organisation such as an NGO or social enterprise. The purpose is to involve local citizens in projects that are relevant to them and their neighbourhood. Much of the decision making power therefore rests with the civil society organisation, but active citizenship through volunteers and local participants means that citizens usually have some influence over most decisions connected with the development of the green space. These initiatives often take place on public land, or on land which

has public access. The organisations leading the initiative usually have some relationship with the municipality; however, they are not dependent on the local authorities. The benefits of organisation-initiated grassroots are similar to grassroots initiatives. As the role of municipalities tend to be bigger, including more financial contributions, cost savings may be somewhat more limited. However, as coordination may be easier with these types of initiatives, municipalities have more control over the outcome. Consequently, the benefits to municipal policies, either environmental or social policies, may also be bigger. Organisation-initiated grassroots initiatives show stronger ties with local institution, including the municipality. Municipalities thus have more options for coordination and collaboration to ensure the contributions to policy aims.



Image: Martijn De Jonge

*Active citizenship is expressed through grassroots organisation around the governance of De Ruige Hof, a community run nature reserve, outside Amsterdam, Netherlands.*

## Green Hubs

Green Hubs are innovative coalitions between citizens, businesses, and non-governmental organisations, sometimes also municipalities. They are related to the recent rise of social enterprises, in which often single individuals try to combine moral responsibility for e.g. sustainability issues with developing a small enterprise to develop income. Green Hubs often play a brokerage role in the exchange of resources such as knowledge, creativity and money. They are engaging stakeholders with various social and professional backgrounds. Green Hubs focus on experimenting with new ways of social and professional interaction while striving for sustainable land use and neighbourhood integrated learning. Through the development of strong social networks, with institutional actors, local communities and NGOs they have access to and combine resources from different groups. Successful Green Hubs know how to develop and connect these networks and resources in order to initiate new and often innovative projects.

The decision-making power between these actors may differ. Key characteristics of Green Hubs is their focus on experimenting with new ways of social and professional interaction, while creating sustainable land use in the city in a very interdisciplinary way. By their interdisciplinary membership with representatives of more than one organisation, they may be more

resilient than single organisation initiated grassroots projects.

Finding creative solutions for sustainability issues is often the key objective of Green Hubs. This creativity may be the most important benefit for municipalities. In addition, Green Hubs can be seen as the “playing ground” for experimenting with such new solutions, which is often very difficult for municipalities. Consequently municipalities can learn from these experimental partnerships and chose to align with successful experiments. In

addition, Green Hubs may have access to additional resources from non-governmental actors such as businesses, including money, knowledge, and manpower. Finally, if Green Hubs are connected to or based on social enterprises, they create new jobs, although the size usually is rather small. Again, coordination with Green Hubs may be a challenge for municipalities. Also continuity of Green Hubs may be an issue. As such, municipalities may not want to depend on Green hubs for important, ongoing policy aims.



Image: Forestry Commission 2007729

### 3.3. EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE

Across Europe, many examples exist of grassroots initiatives, organisation led grassroots initiative and Green Hubs. We will now illustrate these types with examples from within the GREEN SURGE project.

#### ORGANISATION INITIATED GRASSROOTS INITIATIVE: STOPPING-PLACE, SZEGED, HUNGARY

The Stopping-place is a community centre and a community garden located behind the building of the centre; both started in 2014. Stopping-place was started and has been maintained by a NGO called MASZK Association. The NGO applied for and won a tender from the European Commission that funded the development of the initiative. The community centre is open for any residents of the local district called Tarján – with about 7000 residents. Anyone can join the events and programme organized in the community centre. On the other hand, the community garden is much more closed because they have a limited number of plots. Here 11 families from the neighbourhood have the right and the long-term responsibilities to take care of the garden and grow their own vegetables and herbs. The centre and the garden have a strong relationship; all gardeners are active in events organized there, and the people visiting the centre have an appreciation for the garden which used to be an unmaintained grass plot.

The main focus of the NGO initiating this project is to introduce and aid innovative, creative communities, and to organise cultural events for the residents of Szeged. In the case of Stopping-place their main

motivation derived from the neighbourhood's poor accessibility of both community areas and green places. Both the building and the surrounding garden are owned by the municipality of Szeged, however, the maintainer of the area is a company called Environmental Management of Szeged, which is completely owned by the local municipality. Environmental Management established an agreement with MASZK Association which says that they are entitled to use, renew and maintain part of the building and the rear garden for their purposes for a certain amount of rent. The garden and the company still have a strong relationship, the company frequently helps the garden out with lending them equipment, providing some materials like mulch, giving advice about gardening, or providing help with bigger maintenance tasks.

When the centre and garden were founded, the NGO started to mobilize local citizens. They have gave out flyers, advertised on Facebook and with posters, and by more traditional ways, simply just talking with the residents nearby. This communication was on-going, for example, every month about 2000 flyers were distributed by volunteer high school students and



Image: Pixabay

others. Before they started the garden, there was a forum about it where anyone interested in taking part in the community garden could come and learn about the ideas and opportunities.

The initiative has developed a much appreciated place for the district residents. With the help of the resources and mobilizing force of a local NGO, the municipality got help in strengthening the social integration among local citizens. Even though the community garden only has 11 active families, these families have gained much more than spending time outside and producing vegetables. They have built a community with events and everyday contacts, building social ties. Furthermore, many nearby residents have visited the centre because they have noticed the change in the garden from their window or from the street. Many of them stayed to get involved in the community centre programme.

## GRASSROOTS INITIATIVES: GRANTON COMMUNITY GARDENERS, EDINBURGH, UK

Granton Community Gardeners are an association of people located in one of the most socially deprived areas of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Granton Community Gardeners was a group started 10 years ago by local residents who were unhappy about two issues. Firstly, not having access to their own private gardens for fruit and vegetable growing, and, secondly, a lack of diversity in the type of local public green spaces in their locality. They also wanted to help the local neighbourhood through a period of financial austerity, and felt it was important to find ways of building a sense of community on the former social housing estate. The Community Gardeners took matters into their own hands and started planting gardens in their neighbourhood on public street corners, verges and small areas of mowed grass around residential buildings, and abandoned areas of wasteland. These patches of land were mostly owned by the city council. The impact of the Community Gardeners was quite dramatic changing the appearance as well as the biodiversity value of the neighbourhood.

Not long after the first gardens appeared, The City of Edinburgh Council North Neighbourhood office, which is officially responsible for the maintenance of these sites, provided a letter of support to the group to show their consent that the Community Gardeners maintain these green spaces. However, this is not a formal agreement between the citizens and the municipality. It is a non-binding statement of



Image: Pixabay

support that fits in with a national policy desire in Scotland to support community management of local assets including green spaces. The letter of support was significant. It prompted those involved to set up Granton Community Gardeners as a community group with a constitution. Organised in this way and with the letter of support from the Council, the group could start applying for funds for tools, to improve their communications, and to run “grow your own fruit and vegetables” courses. All of this activity raised their profile and increased the number of people involved and volunteering to help.

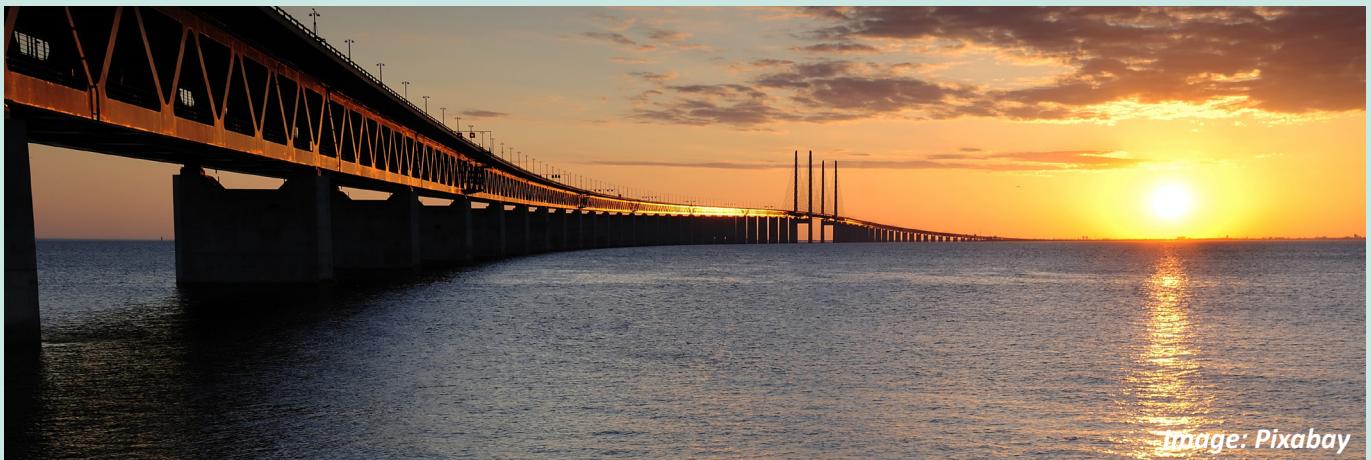
After six years of operation the Granton Community Gardeners now manage 10 gardens on local authority land, most of which are publicly accessible. Active citizenship means the members and supporters of Granton Community Gardeners grow healthy and nutritious food for local residents, providing an alternative to food banks for the most vulnerable members of the community, as well as being a route to environmental education. The gardens themselves have been important in positively changing the image of Granton. By

engaging citizens from a wide range of ethnic and economic backgrounds to take part in communal cultivation, harvesting and cooking/eating projects, evaluations show that cultural and local ecological knowledge exchange is supported, contributing to the building of urban conviviality, social integration, social and cultural capital.

This example shows that for a degree of flexibility in the use of Council owned greenspace, and a modest level of support, i.e. the letter of approval and small financial inputs through the Community Grants Fund (e.g. £4,700 between 2012-2014), the benefits to the municipal authority Edinburgh City Council were:

- Increased levels of understanding and trust between the Council and the local residents in Granton
- A more aesthetically pleasing neighbourhood which improved the reputation of the area
- Reduced UGI maintenance costs
- Involvement of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, building social cohesion
- Realisation of wider Scottish Government policy aims for community involvement

## GREEN HUBS: URBAN FARMING IN HYLLIE, MÄLMO, SWEDEN



*Image: Pixabay*

In 2015 the urban agricultural initiative “Stadsbruk” (Urban Farming in Swedish) was started on some urban development sites in the neighbourhood called Hyllie on the outskirts of the city of Malmö. The project aims to create innovative solutions that fight unemployment and develop sustainable solutions for land which sits unused for long periods of time between designation of a development status and the actual commencement of construction work.

The concept of developing urban farms in these temporary urban green spaces was first proposed by a small social enterprise called Xenofilia that has experience developing social innovations that create job opportunities. So a key objective of the temporary urban farming was to create a business model that could help the local unemployed citizens and citizens living on social welfare by providing an opportunity to grow and sell organic crops. They were also looking for a way to overcome the problems of valuable but temporary unused land.

After developing the concept, Xenofilia sought collaborations with the municipality of Malmö and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU). To reach the goals, the three main actors needed to find interested unemployed residents who would be willing to learn and do farming as their job. They also needed to find the suitable land within the derelict area, and ways to sell the crops of the future farmer. Because of this, Xenofilia, SLU and the City have set up three work packages: Farming, Commercialization and Strategy. The first one, Farming deals with finding both suitable land and interested citizens. The Commercialization focus is to find good ways for packaging, distributing and other tasks regarding utilizing crops. The work package Strategy is compiling all lessons learnt from this process and also identifies other municipalities that would be interested to implement similar solutions for unemployment and temporary derelict land.

Not long after the initiative was started it had quickly became successful in growing organic crops

and finding channels to selling the products. Sites are developed for both commercial and for leisure farming. The leisure farming is not part of the business model development, it is established to create an attractive green structure for the local residents. According to plans, the farming areas are located where public green spaces are going to be in the future, once the district is completely built. Because these areas would lay barren for many years to come, the initiative creates green space values even before the area is built up.

The lessons for municipalities from this case are that there could be other actors other than them to look for when trying to start an urban greening initiative which involves citizens and requires some knowledge which is missing or hard to come by their own resources. Thus, they can look for partnering up with local social enterprises, NGOs and universities even if they don't have an idea but are just looking for a solution for a problem – in this case local unemployment and how to use temporary derelict lands the best way together with citizens.

### 3.4. KEY MESSAGES FOR DECISION MAKERS

One of the big challenges associated with non-government led initiatives is whether municipalities are aware of them, and how they relate to municipal scale objectives and strategies. Even though Green Hubs and some organisation-initiated grass roots initiatives may operate at neighbourhood or city-wide scales, the majority, particularly grassroots initiatives, focus more on small scale actions in local neighbourhoods, business parks or development areas. This has implications when considering connectivity of UGI. Connectivity to the wider urban green infrastructure may be overlooked. Better communication and co-ordination with non-government led initiatives and active citizenship could be beneficial and add value to municipal UGI strategies. Better communication and coordination could for example, mean that active

citizenship is stimulated to fill in empty spots in the green space network, or the municipality could take responsibility for developing connections between the green spaces created and maintained by active citizenship. In addition, scarce municipal resources could perhaps be strategically targeted at important points in the ecological network.

Building trust between government and non-government actors is key. Initial mistrust may exist amongst municipal actors towards those organisations that are more economically or politically powerful, but there may also be mistrust around the ability of grassroots initiatives to deliver actions and UGI management of sufficient quality and in line with legal obligations and accountability. Likewise, communities and active citizens may find it difficult to trust municipal administrators. Time is a critical factor required to build trust and needs to be

included in any formal or informal planning and coordination activities.

Another strategic issue is how a focus on active citizenship and non-government led approaches may also impede inclusiveness. Active citizenship critically depends on cultural capital, that is the capacity and capability of people to take part in actions around spaces they value<sup>7</sup>. As this capital is not distributed evenly across communities, the effect of a retreating government and increased reliance on non-government led initiatives could lead to unintended impacts on environmental justice and the fair distribution of access to public green space. Municipalities may have a continuing role in communication and coordination to ensure that non-government led approaches are not overly dominated by vocal and well organised interest groups to the detriment of other groups in the population.



Image: Shutterstock

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## 3.5. RESOURCES

### Guides and tools

Enabling Social Action: Guidance for the public sector (2015).

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/enabling-social-action-guidance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/enabling-social-action-guidance)

Places to Be: Green Spaces for Active Citizenship (2014).

[www.fabians.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/PlacesToBe-Final1.pdf](http://www.fabians.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/PlacesToBe-Final1.pdf)

### Research papers

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4. Duff, C., *On the role of affect and practice in the production of place*. Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 2010. 28(5): p. 881-895.
5. Colding, J., *Urban green commons: Insights on urban common property systems*. 23 (2013)5. Global environmental change: human and policy dimensions, 2013. 23(5).
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## **CHAPTER 4: GREEN BARTER AND PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: INVOLVING BUSINESS IN UGI GOVERNANCE**

## 4.1. INTRODUCTION

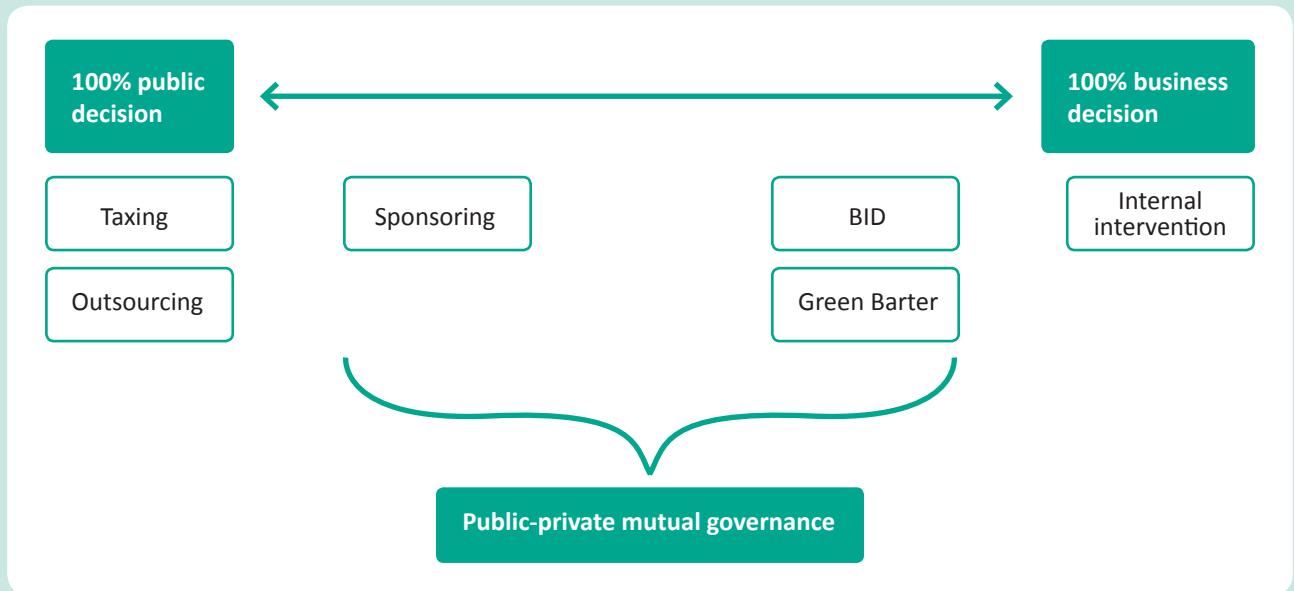
Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have different definitions in different fields. In the case of creating, managing, and operating green spaces we refer to PPP as the cooperation (risk and benefit sharing) of business entities with public actors, even when these business entities are not specializing in this field. As opposed to a PPP scheme, the relationship between public organisations and companies primarily focusing on green space management (which is the most usual form of business relations between public and private actors) is usually outsourcing or subcontracting, which presupposes an unequal distribution of decision making power. In this situation the businesses involved do not have a business-independent motivation to get involved; they simply implement tasks at the request of public actors.

