

Storybook of NbS interventions and activities in six Cultivating Cities

What is this report about?

This report tells the story of six different NbS interventions targeting health and well-being in urban areas, carried out in various cities in Europe. Each Cultivating City came up with their own unique and innovative ways to address these topics. Beginning in summer of 2023, the interventions, like physical installations in public space, were built and replenished by community, business and research events. The result is a rich tapestry of creative solutions and activities that can serve as an example to other cities that wish to improve the health and well-being of their citizens.

Who should read this report?

Anyone interested in supporting or improving health and well-being through NbS in cities. You could be a city official looking for inspiring urban projects, an investor interested in Nature-based Solutions as a long-term investment, a community manager concerned with mental and/or physical health of inhabitants, or citizens from the Local taskforce who want to take a look back at all that has happened over time. This report – our storybook – is an illustrative journey taking you through our NbS interventions, providing inspiration and experience along the way.

Authors

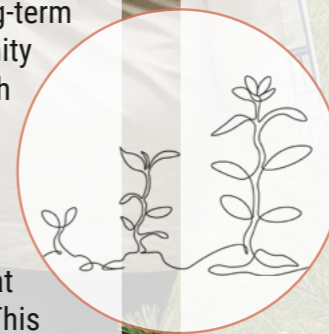
Julia Gäckle, RWTH Aachen
Jannis Meul, RWTH Aachen

Co-authors

Shreya Utkarsh, ICLEI Europe
Simon Racé, ICLEI Europe

Reviewed by

Tadhg MacIntyre,
Aisling O’Loughlen
Maynooth University



Work Package 3
Deliverable No. 3.6

People taking a breath in the Health Forest during Lahti’s Seedbed intervention (Finland) in September 2022. Picture 1, Juha Tanhua

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 869764. The sole responsibility for the content of this document lies with the GoGreenRoutes project and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Union.



5 Executive summary

FIRST PART OF THE STORY

- 7 The idea behind the Storybook and the implementation of six NbS interventions
- 7 What insights does this report unveil, and who is the intended audience?
- 8 How is the report structured?
- 9 Steps between Seedbed and NbS interventions
- 11 Overview: six different NbS in six cities
- 13 Focus Group Discussion
- 15 Burgas
- 21 Limerick
- 27 Umeå
- 33 Lahti
- 37 Tallinn
- 43 Versailles
- 51 Commonalities and Uniqueness of the six cities

SECOND PART

- 53 More action in the cities
- 54 Dr. Tadhg MacIntyre, WP1
- 56 Dr. John Gallagher, WP2
- 57 Isobel Fletcher, WP4
- 58 Rossano Schifanelli and Giovanna Calogiuri, WP6
- 59 Stephen Smith, WP7
- 60 Evelise Pereira Barboza, WP8
- 61 Adriana Duarte, WP9
- 62 Mariia Chebotareva, WP10
- 63 A Playful City event

THIRD PART

- 65 Reflections and lessons learnt
- 66 Looking at the overall NbS journey (Shreya Utkarsh and Julia Gäckle)

The following abbreviations and terms have been used in this report and need further explanation for a better understanding of the report:

Cultivating Cities The GoGreenRoutes project refers to the six core European city partners as 'Cultivating Cities'. Staff from each of these six municipalities receive funding to participate in the project. We use the term Cultivating City and city partner interchangeably to refer to the team leading each municipality's engagement.

Seedbed intervention Desk research shows that the term 'Seedbed intervention' is not yet defined. WP3 partners agree that Seedbed interventions should significantly influence the NbS interventions and foster connections between different user groups. They are temporary interventions and should raise awareness on issues related to urban health and well-being.

NbS and NbS interventions (NbS) The European Commission defines NbS as "solutions that are inspired and supported by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits and help build resilience. Such solutions bring more diverse nature, natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions. Nature-based Solutions must therefore benefit biodiversity and support the delivery of a range of ecosystem services". (European Commission, 2021). In GoGreenRoutes, six NbS interventions will be implemented which are not temporary. The concept is based on the results of the Seedbed interventions.

Local taskforce (Ltf) Each cultivating city formed a Local taskforce (Ltf). Once the taskforces were in place, each city developed its own terms of collaboration. They contribute to the design of Seedbed interventions in each city as mechanisms for fostering wider stakeholder engagement, as well as the broader design and implementation of NbS interventions.

Guided tour around the pilot area in Tallinn during its Seedbed intervention in September 2022. Picture 2, Anton Semenyura

Implementing NbS

This report serves as a document within the framework of the activities undertaken by the Work Package 3 (WP3) partners, focusing on Nature-based Solutions (NbS) interventions and their implementation. Emphasis has been placed on delineating social innovation within the context of these endeavors, such that this report distinctly elucidates the user-centric orientation of NbS interventions, prioritising the user's desires and voice in the (co-creative) process of developing the NbS interventions.



From Seedbed intervention to NbS

In alignment with the pre-defined objectives of the project, the Seedbed interventions played a pivotal role in shaping the subsequent implementation of NbS interventions to be more socially inclusive and equitable than conventional approaches. The experimental nature of the Seedbed interventions has proven to be efficient, acting as a catalyst for NbS interventions that have been tailored to be more closely aligned with the needs of the residents and fostering an improved relationship between inhabitants and the natural environment.

In pursuit of these objectives, soliciting the voices and opinions of urban residents was paramount. This qualitative inquiry sought to glean insights into the perceptions, preferences, and expectations of the citizens, thereby contributing to a nuanced understanding of the socio-ecological dynamics at play. The engagement with the urban populace not only provided valuable feedback on the effectiveness of the implemented NbS interventions, but also served as a mechanism for validating the user-centric approach advocated throughout this report.

Furthermore, the conceptual framework guiding the NbS interventions was rooted in the principles of co-creation and participatory governance, wherein stakeholders, including local residents, played an active role in the decision-making processes. This collaborative approach fostered a sense of ownership among the community members, reinforcing the notion that NbS interventions can be more than mere infrastructural solutions but integral components of a broader socio-environmental fabric.



Co-creation!

In conclusion, the amalgamation of experimental Seedbed interventions, user-centric design, and participatory governance has culminated in NbS interventions that not only address ecological challenges, but also reflect a commitment to social innovation. The findings and insights presented herein underscore the transformative potential of NbS interventions in fostering a symbiotic relationship between urban inhabitants and their natural surroundings, thereby paving the way for a more sustainable and socially responsive urban landscape.

Structure of the report

This report is structured with a tripartite framework. It unfolds across three chapters, each delving into distinct aspects of the subject matter. The initial chapter, entitled „First part of the story: The idea behind Storybooks and the implementation of 6 NbS interventions,“ reintroduces the nexus

to Seedbed interventions. Subsequently, it meticulously showcases each NbS intervention within every Cultivating City. This presentation is elucidated through a photo gallery, a chronological timeline encapsulating key events leading up to the final implementation, and a thematic exploration into the perspectives of residents and users. The resident and user insights are garnered through focused group discussions, providing a platform for individuals to articulate their opinions, assess successes and challenges, and deliver an overarching evaluation of the NbS initiative. Moving to the second chapter, the narrative expands its purview beyond the NbS interventions per se. It includes concise interview summaries featuring diverse Work Packages (WPs) and task leads from GoGreenRoutes, presenting their activities in the cities. The concluding section of the report encapsulates reflections and a comprehensive summary of findings and results. This synthesis is presented through a dialogical exchange between Shreya Utkarsh and Julia Gäckle.

GoGreenRoutes and Volvo Lastvagnar AB teamed up to do warm-up dances with the children after planting bulbs at the first parcellet in Umeå. Picture 3, Frederic Larsson



The idea behind the Storybook and the implementation of six NbS interventions

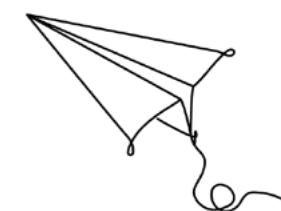
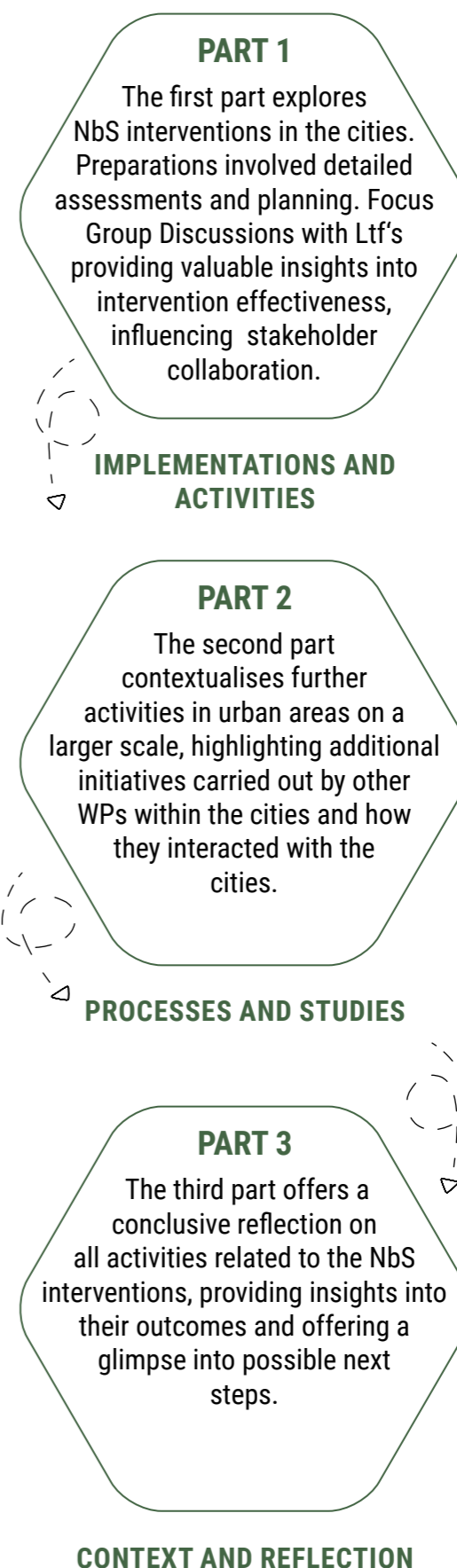
What insights does this report unveil and who is the audience?

This report tells the story of six different NbS interventions, targeting health and well-being in urban areas, carried out in various cities in Europe. Each Cultivating City came up with their own unique and innovative ways to address these topics. Throughout summer 2023 and spring 2024, each intervention included physical installations in public space, as well as entertainment, community, business and research events. The result is a rich tapestry of creative solutions and activities that can serve as an example to other cities that wish to improve the health and well-being of their citizens. This report is for anyone interested in improving urban health and well-being. That could be a city looking for inspiring urban projects, a business interested in Nature-based Solutions, a community organiser concerned with mental health, citizens that took part in our project and want to take a look back at all that has happened, or citizens who were not involved in the project and would like to get inspirations for further projects or who are just interested in re-designing their city. This report is an illustrative journey taking you through the NbS interventions, hoping to provide inspiration transfer knowledge along the way.

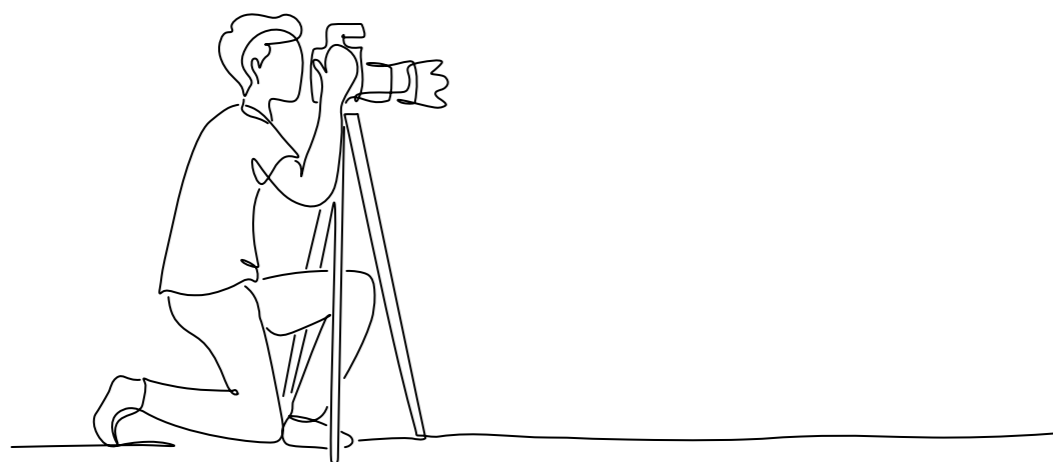
How is the report structured?

The report was primarily and generally structured with the aim of reaching the widest possible readership to make our findings as accessible as possible. To achieve this, longer text passages are consistently interspersed with graphics or images that contribute to a quicker and more intuitive understanding of the context. Additionally, all technical terms or newly coined concepts or terms are briefly explained after the table of contents.

In the first chapter, a brief introduction to the project and the NbS interventions is provided. Subsequently, in six sub-chapters, the development of NbS in each city is elucidated. For each city, a concise summary of the Focus Group Discussions is presented, a photo documentation of the NbS is displayed, and a chronological arrangement of various events in each city related to the NbS is discussed. In the second chapter, the focus shifts from NbS interventions to other actions in the cities. Selected Work Package leads and Task leads from GoGreenRoutes have provided brief interview summaries of the actions in the cities. In the final segment of the report, Shreya Utkarsh and Julia Gäckle collaboratively participate in a dialogical exchange. This dynamic interaction serves as a platform for encapsulating thoughtful reflections and presenting a comprehensive summary that delves into the various findings and results. Through this engaging discourse, the synthesis of information offers readers a nuanced and in-depth understanding of the key insights.



FIRST PART



Structure of the report, built on three main parts. Picture 4, Julia Gäckle, Jannis Meul



Lahti's NbS intervention includes wooden decks to work out. Picture 5, Tommi Mattila

Steps between Seedbed and NbS interventions

To achieve the ambitious objectives of GoGreenRoutes, the project has garnered support from an extensive consortium of partners. Among these collaborators are research institutions and innovative companies, alongside essential partners in each Cultivating City integral to the project's overall success.

To effectively coordinate activities among these diverse partners, the project is structured into different Work Packages, each assigned specific responsibilities. Work Package 3 (WP3) assumes the role of „Cultivating: Re-/Co-Design, Co-Creation, and Co-Ownership“ within the consortium. With a primary focus on the co-creative aspect, WP3 primarily concentrated on formulating the initial concept of a new intervention format: Seedbed interventions. These interventions preceded the implementation of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) interventions and resulted from an intensive co-creative

visioning and engagement process at the local level in each Cultivating City.

Seedbed interventions are temporary initiatives designed to raise awareness about urban health and well-being issues. Each city developed unique activities and timelines within the Urban Well-being Lab, a space for experimentation that serves as both a physical location and a framework for engaging with local stakeholders. The labs support the creation of new green areas like shared walkways, cycling lanes, parks, or urban forests, fostering a stronger connection with nature and benefiting the environment.

To formalise the learning and plan the NbS intervention, an NbS Mini-workshop was organised by RWTH and ICLEI following the Seedbed interventions. Each city reported on their ideas and plans, already in various stages of concretisation. They then planned the necessary steps for the NbS interventions and developed a timeline for public communication.

Between the Seedbed intervention and the NbS intervention, considerations were made on how to document and communicate project results in each city—resulting in a Storybook. Each Work Package and Cultivating City contributed anecdotes and images to narrate the story of GoGreenRoutes, including the valuable voices of the citizens involved in all activities. Focus Group Discussions conducted by WP3 in each city allowed citizens to share their experiences in GoGreenRoutes.

Moreover, during the Consortium meeting convened in Tallinn in September 2023, partners from WP3 and GID panel proactively deliberated on issues pertaining to Green Gentrification. The augmentation of open spaces poses the risk of attracting affluent residents, potentially resulting in the appreciation of property values and the displacement of indigenous populations. To ascertain authentic sustainability, it is imperative to take proactive measures and involve the community at every juncture.

The mitigation of Green Gentrification demands an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating the collaborative efforts of diverse stakeholders such as governmental bodies, institutions, grassroots initiatives, and local inhabitants. Emphasis should be placed on addressing housing concerns, fostering employment opportunities, as well as championing community-driven design initiatives. Early intervention and sustained community engagement are pivotal elements in the formulation of strategies to counteract the adverse effects of Green Gentrification.

Key methods used

Photo Documentation

The city partners were asked to document the process of the implementation of the NbS to ensure everybody can comprehend their process. Updates on events and progress on site were shared in regular WP3 meetings. City partners and WP leads were invited to join and discuss latest news.

Focus Group Discussions

To find out about individual sights, obstacles and highlights within the implementation of the NbS, Focus Group Discussions were conducted. Participants reflected on the overall project and gave recommendations regarding future NbS interventions as well as prospects for the future maintenance of the NbS.

Key questions

In a co-creative process, key questions for the Focus Group Discussions were elaborated to gather city-specific insights. Four questions were chosen to give a framework within the discussions. The questions were either asked in an online meeting or on site. A fifth question was answered individually.

Overview of key methods used between Seedbed and NbS interventions. Picture 6, Jannis Meul

Nbs overview

„Park island“ is now a place to meet and play!
Picture 7, City of Burgas



Time for recreation!

Construction: May to November 2023
“Park island” in Burgas is a green urban space, designed for recreation and maintaining health through natural elements. The NbS offers different spaces for multi-functional use, like a wooden podium for sport classes, picnics or events as well as water installations and natural play elements. The park is intended for all residents, including patients of nearby health facilities.

Wood carvings in old tree trunks along the greenway.
Picture 8, City of Limerick



Take a pause!