There are several types of connections between businesses and the public sphere. The main types are represented below in Figure 5, on a scale that displays the shift between 100% public decision making power and 100% business decision making power. Co-governance (common decision making and risk sharing) falls between the two extremities (the extremes represent exclusive forms of decision making, so excluding cooperation).

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Businesses can be involved in the creation and management of green spaces for public benefits through co-management or co-production governance arrangements with city authorities. These are commonly known as public-private partnerships (PPP).
- In PPP schemes businesses (who do not usually specialize in green space management) assume responsibility for financing, developing, and/or maintaining green spaces that the public have access to. For example businesses may create and maintain public parks, take care of the greenery in certain public areas, and contribute to the financial sustainability of Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) that deal with public green spaces.
- PPP schemes yield benefits for both the private and public actors. Public actors can complement public sources with private ones while private partners may gain additional business opportunities in a direct or indirect way.
- On the other hand, mistrust around PPP solutions is common due to transparency problems and the common beliefs of the actors that the other party earns extra benefits while taking minimal risk. In order to increase transparency there is a need for clear contractual relations (even though PPP projects are usually tailor made) and the result of interventions must be clearly controlled and monitored. Public actors must be aware that the inclusion of businesses in green space projects is not based on pure altruism; therefore business opportunities must be provided in return (e.g. construction opportunities, touristic opportunities, advertisement opportunities).

**FIGURE 5: SHIFT OF DECISION MAKING POWER BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ACTORS**



**Taxing and obligations:** In this scheme the public sphere creates the legal framework that empowers it to levy tax or other financial obligations on different actors for using green spaces. (This can be broadly interpreted as environmental taxation). In this scheme business (and other) actors do not have a decision making power; this solution is therefore not considered as PPP, but a private source of financing public purposes.

**Outsourcing:** As mentioned earlier, outsourcing (which is a very common form of public-private connections) is also not considered as a PPP, as the decision making power still belongs to the public actor, which practically orders the work implemented by business organisations.

**Sponsoring:** In the case of sponsoring, the public actor (often in partnership with other actors) defines green space development goals, and business actors have the opportunity to join the programme. They can contribute financially or by implementing actions/interventions. Sponsorship can be realised by different tools like charity events, direct sponsorship, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes, or contribution certificates.

**Business Improvement Districts (BID):** A Business Improvement District is a legal and financial framework for realising the complex development and/or high level of maintenance of open spaces in a certain urban area. BIDs differ in their degree of public involvement. Sometimes they are run entirely by the business, sometimes in collaboration with local governments. The aim of a BID is to upgrade urban areas (usually shopping or touristic areas) that have the potential to generate additional financial gains after the interventions. BIDs are mostly based on additional tax revenues from local stakeholders who directly benefit from the added value of interventions. In most cases, BIDs are large scale interventions with short to long term implementation. BIDs usually have their own formal management entity. (An example of a BID scheme will be presented later on in this chapter.)

**Green Barter:** Green barter is located at the heart of PPP schemes in which both the goals and the way of implementation are defined by the public and private partners together, and the parties also share the risks and benefits of implementation. In most cases the outcome is spatially patchwork-like, typically resulting in short term solutions. Green barters (even if they fit into a framework regulation and are based on contracts) are mostly based on bi-lateral negotiations between the private and public partners. (This chapter presents two examples of green barters later on.)

**Internal intervention:** In this scheme the business actor makes decisions regarding investments and operation of green spaces, mostly directly affecting its own property.

PPP includes collaboration where co-decision is made by the public and private actors together and both the risks and the benefits are shared. Sponsoring, green barter, and Business Improvement Districts fall into this category. The main reasons for entering into a PPP are different for private and public actors.

In the case of public entities, limited funding for investment in green spaces is the primary reason for entering into PPP schemes. Public funding is rarely sufficient for green space development in most European cities, and this problem can sometimes be grave; accordingly, the involvement of private actors as co-financers can be of high importance. Besides financial reasons, the ownership of spaces can also be important if public services are to be made available on private property, or where the ambition is to manage green infrastructure at a strategic level, rather than green spaces at a site level. In these cases the

cooperation of private owners is essential. Finally, businesses are able to generate funds in many cases where public actors cannot (e.g. private actors can implement business activities in green spaces like tourism or catering), and can therefore create the financial basis of cooperation, which is another reason for public bodies to cooperate with private entities.

From the private actors' point of view, investment in green spaces may result in the reduction of operational/investment costs (e.g. meeting legal obligations in alternative ways), improve their quality or efficiency of operation (e.g. implementing storm water management with the help of urban green infrastructure), generate financial gains (business activities on green space), or enhance their reputation by advertising their investment into public goods. Businesses may contribute 'only' to financing of investment into green spaces (as passive sponsors), but can also take active part in the implementation process.

## 4.2. TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW: GETTING BUSINESSES INVOLVED IN GREEN SPACE CREATION AND MANAGEMENT

Businesses may enter into PPPs based purely on their business interests, or on their sense of corporate social responsibility. However, other incentives can also make PPP projects more attractive. First, it is important to highlight that businesses engaging in a PPP must obtain direct benefits from the project, as external benefits for the wider public do not have an intrinsic value for a private company. Direct, financially measurable private benefits should be created, like new business opportunities (e.g. in the field of tourism), or advertisement for the company and improvement of its image on the market.

Besides these pull factors, legal and financial obligations may be push factors leading businesses



into PPP arrangements; but room for cooperation should still be created to establish a partnership rather than just a pure obligation. As experience shows, obligations alone (e.g. environmental regulations, compensation for environmental damages during construction, restricting advertisement possibilities on open spaces) do not lead directly to better quality green spaces, but the fulfilment of these obligations can be turned into investments in green spaces in case of proper negotiations (see some details of this in the examples described later on in the chapter).

Besides push and pull factors, the emotional incentives should not be underestimated. The financial benefits of PPP may be important to businesses, but emotional factors can sometimes be just as

important. Businesses consist of people that are devoted to their home town, to the green environment, and to their community (and sometimes also to politicians). These emotional linkages should be emphasized when preparing a call for businesses.

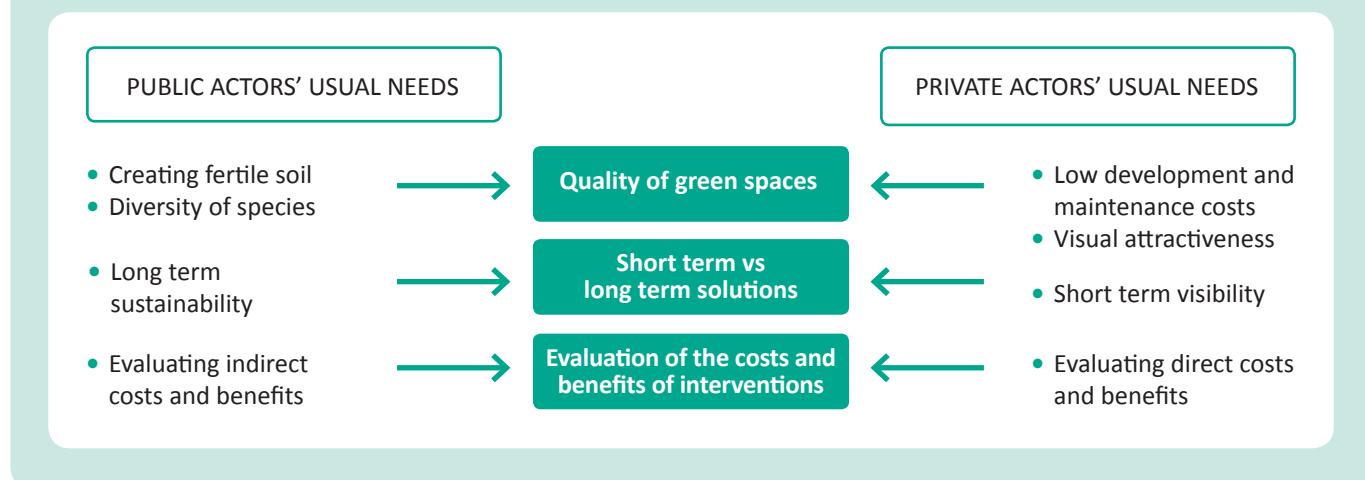
The interest of one business actor to take part in financing/developing/maintaining green spaces is usually limited as the direct costs and benefits of the interventions must be balanced, and the direct benefits stemming from green space development are usually limited for one business actor. It is thus important for public actors to devise tools for upscaling individual projects, and ensure green space development with a larger scale impact than patchwork projects. These tools

can be the involvement of more public (e.g. national) financing, or packaging multiple projects to involve more businesses at the same time (e.g. Business Improvement Districts can create investment packages).

Even if the majority of decision makers in a locality intend to build a closer relationship with business actors<sup>1</sup>, general mistrust between public and private partners is a major obstacle due to conflicting interests and information asymmetry. The core of creating efficient PPP relations is to balance interests, and to ensure transparency in the process.

One has to accept that there are conflicting interests between the public and private actors. Figure 6 illustrates the key pressures in PPP schemes.

## FIGURE 6: CONFLICTING INTERESTS IN PPP SCHEMES



Despite the conflicting interests and the mutual mistrust, there are tools that enable the creation of trust and transparency, such as a reliable contractual framework. The contractual framework on rights and obligations provides a stable background for both contracting parties; however, it is important to note that PPP projects have to be tailor made as each case is different from the other and individual solutions must be elaborated. Meanwhile, the broader policy framework that provides the corner stones of negotiations (like local regulation on “privatising” green spaces) can also be a stabilising factor. This framework is not only able to strengthen transparency, but can also serve as a tool for transferability as it creates opportunities for new businesses to enter into PPP relations. At the same time, it is important to note that PPP solutions may not be easily transferable to other cities

and other countries, as local circumstances matter to a large extent. A strong local economy, for instance, creates more affluent businesses and more valuable business opportunities through green space development.

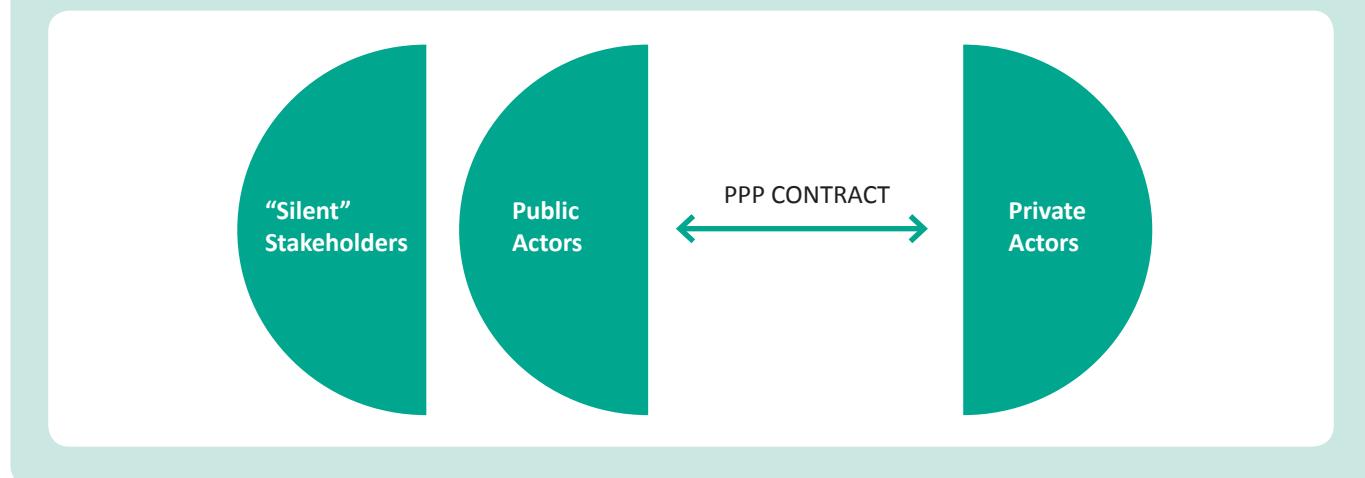
Trust is also based on transparent information on the results of the intervention. One typical problem is that once green space development was implemented and is being operated through a PPP contract, the quality of the output is not measured again. However, this feedback would be necessary to evaluate the fulfilment of the PPP contract, and also to ensure that both private and public interests are met. Taking into account that the quality and the quantity of green spaces to be developed/maintained is the most critical part both in the specification of PPP contracts and in monitoring of the results, it is the interest of

both parties that these requirements are specified and measured properly.

The public sector has extended responsibility in establishing PPP relations. Public actors do not only represent their own interests, but they are obliged to think about those of the general public, citizens and civil society organisations who will not have a voice during the organisation and negotiation of the PPP arrangements.

The public sector can also take a lead in facilitating the implementation of green space development by businesses by providing information for those who do not have expertise in this area. Useful information includes demonstrating the costs and benefits of green space interventions. Examples of this kind include the green audits undertaken in London.

**FIGURE 7: THE PARTNERS REPRESENTED IN PPP CONTRACTS**



## BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT IN HAMBURG, GERMANY

Tibarg is a central area of Niendorf quarter in Hamburg, where traditional retail activities became endangered by a shopping mall that was opened in 2002 at the northern edge of the pedestrian street.

An organisation established in 1969 as an interest group of entrepreneurs in Tibarg initiated the establishment of a Business Improvement District in the neighbourhood by submitting an application to the city municipality. The municipality already established the legal framework of BIDs in 2005 by adopting a local regulation on the issue (Gesetz zur Stärkung der Einzelhandels-, Dienstleistungs- und Gewerbezentränen).

The application was submitted in 2010, and the first phase of the implementation of the BID was accomplished between 2010 and 2015 with an estimated total cost of €1.75 million. The activities concentrated partly on investments such as improved street lightning, bicycle paths, installing street furniture, increasing and improving the green areas, and installing new playgrounds. It also improved services like more efficient cleaning of the area and more efficient marketing activities. Based on the success of the first phase of intervention, a Tibarg II BID was also created for 2016-2021, a budget up to €1.2 million and a focus on improving public space maintenance and marketing for the area.

The planned activities are implemented throughout a newly established BID organisation



*Image: Matthias Friedel*

*BID interventions in the pedestrian area of Tibarg improved the quality of green infrastructure.*

(Handel City- und Standortmanagement BID GmbH) which closely cooperates with the city management company.

The financial basis of implementing the Tibarg BID is an additional tax levied on property-owners in the BID area (which is defined by a local regulation). The property owners pay about 1.7% of the calculated value of their property annually for

5 years in order to implement the interventions (which increase the value of their property in return.) In order to balance the inflow of extra taxes and the uneven schedule of costs, the BID company took on a commercial loan as well.

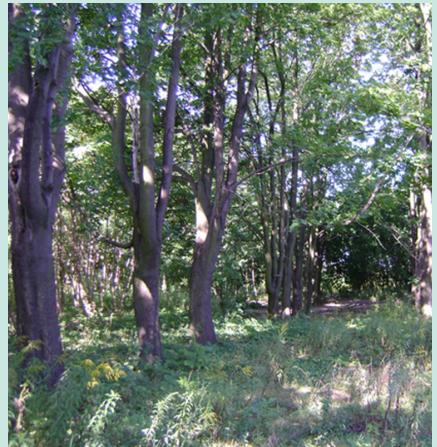
More information on Tibarg BID:  
[www.hamburg.de/bid-projekte/4353920/bid-projekt-tibarg](http://www.hamburg.de/bid-projekte/4353920/bid-projekt-tibarg)  
or [www.tibarg.de/bid/bid\\_tibarg](http://www.tibarg.de/bid/bid_tibarg)

## GREEN BARTER IN LODZ, POLAND

Lisciasta Park Residence (Osiedle Liściasta Park in Polish) is a new residential area in the northern part of Lodz, built between 2009 and 2013. The Residence has seven buildings with 158 apartments. This residential area is bordered in the south and east by a green space – a park with a small river (Sokolowka) and several reservoirs.

The wilder parts of the park just by the new residential area were hiding a lot of construction waste from the nearby estates built in the 1980s and the 1990s. Construction waste was deposited in the green area and since then it overgrew with shrubs, trees and other plants. Budomal (the developer company) started the construction of the Residence in 2009. In 2013 – when the sales of the second batch of apartments started – the company

suggested that it would clear and rehabilitate the adjacent land, about 600 m<sup>2</sup> area that was heavily contaminated by construction waste, partly as compensation for the trees that they had to remove to build the Residence (such a compensation is legally required), and partly to improve the neighbourhood of the Residence. The City Office did not have additional means for rehabilitating this area, which was another argument for such an arrangement. In such circumstances, a public-private partnership was established between the City Office and the Developer to rehabilitate part of the park adjacent to the Residence. This was a temporary arrangement, undertaken to solve one single problem; the land is still publicly owned and after rehabilitation its everyday management has been taken over by the City Office.



*Images: Tomasz Jochim*

*The state of the area before and after the intervention.*

## GREEN BARTER IN ORADEA, ROMANIA

In 2009 the municipality of Oradea decided to follow the experience of some other Romanian cities in letting private companies 'adopt' some smaller green spaces. Companies sign contracts with the municipality for one year (which can be extended) on developing and maintaining smaller pieces of green spaces, and in return they can place their nameplates on them. In addition, these companies are exempt from fees that should be normally paid for using public spaces for private purposes. By this means the residual public spaces are kept in a good condition (thus public expenses are saved), while

the companies obtain a unique advertising opportunity.

The demand for such green space development has been increasing substantially (partly because advertising possibilities in public spaces are restricted in general, so green spaces provide an exceptional opportunity).

Currently the companies are queuing for acquiring new places, but there are no more available plots in the project framework. By May 2015, 56 pieces of green space were 'adopted' by companies, out of which 18 were roundabouts.



Images: Éva Gerőházi

*Examples of adopted green spaces.*

### 4.4. KEY MESSAGES FOR PUBLIC DECISION MAKERS

Involving public-private partnerships in developing/maintaining new pieces of green space provides clear benefits for the public sector, as it:

- generates and contributes funds which can extend public budgets,
- demonstrates that private actors also have an interest in the maintenance/management of green spaces,

- can involve private property, where public actors would otherwise not be able to intervene.

However, public actors should be aware about the following aspects in generating PPP contracts:

- the rights and obligations of the actors must be balanced,
- strong quality control must be built into the process to ensure transparency and set clear targets,
- a strong strategic framework and strong legal background

strengthens the position of public actors,

- the process may start with the pioneers and then be up-scaled,
- multi-partner solutions are necessary to implement large scale projects.

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## 4.5. RESOURCES

### Research papers

1. Davies, C., et al., *Green infrastructure planning and implementation 2015*, GREEN SURGE project report.

Andersson, E., Kronenberg, J., Cvejić, R. and Adams, C.: *Integrating green infrastructure ecosystem services into real economies* (GREEN SURGE Deliverable 4.1, October 2015).

Available at: [http://greensurge.eu/working-packages/wp4/D4.1\\_Final.pdf](http://greensurge.eu/working-packages/wp4/D4.1_Final.pdf)

Cook, I.R., 2009. *Private sector involvement in urban governance: The case of Business Improvement Districts and Town Centre Management partnerships in England*. Geoforum, 40(5), pp.930–940.

Available at: [www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016718509000967](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0016718509000967)

Claudio De Magalhães: *Business Improvement Districts in England and the (private?) governance of urban spaces* Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy, 32(5), pp.916–933.

Available at: <http://epc.sagepub.com/lookup/doi/10.1068/c12263b>

### Guides and tools

[www.naturalinfrastructureforbusiness.org](http://www.naturalinfrastructureforbusiness.org)

[www.hamburg.de/bid-projekte](http://www.hamburg.de/bid-projekte)

## **CHAPTER 5: SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE GOVERNANCE OF UGI**

## 5.1. INTRODUCTION

The terms “social inclusion” and “social exclusion” can be considered as two sides of the same coin. Talking about inclusion is generally regarded as more positive, and focuses attention on overcoming the barriers related to social exclusion. Social inclusion in terms of governance means facilitating actions and processes to include individuals and communities who may otherwise experience barriers to participation in decision making and active management of urban green infrastructure (UGI). The individuals and communities that might be vulnerable to exclusion is very context specific. In some European countries (for example the UK) they may actually be defined in law and there may be national standards for ensuring their participation (for example in Scotland). They might also be mentioned as key targets in local development plans, policies and strategies relating to UGI. For example, the Vienna City Administration has an Urban Mobility Plan which includes a Fairness Check Method to explore the situation of discriminated groups and people whose mobility is restricted for a variety of reasons; the city of Berlin has a Handbook which covers Participation and areas such as Gender Mainstreaming as strategic guides for city development planning (see the guides and tools listed below). So from this point of view their inclusion becomes an important consideration for municipalities and public agencies, and social inclusion in green space

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Social inclusion has become an important consideration in UGI governance, as municipalities and organisations find ways of ensuring that a range of people have the opportunity and capacity to take part in the decision making and management of UGI
- Social inclusion in governance processes is a desired outcome for many organisations as social inclusion is expected to lead to social cohesion
- One way of approaching social inclusion is to examine the barriers to participation experienced by different people and look for methods to overcome those barriers
- Those organisations and agencies responsible for building social inclusion in UGI governance should take a strategic approach to deciding the objective of social inclusion, their role in this process, who should be involved and how best to facilitate their involvement

governance is a stated aim of many local governments and civil society organisations. Despite variations across European regions, common characteristics that municipalities, public agencies and civil society recognise as important factors influencing social inclusion are: educational status; income level; age; health status; disability; ethnicity; religion and belief; gender and sexuality.

There is a large body of research evidence which suggests that many social groups do not engage with urban green space. For example, in Britain large scale longitudinal surveys such as England's Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) demonstrate that people from ethnic minority

communities and members of the lowest socio-economic groups were less likely to visit urban green spaces than others. Some studies have analysed the social, psychological and physical determinants of urban green space access and use, and demonstrate how these barriers to engagement might be overcome<sup>1-7</sup>. Landscape designers and organisations developing inclusive design have taken this one step further and provided guidance about the design principles for urban green space that encourage social inclusion<sup>8-10</sup>. Other researchers have developed tools for urban planners and others to look at the potential social impacts of locating UGI in particular areas (see for example the UGI Equity Index developed in Philadelphia<sup>11</sup>).

So in general terms, there is a growing recognition of the importance of social inclusion in European cities. This has led to environmental justice aspects being considered more frequently by some municipal authorities and departments using the kind of insights and tools mentioned above. For example, in municipal green space planning there is a strong movement to include indicators for assessing green space availability, access, use, and benefit distribution. However, citizens that want to shape and manage urban green space are often not included in decision-making, even more so when it comes to vulnerable groups.

In many European cities, there is also the growing feeling that UGI can be used as a vehicle for social inclusion that builds social cohesion, i.e. greater social connectivity, social acceptance and understanding, and greater integration and interaction between different kinds of people within a community. Social cohesion is becoming more and more of a policy aim as urban communities become more diverse in their cultural and social characteristics.

*Community involvement in the governance of UGI can provide an important local resource for ensuring that everybody has the chance to experience nature, improve their wellbeing and enjoy the company of other people.*

## 5.2. TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW

### Defining the key concepts

Even though there is research looking at the use of urban green spaces by different types of people, the research and the documentation of practice exploring and evidencing social inclusion in UGI governance processes (i.e. including individuals and groups in the decision making and management processes associated with UGI) and whether and how social cohesion is actually achieved between and amongst different societal groups through this is rather poor<sup>12</sup>. "Use" and "governance" of UGI are somewhat related. Unless people have access to and knowledge of UGI they are unlikely to become involved in the governance of those spaces and places. In other words when green space is accessible and facilitates public use, this in turn can have the

effect of encouraging active citizenship and the involvement of civil society in the governance, management and maintenance of a site.

However, including people in decision making and active management is a specific area of concern and action in UGI governance. This is not only true in terms of government-led initiatives, but also in co-governance and non-government led approaches. The involvement of active citizens and civil society groups does not necessarily and automatically lead to social inclusion. Some active citizen groups and organisations can be socially exclusive. This is the case for example, if grassroots action for UGI by neighbours in one street fails to consider the opinions and desires of individuals and groups in the surrounding areas who might have different social



Image: Forestry Commission 2011438

characteristics but an equal interest in the green space. Local variation in who is involved or invited to a process may support social inclusion at a larger scale. A totally open process will, for a number of reasons, exclude or under-represent some groups.

It is also important to distinguish between “social exclusion” and “under-representation”. Exclusion signifies an inability to participate, a lack of choice brought about by particular barriers. Equality signifies the equal treatment and opportunity to participate. Under-representation may be a matter of choice. For example, a particular individual may simply have no interest in urban green space and therefore simply decide not to get involved. In this sense under-representation may not be a symptom of exclusion or unequal treatment. However, the challenge to those practitioners involved in UGI governance is to understand which social groups are not well represented in particular initiatives, to discover why this might be so, and to clarify whether this is an issue of specific concern and therefore how to address it. Municipal authorities and public

agencies are often those in the best position to understand the bigger picture and put in place policy mechanisms and other measures to ensure a balance amongst the kinds of UGI initiatives, projects and processes and the social groups that are included as active citizens or beneficiaries.

### **Understanding the barriers to social inclusion in governance**

To promote broad participation in governance processes certain distinct aspects need to be recognised. There are different, often inter-related, reasons why people do not take part in decision making processes connected with UGI. Figure 8 indicates barriers associated with four particular areas of interaction:

- Social – these are factors related to the social awareness and connections with the organisation of governance. For example, depending on which social grouping individuals come from, they may not have connections with the social networks and relationships that provide the opportunity to

access UGI governance processes and institutions/organisation. They may not know about who and where the organisations and groups involved in governance are.

- Political/Civic – these are factors related to accessing democratic processes and community-based decision-making processes. Depending on who is being considered they may not have access to these, they may not know about how they work or how to engage with them, or they may not have the confidence to do so.
- Cultural – this includes all the cultural conventions around the use and management of green space as well as the cultural expectations connected with taking part in governance processes, so this will include factors such as the confidence to speak up in public forums, the knowledge individuals have about the use and management of green spaces and how they can engage in different processes.
- Economic – depending on who is being considered they may not have access to resources (i.e. the time, money, or skills) required to engage in UGI governance. In some cities it may also be the case that urban regeneration, economic development and neighbourhood improvements using UGI can begin with social inclusion in mind, but can lead to gentrification and the social exclusion of particular groups in governance processes as the majority social characteristics of an area change<sup>8, 9, 13, 14</sup>.



*Image: Shutterstock*

## FIGURE 8: BARRIERS TO SOCIAL INCLUSION IN UGI GOVERNANCE



For example, young people may experience particular economic and political barriers because they may have low levels of income or may be less confident engaging in committees of voting processes. People from ethnic minorities may experience greater cultural and social barriers, for example, it might not be the social norm for women to take part in public meetings, or there may be perceptions that governance of UGI is an issue that has little to do with them and their communities.

### Overcoming the barriers to social inclusion in UGI governance

These different kinds of barriers to inclusion in governance affect an individual or a group's knowledge and competency to understand and make effective

decisions, and the capacity to then act upon them, e.g. having the time and other resources to contribute to governance processes. If there are no policy mechanisms or other procedures in place for municipalities to ensure that the views of people from a range of social backgrounds are included in governance, then the barriers to participation may persist.

### Build a social inclusion strategy

An effective approach is for public agencies to develop and agree a clear and comprehensive social inclusion strategy. Any engagement with the community needs to be carefully planned, and this is particularly true when planning for social inclusion. A temptation for many managers is to focus on activities and events

rather than taking a strategic view and beginning by identifying who they want to involve and why they want to involve them.

Putting together a social inclusion strategy would start with understanding the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of an area, and using secondary data sources to establish who might be present in the locality of the UGI under consideration. This leads into identifying who is present and then making decisions about who might be included, and what can be done to build their participation in the governance process.

Key actions associated with developing a social inclusion strategy, and the questions that public agencies will need to answer are as follows:

## i. Set the objectives of the process

Why is the municipality/organisation engaging the community? What governance model and active citizenship arrangements is the municipality/organisation hoping to facilitate? Are the appropriate organisations taking the lead? What is the role of the municipality?

## ii. Understand the context

Understand the site demography. Use census and similar information to build a clear picture of the population, users and potential users of the UGI and those with an interest. Who are you targeting to ensure social inclusion:

- A geographic community spatially defined?
- An ethnic or faith community?
- A group of people defined by age?
- A community of interest?
- Some combination of the above?

## iii. Identify social groups that might face barriers to inclusion in governance

This may include young people, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, older people or disabled people. Are other agencies also engaging this community? Is collaboration with and between these organisations possible?

## iv. Anticipate difficulties and manage expectations

Work through the factors that may create barriers to inclusion. Has the organisation considered the cultural and social barriers to participation? For example, have they considered whether all stakeholders can mix at the same meetings (e.g. men and women), is the venue, the food and the timing acceptable? What about economic barriers? Has the organisation asked stakeholders about any limitations to their participation (e.g. costs of travel). As part of this step it will also be important to understand the resources that are available to support the engagement and how this impacts the scope and design of the social inclusion strategy, for example:

- Skilled facilitators and managers?
- Information and communication technologies?
- Engagement structures such as Advisory Committees?
- Budget allocation?
- Staff time?

One final technical issue is the assumption that community-led or citizen-led initiatives are necessarily socially inclusive. A specific cultural group, age group or interest group may not facilitate access to UGI governance processes to the widest range of people. It will be part of the role of public agencies and organisations to consider how they might balance this as part of their legal or civic duties.



Image: Forestry Commission 2000077

## v. Design an effective communication strategy

Build people's involvement in a governance process by using a variety of different forms of communication media and platforms to engage with them. Consider the way in which information is presented for people who do not speak the local language well, or come from another culture; this includes immigrants, but also others, for example deaf people who have their own languages, young people who use contemporary language and phrasing.

### Make sure that the governance approach suits the scale

There are other important considerations, that must be taken into account. It is vitally important to recognise the different challenges associated with working at different scale levels. Public agencies will need to be clear at what level they will be working and how well their social inclusion strategy meets scale-level demands. Will the the social inclusion actions be directed:

- Across a city-wide network?
- At neighbourhood level?
- At local site level?

*Using, enjoying and valuing UGI is often the first step towards becoming an active citizen and taking part in the governance of those spaces*

The governance structures that work well at these levels will be different. Strategies for inclusion may need to be hierarchical and addresses multiple scales. A multi-scale approach may be the only route to negotiating governance that aligns with municipalities strategic aims.

## Employ methods suited to objectives and overcoming barriers to inclusion

Certain methods will be more or less suited to different situations and to producing different outputs. For example, tools that originated from conflict resolution



*Image: Forestry Commission 1044878.012*

processes (such as Stakeholder Dialogue) are good at building relationships and finding common ground, while those from marketing, such as Focus Groups, are good at identifying existing wants and needs. This is why it is so important to clarify the objectives and reasons for working to build social inclusion with particular groups. At times the decision may be that it is necessary to tailor engagement processes and activities to enable some communities or individuals to fully participate. There are a range of tools which are more suitable for some citizens than others. For example, immigrants or children with limited language proficiency may find it easier to react to pictorial and active methods of engagement rather than written exercises. Various toolboxes have been produced by national and international organisations which suggest the kinds of tools that can be used in different circumstances and with different kinds of people (see the guides mentioned below). It will also be worth considering digital engagement. Evidence from different parts of the world suggests that digital engagement where managed well can actually increase the inclusion of certain groups, e.g. disabled people, people from ethnic minorities, young people, because digital engagement can overcome some of the social, cultural and civic barriers to inclusion in governance processes.