Construction: April to July 2022
Since 2021, the urban greenway in Castletroy is a popular, inclusive cycling and walking development for users of all ages. The NbS adds a natural area right next to the path. It includes water elements, motivates physical activity on site with the enhancement of biodiversity to strengthen connection to nature. Places to sit, pause or play are also featured.

Children planting bulbs at a new pocket park.
Picture 9, Frederik Larsson



Experience nature connectiveness!

Construction: May 2023 to Autumn 2025
Umeå’s NbS is a reconstruction of a street to make it more attractive for pedestrians and cyclists to use. The site will be under construction until 2025. While the street and a large bike lane are built, four pocket parks are developed to enhance nature connectiveness, welcoming passers-by to take a break. Citizen from different ages are actively included to create the spaces and to emphasise their ideas.

Making nature accessible to all!

Construction: May to September 2023
Kintterö Health Forest is Lahti’s NbS intervention to support resident’s well-being as well as the recovery of patients and staff from the health center nearby. An accessible path is guiding through nature to take a breath outside. Yoga platforms, benches and longtrees are added to invite people to pause and stay in the forest to foster nature connectiveness and well-being.



Lahti’s NbS Intervention includes wooden decks to work out, do yoga or relax in the sun.
Picture 10, Tommi Mattila

Connection through nature!

Construction: April 2024 to April 2025
Tallinn’s NbS intervention is located in Lasnamäe and addresses Estonia and Russian speaking groups. Previously neglected environmental and cultural values have been brought into focus. A historical fruit orchard, natural rain garden and outdoor classroom invites community members to come together, to reduce stress levels and increase social interaction at recreational fields.



People visiting the outdoor exhibition in Tallinn, where plans for the future design of the area are presented.
Picture 11, Birgit Varblane

Revitalising the Square!

Construction: Autumn 2023 to April 2024
The NbS in Versailles is characterised by a space for sporting activities alongside a large meadow. Square Blaise Pascal remains a place to transit, but also fosters a range of outdoor activities to encourage interaction between citizens alongside all generations. More greenery has been added to create a more pleasant environment to relax and connect with nature.



The large park area offers different zones for several activities to choose from.
Picture 12, Jannis Meul

Focus Group Discussion

NbS interventions in the six cities and voices of the citizens

A Focus Group Discussion is slated to occur in each Cultivating City, serving as a subsequent investigative step following the implementation of Seedbed interventions and as a proactive measure within the framework of NbS interventions. These orchestrated discussions are designed to systematically explore and address a set of pertinent inquiries, thereby guiding the discourse in a structured manner. The focal points for deliberation encompass the following thematic inquiries:

5th question provided by WP8

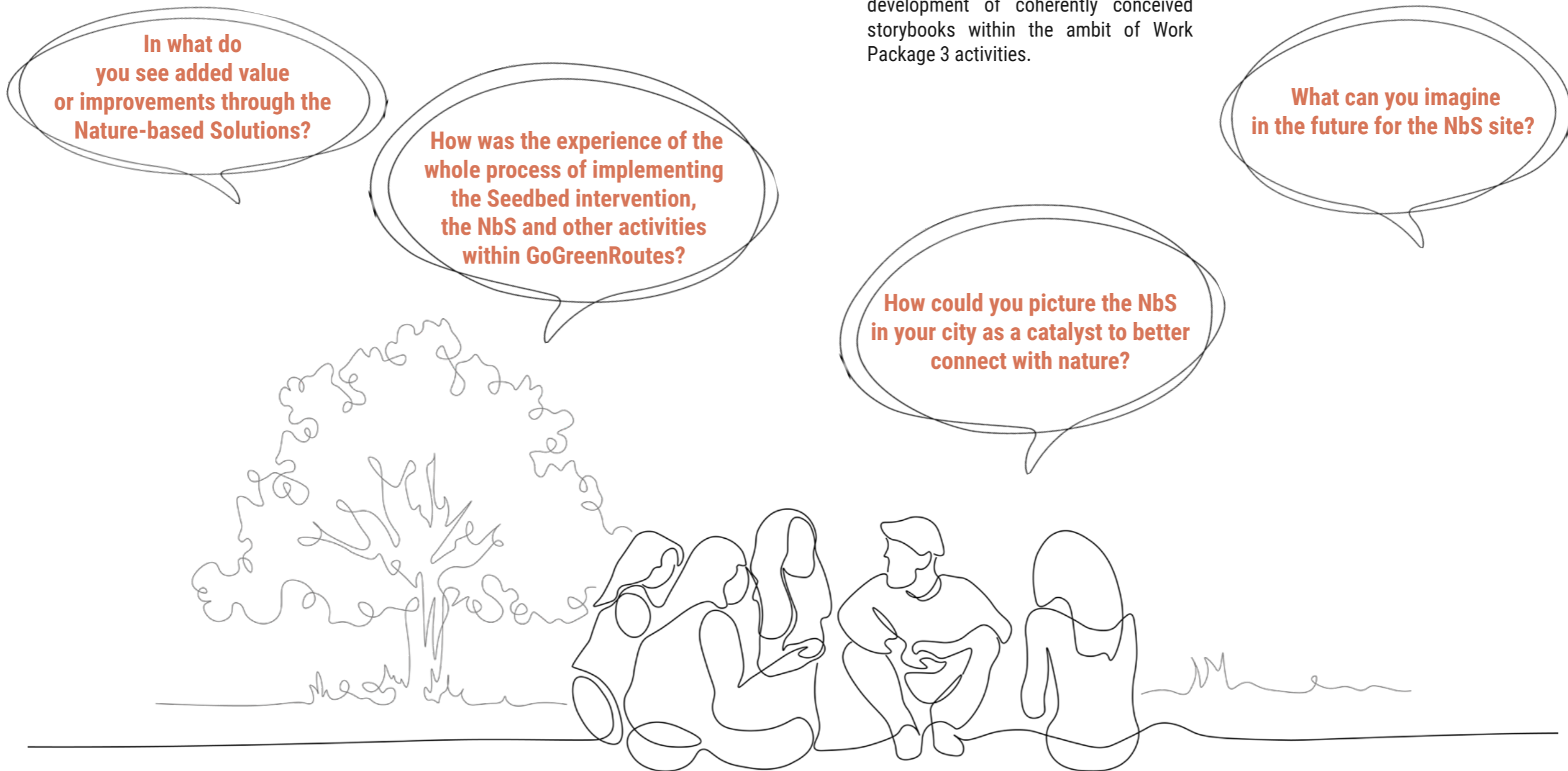
WP 8 initiated a 5th question which was asked in addition or sent out via e-mail after the Focus Group Discussions:

If you would choose an area for new NbS interventions in your city, which area would you prioritise?

The members of the Local taskforce were asked to answer this question individually by fillig out a ranking of different types of areas which they were asked to prioritise from 1 (highest) to 16 (lowest).

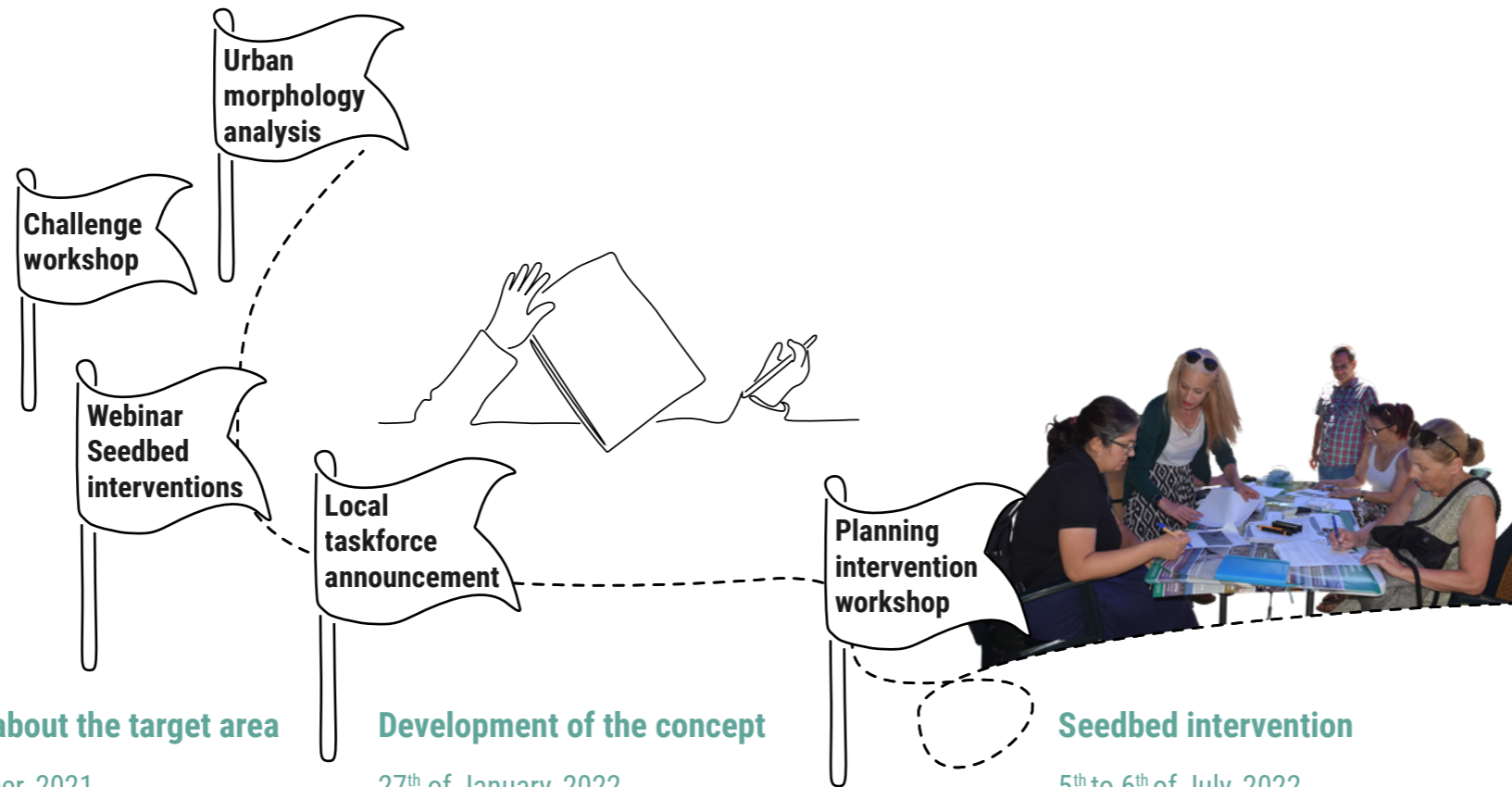
These Focus Group Discussions serve as a crucial mechanism for contextualising NbS interventions within the framework of pre-implemented Seedbed interventions. The objective is to establish a meaningful correlation between the two, elucidating how the engaged stakeholders perceive the co-creative process and identifying perceived opportunities or challenges. The deliberate choice of an approach closely aligned with end-users is paramount at this juncture, facilitating the elucidation of stakeholder narratives in a comprehensive manner. Moreover, this approach aligns with the stipulations of the grant agreement, ensuring the development of coherently conceived storybooks within the ambit of Work Package 3 activities.

It is imperative that the discussions are meticulously documented utilising recording devices, with resultant data securely encrypted and stored on a designated secure device. Furthermore, explicit consent forms must be systematically procured from all participants engaged in the Focus Group Discussions, adhering to ethical and legal considerations surrounding data collection and storage. This methodological rigor ensures the robustness and integrity of the information gleaned from these discussions, thus contributing to the overall success of the project.



These four questions were asked at every Focus Group Discussion, the 5th question was mostly sent out afterwards to be answered individually. Picture 13, Jannis Meul

Burgas - timeline



Thoughts about the target area

29th of October, 2021
 After getting to know each other, the target area was introduced and the Local taskforce got established. Participants were asked to tell first ideas regarding the renovation of the urban space.

Development of the concept

27th of January, 2022
 An internal meeting was held to develop a concept of the future design of the park. A catalogue of specific questions was written to gather feedback from different stakeholders regarding the concept of renovating the green space.

Seedbed intervention

5th to 6th of July, 2022
 An information point was set up at two frequent spots to provide background knowledge about the project. People were asked in a survey about their wishes and concerns regarding the preliminary concept of the site.

Preparing the NbS implementation

2022-2023
 Supported by ICLEI and RWTH, Burgas developed a construction plan and chose a contractor to implement the plans for the redesign of the park.



Developing the Storybook

2023-2024
 Photographs, videos and verbal updates helped to enrich the report with specific information about the progress. Burgas also organised the Focus Group Discussion to wrap up the story.



NbS opening event

9th of September, 2023
 The whole neighbourhood came together to celebrate the opening of the new site. A yoga class was offered at the new wooden deck, people were invited to take a seat or try out the natural play elements.



Focus Group Discussion

Business model workshop

Collage of activities over time in Burgas. Picture 14, Jannis Meul

Setting the scene in Burgas

The Focus Group Discussion was conducted in person in Burgas on July 27 2023 in the premises of the city officials office. On a bright and sunny day, chairs were brought out on the terrace in a round where seven participants of the Focus Group Discussion seated themselves. Snacks and drinks were placed on the table and an informal chat was had with a quick round of introductions to set the scene and understand who was present. The consent forms were signed by each person and some printed documents about the Seedbed intervention in Burgas along with a sheet with questions for the Focus Group Discussion was laid on the table for everyone. The meeting lasted approximately 90 minutes and saw a lively and active participation by the Local taskforce members present.

The meeting was initiated by Ivaylo who introduced again the GoGreenRoutes project and said a few words of appreciation about the project and the collaboration with the partners.

All participants then formally introduced themselves of which most were very familiar with Nature-based Solutions and some had been working for the entire duration with the project, such as the designer and architect Monika. Among others, there was also a biologist working with a national NGO present with 25 years experience in biodiversity projects specifically dealing with coastal and wetland areas. The setting was very comfortable for a more conversational style interview and sometimes the opportunity was used to go beyond the set questions and dive deeper to get more information from the participants.



In what do you see added value or improvements through the Nature-based Solutions?

A very remarkable feature of NbS is the elaborate engagement, i.e. a co-creation process. That was highly lauded by all as having added value for the city officials with more interaction with the residents. Monika said *"We managed to capture (opinions of) all people living in the area. Having this approach in our everyday work is the most beneficial aspect (in terms of added value or improvements of NbS)"*. In one way or another, the staff managed to capture many (ca. 100) opinions about the development of the park with NbS and that was seen as a successful novelty in the working modes of the municipality and something they wish to retain for further projects in the city as well. It resonated with all participants and they agreed that the co-design of the area is crucial, in fact the co-maintenance as well. *"This will provide us with the opportunity to closely work with local communities to bring benefits for them"*, said Georgi. So, in general, the co-creation and co-design aspect was very much welcomed by the Local taskforce members in Burgas. Another interesting observation that was presented in general with NbS, was the drop in violence and aggressive behaviour among people connected to natural spaces. One participant wishes it could be the same for the whole neighbourhood if NbS are applied holistically.



"We want to integrate the green areas into community gardens with common farming practices, to include the elderly, school pupils, migrants."

How was the experience of the whole process of implementing the Seedbed intervention, the NbS and other activities in GoGreenRoutes?

Not many of the Local taskforce members had been present in the previous discussions around the project and hence the response to this question was majorly coming from a few. They really appreciated the process, especially the community engagement which was quite uncommon for the municipality before the project. For the municipality, the Seedbed intervention was one of its kind, which enabled them to try a unique approach and put a face to the authorities for the local neighbourhoods, where they were working towards the park re-development. With a project like this, the Local taskforce members involved in urban greening projects got new ideas for renovating spaces, such as a abandoned railway network, and at the same time providing access for people to green areas. In that regard, Georgi said *"It improves environment and the quality of life at the same time"*.

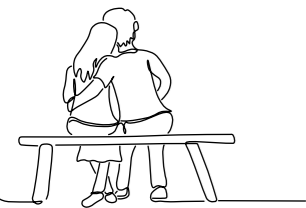
Questioner



Shreya Utkarsh
ICLEI Europe

Local taskforces

Each Cultivating City formed a Local taskforce and its own terms of collaboration. They contribute to the design of Seedbed interventions in each city as mechanisms for fostering wider stakeholder engagement, as well as the broader design and implementation of NbS interventions.



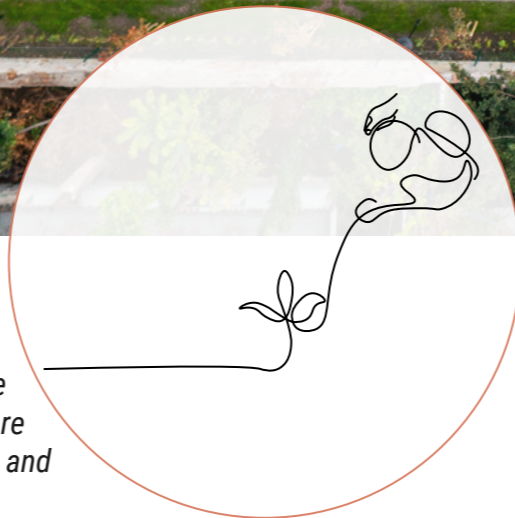
How could you picture the NbS in your city as a catalyst to better connect with nature?

The Local taskforce members connected the question to the local context and elaborated on the social issues of Burgas as being something that NbS can help resolve, acting as a catalyst for social cohesion. There is a major issue of social disaggregation and gravely low quality of life of some low-income minority groups in the coastal areas, who ultimately are more vulnerable to climate change impacts than others. Ivaylo noted that NbS could be helpful in connecting to those whose voices are not heard in the urban settings and those residents who are left out. *„They need some special measures to be taken. It is very difficult to have contact with this community, for years.“*



What can you imagine in the future for the NbS site?