**Consider Time:** Social inclusion may be mediated by the time of day or the day of the week, affecting patterns of UGI use as well as access to governance processes.

For example: many young people are likely to be included in processes only after school, university or college hours; practicing Muslim's may not be available on Fridays; whereas older retired people are more likely to be available during working hours. Different communities may also celebrate different holidays to the majority culture.

### **Consider the type of UGI and associated barriers to inclusion**

Different kinds of green space may attract varying degrees of interest in governance processes due to differences in use and to perceived

stigmas and barriers associated with particular places. For example, in Britain there is evidence that young adults are often nervous about using urban woodlands because they fear other people might think they are engaging in anti-social behaviour and stigmatise them; in contrast larger parks and open spaces are often important to Asian members of the community, using them as locations for cultural events such as *Mela's* which encourages their participation in governance<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, it can be helpful to be aware of these social and cultural considerations when developing an appropriate social inclusion strategy.



*Image: Shutterstock*

### 5.3. EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE

The following examples in practice illustrate the role of the municipality in three different UGI examples. Each example involves a different scale levels, and a different governance model that has involved different approaches to social inclusion for particular groups.

#### CITY-WIDE NETWORKS PROMOTING INCLUSION IN GOVERNANCE THROUGH THE MOBILISATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL BY THE MUNICIPALITY

##### UTRECHT, THE NETHERLANDS, NEIGHBOURHOOD GREEN PLANNING

Established in 2010, Neighbourhood Green Planning (NGP) is a municipal level policy programme facilitating citizen involvement in the development of green infrastructure projects across the city of Utrecht. The explicit aims of the approach included encouraging a more ‘bottom-up’ way of working with active citizens so that they had a stronger influence in the decision making process about what green infrastructure was developed where. In addition the municipality expected this approach to mobilise active citizenship in the continued care and maintenance of the projects and green spaces in their locality (i.e. promoting co-governance and grassroots arrangements). The initiative included 10 neighbourhoods covering the whole municipality of Utrecht, with an allocated budget of €500.000 each.

Each neighbourhood involved in NGP has a different social and environmental character. This affected the opportunities for social inclusion as well as the potential range of UGI ideas and outcomes. For example, the NGP Leidsche Rijn covers a newly planned and built



*Image: Pixabay*

expansion to the city over greenfield areas, whereas the NGP Binnenstad covers the historic high density housing and canaled central area of the city. Different kinds of people live in these different neighbourhoods. In recognition of the social diversity and the different environmental characteristics of the neighbourhoods, there was not one prescriptive process for NGP. The city-wide initiative relied on the development of NGPs in each locality that suited the circumstances of those locations, so they were developed separately and there have been differences in the procedures, funding, content and the individuals and organisations involved in each of the 10 NGPs.

The one consistent thread is that in each neighbourhood, citizens were encouraged to share their ideas about projects that could improve both the quantity and quality of green spaces in their locality. These ideas were then screened for feasibility by the municipality before selection and implementation through the Neighbourhood Green Plan (NGP). Depending on the ideas brought forward by citizens, any one NGP might implement a number of different project ideas, and to date, about 140 projects have been approved and/or delivered.

The municipal officials led and shaped the Neighbourhood Green Planning process in each locality.

... →

Being such a large scale city-wide programme, the municipality almost always worked in association with neighbourhood councils, which functioned as a consulting body for the municipality in each specific neighbourhood. Working with the neighbourhood councils was one method of ensuring that barriers to social inclusion were avoided and that a mix of individual active citizens as well as a mix of grassroots and civil society organisation were always involved in the process discussing and developing ideas for the creation of new green spaces or the

improvement of others. Connecting with active citizens in each neighbourhood in this way meant that a whole range of different people were included who brought forward a wide diversity of proposals. Project proposals included ideas to add 'green' features such as pocket parks to their neighbourhoods; ideas for projects that would promote biodiversity and particular species that were culturally and ecologically important; creating pleasant meeting and sitting places; using green infrastructure to promote street and neighbourhood safety; and the

creation of neighbourhood playing facilities and safe play grounds for children.

In parts of the city where the population was more diverse, the municipality designed strategies to overcome barriers to the involvement of people from different backgrounds, e.g. engaging people with Moroccan ethnicity. However, engaging a diversity of people from poorer neighbourhoods (often those with less green) presented particular challenges as they generally seemed to be less interested in submitting ideas for the NGP's.



Image: Pixabay

## LOCAL SITE LEVEL INCLUSION THROUGH SOCIAL MOBILISATION AND CO-GOVERNANCE

### GLASGOW, SCOTLAND, UK, BARRHEAD WATER WORKS COMMUNITY GREEN SPACE AND GARDEN

Water Works is a co-governance initiative that has worked to regenerate a neighbourhood by transforming a derelict sewage works covering 2 hectares of land into wild flower meadows and community gardening spaces on the edge of Barrhead near Glasgow, Scotland. Barrhead is a neighbourhood with significant levels of social deprivation and health inequalities along with a disproportionately high area of vacant and derelict post-industrial brown field land. The initiative was initially supported and led by East Renfrewshire Council. The Water Works project was underpinned by land planning policy and was included as an integral part of the Council's Local Development Plan.

The project was innovative in the way it sought to build a close partnership for co-governance through meaningful community engagement and the encouragement of active citizenship and direct community action. The Council took their standard approach of consultation and engagement in masterplan processes one step further than they normally would, and encouraged the community to lead the way with hands-on transformation of the site. Getting the local community involved in the physical work and contributing their own resources, skills and knowledge to the design and implementation of the initiative put the community at the centre of the project. This



*Image: East Renfrewshire Council*

*Community gardening initiated by the local authority at Water Works, Barrhead in Glasgow links the next generation to the benefits of urban green space.*

approach led to many discussions about, and then actions to promote, social inclusion, local social cohesion, health and well-being, and environmental sustainability. The process relied on the enthusiasm and commitment of the East Renfrewshire Council project manager, and his ability to make connections with local groups and organisations. Barriers to social inclusion in the initiative were overcome by providing a range of opportunities for involvement, at different stages in the development of the initiative, and at different

times of the week, through different forms of engagement including social media as well as face to face contact. This provided the broadest possible scope for inclusion of many different individuals and groups in the governance of the initiative. Barrhead High School, the Coach House Trust and The Richmond Barrhead High School; the Coach House Trust and The Richmond Fellowship representing young people with disabilities and learning support needs or excluded from mainstream society; Men's Sheds promoting social networking ... →

between men to overcome social isolation; Renfrewshire Association for Mental Health; Dunterlie Youth Group and Young Enterprise Scotland, were all included in the planning, renovation and onward maintenance of the site as a public green space. The outcome is a project that has not only reclaimed the site but it has involved:

- Over 1,000 local people in the transformation of the site
- 180 pupils at Barrhead High School being awarded the John Muir Award;
- An intergenerational project between Men's Shed and Dunterlie Youth Group that has increased social connection between members of the local community that don't normally interact with each other
- 2 spin off projects inspired: community beekeeping and a community orchard;
- £90,000 levered for additional community green space projects;
- 6 modern apprentices trained in plant care and maintenance.

The governance of the initiative has developed and the site is now managed through a new social enterprise, with a newly established "Friends of" group in support. The opportunities to take part in governance and management of the site continue.

A team of evaluators investigating the impacts of the initiative on participants, collected evidence

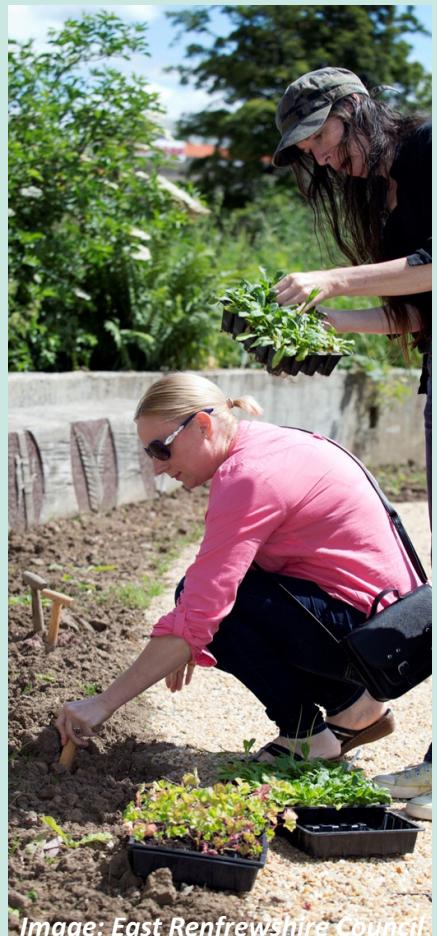
supporting the view that the initiative had succeeded in aims to be socially inclusive in governance, use and the distribution of benefits. In the words of community participants themselves:

*"I've just been really impressed of the number of community groups that have come together, and it really is a community project. No one single organisation is responsible for creating the garden it's everyone working together, so that's fabulous."*

*"The best part of the project for me was ... when the flowers were starting to bloom and it was actually beginning to look like a garden. I had a great sense of accomplishment. I thought to myself, 'I helped make this happen, I was a part of this change and I can make a difference ... It was a great feeling."*

*"It's fantastic that they've got an area they can come and do practical hands on work and have a hands on experience. I see them down here with the wheelchairs with the raised beds and that's great that they're getting something to contribute here as well as having an area for enjoyment."*

Information taken from Scottish Local Government Innovation Exchange:  
[www.innovationex+change.scot/erc-barrhead-water-works.html](http://www.innovationex+change.scot/erc-barrhead-water-works.html)  
 and Barrhead Water Works website:  
<http://barrheadwaterworks.co.uk>



*Image: East Renfrewshire Council*

*Active citizenship mobilised by the local authority at Water Works, Barrhead in Glasgow has improved the quality of green space and built a sense of community.*

## NEIGHBOURHOOD LEVEL INCLUSION THROUGH THE MOBILISATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL LED BY A GRASSROOTS ORGANISATION

### BRISTOL, ENGLAND, UK, NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING OLD MARKET QUARTER

Neighbourhood planning was introduced in England as part of the Localism Act 2011. A neighbourhood development plan establishes general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood, for example where green spaces should be, and what quality or function they should serve. The intent of the NP process is to produce strategic guidance, and is not concerned with the direct delivery of projects. This planning process at neighbourhood level should allow local people to participate in strategic decision making that gets the right type of development and green space allocation for their community. The structuring parameters of the Neighbourhood Planning process are clearly defined and must be compliant with the Local Planning Authority's Local Development Plan. Bristol is one of the few English cities developing urban Neighbourhood Plans. Old Market Quarter Neighbourhood Planning Area is located in the centre of Bristol and is an historic area, with mixed residential and economic functions.

Local residents and businesses came together to form the Old Market Community Association (OMCA) specifically to facilitate resident's involvement with governance processes. OMCA applied for funding which it used to conduct an extended consultation process with the local community, opening up a very transparent consultation process that encouraged dialogue



Image: Bianca Ambrose-O'Connor

*Active citizens who took part in the Neighbourhood Planning Process in Old Market, Bristol were very concerned to keep and maintain green spaces like this one and integrate them into local development planning.*

with a wide range of other local individuals, community groups, and other local stakeholders. Extra measures were taken to overcome the barriers to participation and make sure that a range of voices were heard. Contact was made with community associations who had the best chance of reaching out to more vulnerable groups e.g. Somali women, LGBGT groups, elderly people in social care settings, who were all included in the formulation of plans. Another way of ensuring broad participation was to vary the engagement and evidence collection methods so different kinds of people would be likely to find one method or another to participate. Methods included street stalls, a "wishing cart" that was pushed around the street to collect ideas and opinions, as well as surveys, focus groups and community panels conducted in the evenings and at weekends. Social inclusion in governance was achieved through capture of the views of the local population, which

were included and communicated through OMCA and the Neighbourhood Planning Forum.

Social inclusion in decision making was achieved through formally organised events to collect views and opinions to develop the Neighbourhood Plan, with the activities of OMCA and the Neighbourhood Planning Forum working through a more sustained involvement through partnership working. So there was: sustained involvement towards partnership working between the city officials, planners, OMCA and the Neighbourhood Planning Forum, but formally organised event driven inclusion of the views, preferences and needs of the wider community.

A member of the City Council planning team said from their point of view, "The inclusion of so many "ordinary" voices means perhaps that the green space element of the plan was emphasised more than it might have done otherwise".

## 5.4. KEY MESSAGES FOR DECISION MAKERS

Different approaches for developing socially inclusive governance of UGI will need to be developed at different scale levels. This is particularly true when considering processes which are suited to larger scale city-wide or neighbourhood-wide initiatives. Governance at this scale normally involves co-governance or

government-led approaches, so it will be important for municipalities and partner organisations to work through the options available to create processes that focus on specific groups in society and work to overcome the barriers that might otherwise exclude their perspectives and voices. Some individuals, active citizens or grassroots organisations may need 'safe spaces' based on socially exclusive events where they can act without being exposed to any and all other interests.

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## 5.5. RESOURCES

### Guides and tools

Nordic Forest Research (SNS) *Citizen Participation for Better Urban Green Spaces: Policy Brief*  
[www.nordicforestresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Citizen-participation-PB-final.pdf](http://www.nordicforestresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Citizen-participation-PB-final.pdf)

Forest Research, UK, *A toolbox for public engagement in forest and woodland planning*,  
[www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox)

Open Space World: *A portal for the Open Space engagement framework*. It includes information, case studies, guidance, tools and methods. <http://openspaceworld.org/wp2>

Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt Berlin (Senate Administration for Urban Development and Environment Berlin) *Handbuch zur Partizipation (Handbook for Participation)*  
[www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/soziale\\_stadt/partizipation/download/Handbuch\\_Partizipation.pdf](http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/soziale_stadt/partizipation/download/Handbuch_Partizipation.pdf)

*Gender Mainstreaming in Urban Development*, Berlin City Handbook,  
[www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/soziale\\_stadt/gender\\_mainstreaming/download/gender\\_englisch.pdf](http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/soziale_stadt/gender_mainstreaming/download/gender_englisch.pdf)

*Community Planning. A site with a large database of methods and techniques*  
[www.communityplanning.net/methods/methods.php](http://www.communityplanning.net/methods/methods.php)

*Scotland's Standards on Community Engagement and social inclusion*  
[www.gov.scot/Topics/People/engage/NationalStandards/NationalStandards2016](http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/engage/NationalStandards/NationalStandards2016)

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# **CHAPTER 6:**

# **GOVERNANCE FOR**

# **SUSTAINABILITY**

# **AND CONTINUITY:**

# **PLACE-KEEPING**

## **6.1. WHAT IS PLACE-KEEPING AND HOW DOES IT LINK TO GOVERNANCE AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP?**

Designing and planning urban landscapes tends to focus on creating high-quality public spaces. The sustainable long-term management of such spaces, in other words *place-keeping* is often overlooked<sup>2</sup>. The concept of place-keeping was introduced to emphasise and explore the processes of conserving and maintaining the qualities of green spaces, whether newly created or pre-existing. Without place-keeping, spaces can fall into a ‘downward spiral of disrepair’ in which there is an increasingly inadequate maintenance, leading to a loss in spatial quality and the services and values these spaces provide in terms of cultural attachment and enhanced living environments for citizens<sup>1,3,4</sup>.

Place-keeping is not only about the physical space. Policy and decision making processes can play an important role facilitating long-term planning and protection designations that can help to legitimise place-keeping activities. Place-keeping also requires long-term commitment and allocation of time and other resources from involved individuals, organisations and communities<sup>1,2,5</sup>. In recent years this has presented a major challenge to local authorities. Across many European countries municipal budgets have been put under pressure so that the rhetoric of place-keeping is not necessarily translated into action<sup>6-9</sup>.