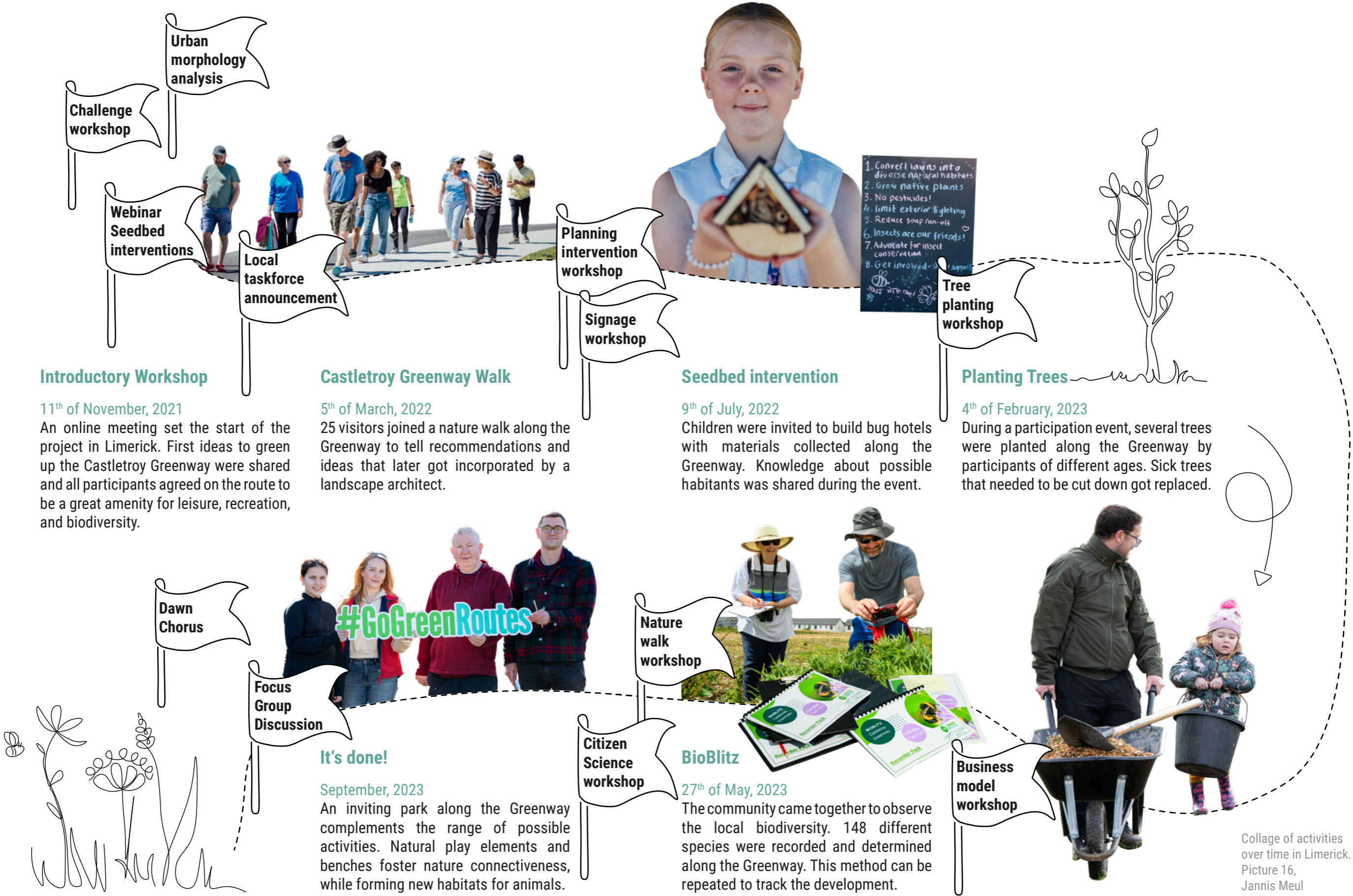
Instead of going more into the future of the NbS site, the Ltf members expanded more on the future ambitions of the city to undertake more such activities and upscale NbS activities, even some similar ones to the Park Island in other areas of the city. They are keen on getting school children involved in NbS education and outdoor learning. They also shared their interested in more community centred approach. Zoe said *“We want to integrate the green areas into community gardens with common farming practices, to include the elderly, school pupils, migrants. We had a festival of traditional arts and crafts, hopefully we will be able to do that after this festival.“*



We also want to have a fitness studio for the elderly and to make them use the space more functionally. As the elderly are quite isolated, it provides mental and physical benefits for them.” It is noticeable that the Ltf is keen on continuing on the NbS journey. In general, they would like to continue community engagement and learn from the processes of Seedbed interventions, to implement similar actions in other projects and areas for more NbS in Burgas.

The new park is designed in organic shapes and offers different areas to relax, play or meet. Picture 15, City of Burgas

Limerick - timeline



Challenge workshop

Urban morphology analysis

Webinar Seedbed interventions

Local taskforce announcement

Planning intervention workshop

Signage workshop

Tree planting workshop

Introductory Workshop

11th of November, 2021
An online meeting set the start of the project in Limerick. First ideas to green up the Castletroy Greenway were shared and all participants agreed on the route to be a great amenity for leisure, recreation, and biodiversity.

Castletroy Greenway Walk

5th of March, 2022
25 visitors joined a nature walk along the Greenway to tell recommendations and ideas that later got incorporated by a landscape architect.

Seedbed intervention

9th of July, 2022
Children were invited to build bug hotels with materials collected along the Greenway. Knowledge about possible habitans was shared during the event.

Planting Trees

4th of February, 2023
During a participation event, several trees were planted along the Greenway by participants of different ages. Sick trees that needed to be cut down got replaced.

Dawn Chorus

Focus Group Discussion

It's done!
September, 2023
An inviting park along the Greenway complements the range of possible activities. Natural play elements and benches foster nature connectiveness, while forming new habitats for animals.

Nature walk workshop

Citizen Science workshop

BioBlitz
27th of May, 2023
The community came together to observe the local biodiversity. 148 different species were recorded and determined along the Greenway. This method can be repeated to track the development.

Business model workshop

Collage of activities over time in Limerick. Picture 16, Jannis Meul

Focus Group Discussion

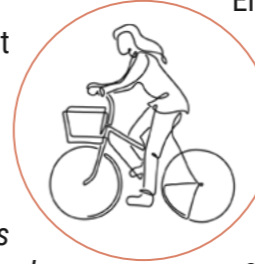
Setting the scene in Limerick

The Focus Group Discussion was conducted via the Zoom platform, in accordance with the recommendation of city partner Sarah O'Malley, as opposed to an in-person gathering at the Limerick site. Given the completion of the NbS intervention in Limerick and the voluntary nature of the contributions from the invited guests of the Local taskforce, efforts were made to minimise any additional burden on their part. Consequently, a collective decision was made to employ an online format for the discussion. Four individuals representing the Local taskforce actively participated in the meeting, which transpired on October 3, 2023, at 8:30 PM CET, lasting approximately 60 minutes.

The initiation of the meeting involved an introductory presentation delivered by Sarah O'Malley. Subsequently, all participants briefly introduced themselves. Distinguished attendees encompassed three citizens whom are living in the Castletroy area (Sharon Lynch, Maria Jennings, Kate Cannon) and a local councilor in the area (Elena Secas). Áine McBeth, Jannis Meul and Sarah O'Malley supported in hosting the Focus Group Discussion. Prior to delving into the four predetermined questions, Julia Gäckle succinctly elucidated them.

In what do you see added value or improvements through the Nature-based Solutions?

In the discussion about the added value or improvements through Nature-based Solutions (NbS), Maria Jennings notes „The playground is good. It seems to be well used, you would see a lot of people, with small kids in particular using it.“ Elena Secas highlights community interest, stating, „From speaking with people around the area, they are saying that they would like to see more of that, more woodcarving.“ Kate Cannon emphasises the unique nature of the greenway, noting, „It's not just a route to get somewhere quickly, that people will kind of stop and have a look around and notice what's happening.“ Sharon Lynch builds on this, stating, „It's been enhanced from the initial purposes of the greenway, towards more; it's not just a walkthrough anymore, you can actually stay and enjoy the space.“ Overall, the discussion underscores the multifaceted benefits of NbS, ranging from environmental enhancements to community engagement, while also addressing challenges such as public awareness.



„It's not just a walkthrough anymore, you can actually stay and enjoy the space.“

How was the experience of the whole process of implementing the Seedbed intervention, the NbS and other activities in GoGreenRoutes?

The process was perceived by the four participants as well structured and informative. Maria Jennings summarised her impression of the workshops implemented at the beginning as follows:

„Very well run. Well explained, started on time, finished on time, welcoming and friendly.“

Elena Secas expressed satisfaction with the workshops as well, noting „the workshops were quite good. From that point of view, there was a lot of interaction with the people who participated in the workshops, lots of good ideas thrown and explored afterwards“.

Sharon Lynch praised the interactive and hands-on nature of the events, particularly the opportunities for participants to actively contribute to the project, such as planting trees and identifying bugs. She identified the lack of negative aspects and suggested more frequent interactive events in the project schedule.

Julia Gäckle prompted participants to share negative aspects or areas for improvement. Kate Cannon expressed a desire for follow-up events to assess the project's long-term impact. Sarah and Áine joined the discussion on community involvement, questioning whether multiple events led to increased ownership and a sense of responsibility for the area. Kate Cannon highlighted the variability of experiences, suggesting that awareness of events might impact participants' perceived ownership.

In summary, participants highlighted the well-organised and engaging nature of the community events, with positive outcomes in terms of involvement and tangible project results. Kate Cannon suggested the need for ongoing events and highlighted the variable impact on community ownership based on awareness levels.

Questioner

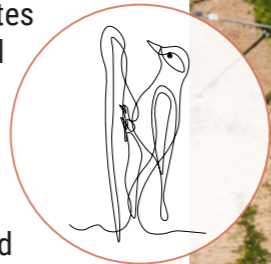


Julia Gäckle
WP3 Task Lead,
RWTH Aachen



How could you picture the NbS in your city as a catalyst to better connect with nature?

The Castletroy Greenway, primarily a connectivity project, needs further development to become a nature destination. Maria Jennings notes the lack of seating as a crucial aspect, particularly for the older community in the adjacent apartment block, hindering the Greenway from being a space for relaxation and appreciation: „At that point, you know, if you're considering the concept of staying there, there's nowhere to sit.“ The delicate balance between providing seating and preventing potential antisocial behavior is acknowledged by Sarah O'Malley, emphasising the complexity of this issue. Maria's suggestion of semi-permanent seating aligns with the community's role in ensuring the Greenway's vibrancy. Kate Cannon suggests additional enhancements like informative signage, workshops, and seed exchanges, aligning with NbS principles. In conclusion, a nuanced approach considering seating, signage, and community engagement is vital for the Castletroy Greenway to evolve into a connective pathway as well as a nature retreat.



What can you imagine in the future for the NbS site?

The participants in the discussion envision a transformed Greenway, aiming for it to be more than a mere connection but a destination. One participant expresses the need for increased greenery, seating, and frequent human presence to mitigate anti-social behavior, stating, „If it was a destination, and you've



The pocket park next to an intersection of the Castletroy Greenway was designed with natural materials and invites visitors to take a break and enjoy the space. Picture 17, City of Limerick

had people there most of the time, I think that would help with anti-social behavior.“ This shift towards destination status is seen as crucial for fostering a sense of community and safety. Sharon Lynch emphasises the Greenway's potential as an outdoor classroom, with diverse habitats providing educational opportunities. She envisions students engaging in activities like pond exploration and BioBlitzes, aligning with the growing trend of outdoor education. Kate Cannon echoes this sentiment, highlighting the importance of a safe, traffic-free environment with greenery for cycling and walking.

Maria Jennings raises the idea of integrating the Greenway with the nearby shopping center and creating wildlife corridors. The importance of considering the site's relationship with the community and its potential role as a wildlife habitat was emphasised. She asked „Is there anything that could be done to integrate it more with the upper-value shopping center? They have a lovely market there on a Friday. Could you somehow try and integrate that into the Greenway in some way?“

In addressing the future, Sarah O'Malley emphasises the site's flexibility and hopes that the foundational pieces laid down, such as the metro play area, will adapt to evolving community needs.

The uncertainty surrounding the large piece of land between schools leaves opportunities for further development and community input.

In summary, the envisioned future for the Greenway involves a destination with increased green spaces, educational opportunities, integration with the community, wildlife corridors, and adaptability to evolving needs. The participants express a desire for a multifunctional space that fosters community engagement, education, and environmental sustainability.

Umeå - timeline



Urban morphology analysis

Challenge workshop

Webinar Seedbed interventions



Planning intervention workshop



Planning intervention workshop

1st of February, 2021

The Local taskforce met to discuss the re-design of the road and the additional bike lane. Four parklets were considered to complement the area to improve nature connectiveness and offer some space to take a pause.

Co-creative planning

23rd of November, 2021

Children from Böle Preschool got involved at an early stage to contribute first ideas regarding the planning of a parklet near their preschool. Some 5-year-olds flagged a safe crossing of the driveway for children, cats and dogs.

Seedbed intervention

2nd of September, 2022

A pop-up playground was set up and will remain at Aspgården from Spring to Autumn. It was supplemented by a 'Pallet Parliament', where people could meet and listen to music by local bands.

Planting day

18th of October, 2023

Children from the preschool and the school nearby came together to plant bulbs around fruit trees, which were added earlier that year.



It's going to be amazing!

October 2025

The different stakeholders are looking forward to an additional green route to ride a bike, run or walk as well as several spaces to meet and relax in nature.

Planning and coordination

2024 - 2025

As Bölevagen is going to be under construction until 2025, all parts of the NbS need to be coordinated carefully to guarantee a coherent result.



Collage of activities over time in Umeå. Picture 18, Jannis Meul

Focus Group Discussion

Setting the scene in Umeå

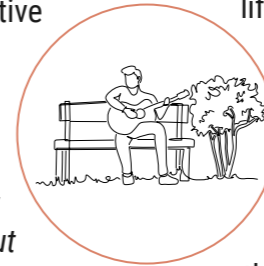
The Focus Group Discussion in Umeå took place in two different settings. Initially, participants gathered at the local municipalities' facilities, following a morning planting event on site, where kids from a nearby preschool enthusiastically planted bulbs beneath the freshly planted trees. The second discussion unfolded at the Volvo headquarters and involved Volvo employee Elisabeth Lundell.

During the first discussion, everyone introduced themselves and shared the context that brought them to the conversation. Distinguished attendees included school directors (Anna Tjäderborn, Andreas Nilsson), an university professor and their colleague (Alejandro Haiek, Rebecca Rudolph), as well as Eva Maaherra Lövheim, Mikael Ringh, Vera Shaswar, Julia Gäckle and Jannis Meul. The four questions were presented, along with a thorough explanation of the NbS term. After a round of questions and a short break, the official questioning kicked off about 20 minutes into the session.

The second Focus Group Discussion delved into the questions shortly after a few initial queries. Beforehand, some contextual matters were already discussed over a brief lunch with Elisabeth Lundell from VOLVO in the company's cafeteria.

In what do you see added value or improvements through the Nature-based Solutions?

Participants in the discussion highlighted several positive changes and added values: Alejandro Haiek emphasised a transformative shift in material use, stating, *„We are extracting sources not for making products but instead to transform the material that is there.“* He praised the collaborative approach, cost reduction, and recycling of materials, noting it involved more people and diverse perspectives. Andreas Nilsson reflected on the changing community attitude, stating, *„More people [are] thinking about nature and how you can make it more accessible.“* He found that initial concerns about commuting logistics disappeared as the community looked forward to the project. Anna Tjäderborn, representing the local preschool, discussed the importance of safety for children and the positive impact on their connection with nature. Mikael Ringh shared insights on involving children in decision-making about the environment, emphasising a more inclusive approach to urban planning. Julia Gäckle underscored as a moderator the social aspect, aiming for inclusivity, justice, and broad user group engagement. Overall, the participants highlighted a paradigm shift, increased community engagement, and the positive impact on safety, education, and community connections.



„More people [are] thinking about nature and how you can make it more accessible.“

In the second Focus Group Discussion, Elisabeth Lundell emphasises the personal appeal of Nature-based Solutions, highlighting the importance of a healthy environment and outdoor lifestyle. From a company perspective, they recognise the value of such solutions in attracting employees and enhancing the overall appeal of their location, emphasising the importance of connecting with the city and planning green spaces for their workforce.

How was the experience of the whole process of implementing the Seedbed intervention, the NbS and other activities in GoGreenRoutes?

In the co-creation process, challenges like COVID-related restrictions affected initial stakeholder engagement. Anna Tjäderborn highlighted time constraints for preschools, suggesting optimal meeting times. Andreas Nilsson emphasised the need for broader representation, questioning the absence of local organizations in the Local taskforce. Eva Maaherra Lövheim echoed some concerns about limited voices, mainly heard during the Seedbed intervention. Julia Gäckle acknowledged difficulties in involving citizens due to COVID but pointed out efforts to include diverse opinions. Vera Shaswar praised the unique stakeholder involvement, while Mikael Ringh underscored collaboration for unique neighbourhood spaces. Alejandro Haiek noted the evolving participant dynamics and praised the wide-ranging co-creation, emphasising the intergenerational impact of the project.



Questioner



Julia Gäckle
WP3 Task Lead,
RWTH Aachen

Co-creation!

The city of Umeå involved VOLVO Lastvagnar AB as an important stakeholder right next to the first pocket park at an early stage of the process, to also take their ideas and concerns into account.