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Place-keeping refers to the long term management of places. Much attention is focused on the creation of urban green infrastructure (UGI), but thinking through and building support for ongoing management is equally important if those places are to maintain their value to urban populations.
- Involving individuals, community groups and voluntary organisations in place keeping is possible where these players have the resources, capacity and capability to support municipal authorities, but for this to happen place-keeping planning and action must be built into projects and strategies from the early stages.
- All active citizenship arrangements should consider place keeping as part of the work they do, but this may be very pertinent for municipalities if they own the land and have continuing legal obligations.
- Involving citizens and citizen groups can lead to innovative and alternative forms of resource capture and income generation for place-keeping actions. There are many examples from around Europe which demonstrate the ways in which municipal authorities and public agencies can benefit from the fund raising capacity of citizens if they facilitate and support a sense of partnership, collaboration, responsibility and ownership.

### **A FORMAL DEFINITION OF PLACE-KEEPING IS CREATING**

‘responsive long-term management which ensures that the social, environmental and economic quality and benefits a place brings can be enjoyed by present and future generations’<sup>1</sup>

Active citizenship for governance has been seen as a way to meet some of these challenges. The benefits of collaborative working to place-keeping are well-demonstrated: Sharing responsibilities lessen the resource burden on any one partner and different actors have access to different resources and networks which can be shared to greater effect<sup>1, 10</sup>. Complimentary skills and capabilities can be put into practice strategically to cover different aspects and scale levels of place-keeping activity, for example a community group may cooperate with a municipality on managing a small local site, while an NGO may do so in the management of a large park. Partnership working has a possibility to improve the legitimacy of the place-keeping activities by increasing inclusiveness, transparency and the influence of non-state actors.

However, care must be taken to assess whether and how citizens and citizen groups can undertake place-keeping activities. Citizens may well experience some of the same resource pressures as public authorities. In addition, because citizens often act as volunteers, their involvement cannot be taken for granted. Much of the research into place-keeping suggests that efforts may be more successful in areas where the citizens involved have the skills, capacity and funds to

take on place-keeping responsibilities: this often implies residents and citizens groups in less disadvantaged wealthier areas of the city<sup>1</sup>. The shift in management responsibilities from public authorities towards more participatory forms of governance also requires mediation and negotiation to ensure roles, responsibilities and resources are properly distributed and the different individuals, groups and organisations can work together effectively<sup>1</sup>.



Image: Forestry Commission 1060210

*Monitoring is an important aspect of place keeping that provides opportunities for active citizens to oversee UGI environmental quality and ecological benefits in the longer term.*

## 6.2. TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW: FEATURES OF SUCCESSFUL PLACE-KEEPING

There are many important aspects to successful place-keeping that are part of a continuous and dynamic process, and closely linked with participatory governance. The most important factors to consider include: policy and politics surrounding the place-keeping context; design and management of the place and place-keeping activities; funding and resources; and evaluation.

### Policy and politics

- The success of place-keeping depends very much on local authorities and politicians or elected members<sup>10</sup>. Because European municipal authorities are often the owners of much urban land and greenspace, they are involved in a wide range of place-keeping arrangements so

that their resources and policies can significantly contribute to, or disrupt, place-keeping plans and activities<sup>10</sup>.

- Competing interests for urban land often means that significant numbers of citizens and stakeholders get involved in the politics surrounding particular sites. More enduring place-keeping outcomes are likely to be built when citizens and voluntary groups are involved in negotiations and decision making about the creation and design of new green spaces and finding ways to ensure their long-term viability<sup>1</sup>.
- Place-keeping is also influenced by policies and political decisions that consider the wider context in which a single site is located. This includes subsidy, regulations, policies on green space protection, mechanisms for community engagement, etc. These policies

can support place-keeping, but may also have a constraining effect. These potential influences and impacts need to be taken into account in the design and formulation of place-keeping approaches.

- Place-keeping can be disrupted by abrupt policy shifts and changing political priorities and this may have a disproportionate impact in less wealthy urban areas<sup>1</sup>. For example, the support provided for communities in more deprived areas to take part in urban regeneration programmes may be withdrawn as budgets come under pressure. These may be the very same areas with little or poor quality greenspace most in need of improved place-keeping efforts<sup>11</sup>. Statutory embedding of place-keeping in order to protect spaces and ensure equity of access to greenspaces is important.



*Image: Forestry Commission 2023/24*

## Design and management

- Place-keeping literature emphasizes the importance of considering long-term management and maintenance issues early on in the design-phase, clearly linking place-making and place-keeping. If places are not maintained, the qualities that are attributed to them will generally decline<sup>2</sup>.
- This long term perspective means thinking early on about issues such as ongoing maintenance budgets, the long-term wishes of different users, and the continuing role of individuals, groups and organisations.
- Adaptability and change are part of place-keeping: the use and value of green places will keep changing over time, and so too will the context in which those places are situated. Place-keeping does not mean that there is no room for the ongoing development of a green space. Instead it means being aware of and integrating factors, such as changing user preferences or chances in policy in the ongoing management of a place.

## Funding and resources

- There is often insufficient consideration of the resources required for successful place-keeping. Many grant schemes and budget allocations can be

justified and provided for capital spending, but the allocation of resources available to conserve and maintain the values of many green spaces is often under significant pressure.

- Private sector funding and in-kind cost reductions through volunteer labour, innovative income generation schemes, and charging greenspace user fees may all be viable options that local authorities and citizen groups could consider when planning the future maintenance of an urban greenspace<sup>1, 12</sup>.

## Evaluation

- The idea of place-keeping emphasizes the need to maintain the qualities of specific places, so it is important to be aware of the qualities that people enjoy at a certain site, or that stakeholders desire from that place.
- Cost-effective methods can be employed by local authorities or by citizens themselves to investigate the environmental, economic and social values of a place that are maintained at a site through time. The information and evidence collected can be used to ensure that management is meeting people's needs and expectations, the effectiveness of future management and to influence policy and practices related to urban green spaces<sup>1</sup>.

## 6.3. EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE

The following examples illustrate key features of participatory governance that have contributed to the long term sustainability of different kinds of urban greenspaces across a number of different European cities.

We look at examples of place-keeping in:

- Boscoincittà, Milan, Italy where place keeping is achieved through *Co-governance arrangements*
- De Ruige Hof, near Amsterdam, Netherlands, where place-keeping is achieved through a *Grassroots Initiative*
- Duddingston Field Group, Edinburgh, UK, where place-keeping is achieved through a *Grassroots Initiative*



Image: Bianca Ambrose-Oji

## BOSCOINCITTÀ, MILAN, ITALY

Boscoincittà (Forest in the City) is a public park in the urban peripheral area of Milan established in 1974 on 35 ha of abandoned farmland. This area of private land was taken into public ownership and totally transformed into a forest and parkland through a multi-actor, bottom-up process involving citizens, schools, NGOs and public bodies. Boscoincittà was designed to promote individual and community wellbeing, social cohesion and to improve natural connectivity between the city and peri-urban areas. Over time, the park has grown to 120 ha, and now includes woodlands, meadows, streams, wetlands and allotment gardens. Boscoincittà is managed by the NGO 'Italia Nostra', which has a management agreement for the site with the municipality of Milan who own the land. Italia Nostra's operational body 'Centro Forestazione Urbana' develops and coordinates all works in the park, provides the park services, promotes citizen participation and engages in fundraising. Citizens contribute to park services and undertake activities such as communal allotment gardening or environmental education for children. Over time, Italia Nostra has acquired greater independence from the municipality in decision-making. Currently, the municipality prepares and renews the management agreement, and ensures management is in line with its policies. Given its success in community engagement, the project has been used as a model for the generation of other new



*Image: Pixabay*

parks in Milan's Green Belt (e.g. Giretta park).

### **Policy and politics**

Boscoincittà is part of the Green Belt and is formally recognized in the Master Plan for the metropolitan area of Milan, as well as other regional plans, such as the Provincial Ecological Network strategy. As such, the park's creation, expansion and maintenance are key to the region's green infrastructure. Central to the long-term success of Boscoincittà has been the ability of its park authority to expand and develop the park while also increasing visitor facilities. The growing numbers of visitors have raised the profile of the park and emphasised its importance as a resource for the city.

### **Design and management / Evaluation**

The professional expertise in landscape design and the institutionalised management

processes overseen by Italia Nostra are fundamental to achieving physical site objectives and coordinating the place-keeping activities of volunteers and citizen groups. The role of the municipality in supporting these processes and approving the site design through the management agreement has been important to facilitating place-keeping. However, there are challenges. Staff turnover, integration with bureaucratic systems, and finding a way to manage the conflicting priorities of the municipality are all issues that require sustained effort by Italia Nostra. In terms of evaluation Italia Nostra engages in monitoring of wildlife, botanical and soil surveys to demonstrate the benefits of their work. This information can help support the policy and political dimensions of park governance.

### **Funding and other resources**

External financial contributions played an important part in the early establishment of the park, but

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nowadays the municipality provides 85% of the place-keeping budget. Italia Nostra and volunteers provide additional income contributing to place-making through donations and fund raising activities. The success of Boscoincittà engaging in long-term management has been reliant on building partnerships between Italia Nostra, the municipality and other stakeholders. Citizen groups and volunteer

organisations have been particularly important, for example the 'Friends of the Forest Committee' that contributed private funds in the first few years after opening. Fundamental to the success of place-keeping and the park's viability is the active engagement of the volunteer 'workforce' which runs to several hundred people. Operation Canal which engages in maintenance

works in the park, the 'Leisure Forests' volunteer group which organizes educational activities for children, while 'Orti Violé' manages the allotment gardens and also contributes to other park services. Active engagement of citizens is maintained through a participatory approach, including volunteers suggesting ideas and implementing them with professional guidance.

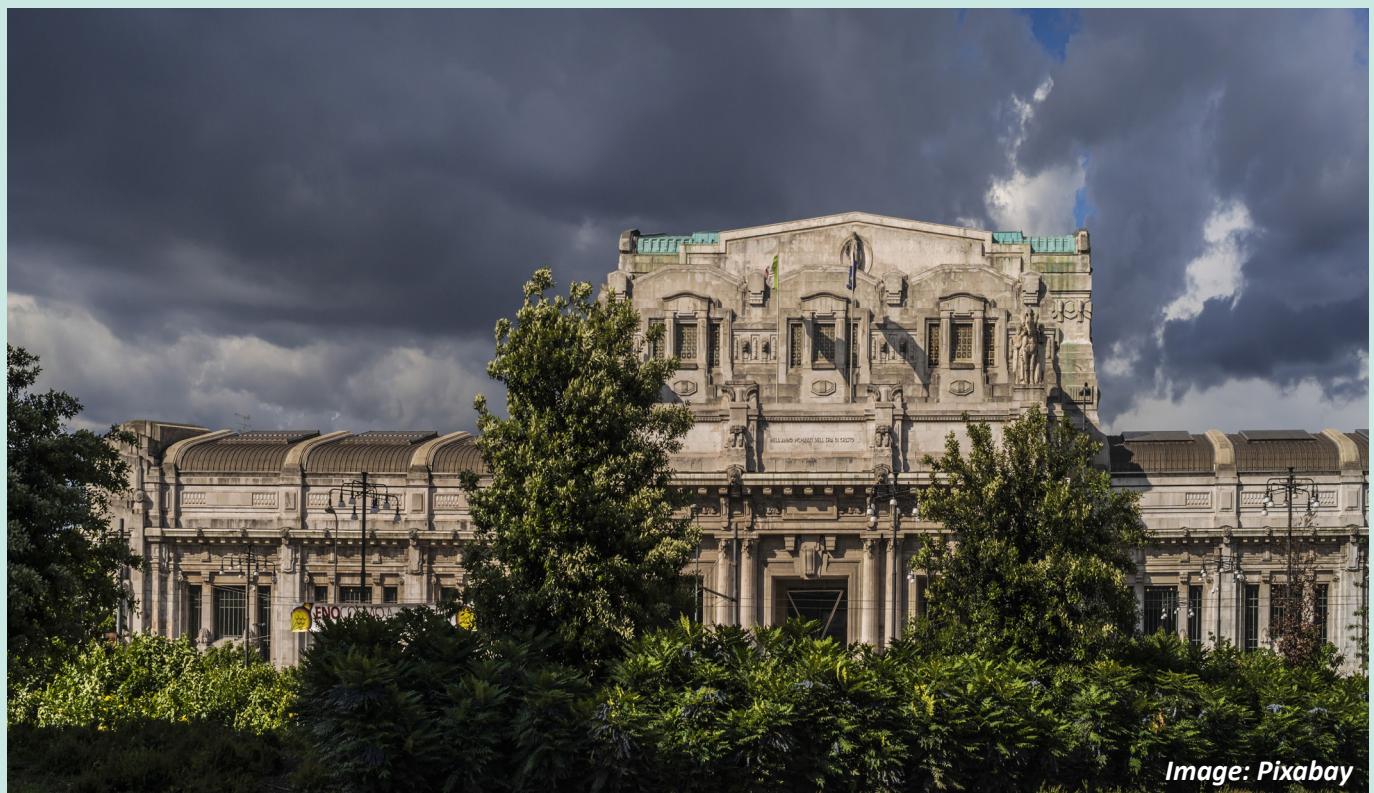


Image: Pixabay

## DE RUIGE HOF, AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS

For the past 30 years the nature association ‘De Ruige Hof’ (DRH; The Wild Court) has managed 13 ha of peri-urban greenspace in the southeast of Amsterdam with the aim of “bringing nature closer to citizens and citizens closer to nature”. The local community formed the association in 1986 to protect a greenspace that had begun to spontaneously “create itself” on abandoned construction sites. The land is owned by the municipality of Amsterdam. The municipality granted DRH the right to manage the site ‘De Riethoek’, and that of a second area called ‘Klarenbeek’ with a symbolic €1 lease agreement. The place making and subsequent place-keeping activities of DRH have involved conservation management on meadows, woodland and wetland. This has enhanced the quality of this unplanned greenspace in terms of wildlife, biodiversity and the connection of local people to the site. DRH also maintains recreational facilities such as paths and benches, has built a nature centre and other wooden buildings, organizes excursions, publishes a magazine and runs a Kids Club to encourage new and sustained citizen engagement with the space. The association is run by a ‘daily board’ and employs a part-time coordinator to supervise activities. A management committee is responsible for preparing a management plan and a policy strategy outlining goals and objectives. They have around 450 members and over 50 active



*Image: Martijn De Jonge*

*De Ruige Hof grassroots initiative Amsterdam, Netherlands keeps up an income stream for place keeping by renting out their accommodation as an event space.*

volunteers. As well as the partnership between DRH and the municipality of Amsterdam, De Ruige Hof’s sites sit within the boundary of the regional partnership ‘Groengebied Amstelland’. This partnership involves four municipalities and the regional authority. De Ruige Hof rents a building and some of its land from them, but in addition the partnership provides publicity and legitimacy to the project as part of its offer of greenspace for tourism and recreation. There have also been partnerships with businesses and other voluntary organisations which have provided place-keeping equipment, materials and advice free of charge, or have provided volunteers to take part in place-keeping activities.

### Policy and politics

Initial flexibility by the municipality to find a mechanism for allowing DRH to lease the land was obviously

important in securing the site. Even though DRH have successfully leased the land for a period of nearly 30 years, the status of the sites is not secure as it does not have a formal conservation status. As a certain point, the municipality of Amsterdam considered Klarenbeek as a site for residential development, which led to protests from volunteers. This wider planning and economic development policy presents a constraint on place-keeping. Citizen support for the area is important: Previous plans to construct a road through Klarenbeek were abandoned after local protests demonstrated the political costs of not supporting place-keeping.

### Funding and resources

DRH raises an annual income of around €20,000. Most of this comes from membership contributions and donations, but some additional income comes

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from selling produce and renting out their accommodation as an event space. DRH reserves the majority of its fixed management budget for the ongoing maintenance of green areas, while 'new' elements (i.e. place-making activities) are generally grant-funded. Recently, the group's income has been under pressure

as a result of government budget cuts and fewer sponsorships and donations, so a major focus of the management committee is fund raising. One of the keys to the long-term viability of DRH has been its ability to mobilize volunteers. One way they have achieved this is by offering a wide variety of activities that people

can get involved with. An additional benefit of the volunteering activity is that many volunteers, about half of whom have been diagnosed with a mental health issue in the past, report improved skills and environmental awareness, and positive impacts on their health and wellbeing.