Elisabeth Lundell reflects on her nearly two-year involvement in implementing the Seedbed intervention and other activities in GoGreenRoutes. She emphasises the value of early dialogues in understanding the purpose and expectations of the process, highlighting concerns such as safety issues near their workplace and the importance of early involvement in addressing them effectively.

How could you picture the NbS in your city as a catalyst to better connect with nature?

In envisioning NbS in their city, participants like Rebecca Rudolph and Vera Shaswar stated the value of NbS in providing a unique and more genuine experience of nature for children within the city, bridging the gap between the urban and natural environments. Shaswar highlighted the unconventional nature of the NbS site, prompting curiosity about materials and ecological processes.

Alejandro Haiek discussed the transformative impact of biodiversity on landscapes, challenging traditional perceptions of green surfaces. The conversation touched on the decline of children's freedom to play in natural settings due to safety concerns, with Mikael Ringh expressing nostalgia for the imaginative play of his childhood. The importance of unprogrammed spaces, the educational role of playgrounds, and the multi-generational aspect of NbS were also discussed.

The choice of Bölevägen in Umeå for the project was explained by its historical need for improvement and prioritization in the application process. Overall, the discussion highlighted NbS's potential to foster learning, curiosity, and a deeper connection to the environment, pointing



Children from the school nearby helped planting bulbs and learned about environmental developments in the area to support insects. Members of the Ltf joined the event to later talk about it in our Focus Group Discussions. Picture 19, Fredeirk Larsson

out the balance between safety and the enriching experiences offered by Nature-based Solutions.

Elisabeth Lundell highlights that there's already a strong awareness in Umeå and appreciation for nature due to the city's proximity to it, which might lead to taking it for granted. The focus tends to be on solutions that are nature-inspired rather than those that detract from it, with a preference for integrating nature into urban planning.

What can you imagine in the future for the NbS site?

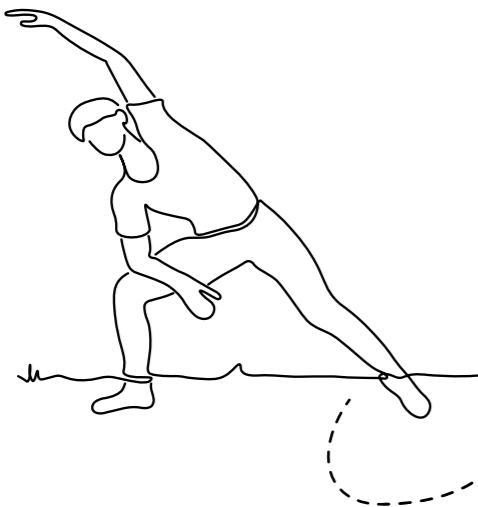
Andreas Nilsson envisions the Bölevägen area becoming a hub for outdoor activities, stating, *„It's prettier. It's nicer. It's something that is fun to use.“* The conversation, featuring voices like Eva Maaherra Lövheim and



Mikael Ringh, emphasises the transformation's positive impact on engagement, education, and cultural experiences. Eva underscores the vision for a more vibrant Bölevägen, not just a transportation route. Mikael mentions the importance of shared spaces for families, envisioning a return to doing things together. Alejandro Haiek discusses the exciting potential for diverse cultural events, while Rebecca Rudolph notes the educational value in observing natural changes. Vera Shaswar acknowledges the challenge of public participation, and Andreas Nilsson calls for increased involvement in future planning, emphasising the need for community input. Overall, the conversation illustrates the multi-faceted benefits of the Bölevägen transformation.

The Nature-based Solutions discussion around Bölevägen highlighted positive shifts, emphasising sustainable material use, community attitude changes, and safety benefits for children. Challenges in the co-creation process, influenced by COVID restrictions, were noted, calling for broader representation and optimal meeting times. Envisioning NbS in the city, participants mentioned its potential to bridge urban-nature gaps, foster learning, and deepen the connection to the environment. Looking ahead, expectations for the NbS site included increased community engagement, cultural events, and educational opportunities, underscoring the need for ongoing public involvement. Overall, the conversation showcased the diverse positive impacts of NbS on community, education, and cultural experiences.

Lahti - timeline



A trip through the Health Forest

29th of November, 2021
After creating the Local taskforce, all members visited the Health Forest to get to know the path. The team developed first ideas and discovered synergies that support the overall plan.

Meetings with the hospital

2022-2023
Ongoing meetings with employees of the hospital ensure co-creation and additional ideas to develop the area. For example, a barrier-free route as well as art installations are going to be implemented.

Seedbed intervention

5th to 8th of September, 2022
Guided sensory walks took participants along a possible trail through the Health Forest. People were asked at different stops about their feelings to understand the collective picture of nature as well as what they feel during and after the walk.

Construction work

May, 2023
The wooden path that leads visitors through the Health Forest was installed. Next to the path, various options like benches and platforms are going to be built to invite passing people to stop and take a break.



NbS opening event

9th of September, 2023
Citizens were invited to take part in a guided tour along the path to hear input about the NbS and visit the different stations in the forest.

Baseline monitoring

04th to 06th of May, 2023
Existing environmental conditions in the area were identified to evaluate the long-term impact of the project through further monitoring in the future.



Collage of activities over time in Lahti. Picture 20, Jannis Meul

Focus Group Discussion

Setting the scene in Lahti

On August 21, 2023, a Focus Group Discussion was conducted on the 2nd floor of the Shopping Center Trio in Lahti. The discussion, moderated by Shreya Utkarsh, aimed to gather insights and opinions from a Local taskforce regarding the "Health Forest" in the city of Lahti, Finland. There were a total of 4 Ltf members present, including Taru from the city of Lahti. All of them have quite an elaborate understanding of the project and have had site visits to understand how the area is being transformed through NbS. To begin the Focus Group Discussion, Taru presented again the Seedbed interventions and the NbS implementation of the Health Forest in Lahti.

In what do you see added value or improvements through the Nature-based Solutions?

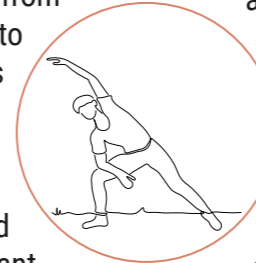
In Finland, people generally spend quite a lot of time in the forests, however the Health Forest has different parts including water elements and a yoga place, benches and signage that allows people to take a break and take in the nature surrounding them. A participant said *„Even though you can hear the cars in some parts, the landscape of the area is very much inviting and really feels like you are actually in the middle of a forest“*. One major added value of Nature-based Solutions is the possibility of approaching other theoretical concepts such as circular economy or nature positivity in practice as well. Some of the participants have been working in the city of Lahti on different projects and would like to incorporate NbS where possible.

In general, people do not connect the idea of health and well-being with the forest, *„although we all all know that, of course, being in forest or being in nature is good for us. But because we all are so accustomed to be in the forest and the forest is always near. So we don't necessarily identify these connections so well, although of course we know it.“*

Another interesting and relevant value noted was the pride of the people when there is recognition of the city as an environmental friendly city.

How was the experience of the whole process of implementing the Seedbed intervention, the NbS and other activities in GoGreenRoutes?

Since not all participants were entirely engaged in the process from the start, they had little to say about the experiences as a whole, but highlighted the interesting approach taken within this project towards co-creation and engagement of relevant stakeholders. The participants of the Focus Group Discussion also mentioned that they had been to the Health Forest and did the guided tour to see the value of NbS intervention first-hand and appreciate it.



How could you picture the NbS in your city as a catalyst to better connect with nature?

„Business and better investments in the city“ can be an interesting avenue opened up by promoting better health and well-being in and around the city for newcomers and tourists as well as new investors and businesses to set up in Lahti. It was reiterated during the Focus Group Discussion at times how the city acknowledges that it would help in making the residents of the city proud and giving them a better quality of life.

What can you imagine in the future for the NbS site?

Taru indicated that the plan would be to engage with diverse groups of residents of the city, specifically highlighting migrants who could be given a guided tour in english at some point soon. This would be helpful, not only in instilling a sense of belonging, but also serve their well-being in the long run by making clear the connections to nature and ease of access to it. In fact, the youth and their interest in developing ideas of what could be done as activities in the forest, would also be gauged to better understand the future of the area. Many businesses could also pop up around, which would benefit the local community as a whole, specifically businesses involving yoga lessons or guided tours in the Health Forest.

In summary, the Health Forest is an important asset for the city and a call to all residents to think of all local forests as Health Forests, owing to the many health benefits a forest brings. Various activities and advocacy plans are taking shape and the city proceeds to make itself known as a pioneer in one-health approaches in general.

„Even though you can hear the cars in some parts, the landscape of the area is very much inviting and really feels like you are actually in the middle of a forest“

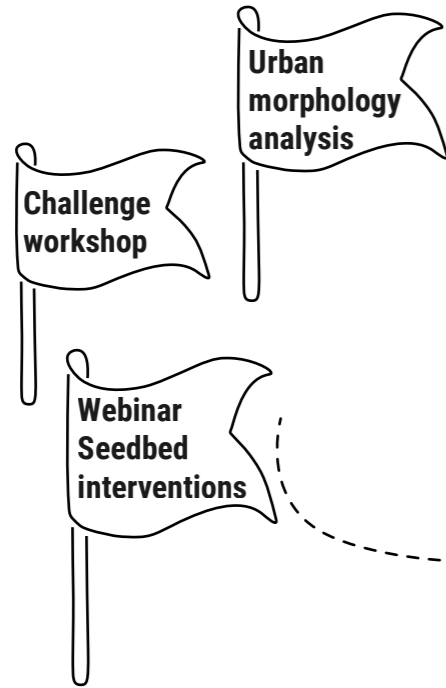
Questioner



Shreya Utkarsh
ICLEI Europe



Tallinn - timeline



Urban morphology analysis

Challenge workshop

Webinar Seedbed interventions



Planning intervention workshop

Local taskforce announcement



Co-creation!

2nd of November, 2021

Early meetings with local schools and kindergardens were scheduled to introduce everybody to the project and to develop possible Seedbed and NbS interventions together.

Teaming up with Tallinn University

December 2021-Februar 2022

To enhance collaboration, meetings with Tallinn University were held. Participation in the planning intervention workshop and research projects were decided to work on together.

Pruning apple trees

24th of April, 2022

In collaboration with the botanical garden, participants were taught how to cut trees correctly. This workshop was open air in Vormsi green area and decided to repeat in June that year.

Seedbed intervention

10th of September, 2022

During the Seedbed intervention, guided walks in Estonian and Russian about the historical context and ecological aspects were organised to discuss the area's development possibilities .



Focus Group Discussion

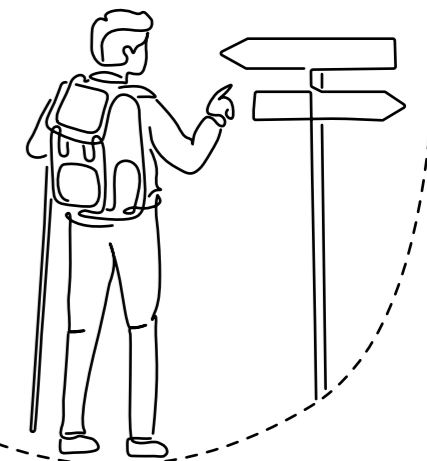


Vormsi greenery outline

15th of May, 2023

Visitors were invited to discuss with landscape architects about the ongoing planning process. The event raised awareness and gave the opportunity to contribute ideas and thoughts.

Business model workshop



It's just about to start!

November 2023

The preliminary design of Vormsi green area is ready. 2024: The final NbS is going to be completed, the start of the construction work is scheduled for 2025.



Collage of activities over time in Tallinn. Picture 21, Jannis Meul

Focus Group Discussion

Setting the scene in Tallinn

The Focus Group Discussion was conducted online on the 10th of June 2024 on Teams with about seven participants in total. Stella from the city municipality introduced the participants to the project and asked for a quick round of introductions to set the scene and to understand who was present in the virtual meeting. The consent forms were signed by each person after the meeting and consent was taken to record the online interaction. The meeting lasted ca. 90 minutes and saw a good participation by the Local taskforce members present as well as the city officials.

Apart from the GoGreenRoutes city partners from Tallinn, some local residents joined the meeting, one of whom had his own NGO working with some joint activities with the city in the area. There was also a person as a representative of the district administration involved in the project for nearly two years, who had also helped organising some activities with the city officials.

The meeting was held in Estonian and English, with the locals speaking Estonian mostly with translations provided by Stella.

In what do you see added value or improvements through the Nature-based Solutions?

For Viktoria it was surprising to see and acknowledge the diversity of plants growing in the area and to imagine a future where parents could tell their children of the many trees and plants present in the intervention site. Hence, the educational aspect of the NbS was a highlight and the possibility to create awareness among the younger generations on taking care of their surroundings.

Additionally, the area once finalised with the NbS would be a perfect spot to organise some events and for the locals to undertake some different activities, and in fact Maxim had an idea for how it could be used to organise some kind of quests, using all the information in terms of plant species, history etc. spread in the area. He also shared that at the moment they utilise the Vormsi park sports ground to organise cleanup activities with Zumba, meaning they start with dancing and then move on to collect trash on the playground and the area nearby within the intervention site. Apart from Zumba and cleanup actions, there are plans also to have tours about local nature with horticulturists and specialists.

How was the experience of the whole process of implementing the Seedbed intervention, the NbS and other activities in GoGreenRoutes?

The Ltf members have been present and active in the area for a long time, some in fact from the start of the project. They were and still are quite skeptical of the conduct of the locals, but have full faith that with time and engagements and interactions, the people will come to see the benefits of preserving and protecting the nature of their local areas.

In terms of developments, it was a surprise for the Local taskforce to see that such a global project that could shape their local area was welcomed with open arms. People expressed gratitude that their locality was where the NbS activities were taking place. Some of them had ideas for the future as well in terms of how the space would be useful for diverse recreational activities and events.

In general, the experience of the whole process of implementing the Seedbed interventions, followed by NbS and other activities, has been seen positively and with curiosity and wishes for further support to local nature in their area. They also wish to see social cohesion and stewardship develop over time amongst the now uninterested or skeptical locals in the area.

„This process that we had, where we communicated directly with local residents, it's actually something that should be in every project, regardless of the site or its magnitude“

How could you picture the NbS in your city as a catalyst to better connect with nature?

The Local taskforce members and city officials see the NbS site as a strong catalyst for encouraging diverse activities in the area as it is already ongoing, such as with the Zumba class and upcoming tours.

Additionally, Viktoria pointed out that the key to the NbS in their area could be about variety and in fact, the NbS in Vormsi would differ from other NbS interventions in different places, which will have their own unique features. This would bring a sense of civic pride and make the locals think differently of their surroundings. This would then also encourage them to invite people from other neighbourhoods to come and explore their unique space and have better social cohesion in the process.

Maxim commented that there is also an App he uses to record bird songs with his friends and is now very popular in his circle. This and many other such apps and digital tools help to connect with nature in the area and understand the importance of diversity and to appreciate it much more.

Once the people involved are fully convinced of the benefits of nature, they can act as ambassadors explaining to other people on how to use modern tools and apps to understand the nature around them.

Questioner



Shreya Utkarsh
ICLEI Europe



What can you imagine in the future for the NbS site?

The city officials, Irma and Karin, also talked about some other NbS activities in Tallinn and expressed curiosity to see how things develop and to connect the learnings from different sites, to be able to exchange and learn further. Additionally, Irma expressed that in the city are different lovely corners as well as city gardens where people can go to sit and read their books or just relax. She wishes more and more such spaces could pop up in the city, to encourage people to spend time outdoors doing recreational activities.

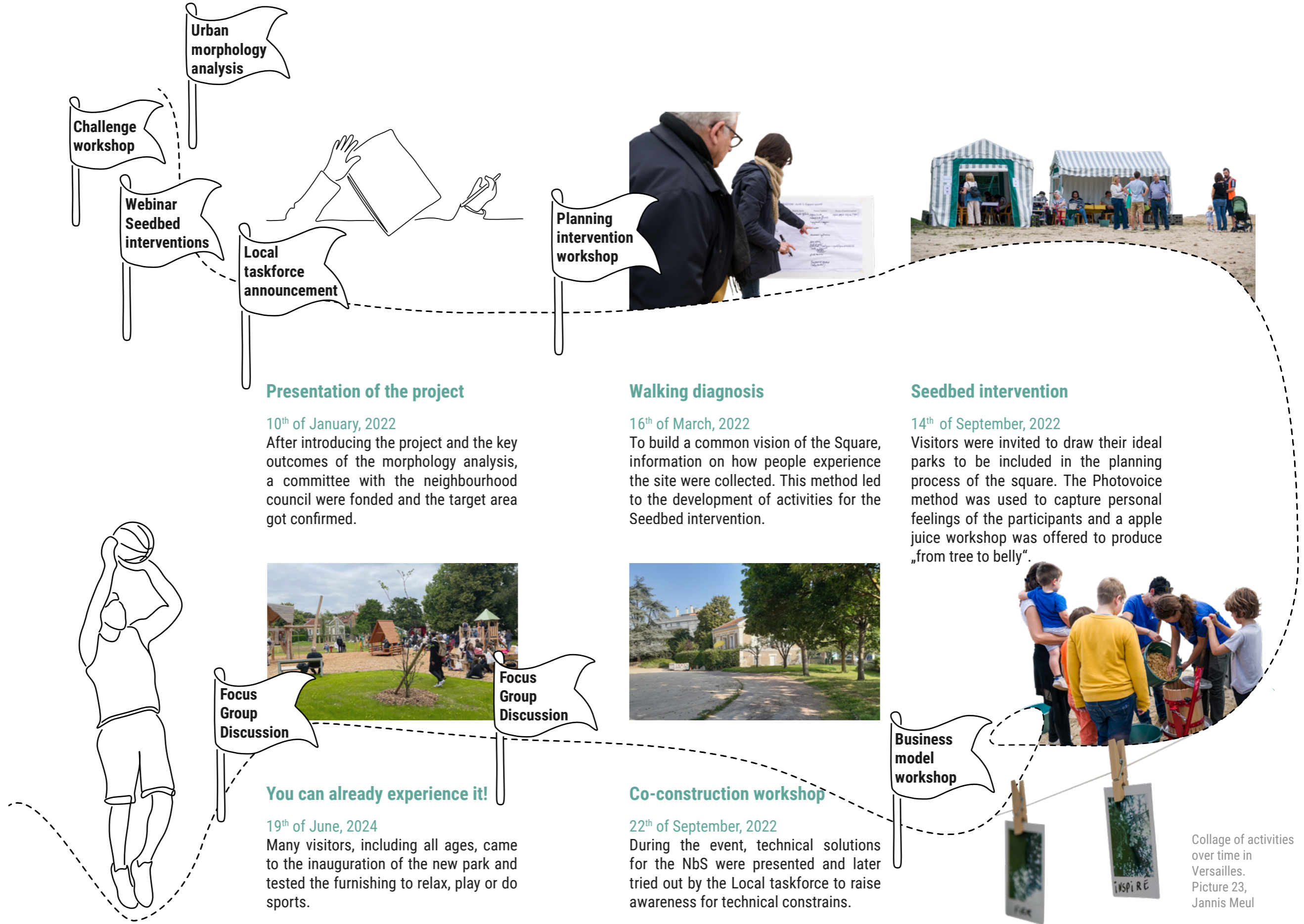
In conclusion, it seems that the location was a good pick for the NbS to create some sense of pride and ownership and with time, there is hope that the local residents would appreciate the NbS more and more. The Ltf members wish for the area to become an interesting educational resource by providing opportunities for parents, youngsters and in fact for all walks of life to learn about the nature in their surroundings, be it with modern apps and such, or with other engagement activities in the area.

"It was very exciting to participate and I'm also very glad that I saw the same faces practically during every event."



Tallinn presented the plans to redesign the area to the public and gathered feedback from visitors.
Picture 22,
Birgit Varblane

Versailles - timeline



Urban morphology analysis

Challenge workshop

Webinar Seedbed interventions

Local taskforce announcement

Planning intervention workshop

Presentation of the project

10th of January, 2022
 After introducing the project and the key outcomes of the morphology analysis, a committee with the neighbourhood council were founded and the target area got confirmed.

Walking diagnosis

16th of March, 2022
 To build a common vision of the Square, information on how people experience the site were collected. This method led to the development of activities for the Seedbed intervention.

Seedbed intervention

14th of September, 2022
 Visitors were invited to draw their ideal parks to be included in the planning process of the square. The Photovoice method was used to capture personal feelings of the participants and a apple juice workshop was offered to produce „from tree to belly“.



Focus Group Discussion



Focus Group Discussion

You can already experience it!

19th of June, 2024
 Many visitors, including all ages, came to the inauguration of the new park and tested the furnishing to relax, play or do sports.



Co-construction workshop

22th of September, 2022
 During the event, technical solutions for the NbS were presented and later tried out by the Local taskforce to raise awareness for technical constrains.

Business model workshop



Collage of activities over time in Versailles. Picture 23, Jannis Meul

Focus Group Discussion

Setting the scene in Versailles

The first Focus Group Discussion convened in Square Blaise Pascal, bringing together several participants who joined the event. This Focus Group Discussion was not focused on interviewing members of the Local taskforce. Julia Gäckle facilitated the session and posed the questions, while Jannis Meul took notes and handled the audio recording. Simon Racé provided translation between English and French as needed. Although four questions were initially planned, only three were discussed due to the apparent time constraints and fatigue among the participants, who, despite these challenges, remained briefly motivated.

In what do you see added value or improvements through the Nature-based Solutions?

The added value and improvements through NbS are evident in several ways. The park now successfully brings together people of all ages, from small children to the elderly, in a shared space, which was not the case before. The redesigned area is seen as more accommodating for families, with children having ample space to play and picnic, contributing to a more community-oriented atmosphere. The space, previously dry and sandy, is evolving into a green oasis. This transformation is expected to promote well-being, offering a refreshing and tranquil environment as the vegetation matures. Additionally, the project has fostered community involvement and created a "wow-effect" through its innovative design, which is significantly different from the previous layout, now fostering social interactions and a stronger sense of place. These points highlight the NbS's success in creating a more inclusive, green, and community-oriented space.

How was the experience of the whole process of implementing the Seedbed intervention, the NbS and other activities in GoGreenRoutes?

The experience of implementing the Seedbed intervention, the NbS, and other activities in GoGreenRoutes was highly collaborative and rewarding. The co-creation process was crucial, involving local residents from the start and fostering strong connections among different age groups within the community. This approach transformed the site into a unified, welcoming space that successfully brought together children and teenagers, addressing previous concerns of separation. The involvement of citizens through workshops and participatory tools ensured that the community felt a strong sense of ownership over the project. The intervention also included environmental considerations, such as mitigating the effects of heatwaves, with the support of European Union funding. Overall, the process highlighted the importance of engaging residents early on in urban projects to achieve a shared vision and create durable, enjoyable city spaces.

„You can see very small kids, teenagers, the parents, the elderly as well, and before that, it was very much more... separated.“

What can you imagine in the future for the NbS site?

In the future of the NbS site, the community is keen on observing how the space evolves over time. Initially, there was very little activity in the area, but now, with new facilities like children's areas and sports fields, the transformation is significant. The community is hopeful that the space will remain vibrant and well-used, maintaining its current "wow-effect" and continues attractiveness to residents. However, there is some concern that this initial enthusiasm might fade over time, and it's important to ensure the space stays lively and engaging for everyone.

In conclusion, the NbS have significantly improved a previously dry, underutilised area, turning it into a lively, green space that encourages interaction among all age groups.

The redesigned park now better serves families, offering spaces for children to play and enjoy picnics, creating a more welcoming environment.

As the greenery develops, it is anticipated to further boost well-being. The NbS implementation in GoGreenRoutes was a collaborative effort, with active involvement from local residents, fostering a sense of community ownership and addressing environmental issues. Looking forward, the community is hopeful that the space will continue to thrive, but acknowledges the importance of ongoing engagement to keep the area dynamic and appealing over time.

Questioner



Julia Gäckle
WP3 Task Lead,
RWTH Aachen

Scan me!



To find out more about the inauguration of Square Blaise Pascal!



Focus Group Discussion

Setting the scene in Versailles

The second Focus Group Discussion also convened in Square Blaise Pascal, bringing together several members of the Local taskforce.

In what do you see added value or improvements through the Nature-based Solutions?

The implementation of NbS brought significant improvements and added value to the community space. Previously, the area was limited to a football and basketball field, but now it is a more inclusive and pleasant environment. Brigitte Chaudron emphasised that the new design encourages social interactions among different generations by integrating greenery and creating a more inviting atmosphere for everyone. Local taskforce members noted that the space now allows for better supervision of children and teenagers, while also providing areas where adults can monitor activities.

The collaborative process involving local residents was crucial. Elderly residents contributed valuable insights into the needs of various age groups, ensuring that the design was well-rounded and functional. This participatory approach meant that everyone had a voice in the development, resulting in a space that meets the community's diverse needs effectively. This intervention highlights the importance of inclusive planning and the tangible benefits of NbS in enhancing social cohesion and the usability of public spaces.

„This site is due to exist! And I think that's the reason why people came today, to understand what is different..“

How was the experience of the whole process of implementing the Seedbed intervention, the NbS and other activities in GoGreenRoutes?

The implementation of the Seedbed intervention and other activities in the project was a multifaceted process with several key experiences and challenges. Initially, there was significant apprehension among residents about the changes to the area. However, involving the community early on helped alleviate these concerns and demystify the project's objectives.

Local taskforce members highlighted the importance of collaboration between the municipality and various stakeholders, which ensured that the project was not solely municipal but a collective effort. Engaging technical services from the municipality was crucial in this regard.

It was also essential to consider the opinions of all residents, as this inclusivity contributed to the project's long-term efficiency. Typically, the municipality does not engage citizens to this extent, making this project a unique and valuable opportunity for community involvement.

One significant challenge was the lengthy commitment required from the working group, compounded by language barriers. For instance, translating theoretical terms like "Seedbed intervention" into French proved difficult, and conveying these concepts to residents was a complex task. Despite these hurdles, the process was enriching and provided substantial learning experiences for all involved.

What can you imagine in the future for the NbS site?

The experience of implementing the Seedbed intervention, the NbS, and other activities within the project has been positive and forward-thinking. Local taskforce members highlighted the historical significance of horticulture in the area, noting that 200 years ago, the region was heavily involved in horticultural activities. The vision for the future includes transforming the area into a memorial of its horticultural past, similar to the green spaces in Versailles, emphasising the importance of maintaining and enhancing green urban areas.

One member of the Local taskforce elaborated on the future plans, mentioning the possibility of expanding the district house area and integrating it with the green space or garden. However, this proposal is still under discussion, and there is a strong emphasis on involving citizens in the decision-making process to ensure that the future development reflects the community's desires.

For the undeveloped parts of the park, there is an anticipation of further development that would continue to honor the horticultural legacy while promoting citizen engagement and sustainable urban growth. The overall goal is to create a vibrant, green, and historically mindful urban environment that residents actively shape and enjoy.

The NbS intervention has transformed a community space, making it more inclusive and pleasant. Through collaborative efforts, the design now fosters social interactions across generations. The participatory approach ensured that diverse needs were met effectively, highlighting the importance of inclusive planning. The experience of implementing the Seedbed intervention and other activities in the project involved overcoming initial apprehension through community involvement. Challenges included language barriers and lengthy commitments resulted in enriching learning experiences. Looking ahead, there are plans to memorialize the area's horticultural past, potentially expanding green spaces and engaging citizens in future development.

Questioner



Julia Gäckle
WP3 Task Lead,
RWTH Aachen



The Focus Group Discussions were held on site to also capture impressions of the inauguration. Picture 24, Jannis Meul

Focus Group Discussion

Setting the scene in Versailles

The third discussion took place in September, at the same time as the Urban Play event (read more on page 59). It served as a reflection of the use of the site within its first summer.

We met three participants of the Focus Group Discussions back in June to reflect about the first summer of the implemented NbS.

François Darchis, Adjoint au maire, 14e adjoint

The way how Versailles implemented the NbS intervention, represents a significant shift in how municipalities view urban development and citizen participation. The intervention, along with the broader co-creation process, has changed the minds of local officials and demonstrated that understanding citizens' usage needs is crucial for successful urban projects.

One of the most remarkable outcomes of the whole process, was how it altered the perception of city officials, including the mayor. Initially, the project was met with resistance from some, particularly concerning the scale of changes being proposed. However, the key to overcome this resistance was shifting the focus from abstract design concepts to the practical question of how citizens would actually use the park. As Darchis explained, "Here, we changed everything based on the usage, absolutely."

This shift was not just about changing physical spaces, but also about changing how

the city approaches urban planning. Traditionally, urban projects in Versailles had been more conservative, making incremental changes based on financial constraints. However, the NbS intervention took a different approach by engaging the community directly, asking about how they would use the space rather than what they want. That shifted the narrative from one of opposition to collaboration. Darchis highlighted that people often imagine the worst when changes are proposed, expecting that their concerns will be ignored.

A key example of this participatory approach was the use of tools like cameras and pens, which allowed residents to express their preferences in creative and non-verbal ways. This shift in focus helped temper expectations and ensured that the final design would meet the community's actual needs. Darchis reflected on this, saying, "This long time you took is not to ask them what they want, but how they are going to use it."

The success of the approach of the NbS intervention has also inspired the municipality to apply this method to other projects. One such example is the "Oasis" project, which aims to redesign school courtyards in Versailles to make them more environmentally friendly and better suited to children's needs. This project follows the same principles of co-creation and citizen engagement, involving not just parents and teachers but also the children in the planning process. As Darchis noted, "Now that we have made the first Oasis concept... they are now all asking this to be accelerated." This demonstrates that once citizens see the benefits of a participatory approach, they become advocates for it, pushing for similar methods in future projects.

"You spend your time to imagine what has to be done. In fact, you just have to listen. And it will give you exactly a substance you are looking for."

Cathy Biass-Morin, Directrice des espaces verts de la ville de Versailles

Cathy praised the redevelopment of Square Blaise Pascal and its benefits to the urban climate. She highlighted the momentous changes to the formal sealed site. Planting trees and reseeding the lawn has significantly enhanced the park's natural feel, making it more inviting, especially during hot weather, leading to increased visitor numbers.

"The play area is very well appreciated", Cathy stated. The expanded sports offers, particularly the basketball court with a "basketball tree" featuring varied hoop heights, attract people of all ages. Even if the GoGreenRoutes' project is coming to an end, the Square is going to be transformed further in the future. As the site used to be the Moser and Truffaut hospital, Cathie explained plans to celebrate Truffaut's 200th birthday: "We received requests from the neighbourhood council and five associations to plant additional trees, including espaliered fruit trees, in order to create a narrative linked to the site."

Cathy emphasised that integrating nature into urban spaces has already been a long-term priority for the city. "[GoGreenRoutes] has allowed us to push even further with this park and engage in co-construction with the local residents", she stressed to point out the positive impact of the project's approaches.

"When it's hot, people come to the park much more often. We've had significantly more visitors since the park reopened"

"It's well-known among people from other neighbourhoods. That's why there are so many people here now, not just from the local area."

Brigitte Chaudron, conseiller municipal

"Overall, it's very good, the park is excellent, the new structures with the slide, the new games, the mix for visitors of all ages—children, youth, and older—everything is very well done", Brigitte started the talk. As someone who lives close to the Square, Brigitte highlighted the new ground of the football pit, as it's much more quiet now, when the ball hits the ground.

Talking about noise, one problem is there to be mentioned: "There are many more young people, and they often bring music, which makes it less pleasant", she criticised.

The popularity of the Square seems to be big, as visitors are coming from other neighbourhoods too. As Brigitte is talking to the local residents a lot, she also knew what children are missing on site: "Many children would love to have a swing!"

To summarise the discussions, the NbS intervention and its co-creation process offer important lessons for urban planners and municipalities beyond Versailles. The success of the project underscores the value of taking the time to engage with citizens meaningfully and to focus on practical usage rather than abstract desires. This participatory approach not only leads to more functional and accepted urban spaces, but also strengthens the relationship between citizens and their local government.

Questioner



Julia Gäckle
WP3 Task Lead,
RWTH Aachen

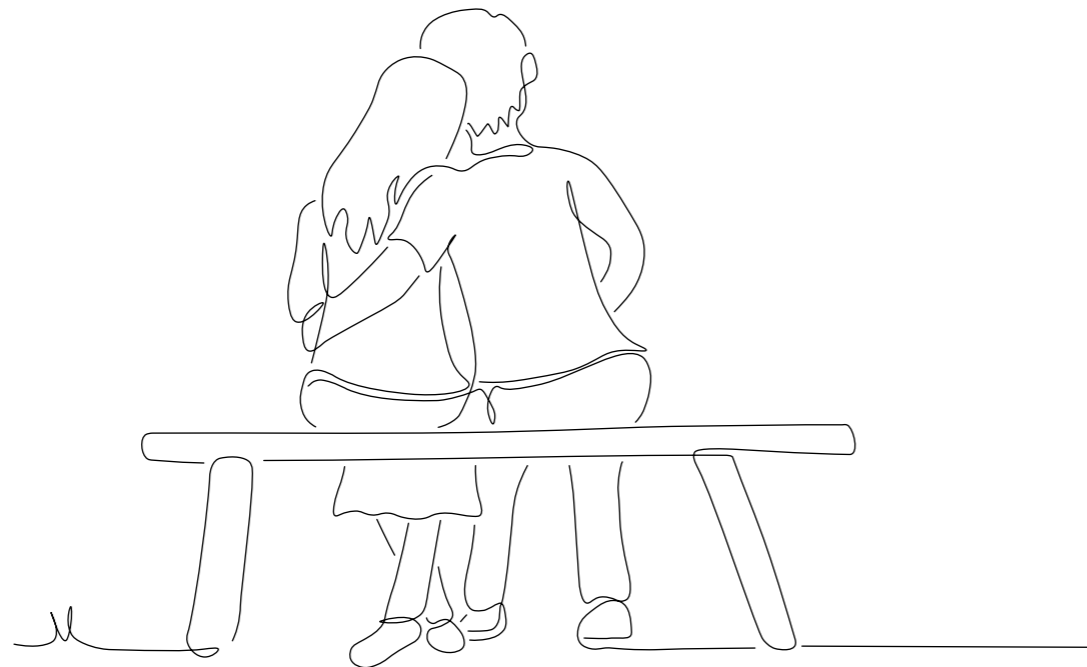
Commonalities and Uniqueness of the six cities

From the previous chapter it became evident that each city brought its own characteristics to the fore for the co-design and development of the various NbS. We would like to highlight the key commonalities and uniqueness in terms of features and conditions for each city. This will help to compare and contrast why which NbS seemed suitable for which city and how the cities assessed their needs to realise the right NbS in the right place. This should not be mistaken for an exhaustive comparative analysis, as such an undertaking would be difficult and rather unnecessary. It just provides a snapshot on some key common and unique aspects, linked to the place and type of intervention.