*Image: Martijn De Jonge*

## DUDDINGSTON FIELD GROUP, EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND, UK

Duddingston Field Group (DFG) is an urban community woodland group based in Edinburgh, Scotland. Since 2011 DFG has managed a 2.5 ha existing green space, a meadow on the slopes of Arthur's Seat, which they lease from the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) for a symbolic sum of £100 per year. DFG has been involved in place-keeping activities that are evolving from the maintenance of the meadow to the creation of a native broadleaf forest and a community orchard planted with Scottish varieties of apples and plums. Access to the field site has been improved with the creation of several new paths and visitor infrastructure such as benches and signs. The day-to-day management is done by a committee with local people, who meet regularly. The general aim of DFG is to create a natural asset that the community can enjoy over the long term.

### Policy and politics

The national and local policy contexts are very supportive of community green space management. Nationally, the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 enables communities to take on management of abandoned or neglected public assets via purchase, lease or other agreement, provided they are confident, capable and competent to do that. At the city level, the decentralisation of some services, including parks and greenspaces management to neighbourhood offices has led to improved contacts with, and better support of, local communities



Image: Pixabay

interested in greenspace management. These factors were key to facilitating participatory governance of the Duddingston field site.

However, challenges to place-keeping remain. In order to formalize the intention to develop Duddingston Field as a community resource now and into the future, DFG is interested in purchasing the land. Although fundraising for this is relatively easy and the municipality is open to the idea, DFG is faced with the challenge of having to formalize the community according to legal process outlined in community empowerment legislation. This is complicated because the community of interest engaged with DFG, is different from the geographical community based on postcode level, encompassing a larger area. Legislation looks for engagement and consultation with the resident community, based on postcode, as part of the process purchasing land from public bodies. DFG is nervous of widening

governance processes in line with this policy dictate because people currently uninvolved may prefer activities that would interfere with the current tranquil character of the place.

Lastly it is important to recognise that while Duddingston Field is recognised as part of the Green Belt in the city's Local Development Plan, it is difficult to access by motorized transport. It sits on a natural heritage feature important to the landscape of the city, and as such is unlikely to come under pressure from housing development.

### Design and management / Evaluation

The group has access to a broad set of skills and relevant knowledge which were key to developing the place-making and place-keeping approach. One of the strengths of DFG has been the early consideration of place-keeping within the design of the project.

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Two public meetings were organized ahead of signing the lease to address concerns by, and win the support of, local people. Only the rough parameters of what the group wanted to achieve were set early on, and exact decisions about what would happen were made as time progressed, so in effect the greenspace has been allowed to develop organically. At the same time, a five-year work plan serves to ensure that essential maintenance activities such as meadow mowing and raking, path maintenance and weeding around the young trees, are carried out in time. As a result, the site delivers on the green space needs and desires of local people.

#### Funding and other resources

The partnership between DFG and CEC is excellent and maintained through the development of a business plan, delivery of targets and outputs in the plan, and

communication with the municipality including annual reporting. The high level of competency of DFG means that support from CEC is minimal, as one CEC staff member noted: “[DFG is] a very good example of just letting the community get on with what they’re doing and just keeping a very distant watching eye on it”. The main source of funding for DFG is grant aid and gifts in kind. The group has been careful in which grants they have applied for, avoiding any that are very prescriptive in how funds are used. They sought funding from a very broad range of larger and smaller scale providers. Some of the income has been used for creating access features and capital purchases: For example, a local environmental NGO has funded the purchase of equipment, the Lottery funded materials and tools used for creating and maintaining the access gate and paths. Additional income used for place-keeping activity has

been generated through fundraising activities linked to the place-making work, such as an apple tree sponsorship scheme, and donations in return for planting memorial trees. Volunteers and citizen organisations have also provided professional knowledge and services that facilitate place-keeping work e.g. how to manage veteran trees for biodiversity, maintaining site drainage. The volunteer workforce is key to success. Duddingston is an affluent area with a relatively high number of retired people with time on their hands, which provides a good volunteer base. However, the group has also been successful in attracting volunteers from further afield through their website, social media and events such as Open Doors Day and an annual Apple Day. They also get regular support from students involved in an environmental volunteering society.

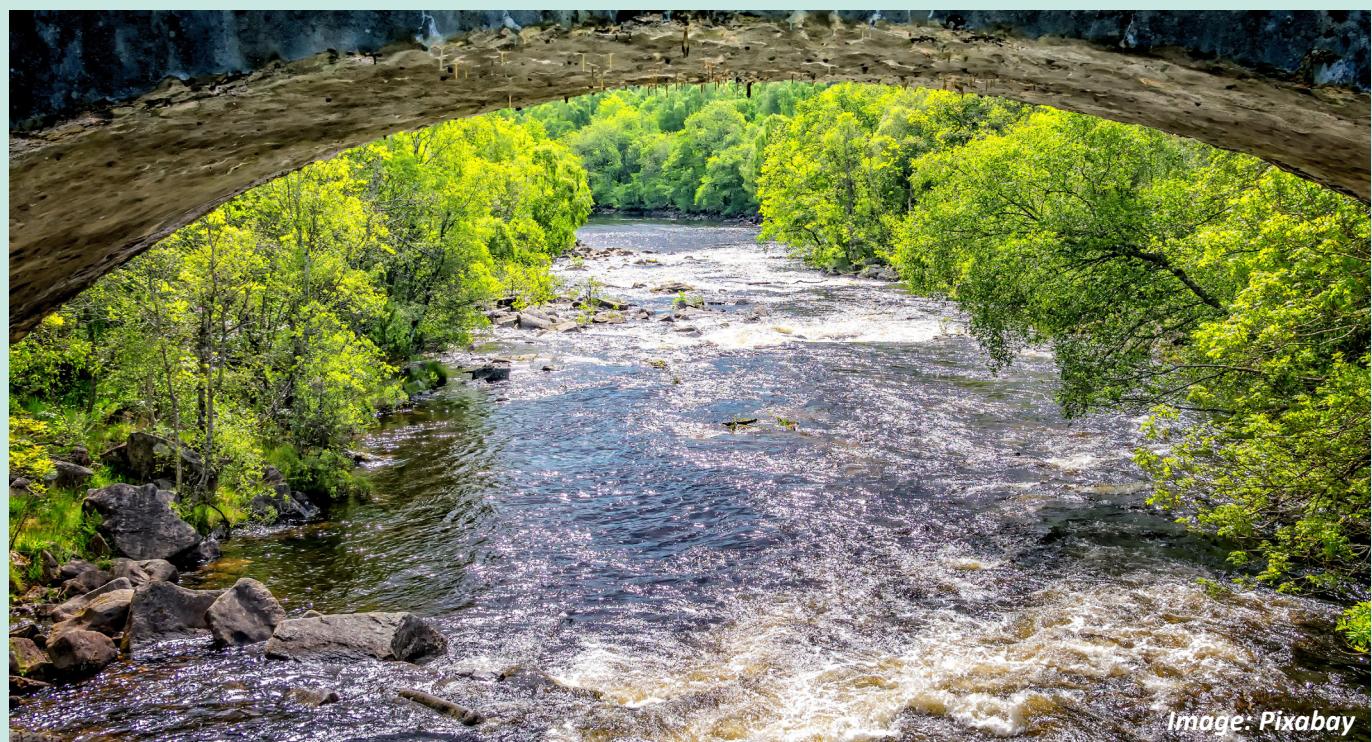


Image: Pixabay

## 6.4. KEY MESSAGES FOR DECISION MAKERS

The examples of active citizenship in the three case studies demonstrate the potential of these practices to place-keeping, more than the provision of a site to non-governmental actors. In Boscoincittà, partnership working with citizen groups and volunteer organisations was key to attracting volunteers for a variety of activities ranging from outdoor education to allotment gardening. At DRH, our findings showed that authorities can also provide support by offering leases for accommodation, and providing a sense of legitimacy. Partnership working also ensures better access to relevant advice, equipment and materials.

However, elected members, as well as other decision makers within local authorities, play a fundamental role in place-keeping through the development of stable policies and urban development plans that protect urban greenspaces and allocate resources to place-keeping.

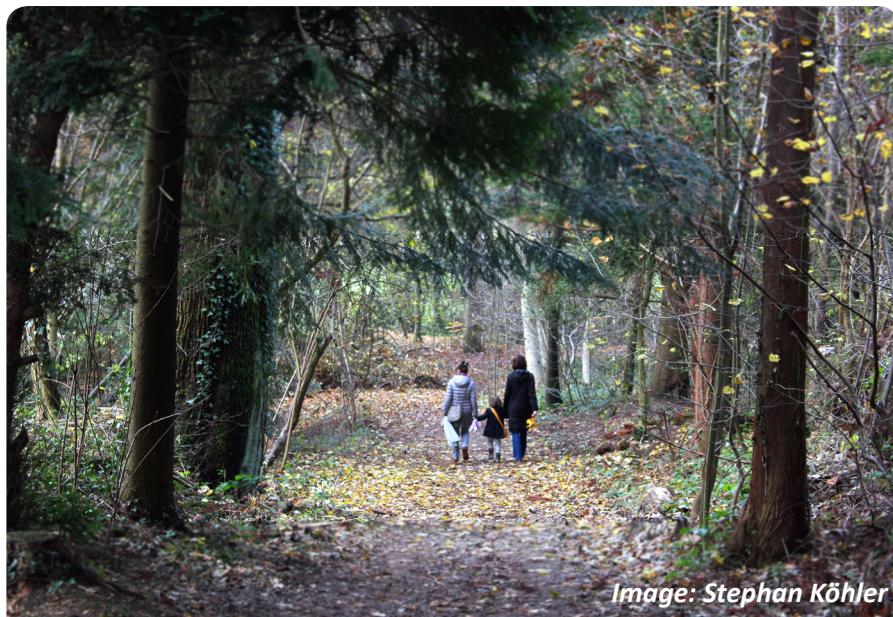
For example, the role of Boscoincittà as a core element of the Green Belt is recognized in a Master Plan for the metropolitan area as well as other regional plans. In addition, our cases demonstrate that policies and legislation promoting bottom-up governance are relevant to place-keeping as well. In all cases, municipalities had agreed for third parties to take on green space decision making relatively independently. The case of Duddingston Field Group (DFG) demonstrates that national legislation can play an important role in empowering non-governmental actors to take on management of public green spaces when the municipality is not able to adequately maintain a place.

Sufficient thought must be given to how a place will be maintained once it has been created<sup>1</sup>; so integration between place-making and place-keeping planning along with adaptive management practices that meet changing demands of sites are key to the sustainability of any green spaces<sup>1,10</sup>. Finding ways to support

active citizens develop their knowledge and capacity to respond to the grounds maintenance tasks, organisational management and communications is helpful, even where volunteers may have with a degree of expert knowledge. This is particularly true during the start-up phase of an initiative or when there is turnover of key (paid or unpaid) staff. Bureaucracy and overly prescriptive management requirements, as in the case of Boscoincittà, need to be avoided to ensure that groups maintain their ability to creatively respond to site conditions and new bottom-up ideas.

Involving citizens and citizen groups can lead to innovative and alternative forms of resource capture and income generation that can be used for place-keeping. Citizen groups managing green spaces can access alternative funds (e.g. Lottery funds or small local funds offered by NGOs) and can raise considerable sums of income through donations and membership fees. Local authorities must recognise the legitimacy of income generation for place-keeping and ensure that systems and processes facilitate citizen efforts rather than create barriers to innovation.

Citizens and citizen groups are capable of providing evaluation evidence that can demonstrate the physical site-based, as well as social, benefits which their place-keeping efforts produce and sustain. To illustrate, all three cases actively engaged in site monitoring (e.g., visitors, flora & fauna) in order to improve their own decision making and to leverage support and resources for ongoing place-keeping.



*Image: Stephan Köhler*

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## 6.5. RESOURCES

### Guides and tools

Dempsey, N. 2015, *Partnerships Handbook: A guide to good place-keeping*

Available from: [https://place-keeping.squarespace.com/s/Partnerships\\_handbook.pdf](https://place-keeping.squarespace.com/s/Partnerships_handbook.pdf)

Heriot Watt University. 2012, *Place-keeping in Master Planning.*

Available from: [http://archive.northsearegion.eu/files/repository/20121218180653\\_Place-Keeping-in-Masterplanning-Report\[1\].pdf](http://archive.northsearegion.eu/files/repository/20121218180653_Place-Keeping-in-Masterplanning-Report[1].pdf)

### Research papers

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4. McDonald, R.I., *Conservation for cities: How to plan & build natural infrastructure*. 2015, Washington D.C.
5. Sanesi, G., et al., *Assessing the current status of urban forest resources in the context of Parco Nord, Milan, Italy*. Landscape and Ecological Engineering, 2007. 3: p. 187-198.
6. Kabisch, N., *Ecosystem service implementation and governance challenges in urban green space planning - The case of Berlin, Germany*. Land Use Policy, 2015. 42: p. 557-567.
7. Perkins, H.A., *Green spaces of self-interest within shared urban governance*. Geography Compass, 2010. 4(3): p. 255-268.
8. McCarthy, J. and S. Prudham, *Neoliberal nature and the nature of neoliberalism*. Geoforum, 2004. 35(3): p. 275-283.
9. Van der Jagt, A.P.N., et al., *Participatory governance of urban green space: trends and practices in the EU*. Nordic Journal of Architectural research, 2017.
10. Mattijssen, T.J.M., et al., *FThe long-term prospects of citizens managing urban green space: from place making to place keeping?* Urban Forestry & Urban Greening, 2017, August 78-84.
11. Mathers, A., N. Dempsey, and J. Frøik Molin, *Place-keeping in action: Evaluating the capacity of green space partnerships in England*. Landscape and Urban Planning, 2015. 139: p. 126-136.
12. Rosol, M., *Public Participation in post-fordist urban green space governance: The case of community gardens in Berlin*. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, 2010. 34(3): p. 548-563.



# **CHAPTER 7:**

## **THE STRATEGIC BENEFITS OF ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP IN UGI GOVERNANCE**

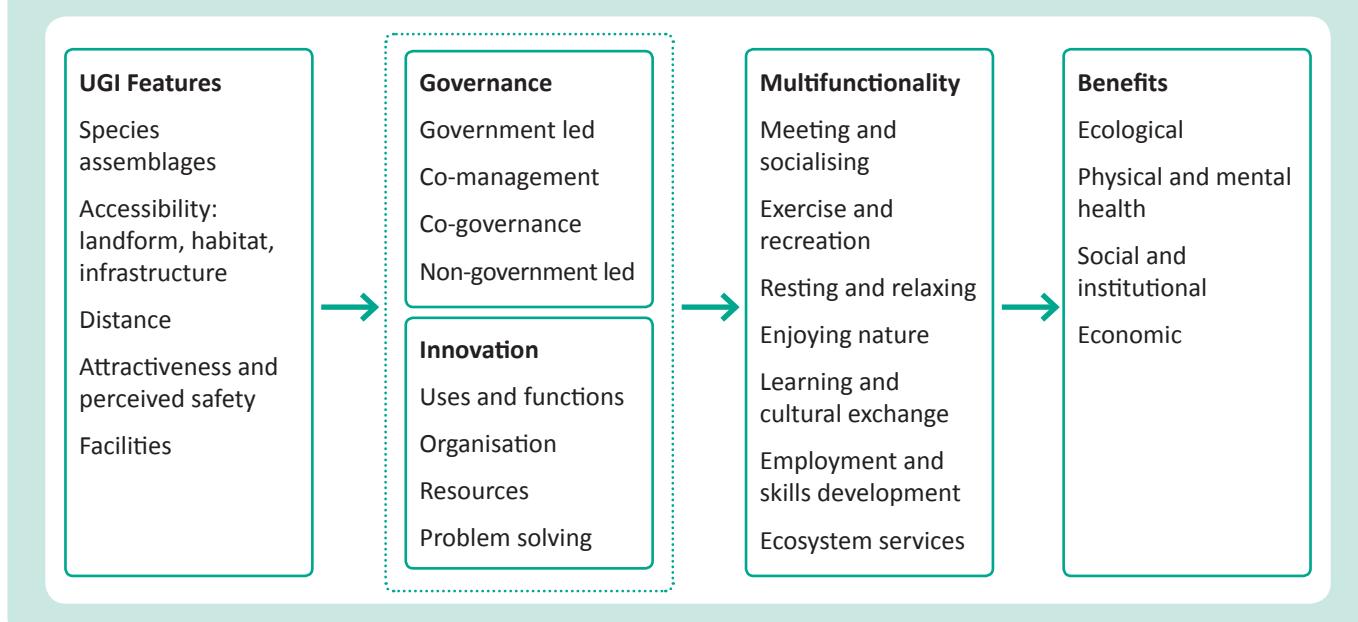
## 7.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

Different kinds of urban green infrastructure (UGI) have different features and characteristics which offer different opportunities and constraints for municipalities, active citizens, organisations, and businesses. The benefits that come from different kinds of UGI will depend on the governance model applied and how the different objectives and resources of the different individuals and organisations are negotiated and used. Crucial to this will be whether time, money and perhaps most importantly the skills and knowledge available to imagine what the features of UGI could support and then skills and knowledge to put that into development plans. Depending on the mix of objectives and resources available, this will lead to different degrees of multifunctionality which in turn provide different outcomes, providing different streams of benefits.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Different kinds of green spaces have different qualities and features as well as providing different opportunities for public involvement and participation
- Different governance arrangements can realise different functions and benefits from those UGI qualities
- What benefits are achieved depends on the objectives and resources municipalities, active citizens, civil society groups and businesses mobilise to manage those spaces
- There are very few types of UGI that cannot be managed through innovative governance arrangements, active citizens manage places as diverse as cemeteries, urban rivers, school grounds and urban wetlands producing a range of ecological and social benefits
- Strategic assessment of the value of the benefits coming through different governance models can help to justify the costs of support by municipalities who may realise far more in terms of the value of benefits, particularly in terms of health and social benefits, than they contribute in capital spending

**FIGURE 9: THE BENEFITS FROM URBAN GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ARE AFFECTED BY GOVERNANCE AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**



In the past, much research focused on defining and documenting the characteristics of the urban green space that are likely to influence its use, such as its accessibility, quality, facilities, attractiveness, and security<sup>1</sup>. There is some research that has measured and documented the benefits that come from different kinds of green space. However, there is less research that links those benefits directly to different kinds of governance and active citizen arrangements. None the less there is a general perception, or expectation, that opening up the governance of UGI to active citizens, civil society groups and businesses increases the multifunctionality of green spaces. The end result of that is that more benefits, and a wider range of benefits are realised in four main areas.

**1. Ecological benefits.** This could be through the creation of new green spaces or improvements to existing spaces. Many examples of grassroots initiatives and co-governance of green spaces in European cities are because active citizens were motivated to protect and improve biodiversity in their locality<sup>2</sup>. The focus on biodiversity has helped to maintain or increase species assemblages, but also contributes to other ecological functions of green space.

**2. Physical and mental health benefits.** This could be through the process of taking part in active citizenship projects e.g. volunteering on active physical tasks in the green space. But it may also be through the use and enjoyment of the spaces created

or maintained by different governance models. For example, in the Netherlands, a study of 345,143 General Practitioner doctor records indicated that the more green space within 1km of an area, the lower the annual prevalence rates for 15 of 24 chosen disease clusters<sup>3</sup>. There is a very large evidence base documenting the many physical and mental health benefits of UGI<sup>4-6</sup>. In many of the examples of grassroots and co-governance initiatives the individuals and organisations involved mention how physical and mental health benefits are an explicit objective of their efforts.

**3. Social and institutional benefits.** The majority of the examples of grassroots, non-government led and co-governance UGI projects and initiatives see the process of bringing people together,

building connections between individuals and groups, and between them and the wider community as a fundamental part of their UGI initiatives.

**4. Economic benefits.** Some of the economic benefits from UGI may be direct and others indirect. The evidence suggests that these benefits are often general societal level impacts that arrive regardless of the governance model or active citizenship arrangement being considered. There are documented cases of improved values to land and houses (in the UK this may be 8% for houses close to parks<sup>3</sup>), as well as the offset costs of health interventions and improved mental health brought about by increased exercise and relaxation in UGI. Evidence also suggests increased numbers of visitors to some urban green space locations have positive impacts on the local economy<sup>7</sup>.



Image: Stephan Köhler

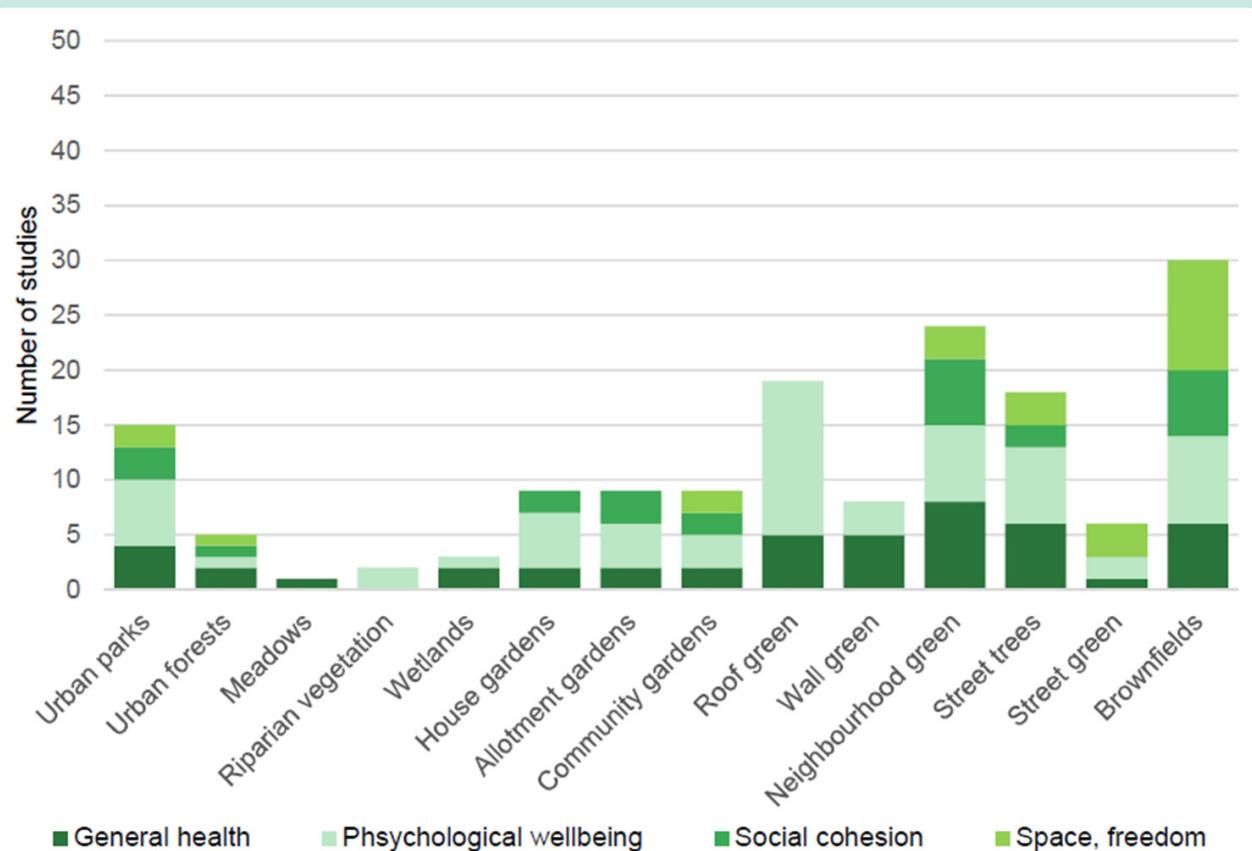
## 7.2. TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW

Urban green spaces are very diverse in ecology, size, functionality, ownership, tenure and social interest. They range from city parks to green walls and rooftop gardens, from urban forests to allotment gardens. Some government agencies and organisations will also include blue spaces such as lakes or rivers and their adjacent green corridors in their definitions of UGI. The GREEN SURGE project

undertook a scientific review of 163 journal articles that had been published between 2000-2015 to see what evidence there was about the ecological, social, and economic benefits associated with different kinds of green space. These articles did indeed identify multiple benefits from the full range of UGI including urban parks, urban wetlands, and even green walls and roofs. There was some detailed research about the ecological benefits, including: climate change regulation and air filtration;

water and soil function regulation; biodiversity and habitat quality. The social benefits identified in the research included physical and mental health, social cohesion and other attributes with social importance such as sense of space and freedom that urban residents particularly value. Figure 10 illustrates the number of research papers documenting different kinds of benefits associated with different kinds of UGI. The simple message is that benefits can be found across all types of green spaces.

**FIGURE 10: SOCIAL AND WELLBEING BENEFITS DERIVED FROM DIFFERENT KINDS OF UGI (N=158)<sup>8</sup>**



Researchers associated with the GREEN SURGE project undertook several inventories looking for examples of different kinds of governance and active citizenship arrangements associated with different kinds of green space<sup>2</sup>. It is possible to find examples of different governance arrangements involving active citizens in each of these different UGI contexts. The examples mapped out in Table 2

below, provide a very clear view that active citizenship can contribute to the development and maintenance of urban green spaces of different types, in areas of quite different character and qualities, and of very different sizes and levels of ecological and social complexity. The examples uncovered through the GREEN SURGE project vary between grassroots initiatives working on

sites less than one hectare, to active citizens working in co-production with municipalities developing and managing sites of 120 hectares or more. The multiple functions and benefits these examples provide are not always formally measured, but Table 2 indicates the most prevalent forms of governance and the most commonly mentioned benefits associated with the examples.

**TABLE 2: AN INVENTORY OF DIFFERENT UGI TYPES, ASSOCIATED GOVERNANCE AND BENEFITS**

<b>TYPE OF UGI</b>	<b>PREDOMINANT GOVERNANCE MODELS DOCUMENTED</b>	<b>KEY BENEFITS DOCUMENTED</b>	<b>EXAMPLES</b>
Green walls and Green roofs	A few examples of co-governance and a few non-governmental led initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extends available urban green space: mainly ecological benefits</li> <li>Some public health benefits</li> <li>Some social benefits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Berlin, Germany, community managed buildings with green roofs</li> <li>London, England, <a href="#">UK Urban Wild Project green roofs in Herne Hill</a></li> </ul>
Street and road verges trees and hedges	Some co-management and co-governance projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic in terms of cost savings to municipalities and public agencies</li> <li>Ecological through biodiversity improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edinburgh, Scotland, <a href="#">UK Urban Pollinator Project</a></li> <li>Oredea, Romania, examples of Green Barriers on street sides and roundabouts</li> <li>Edinburgh, Scotland, UK <a href="#">Granton Community Gardeners</a></li> </ul>
Domestic gardens	Some examples of NGO initiated initiatives involving households and social housing providers in particular initiatives and projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecological through biodiversity improvements</li> <li>Social benefits where gardens are part of public housing and provide improved spaces for social interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Łódź, Poland, Lisciasta Park Residence</li> <li>Sheffield, England, UK, <a href="#">Grey to Green on Manor and Castle Green estate</a></li> <li>Over the UK, <a href="#">RHS "Greening Grey Britain" campaign</a></li> </ul>
Community gardens	Many examples of co-governance/co-production and many grass roots active citizenship projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social benefits through social contact and building social cohesion</li> <li>Physical and mental health through exercise, healthy eating and social contact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budapest, Hungary <a href="#">community gardens</a></li> <li>Szeged, Hungary, The Stopping Place</li> <li>Glasgow, Scotland, UK, <a href="#">Urban Roots community gardens</a></li> <li>See many examples through the <a href="#">Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens</a> in the UK</li> <li>Rotterdam, Netherlands, <a href="#">Wollefoppengroen</a></li> </ul>

**TABLE 2: AN INVENTORY OF DIFFERENT UGI TYPES,  
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<b>TYPE OF UGI</b>	<b>PREDOMINANT GOVERNANCE MODELS DOCUMENTED</b>	<b>KEY BENEFITS DOCUMENTED</b>	<b>EXAMPLES</b>
Play grounds	A few examples with Government led social mobilisation, co-governance and grassroots initiatives rare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical health benefits through use of playground</li> <li>Social benefits through social contact and building social cohesion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>England, <a href="#">Friends of Chudleigh Knighton Playpark</a></li> <li>Leiderdorp, Netherlands, <a href="#">Stichting Natuurspeeltuin Leiderdorp</a></li> </ul>
Pocket parks	Many examples of co-governance and community led governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecological through biodiversity improvements</li> <li>Social benefits where parks improve spaces for social interaction</li> <li>Mental health benefits through use of pocket park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bristol, England, UK <a href="#">Ebenezer Gate Pocket Park</a></li> <li>Hartwell, England, UK <a href="#">Ashwood Acre Pocket Park</a></li> <li>Amersfoort, Netherlands, <a href="#">Postzegelpark Leusderweg</a></li> </ul>
Public parks including country parks	Many examples of co-management or collaborative-governance/co-production a few community led governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecological through biodiversity improvements</li> <li>Social benefits where gardens are part of public housing and provide improved spaces for social interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Berlin, Germany, <a href="#">Volkspark Lichtenrade</a></li> <li>Sheffield, England, UK, <a href="#">Heeley People's Park</a></li> </ul>
Neighbourhood green space	Many examples of strategic government-led processes, some co-governance and community led governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social benefits where social interaction is facilitated and builds social cohesion</li> <li>Economic likely to have positive impact on value of area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Netherlands, Utrecht, <a href="#">Neighbourhood Green space Planning</a></li> <li>Amersfoort, Netherlands, <a href="#">Elisabeth Groen</a></li> </ul>
Cemeteries and churchyards	A few examples of co-management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecological where biodiversity improvements are an objective</li> <li>Social benefits where cemeteries and churchyards are given new purpose as educational or recreational spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>London, England, UK, <a href="#">The Friends of Tower Hamlet Cemetery Park</a></li> <li>Bristol, England, UK, <a href="#">Arnos Vale Cemetery</a></li> </ul>
Allotments	Many examples including full range of governance models from non-government led grassroots through to co-management and government led	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social benefits where social interaction is facilitated and builds social cohesion</li> <li>Physical and mental health benefits through time spent in open spaces, exercise through gardening and healthy eating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lisbon, Portugal, <a href="#">municipal allotment gardens</a></li> <li>Stockholm, Sweden, Igelbäcken Allotment Gardens</li> </ul>

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**TABLE 2: AN INVENTORY OF DIFFERENT UGI TYPES,  
ASSOCIATED GOVERNANCE AND BENEFITS**

<b>TYPE OF UGI</b>	<b>PREDOMINANT GOVERNANCE MODELS DOCUMENTED</b>	<b>KEY BENEFITS DOCUMENTED</b>	<b>EXAMPLES</b>
Arable land and horticulture or market gardening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Many examples which include co-management and community-led governance</li> <li>Many community supported agriculture and food growing schemes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecological where biodiversity improvements are an objective</li> <li>Social benefits where social interaction is facilitated and builds social cohesion</li> <li>Economic likely to have positive impact on value of area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Edinburgh, Scotland, UK <a href="#">Duddingston Field Group</a></li> <li>Malmö, Sweden, Hyllie residential development area and urban agriculture</li> <li>Bristol, England, UK, <a href="#">Feed Bristol</a></li> </ul>
Orchards	Most examples are collaborative-governance/co-production and community led governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecological where biodiversity improvements are an objective</li> <li>Social benefits where social interaction is facilitated and builds social cohesion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bristol, England, UK, <a href="#">Horfield Community Orchard</a></li> <li>Gateshead, England, UK, <a href="#">Clara Vale Orchard</a></li> </ul>
Woodlands, forests and wooded park land	Most examples are collaborative-governance/co-production and community led governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecological where biodiversity improvements are an objective</li> <li>Social benefits where social interaction is facilitated and builds social cohesion</li> <li>Physical and mental health benefits through time spent in open spaces, and exercise taking part in site tasks</li> <li>Economic small scale business activity and visitors to the sites have positive impact on local economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Milan, Italy, <a href="#">Boscoincittà</a></li> <li>Many examples of community managed urban woodlands in Scotland, UK <a href="#">Community Woodlands Association</a> and Wales, UK <a href="#">Llais Y Goedwig</a></li> </ul>
Brownfield sites (derelict/ abandoned land and scrubland)	Some examples, often grassroots initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecological where biodiversity improvements are an objective</li> <li>Social benefits where social interaction is facilitated and builds social cohesion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ljubljana, Slovenia, Beyond the construction site</li> <li>Leamington Spa, England, UK, <a href="#">ARC and Foundry Wood</a></li> </ul>

**TABLE 2: AN INVENTORY OF DIFFERENT UGI TYPES,  
ASSOCIATED GOVERNANCE AND BENEFITS**

<b>TYPE OF UGI</b>	<b>PREDOMINANT GOVERNANCE MODELS DOCUMENTED</b>	<b>KEY BENEFITS DOCUMENTED</b>	<b>EXAMPLES</b>
Wetland Ponds/lakes	Examples include co-governance and non-government led approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecological where biodiversity improvements are an objective</li> <li>Social benefits where social interaction is facilitated and builds social cohesion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amsterdam, Netherlands, <a href="#"><u>De Ruige Hof</u></a></li> </ul>
River banks, streams, canals	Few examples, most co-governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ecological where biodiversity improvements are an objective</li> <li>Social benefits where social interaction is facilitated and builds social cohesion</li> <li>Economic through reduced costs to municipalities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sheffield, England, UK, <a href="#"><u>River Stewardship Company</u></a></li> <li>England, UK, <a href="#"><u>Canal and River Trust</u></a></li> <li>Leiden, Netherlands, <a href="#"><u>Singelpark Leiden</u></a></li> </ul>



The key learning points that came through from these inventories and from the in-depth case studies that the GREEN SURGE researchers undertook were that:

- *The “Rules of the game” are fundamentally important in influencing multifunctionality and the range of benefits to come from green space*

Ownership and tenure are fundamentally important aspects of UGI governance that affect how far active citizens, civil society organisations and businesses might be involved. When land is in public ownership municipalities and public agencies are more likely to insist on initiatives that produce public benefits. This is likely to favour initiatives in co-governance arrangements, or may mean non-government lead initiatives on public land might be subject to specific arrangements that ensure public benefits. The more complex the public functions of UGI and the legal issues surrounding them, the less likely these will be involved with grassroots governance and co-governance arrangements. For example there are few if any examples in Europe of urban bioswales (i.e. landscape features replacing gutters, which are designed to capture pollution and sediments in surface water runoff) being managed through co-governance partly because of the important public function they perform

and the legal obligations surrounding their maintenance and operation.