"All the problems that they saw, kind of disappeared. I think overall, more people thinking about the nature and how you can in an inner-city place actually make it more accessible, available and more relaxing."
 Andreas Nilsson, FGD Umeå

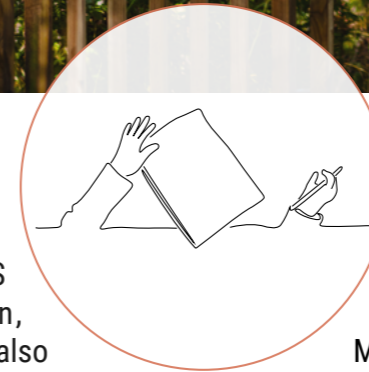
Locations

The NbS implemented in Burgas and Lahti are located very close to a health facility. While Lahti intentionally focussed on the patients and staff from the hospital to access the NbS but ofcourse not limiting it only to them, the NbS in Burgas is more seen as a potential for use by the hospital patients and staff as well as visitors. Others include greenways for walking and cycling in Limerick. In the city of Umeå, just like Burgas but much smaller and rather spread out, pocket parks were realised. Tallinn has revitalised its orchard and provided a sponge garden, focussing on the biodiversity aspect as well, while Versailles has focussed on a public square.



Purposes

By differing in locations of NbS implementation, the target groups also slightly differ. However, in most cases the cities intended to be as conducive to all of the local population as possible. Significant efforts seemed to go towards encouraging physical activities, as was the case in Versailles and Burgas explicitly, while some see it for taking pauses, such as in Limerick with its greenway, and experiencing nature connectiveness in the case of Umeå. Interesting is also the case of Tallinn, which caters to outdoor community learning while ensuring biodiversity flourishes, similarly in Lahti with physical activity but also mindfulness, the idea is to reconnect with nature. Versailles infact goes one step further and aims to encourage sporting activities also to encourage multi-generational interactions.



Key Takeaways

The cities have learnt similar but also unique lessons from the four year long process of NbS implementation. Most cities acknowledge the significance of co-creation despite being sceptical of it in the start. Burgas wishes to integrate co-creation in all its municipal activities going forward, for instance. Another important learning has been that accessibility and attractiveness for one and all should be considered. In the case of Umeå, a concerted effort was made to ensure the gender, inclusion and diversity principles are embedded well in the co-design and implementation phases. A unique but potentially replicable lesson from Lahti was to think of upscaling right from the start, for instance all local forests can be considered Health Forests providing multiple health benefits in their own ways. There are many such nuggets of common and unique learnings and outcomes. We want you, the reader, to imagine the vastness of learnings, as well as how similar yet different each specific local context is.

Entry to Lahti's Health Forest, including signage showing the route as well as information to focus on your walk. Picture 25, Tommi Mattila

More action in the cities

In the second chapter, the focus is directed towards the voices of the WP leads and Task leads. It necessitates taking a step back to gain an overarching perspective on additional activities within the Cultivating Cities, which are to be correlated with NbS interventions. At this juncture, a coherent overview of various activities is provided to embed the comprehensive spectrum of diverse investigations, approaches, and outcomes alongside the actual implementations of NbS interventions in the Storybook. This aims to draw attention to and inform the reader about additional activities. Simultaneously, this approach aims to foster a better comprehension of the complexity inherent in this project. In order to achieve this, interviews were conducted with the heads of Work Packages WP1, WP2, WP5, WP6, WP8, WP9, and WP10. The following questions were utilised as a guiding framework:

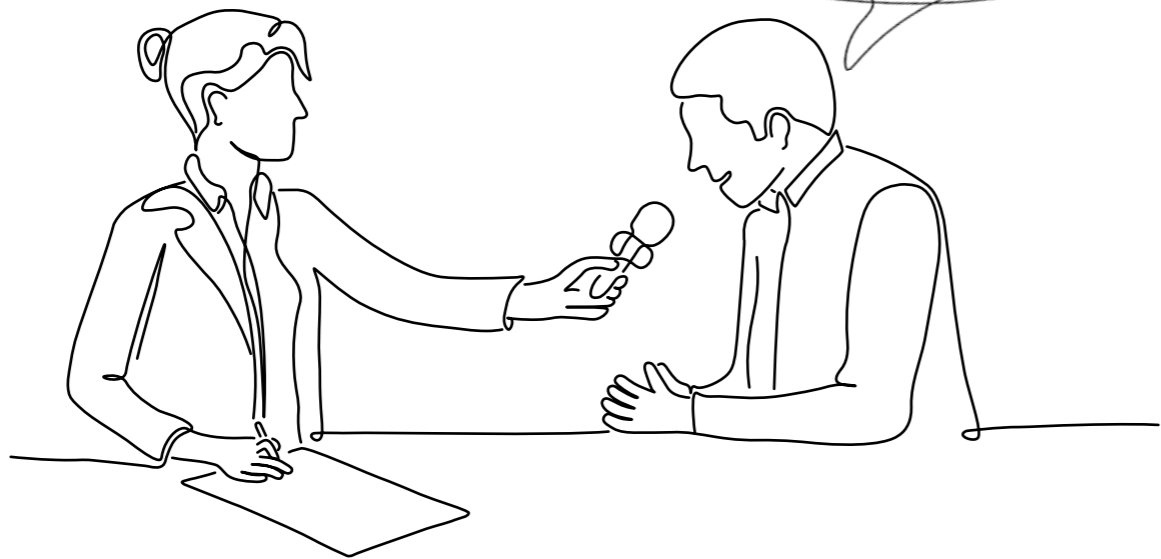
Have you been in contact with the Cultivating Cities in between Seedbed intervention and final NbS intervention?

Did you have a field visit in that time period? If yes, what was your impression of the visit?

Did you organise a workshop/ event in that time period? If yes, what was your intention and how did it turned out? Did you experience any obstacles?

Did you conduct interviews with and in the Cultivating Cities in that time period?

What are your main observations in terms of your relevant WP work and how the cities progressed overtime?



Interview with Dr. Tadhg MacIntyre

Julia Gäckle interviewed Tadhg to explore the impact and outcomes of the Seedbed interventions in the context of cultivating citizen engagement and implementing Nature-based Solutions (NbS). Their discussion covered the role of collaborative approaches, challenges faced during the project, and specific experiences across various cities involved in the initiative. Tadhg emphasised the critical role of Seedbed interventions in establishing and fostering relationships with cities, especially during the challenging COVID-19 period. These interventions created a foundation for both the initial and subsequent work within the project. He noted the dual importance of coordinating with city staff and engaging local citizens, which was essential for creating a city-centric project that addressed local needs.

„Listening to citizens, speaking to the key local actors, the city staff, the municipality staff, that's central to getting the job done, but getting the job done in a way that meets the needs of the community.“

The interventions prioritised engaging with local actors, listening to citizen opinions and collaborating with municipalities to create a shared "knowledge ecosystem". This co-creative approach ensured that solutions were shaped by the community rather than imposed externally. Tadhg described frequent field visits to various cities, such as Versailles and Limerick, which he visited multiple times. These trips served purposes like monitoring, conducting interviews, and organising workshops. He highlighted the importance of physical presence, noting that engaging directly with people in their local environment allowed for better contextual understanding and co-creation of solutions. In Limerick, for example, he participated in monitoring the greenway, while in Versailles, he observed the redevelopment of a local park. Tadhg explained that each city presented unique opportunities and challenges based on its political, social, and cultural context. One of the standout successes highlighted by Tadhg was the ability of Seedbed interventions to foster social cohesion.

Task lead WP1



Dr. Tadhg MacIntyre
Maynooth University

Interview WP1

Tadhg detailed several challenges encountered during the project:

1. Absence of local university partners: In cities without local university partners, such as Burgas, it was more difficult to coordinate activities and build capacity. This required additional support from external teams.

2. Adaptation to local contexts: In Versailles, the mayor focus laid on people and culture, rather than virtual reality and technological solutions, necessitated adjustments to the approach. For example, VR demonstrations were moved to a local university.

3. Resource constraints: Limited capacity in some cities, such as Limerick, required additional external teams to support project activities.

4. Navigating political and social dynamics: In cities like Versailles, where elections influenced priorities, the team had to be mindful of local sensitivities and align their work with the needs of the community.

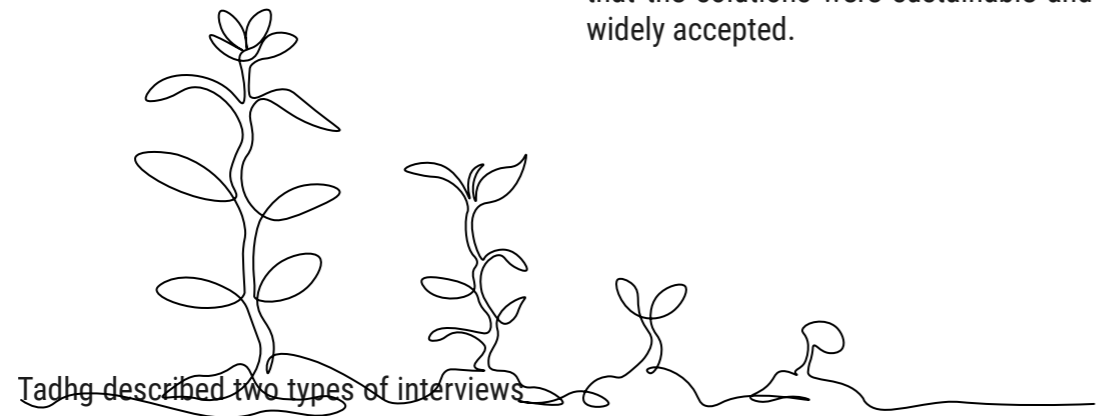
„Reducing extremism enhancing social cohesion was actually a direct impact, according to the people in the walking interviews.“

conducted during the project:

1. Walking interviews: Conducted with citizens in NbS sites, these interviews allowed participants to share their thoughts in real-time while experiencing the environment. This method helped to overcome issues like retrospective bias and allowed for inclusive engagement across diverse groups, including refugees and marginalised communities.

2. High-level interviews: Conducted with key stakeholders such as local politicians, NGO representatives, and city staff, these interviews provided insights into the strategic vision and decision-making processes of the cities.

Tadhg emphasised the importance of empathy and stepping into others' worlds to build meaningful connections. He highlighted that participatory methods and on-site engagements allowed the project to create solutions that were not only effective but also resonated deeply with the communities involved. He concluded that fostering a sense of ownership among citizens was crucial for the success of the interventions. This sense of ownership helped to ensure that the solutions were sustainable and widely accepted.



Interview with Dr. John Gallagher

Work Package 2 lead John Gallagher stated that he has been in contact especially with the team in Versailles as they have done more focused monitoring. He visited the city in late summer to collect data that could be used for in-depth analysis.

As a part of the baseline monitoring, researchers from WP2 also teamed up with people from different institutes to collect data in all six cities between spring and summer of 2023. This has been carried out to support monitoring for WP8. It was a field visit, alongside some engagement with members of the city, the team visited the pilot areas and spent three days in each city to actively assess the setting, mostly observatory and passive.

„I think it came down to how well or not the cities were resourced. And, you know, the budget subsidies vary quite a lot.“

John highlighted some logistical challenges as well as difficulties with finding dates to meet. *“I think there were some changes to the timelines, trying to get the cities’ representatives to be available and obviously the team on our side to be coordinated.”* He also mentioned the cities to be supportive regarding these issues.

Regarding the WP’s work, no interviews were held, instead meetings were conducted to talk about activities, data and to identify key stakeholders in certain subjects. Dynamic changes in responsibilities were an issue too. *“Sometimes the team was one person, and they don’t have the skills or knowledge required to help with specific tasks”,* John pointed out. A lot of it depended on each cities’ resources and budgets. *„I think it came down to how well or not the cities were resourced. And, you know, the budget subsidies vary quite a lot“,* he explained.



Task lead WP2



Dr. John Gallagher
Trinity College
Dublin

Interview WP2

Task lead WP4



Isobel Fletcher
Horizon Nua

Interview with Isobel Fletcher

Talking to WP4 task lead Isobel Fletcher it became clear how important it is to support the city partners with knowledge about Nature-based entrepreneurship support to contribute towards the long term maintenance of the NbS.

Isobel pointed out several workshops in Maynooth and Tallinn as well as the business model canvas workshop in Lahti to create an innovation concept alongside a delivery program. *"I'm hoping some more cities might come on board between now and the end of the project and all six cities will be doing the entrepreneurship strategy with me between now and the end of the project"*, she said referring to the ongoing work with the city of Lahti.

As WP4 is working on scaling up current developments, they have not been involved with developing the Nature-based Solutions but did get a good impression about the work in Lahti as they were updated regularly to talk about possible revenue generation models. Isobel stated that Lahti's representatives were open to work on ideas to generate income from the NbS to later be used on the upkeep of built interventions. *"And just hearing good feedback from the others!"*, she added.

Regarding possible obstacles and challenges, Isobel claimed that cities were quite involved in creating the NbS and might not have had the capacity to develop ideas to generate income from the NbS. *"They are uncomfortable talking of finance, innovation and entrepreneurship"*, she summarized. WP4 would have liked to have developed more business models in co-creation with the city partners. A

reason for this problem in some cities is the size of the team. In Limerick, for example, Sarah is the only person to tackle all the different tasks regarding this project. Isobel supposed that if the cities would have known the extent of work for the different tasks of the project, some cities may have alter their approaches.

Regarding the question how the cities progressed over time it was difficult to find a conclusion already as the work in this particular WP is still in progress. Some cities like Burgas and Tallinn are expected to have especially positive outcomes regarding WP9's work as they are both experienced in either doing an EU project (Burgas: Connecting Nature) or being a city of entrepreneurs in general (Tallinn). So WP4 aims to support the other cities even more to help with new approaches.

"Certainly on my past experience, cities, once they kind of get going on us, tend to enjoy this because it is different from the intervention side of things", Isobel ends.

"Cities, once they kind of get going on us, tend to enjoy this because it is different from the intervention side of things"



Interview WP4

Interview with Rossano Schifanelli and Giovanna Calogiuri

In an initial interview, Rossano, acting as the WP6 lead, responded to the questions sent via email beforehand. However, he promptly agreed to Shreya's suggestion at the outset that we should also interview one of his Task leads, Giovanna Calogiuri, as she was heavily involved in the topic of VR showcases in the cities. Subsequently, a second separate interview round was conducted with Giovanna Calogiuri.

Starting the interview, Rossano explains that his Work Package hasn't directly engaged with NbS interventions but has focused more on the VR showcase and emotional mapping. Shreya suggests involving Giovanna for insights on the VR showcase's NbS connection. Rossano mentions challenges accessing social media data due to API changes, but they discuss options for accessing Twitter data and consider a digital media library for sharing NbS-related content. Shreya offers to provide access to the library and discusses the availability of event photos. They plan to incorporate these insights into the project narrative. Additionally, Rossano mentions the release of a digital placemaking toolkit and suggests exploring its potential connection to NbS interventions. Shreya expresses interest, and they plan to follow up on various tasks and exchange resources.

"Comments or discussions are going on in some cities related to the actual NbS intervention and (...) the issue is that the management of the main social media we were using, so Twitter, changed drastically."

Giovanna Calogiuri discusses her engagement with city partners regarding the VR showcase events. She initiated dialogue with Paris City Partners early to inform them about the events and confirm their interest. Despite delays in implementation, she maintained contact to discuss logistical details closer to the events. Her team organised showcase events in Tallinn, Lahti, and Umeå, with plans for future cities like Limerick, Burgas, and Versailles. While Limerick's event was postponed due to technical challenges, the VR showcase was seen at the Lahti People and Planet conference. Giovanna explains the survey conducted during these events, indicating an increase in nature connectedness among participants. She also notes the impact of transitioning from city to nature environments in the VR experience. Shreya asks about the progress of city engagement, and Giovanna reflects on the challenges encountered, including varying responses based on event settings. She suggests more structured or invitation-based events for effective engagement, emphasising the importance of informing the target audience about the showcase's purpose to enhance participation.

Task lead WP6



Rossano Schifanelli
University of Turin



Giovanna Calogiuri
University of South-Eastern Norway

Interview WP6

Task lead WP7



Stephen Smith
Institute of Child
Education and
Psychology Europe

Interview with Stephen Smith

WP7 had limited direct contacts with city partners. Indeed, it has developed a measurement tool by working *“with experts on the field rather than cities or academic experts, including landscape architects and poet artists”*. WP7 leaders have also regularly assisted the monitoring process on the ground in Limerick. By doing so, they have witnessed *“a significant progress across the duration of the project”*. Besides this contribution to the monitoring process, WP7 has also organised six citizen science workshops across each of the cities. Focused on the GoGreenRoutes tools, it was coupled by surveys aiming to better identify barriers and enablers to foster participation in citizen science initiatives.

„When we were surveying people (...), they were talking about a place to connect, a place to be active, a place to unwind.“

Additionally, walking interviews have been led in order to get feedback and personal impressions from the public on the project. Coupled with informal discussions, interviews’ results have highlighted the overall positiveness from the inhabitants towards the Green way, some citizens arguing that it is actually *“helpful and it improves the quality of their commute to work every day”*. Stephen even adds that *“when we were surveying people, and trying to get a sense of what the greenway means to them, they were talking about a place to connect, a place to be active, a place to unwind.”*



Interview WP7

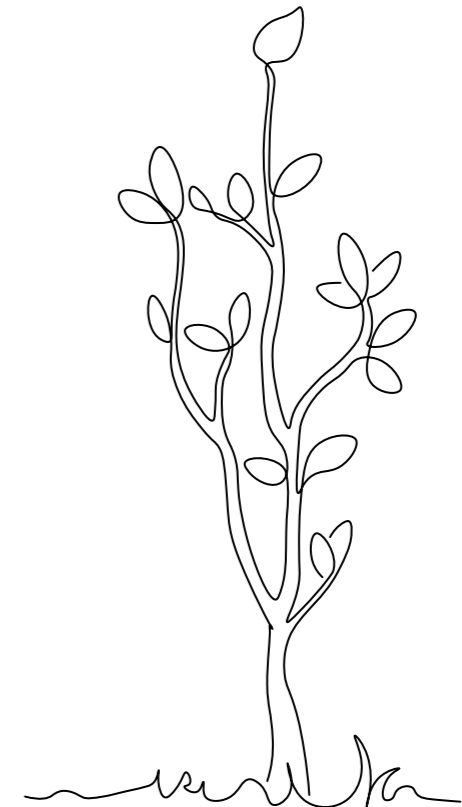
Interview with Evelise Pereira Barboza

The interview led with Evelise has highlighted the importance of the connection between WP8 and WP3 to understand the dynamics related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, WP8 has closely collaborated with cities, especially Tallinn, Umeå and Versailles, to get a firm understanding of their context before the Seedbed intervention. It has for example facilitated the baseline monitoring process by considering the differences of knowledge and resources available in each city.

„If you have an event happening, 100 people come and then you don’t have a regular picture of how the space is being used day-by-day.“

The collaboration between WP8 and cities also included the development of a tool to get a qualitative approach, online trainings, as well as on the ground activities. This *“score card tool”* will even *“be proposed as a GoGreenRoutes method for future projects”*, according to Evelise. With a strong focus on the relationship between NbS and human well-being, it will be used as a baseline in new cities to shape NbS policies and interventions. WP8 leaders have tested on the ground this tool in Tallinn and have also undertaken activities in Versailles and Umeå.

While being on the ground, WP8 representatives have visited and observed the three green areas in Umeå, Tallinn and Versailles, with the intention to *“have a regular picture of how the space is being used day-by-day”* by the citizens. In Versailles and Tallinn, green spaces *“have specific social functions”*. In Versailles, young people use the area to play basketball while in Tallinn, some young people use it to consume alcohol. These specific uses may conflict with the NbS intervention and changes will be analysed during the post-intervention monitoring period.



Task lead WP8



Evelise Pereira
Barboza
ISGlobal Barcelona

Interview WP8

Task lead WP9



Adriana Duarte
ICLEI Europe

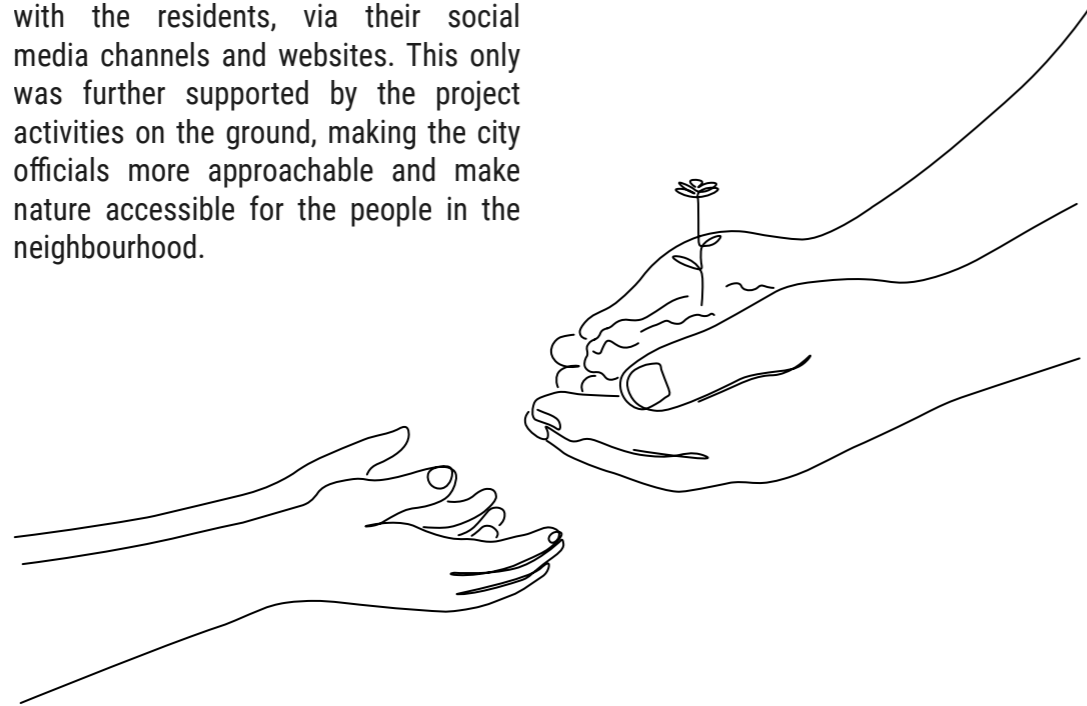
Interview with Adriana Duarte

In the interview, it became clear that the role of this WP was closely linked to the sharing and disseminating to maximise the impacts being created by WP3 in terms of NbS implementation. But not only that, WP9 also conducted their own interviews on visiting Tallinn with a couple of the partner cities, Umeå and Limerick, specifically for promotion and more communication around their NbS plans and actions on the ground. WP9 lead mentioned that *„(the NbS activities) also enabled the local citizens to be more empowered to take part in these interactions, this was of course really noticeable because when we arrived at the Vormsi park, we were even greeted by the local task force“*.

„(The NbS activities) also enabled the local citizens to be more empowered to take part in these interactions“

Moreover, while working more digitally with the cities (on the communication plan, among others), it was noticed within WP9 how well the cities were doing in terms of engagement with the residents, via their social media channels and websites. This only was further supported by the project activities on the ground, making the city officials more approachable and make nature accessible for the people in the neighbourhood.

Talking about the most recent workshop with the entire consortium that WP9 organised, a workshop on effective communication and sharing results about research, there was a need expressed in learning these kinds of skills. Adriana said *“people would work together to pretend they were making a communication campaign on a specific output, and it was pretty interesting because there were a lot of different levels of skill in it. People were pretty engaged.”*



Interview WP9

Interview with Mariia Chebotareva

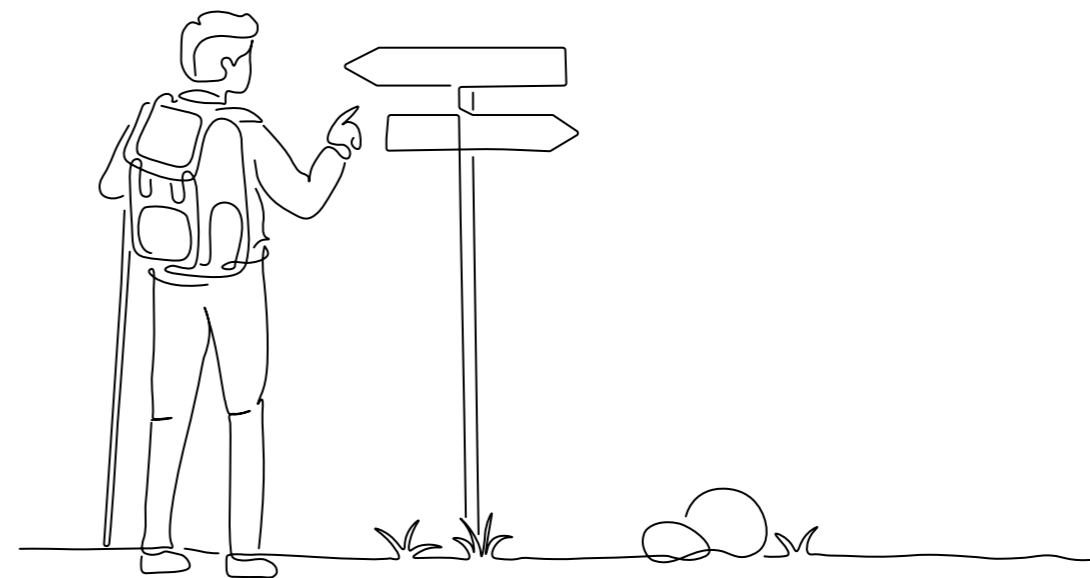
Mariia Chebotareva highlighted their engagement with city partners in Tallinn, particularly regarding baseline data monitoring, conducted e.g. in Tallinn by partners Evelise Pereira (WP8) and Tadhg MacIntyre.

In this context she also mentioned the presentation of research outcomes to facilitate the development of Nature-based Solutions (NbS) as a connection between her work and the cities. While her primary collaboration was with researchers, she also supported city partners with ethics applications, notably in Tallinn and in collaboration with WP3.

“You can give advices, you can give internal support, but still, without committee availability and experience in the ethical sense, it’s quite hard to keep up the level.”

Mariia noted their participation in field visits and data collection activities in Tallinn’s pilot area, noting visible improvements attributed to the project’s efforts. Despite encountering minimal obstacles during baseline monitoring, they faced a brief delay due to a city fire, emphasising the need for flexibility in such situations. Mariia underscored the importance of city partners possessing experience in ethics applications and committees to uphold ethical standards effectively. This conclusion was drawn from their observations of city progress over time.

The exchange highlighted Mariia’s multifaceted involvement in the project, encompassing communication with city partners, research collaboration, and ethical considerations. Overall, Mariia’s contributions underscored the collaborative nature of the project and the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation in achieving its goals.



Task lead WP10



Mariia Chebotareva
Tallinn University

Interview WP10

What is "A Playful City"?

"A Playful City" is a not-for-profit, founded in 2017, to provide co-created solutions for cities and towns.

A diverse team creates individual places and events for inhabitants. For GoGreenRoutes, the organisation is hosting six Urban Play events in the Cultivating Cities. The aim is to promote these new spaces, and show different games to encourage people to further use the area. It is also an opportunity to celebrate and share the successes of the implemented NbS, and raise awareness of the GoGreenRoutes' project.

Further activating Square Blaise Pascal!

After the renovated Sqaire Blaise Pascal in Versailles was accessible for people during the first summer, "A Playful City" and the City of Versailles organised an inclusive event on the 25th of September 2024, invitig citizens to come together, connect and play. To promote the day, several flyers and posters were designed and sent to the city (See picture 27).

After the team set up games, a tent and colourful pyramids displaying information about the project, people started accessing the Square at 2:30 pm.

A brief introduction started at 3 pm, welcoming the visitors and explaining the event. Despite the rain, the attendees were eger to play on the new playgroud as well as to use the provided games by "A Playful City". Small groups of children quickly formed through their individual

"It's a really, really lovely atmosphere and a big thanks to everyone in GoGreenRoutes. A Playful City is delighted to be here today!"
Neasa Ni Bhriain, A Playful City

choice of games. One group took big rings to throw. Another, including Cathy Biass-Morin, the head gardener of Versailles, chose skipping ropes to jump together.

Historic games like kubb, which is a viking game, or boule, were set up. Due to the rain, the children had to leave earlier than expected, why specific games like these could not be explained and played properly.

The children were also invited to make a wish at a wishing tree. Ribbons were handed out to attach them to the tree as a symbol of each individual wish.

Additionally, the team organised a "Colour Scavenger Hunt", where participants were invited to take a magnifying glass and find natural materials in the park that match the shown colour. Proudly, the children met under the tent to show their collected leafs and flowers representing each of the colours.

During the event, Julia and Jannis from RWTH met several participants of the Focus Group Discussions in Versailles back in June. As they were willing to talk about the process of implementing the NbS as well as how the site was used during a its first summer, we summarised their impressions (Read more on page 49).

The event ended at around 4:30 due to the weather conditions.



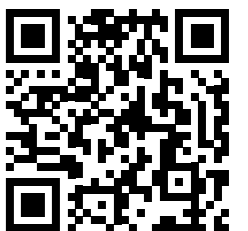
However, it was great watching the children using the space and bringing the Square Blaise Pascal to life. "A playful city" showed in a low-threshold way, how a space can be further activated and promoted through activities that bring people together. Through activities like the "Colour Scavenger Hunt", children are able to connect to nature in a playful way.

The action

"A Playful City" organised multiple games and activities to further activate the Square in Versailles. Children participated in the "Colour Scavenger Hunt" collected natural material to match the colours on the paper. Picture 26, Jannis Meul

"A Playful City" organised different graphics to promote the event and adress people of all ages. Picture 27, Jannis Meul

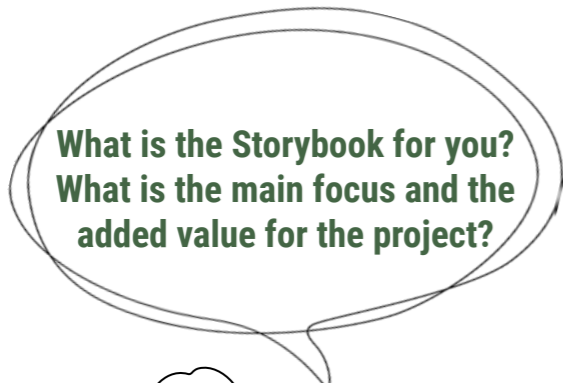
Scan me!



To find out more about Playful City!

About this chapter

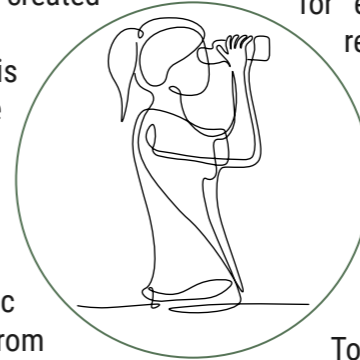
The third chapter entails a summary of an interview conducted between Shreya Utkarsh (ICLEI Europe) and Julia Gäckle (RWTH Aachen University). This dialogue serves as a platform for the reflection upon the outcomes and insights presented within the present report. Moreover, the interview assumes the additional function of contextualizing these findings within the broader framework of the ongoing project and antecedent endeavors with focus on WP3's work in GoGreenRoutes since the start of the project. Furthermore, the interview serves as a strategic juncture for envisioning the trajectory post-project culmination.



The discourse delves into the prospective implications of the research outcomes, contemplating how they might contribute to the broader academic landscape and inform subsequent investigations. In sum, the interview between Shreya Utkarsh and Julia Gäckle serves as both a reflective mirror and a forward-looking lens, illuminating the current project's significance, while projecting its potential impact on future research endeavors. It is important to mention here that this report, the Storybook, was able to provide a small insight into the complexity of the various endeavors in GoGreenRoutes, especially with the interviews in Chapter two. However, as a product originating from WP3 and produced by its partners, the main focus must always be placed, within the scope of the possibilities, on the key activities in WP3: eg. Overall new co-creation approaches, Seedbed interventions, NbS planning and implementation, as well as communication with cities and the documentation of their activities. In the Storybook the focus lays clearly on the NbS interventions in the cities.

Setting the scene

In Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, there is an eco quarter called Vauban. Nowadays, almost 5000 people are living in this nearly car free, low energy, social integrating area. Vauban illustrates the development of a sustainable urban district adopting a co-creative planning process and social ecological values. You can find citizen engagement and community values that generate a sense of civic responsibility and shared vision for the district. It tells an excellent story about upscaling sustainability, and it also contains various co-created NbS interventions. This is the setting for this GoGreenRoutes dialogue between ICLEI and RWTH, to tell the story of NbS implementation and co-creation within the project. It serves as a strategic reflection of outcomes from GoGreenRoutes and their potential impact post-project.



What is the main focus and the overall aim of the storybook for the project? Can you explain where the storybook is positioned in the project?

Shreya started the reflection by highlighting the main focus of this storybook, „to tell a collective narrative“ of the whole process within WP leads and the cultivating cities as well as to point out co-creative elements. It was important to mark the specific aims, needs and expectations of each city. Julia added the focus of this storybook, which is the implementation of the NbS interventions and the individual steps that led to this. „It was really important that we created this [...] storybook itself in

a really graphical way, so that it's possible to reach a broad audience, that we can have a really easy accessible document in the end“, Julia stated and explained the mixed medium approach, which was used to design this report.

Are all different activities from GoGreenRoutes comprehensively represented in the storybook?

Julia denies, as this storybook focuses on the work of WP3, especially on the implementation of the NbS. This is graphically presented by the timelines for each city, which also cover research, workshops, events and discussions that were held to evolve the NbS. Another important method were the Focus Group Discussions, to capture thoughts on the project of the local taskforces.

To give a better understanding of the overall project and linkages to other WPs, interviews with other Work Packages were conducted. Also „to find out how they were engaging with the cities“, Shreya mentioned. Additionally, Julia recommended to scan the provided QR codes next to the interviews to find out more about their work. „This is a way of communicating furthermore, what happens in the project, just in a short way.“

In what do you see the innovative elements of the NbS interventions in this project?

Julia started by explaining the theoretical approach, which was to develop NbS in a more social way. The aim was to give citizens „a really strong voice to communicate their wishes and desires!“

Dialogue between



Julia Gäckle
WP3 Task Lead,
RWTH Aachen



Shreya Utkarsh
ICLEI Europe

Scan me!

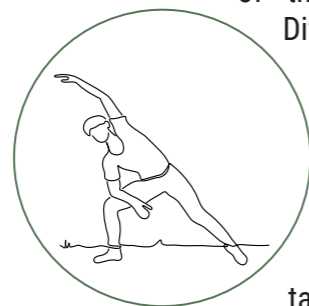


To see the whole dialogue, please scan or click the QR code to watch the video on YouTube.

As everything was talked about right at the beginning already, even the co-creation process was co-created. Through the process, their role as partners has changed. Each member's profession became more insignificant, as everybody was an equal member of the team. „In this way, we gathered a lot of local knowledge, which was maybe not possible to reach out to with a normal approach that they used to work with“, Julia summarised the innovative approach.

From a more practical perspective, Shreya mentioned Umeå as an example of a city in a different setting, as they were already thinking about gender inclusion, which matched one of the main objectives within GoGreenRoutes. Additionally, the city of Umeå also invited school children to join the process to foster a connection between the pilot area and the future stakeholders.