- *Improvements to ecological connectivity across urban areas came through the cumulative impacts of small as well as larger projects.*

Active citizenship initiatives manage sites that are connected with and part of a wider physical network of green spaces. As such, they link up with other urban green infrastructure (UGI), and contribute to connectivity as part of a larger green network. The Klarenbeek area managed by De Ruige Hof (see [Chapter 6](#)) for example, forms an important part of an ecological corridor, and connects green spaces in and outside the city of Amsterdam with the National Ecological Network of the Netherlands. Similarly allotments and food growing spaces in Lisbon, Portugal form part of a city-wide strategy fundamental to maintaining the city network of green spaces.

- *Biodiversity improvements are often a key focus of active citizenship*

Many of the examples documented improvements to specific species and to the overall quality of UGI habitats through active management by grassroots, civil society and business initiatives. This was often linked with diversification of green space

use, the removal of litter and waste, the removal of invasive plant species, and management in favour of biodiversity. Many examples showed that knowledge and understanding of conservation management was an essential resource in realising these benefits.

- *Wellbeing benefits were most common across the variety of UGI governance initiatives*

All examples of UGI governance involving active citizens provided evidence of increased wellbeing. In the case of Granton Community Gardeners in Edinburgh (see [Chapter 3](#)) for example, individuals coming to work together towards a common goal, created a shared value system that improved the look and feel of the area, but also created a sense of community pride, and improved the physical and mental wellbeing of those who took part.

## 7.3. EXAMPLES IN PRACTICE

### BENEFITS FROM INNOVATIVE CO-GOVERNANCE

#### RIVER STEWARDSHIP COMPANY, SHEFFIELD, ENGLAND, UK

The River Stewardship Company (RSC) is a social enterprise which works to improve the waterways for people and for wildlife in the city of Sheffield, England. A social enterprise is a company (i.e. a legal form of business) that uses commercial strategies to achieve social and environmental aims, and which reinvests profits back into achieving the social and environmental aims. The formation of this social enterprise was an innovation that grew out of a wide partnership of stakeholder organisations, called the Sheffield Waterways Strategy Group, who were trying to find a way of implementing sustainable river and riverside vegetation management in the city. There were two key problems they were looking to solve. The first was the impact that reductions to public funding and the increasing pressures on the City Council and other public agencies, were having on the capacity of public agencies to manage this kind of UGI. The second problem was the large gap in responsibility which exists on most urban rivers in England. The ownership of riverside land, and the responsibility for different functions around that land and the river involve multiple owners and tenants, and multiple agencies. There is much confusion about who should be doing what. This results in river-side spaces being neglected or very poorly managed. The private owners of



Image: Pixabay

land and buildings alongside urban rivers are very often poorly equipped to manage river-side land, and in many cases are not even aware of their legal responsibilities to look after the river channel and banks.

The RSC provides a service to land owners and to the municipal authority and government agencies, which fills this gap in governance and actively manages the urban river and riverside vegetation. The RSC has members of the original partnership on the governing Board, so the perspectives of the municipal and public agencies, as well as other civil society organisations are represented. The RSC generates income through commercial contracts for land owners alongside

the rivers, cleaning and managing the riverside vegetation on their land, this also includes work for the City Council where land is in their ownership. Because the RSC has environmental and social aims, it also raises some funding through grants and projects sponsored by other charitable bodies.

The RSC has a small number of permanent staff, but the work it does is achieved through the involvement of local volunteers. There are a small number of permanent volunteers who act as Voluntary River Stewards, but a very large number of general volunteers undertaking specific tasks for land owners and managed by the RSC Community Team Manager. A wide range of different people are

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involved as volunteers, old and young, employed and unemployed, those with and without health issues. Volunteers have included people referred through health services, for example through the brain injury clinic or through green exercise prescriptions; there has been engagement with groups wanting to find ways of integrating their members with the local community, e.g. a Burmese refugee group; and there has been significant engagement with organisations working with young people not in education, training or employment as well as the youth justice programme.

The benefits that come through from the RSC's riverside UGI management in this example include economic and organisational benefits to Sheffield City Council, as they have been able to meet obligations to increase flood protection activity, improve the quality of riverine habitats, and improve access to UGI. The Environment Agency who are the government body with overall national responsibility for flood management recognise the benefits of community and volunteer involvement with RSC as building community resilience to flooding, as well as building a sense of ownership and responsibility to the river amongst local people and

businesses. The RSC recognises benefits to wildlife and biodiversity, through the clearance of non-native invasive species such as Japanese knotweed and Giant Hogweed, or encouraging native species such as sand martins through habitat restoration, but also benefits to the rivers ecological functions, and benefits to people through their community engagement. Volunteers recognise benefits to their physical and mental health, as well as to making links with other people in their community, building a sense of social cohesion. Some volunteers benefit from training and the achievement of formal qualifications.

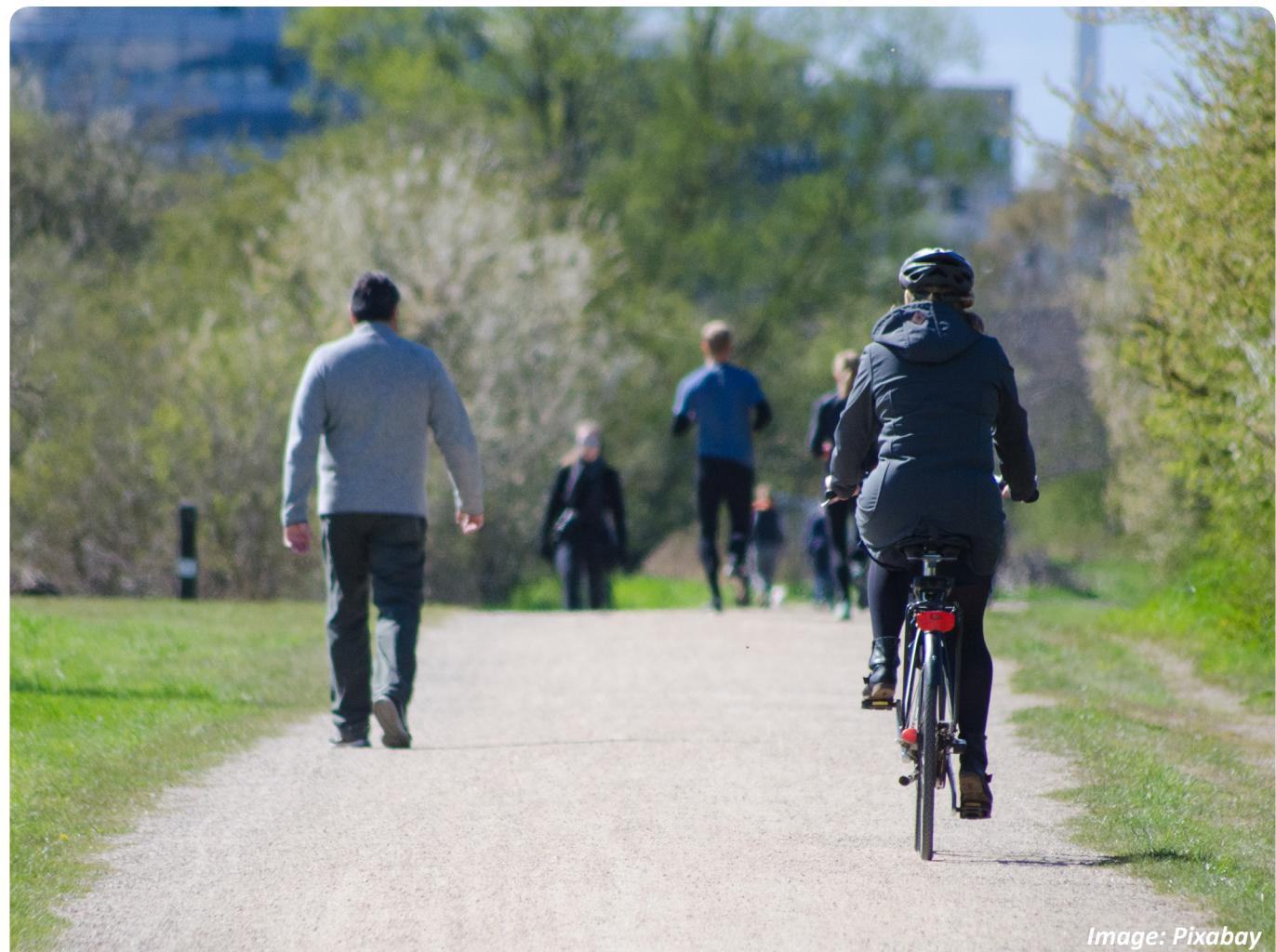


Image: Pixabay

## BENEFITS FROM INNOVATIVE NON-GOVERNMENT LED GRASSROOTS PROJECTS

### ARNOS VALE CEMETERY, BRISTOL, ENGLAND, UK

Arnos Vale Cemetery is an historically important cemetery that was established in Bristol in 1837. The cemetery has conservation status and is recognised as Grade II on the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Interest. The cemetery covers 18 hectares of land, much of which was landscaped and designed to reflect a perfect Arcadia, a necropolis, which became so popular that the cemetery was for a while the most fashionable place to be buried in Bristol.

However, over the years the cemetery fell into disuse and disrepair. Because the cemetery had been established as a private business the land was still in private ownership. The land owner had plans to demolish the cemetery, exhume the bodies, and develop the land for housing. Local communities established a campaign to save the cemetery because of the historic value of the site as well as the green space it provided for recreation and education. In 2003 Bristol City Council responded to the community concern and the public campaign to save the cemetery by issuing a compulsory purchase order, which meant the site was placed into the ownership of the City Council. The community, who had organised themselves as the Arnos Vale Cemetery Trust, were given a license to take on the management of the site. The Trust is registered as both a business and a charity. The objective of the Trust is to fund and coordinate the long term management of the cemetery.



*Image: Bianca Ambrose-Oji*

*Active citizenship through grassroots organisation saved Arnos Vale Cemetery from development, and this important urban green space is now maintained and managed by the community.*

Having organised themselves as a Trust, it meant that the local campaigners were then able to apply for funding to realise their aims. In 2006 they received a grant of £4.8 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to begin restoration of some of the historic buildings on the site. In 2010 the Trust relaunched the site to the public. The Trust applied successfully for a Santander Social Enterprise Development Award of £50,000 in 2012, which funded the construction of a timber frame building in the forest built largely by volunteers. The contribution from active citizens throughout the restoration period has been valued at approximately £250,000-worth of equivalent volunteer time. In January 2013 a dedicated Friends' group was set up and continues to support the Trust. Having completed much of the restoration and

consolidated its governance, in 2013 Bristol City Council agreed a 125 year lease with the Trust.

Today, the combined efforts of the Trust and the Friends group ensures that income comes from using the restored buildings and grounds to host events and occasions including weddings. The cemetery also continues to be used for its original purpose and the Trust has just started woodland burials. There is also a very busy café on the site. The income raised by the Trust is complimented by donations from the public. There is no funding from the City Council. The Trust had support from the HLF's Catalyst endowment fund and had a target to raise £500,000 between 2013 and June 2016. This was matched pound for pound by HLF. The annual return from this fund will cover basic maintenance and running costs of the cemetery.

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The Trust now employs the equivalent of nine full-time staff. The active citizens in the “Friends of” group provide labour and skills for much of day to day management of the site including maintenance of the grounds and all types of landscaping work, as well as acting as tour guides, helping to run the gift shop and reception, and carrying out various research and administrative roles.

The benefits to Bristol City Council have been to save an important public open space from

development, at minimal cost to the Council. The benefits to people in the city are the maintenance of a public green space that forms part of the city’s green network. In terms of the benefits to the ecology of the site, the cemetery is also being managed as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI). The landscape management plan focuses on conserving the existing grassland and woodland habitats and improving their quality to benefit wildlife. The woodland is being managed through selective thinning; to improve the canopy

structure and encourage biodiversity. The nationally scarce plant, ivy broomrape, is present along with many nationally rare insects which are taken into account in the management plan. The social benefits are particularly notable as the site provides a place for recreation and social interaction as well as being a site that build connection with the local community and a sense of community cohesion. The significant cultural values associated with the historic monuments and memorials are also a benefit.

## 7.4. KEY MESSAGES FOR DECISION MAKERS

It is possible for municipal authorities to facilitate the development of a range of governance and active citizenship arrangements that can create, manage and maintain almost any type of UGI. The facilitation actions may have as much to do with strategic policy or legal processes, as with providing capital spending and resources.

If municipalities provide capital and other resources for the governance of UGI, a strategic approach to assessing and valuing the range of benefits provided by governance models that include active citizenship arrangements and the efforts of other civil society organisations and

businesses should be undertaken. These assessments are likely to demonstrate that the costs incurred by local authorities and municipalities raise a significantly higher ratio of ecological, social and economic benefits. This also implies that municipalities should seek ecological, social and economic value from the communities, organisations and businesses they entrust the creation and management of UGI to, rather than simply opting for the lowest cost.

Methods to measure and value the health and wellbeing impacts of urban green spaces are now well understood with global and regionally accepted methodologies<sup>9</sup>. Techniques for assessing these benefits have been developed for use by community

groups, civil society organisations and businesses as well as local and national government. These assessments can often provide a compelling assessment of the value of UGI important to policy makers and municipal authorities developing strategic approaches to the wellbeing of populations in their cities, and community level resilience to modern social pressures. The examples of green space creation and management that involve greater degrees of active citizenship, civil society involvement and the involvement of business are often those with the most often reported impacts on wellbeing. The integration of co-governance and non-government led initiatives in all kinds of UGI would appear to present win-win cases for municipal authorities.

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## 7.5. RESOURCES

### Guides and tools

NESTA, *Learning to rethink parks, a guide for park managers, local authorities, policy makers:* [www.nesta.org.uk/publications/learning-rethink-parks](http://www.nesta.org.uk/publications/learning-rethink-parks)

Respublica, *A Community Right to Beauty: Giving communities the power to shape, enhance and create beautiful places, developments and spaces.*

[www.respublica.org.uk/our-work/publications/a-community-right-to-beauty-giving-communities-the-power-to-shape-enhance-and-create-beautiful-places-developments-and-spaces](http://www.respublica.org.uk/our-work/publications/a-community-right-to-beauty-giving-communities-the-power-to-shape-enhance-and-create-beautiful-places-developments-and-spaces)

### Research papers

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