To underline the transferability to other areas, Shreya named the Lathi Health Forest as a project to be able to upscale in many local forests. "So it's really innovative in that sense, because it's not only about seeing one intervention as it is, but actually kind of inspiring other areas to also take them into account", she explained and added the intention of Lahti, to also invite vulnerable groups, to highlight the importance of nature connectiveness.



„We even co-created the co-creation process in a way [...], because we talked about everything right from the beginning with the Cultivating City partners and developed everything together.“

If you target the overall process from task 3.1 to task 3.5 in the Cultivating Cities, what were obstacles, potentials, chances, or specific strengths you might have seen?

"Maybe I can start right at the beginning with our endeavor to do co-creation with municipalities", Julia stated. Some cities were already used to do some participation processes, but in this project, really intense co-creation was aimed for. This was a barrier to overcome and to communicate our idea of the process. Once the city partners started adopting that, we were able to step back as professional planners as well.

The urban morphology analys can be seen as a good example, as it was a new approach to most of the cities.

"I think most of them never did such an analysis procedure where they need to create maps, they need to really dive into a specific approach here to analyze their local target areas", Julia pointed out. Through webinars and workshops, guidance was provided to enable the cities to work on this topics and to find a handling with their local target areas. Referring to that, Shreya explained the importance of a locally different definition of the term 'Nature-based Solution'.

Differences between the cities and the local political landscape were taken into account, while general principles were kept to also safeguard the Commission's definition.

Shreya also named the local taskforces as an important puzzle



Our location

Shreya Utkarsh from ICLEI and Julia Gäckle from RWTH met in April 2024 in Freiburg's eco quarter Vauban to discuss the storybook and the impact of our work with the city partners. Vauban impressively integrated NbS and citizen engagement tools within the planning and maintaining process. Picture 28, Jannis Meul

piece to work with. As many projects would include them at a later stage, GoGreenRoutes included them right at the beginning.

"I think more of an obstacle was the time and the connections that we had to make with the local authorities", Shreya reflected. Referring to Burgas, she also highlighted the long term impact of the new processes, as they said to continue using several tools.

Julia added that specific art-based methods like the Photovoice ensured a successful communication. Through this new ways, analyzing a landscape or a city space can be more effective: "In that we saw really big potential to furthermore understand how [citizens] feel about the cities." It also enabled a new channel to discover and express what people want for specific spaces. This also applies to the local taskforces, as they were able to

communicate wishes and desires. Another important part of the process was the communication tracker, Shreya added. The lokal taskforces were asked to track their activities over time. Critical turning points were captured and the whole process can be understood.

Julia reffered to including the 'leave no one behind' principle: "Maybe we didn't succeed fully. But in a way, it was really helpful to approach these principles to really try to implement also relevant GID parameters in implementing the NbS."

Contact



WP3 lead person
Julia Gäckle
RWTH Aachen
University
jgaeckle@la.rwth-
aachen.de



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 869764. The sole responsibility for the content of this document lies with the GoGreenRoutes project and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the European Union.



You can find further details about the following topics by clicking on the titles.

- 3 [Table of figures](#)
- 5 [Transcript of the Focus Group Discussion in Burgas](#)
- 23 [Transcript of the Focus Group Discussion in Limerick](#)
- 38 [Transcript of the first Focus Group Discussion in Umeå](#)
- 57 [Transcript of the second Focus Group Discussion in Umeå](#)
- 62 [Transcript of the Focus Group Discussion in Lahti](#)
- 72 [Transcript of the Focus Group Discussion in Tallinn](#)
- 83 [Transcript of the first Focus Group Discussion in Versailles](#)
- 91 [Transcript of the second Focus Group Discussion in Versailles](#)
- 95 [Transcript of the interview with Cathy Biass-Mourin in Versailles](#)
- 97 [Transcript of the interview with Brigitte Chaudron in Versailles](#)
- 99 [Transcript of the interview with François Darchis in Versailles](#)
- 105 [Transcript of the interview with Dr. Tadhg MacIntyre, WP1](#)
- 109 [Transcript of the interview with Dr. John Gallagher, WP2](#)
- 112 [Transcript of the interview with Isobel Fletcher, WP4](#)
- 115 [Transcript of the interview with Rossano Schifanelli, WP6](#)
- 122 [Transcript of the interview with Giovanna Calogiuri, WP6](#)
- 125 [Transcript of the interview with Stephen Smith, WP7](#)
- 128 [Transcript of the interview with Evelise Pereira Barboza, WP8](#)
- 130 [Transcript of the interview with Adriana Duarte, WP9](#)
- 135 [Transcript of the interview with Mariia Chebotareva, WP10](#)
- 138 [Transcript of the dialogue between ICLEI and RWTH](#)

Children of different ages planting bulbs in a new pocket park in Umeå.
Picture 29,
Frederik Larsson

PARTNERS

ANNEX

Table of figures

Picture 1	People taking a breath in the Health Forest during Lahti's Seedbed intervention (Finland) in September 2022.	Photo credit: Juha Tanhua	P. 2	Picture 19	Children from the school nearby helped planting bulbs and learned about environmental developments in the area to support insects. Members of the Ltf joined the event to later talk about it in our Focus Group Discussions.	Photo credit: Frederik Larsson	P. 32
Picture 2	Guided tour around the pilot area in Tallinn during its Seedbed intervention in September 2022.	Photo credit: Anton Semenyura	P. 4	Picture 20	Collage of activities over time in Lahti.	Credit: Jannis Meul	P. 34
Picture 3	GoGreenRoutes and Volvo Lastvagnar AB teamed up to do warm-up dances with the children after planting bulbs at the first parcllet in Umeå.	Photo credit: Frederic Larsson	P. 6	Picture 21	Collage of activities over time in Tallinn.	Credit: Jannis Meul	P. 38
Picture 4	Structure of the report, built on three main parts.	Credit: Julia Gäckle, Jannis Meul	P. 8	Picture 22	Tallinn presented the plans to redesign the area to the public and gathered feedback from visitors.	Photo credit: Birgit Varblane	P. 42
Picture 5	Lahti's NbS intervention includes wooden decks to work out.	Photo credit: Tommi Mattila	P. 9	Picture 23	Collage of activities over time in Versailles.	Credit: Jannis Meul	P. 44
Picture 6	Overview of key methods used between Seedbed and NbS interventions.	Photo credit: Jannis Meul	P. 10	Picture 24	The Focus Group Discussions were held on site to also capture impressions of the inauguration.	Photo credit: Jannis Meul	P. 48
Picture 7	„Park island“ is now a place to meet and play!	Photo credit: City of Burgas	P. 11	Picture 25	Entry to Lahti's Health Forest, including signage showing the route as well as information to focus on your walk.	Photo credit: Tommi Mattila	P.52
Picture 8	Wood carvings in old tree trunks along the greenway.	Photo credit: City of Limerick	P. 11	Picture 26	"A Playful City" organised multiple games and activities to further activate the Square in Versailles. Children participated in a "Colour Scavanger Hunt" collected natural material to match the colours on the paper.	Photo credit: Jannis Meul	P.64
Picture 9	Children planting bulbs at a new pocket park.	Photo credit: Frederic Larsson	P. 11	Picture 27	"A Playful City" organised different graphics to promote the event and adress people of all ages.	Credit: A Playful City	P. 64
Picture 10	Lahti's NbS Intervention includes wooden decks to work out, do yoga or relax in the sun.	Photo credit: Tommi Mattila	P. 12	Picture 28	Shreya Utkarsh from ICLEI and Julia Gäckle RWTH met in April 2024 in Freiburg's eco quarter Vauban to discuss the storybook and the impact of our work with the city partners. Vauban impressively integrated NbS and citizen engagement tools within the planning and maintaining process.	Photo credit: Jannis Meul	P. 68
Picture 11	People visiting the outdoor exhibition in Tallinn where plans for the future design of the area are presented.	Photo credit: Birgit Varblane	P. 12	Picture 29	Children of different ages planting bulbs in a new pocket park in Umeå.	Photo credit: Frederik Larsson	P. 70
Picture 12	The large park area offers different zones for several activities to choose from.	Photo credit: Jannis Meul	P. 12				
Picture 13	These four questions were asked at every Focus Group Discussion, the 5th question was mostly sent out afterwards to be answered individually.	Credit: Jannis Meul	P. 14				
Picture 14	Collage of activities over time in Burgas.	Credit: Jannis Meul	P. 16				
Picture 15	The new park is designed in organic shapes and offers different areas to relax, play or meet.	Photo credit: City of Burgas	P. 20				
Picture 16	Collage of activities over time in Limerick.	Credit: Jannis Meul	P. 22				
Picture 17	The pocket park next to an intersection of the Castletroy Greenway was designed with natural materials and invites visitors to take a break and enjoy the space.	Photo credit: City of Limerick	P. 26				
Picture 18	Collage of activities over time in Umeå.	Credit: Jannis Meul	P. 28				

Transcript of the Focus Group Discussion in Burgas

Monday, August 21, 2023 10:32AM CET • Duration: 01:34

On-site visit, Terrace of Ulitsa "Sveti Kliment Ohridski" 3

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

project, area, NbS, city, place, green, biodiversity, municipality, people, nature, work, space, solutions, park, plan, process, citizens

SPEAKERS

Shreya Utkarsh, Ivaylo Trendafilov, Dionysia Giannopoulou, Local taskforce members

SETTING

The Focus Group Discussion held on August 21, 2023, at the address "Sveti Kliment Ohridski" 3, Burgas, was notably engaging and insightful. Throughout the session, several key observations emerged:

1. **Friendly and welcoming atmosphere** The atmosphere during the discussion was friendly and conducive to open dialogue. This positive open environment possibly contributed to the participants' willingness to share their thoughts openly. They offered drinks and snacks which made everyone feel comfortable from the very beginning. Also, Ivaylo gifted us a little present at the end of the session, a handmade tote bag with some goods in it.
2. **Engagement** The participants demonstrated a high level of engagement. They appeared well-prepared and eager to share comprehensive insights about the ongoing projects within the city. Particularly engaged, I found the land architect, Monika. She had a great overview of the Park Island project and she did not hesitate to give us updates and share insights on the progress of the constructions.
3. **Passion for Greening** There was a palpable passion among the participants regarding the greening projects that the city is involved in. They recognized the significance of integrating more nature-based elements into Burgas.
4. **Desire for Progress** Participants expressed a strong desire to position Burgas in additional projects. This desire for involvement was exemplified by their recent win in the urban project, reflecting their dedication to securing resources to enhance the city's sustainability.
5. **Public Engagement Challenge** Public engagement emerged repeatedly as a challenge. Participants expressed the difficulty of effectively involving the community in various initiatives.
6. **Community Engagement** Engaging with the community sounded to be a bit tricky, particularly the Roma community, which was recognized as a complex endeavor. While participants expressed concern about finding effective solutions, their enthusiasm to overcome this challenge was evident.
7. **Openness to Challenges** Despite acknowledging challenges in citizen and public engagement, participants openly shared their thoughts. Their willingness to address these challenges head-on was notable.

The Focus Group Discussion provided valuable insights into the perspectives and aspirations of the participants. The engagement, passion, and dedication showcased by the Burgas community, as well as their commitment to overcoming challenges, bode well for the city's journey towards a more sustainable and inclusive future.

Ivaylo Trendafilov 0:06

The main objective of the project is to study how spending more time outside, in being active outside affects the general well being of individuals in the city. So part of this project within Burgas, we made a concept design of the small green area. Fortunately from another project, we managed to secure financing, and it's being implemented at the moment. And before the construction work began, we made like an initial baseline of noise pollution in the area, air quality, number of people passing by, the biodiversity, there was this application which captures the voices of different birds, and recognize the bird. And now we can have the baseline, and once the park is finished next year at the same time. This was in June, this year. So next year in June, I think we will have the same monitoring. And we will see more or less, how this renovation in this green area affected the neighbourhood. So, in this practice with ICLEI, ICLEI is an international organization, one of the most powerful organizations together with you, as far as I know, so thanks to them Burgas municipality is a member of ICLEI for, I don't know, maybe 15 years or 20 years?

Shreya Utkarsh 1:49

I think 2008? Yeah. A long time ago!

Ivaylo Trendafilov 1:54

Yeah, and thanks to them, we managed to implement it. We implemented many, many projects. So it's quite valuable for us.

Shreya Utkarsh 2:07

Thank you so much, Ivaylo. Yeah, I can quickly start and then we choose to this round as well. So I'm Shreya. And I work on Nature-based Solutions and biodiversity. And ICLEI, as Ivaylo explained, is a city network, so we have kind of expertise to take kind of knowledge from one city and see if it can be implemented in another, so peer to peer learning processes. But also supporting mostly urban planning aspects, definitely. I am very much focused on the greening side, greening and bluing, you could call it. So much more on the natural components. So that's kind of my, like, I did a master's in environmental governance, so much more on trying to understand how co-creation works, how society works in a natural environment, and how we can make it more connected to the nature developments in the city as well. So that's kind of the background. I work on almost five projects at the moment, very different, but similar kinds of interests. So looking at the challenges for the city is having, and then trying to find good solutions, which are based on nature, to implement in cities as well, using the public land or even with private enterprises, and trying to connect that a little bit in cities. So that's from my side.

Dionysia Giannopoulou 3:45

Hi, everyone. I am Dionysia. I joined ICLEI two months ago, as an intern, I'm doing my internship for five, six months. I'm working with Shreya on this team on Nature-based Solutions, so yeah, I'm trying my best here. I'm here to meet you and have a nice discussion today. I can also share a bit about my background. I studied economics in Greece, I'm from Greece. And then I did my master's in Italy, in innovation management. And now I'm living in Brussels. ICLEI has some offices around Europe, and one of them is in Brussels based. So I am living there at the moment.

Local taskforce 4:45

Hello, my name is Sonia. I work for the strategic development in the Burgas municipality. I have a background in international relations. A master's in international business, and mostly I help with the preparation and implementation of projects where we deal with climate adaption, urban regeneration. Currently we implement a project on revaluing the water from the urban areas of waterfront cities into

sunder horizon climate conditions. So, I think we'll be focusing on regenerating the waterfront area that is connected with biodiversity in Burgas. And so one of the webcams we will try to implement Nature-based Solutions there and try to protect the biodiversity and to enhance also the connectivity between the area and the urban core. I think it'll be beneficial.

Shreya Utkarsh 5:58

Sounds great. Is that Regions for Climate as well? Or what project is that?

Local taskforce 6:03

it's called Revalue. It's like a sister project. Regions for Climate.

Local taskforce 6:19

My name is Christina, I'm from a national NGO. We have a regional office here in Burgas, dealing mainly with biodiversity and wetlands. But not only on the coasts, and working very actively with the municipality. For many years, I work for almost 25 years for my organization. And during all these years, we worked with the municipality and we also know how they developed, how they collect so many experts on these European topics. But especially for this project, we were involved in the first part, when we discussed the different options to involve citizens. This area was selected because it's on the opposite side of our office [Laughter]. We are waiting for the final result and to be able to use it since it's a nice place. So, measure by solution, the topic is very interesting for us at the moment and we also worked on select projects but now on horizon 2020. This Nature-based Solution is something which we should do and which we want to develop capacity to be able to use the legs of the analysis.

Local taskforce 8:40

Actually though, the NGO is the most active on the territory of Burgas, which is environmentally related. If you don't know the context of Burgas, maybe good to know that the city is surrounded by three lakes and the sea, there is exceptional biodiversity because here we have the Pontica Route which is a migrant route for work in Europe. The Biodiversity Foundation, they manage one of our lakes. They're responsible for management one of those.

Shreya Utkarsh 9:42

Thank you so much.

Local taskforce 9:46

My name is Monica. I'm part of the design team, specifically from the architecture studio which was involved in the park place. Our collective background: we are quite diverse first in background because we have colleagues with experience in architecture, like me, with interior design and art, with furniture and product design and similar to our background, our interest then kind of combines all of these areas into. We're looking for solutions, again not specifically architecture or interior design, but solutions which are able to transform somehow the found environment. So in this case we're not concentrating on urban design or whatever. We're working on projects which have a potential nature impact. So we're trying to propose things which are well thought for people to start to have a meaningful life here.

Shreya Utkarsh 11:51

Yeah.

Local taskforce 11:51

It is actually experts and all other representatives here from the municipality will work in the strategic planning directorate. So our jobs are mainly related to preparation and implementation of projects funded but also other international programs. Whoever then, before the municipality starts we have to check.

Shreya Utkarsh 14:00

As a preliminary step to determine how it would work actually in practice.

Local taskforce 14:06

We have to inform the neighbours.

Shreya Utkarsh 14:45

So if I understood correctly, like in the area where people with some health issues-

Local taskforce 14:53

Yes, yes, exactly. There is a new hospital. People are going to use this place for recreation.

Local taskforce 15:14

So, my name is Yorgi, just like my colleagues, I'm working with the Burgas municipality and Strategic Development Directorate. I'm also responsible for project preparation implementation, basically projects related to urban planning, development and implementation of Nature-based Solutions related to climate change, adaptation and mitigation measures. So, right in the moment, I'm project coordinator of Regions for Climate. One of the large scale innovation projects with demonstration activities related to climate change and use of Nature-based Solutions in the process of climate change adaptation and mitigation. This project is actually launched at the beginning of this year. And it's a pretty logical structure with a lot of members, actually ICLEI is one of the partners within the project responsible for the communication and dissemination procedures. My professional background, my educational background is related to economics and marketing.

Shreya Utkarsh 16:58

And good luck with the with the start of this new project! It sounds really, really challenging.

Local taskforce 17:03

Yes very interesting. We kept very good cohesion with the partners. A lot of things that we have planned to realize, and we will have the opportunity to build on this experience and to continue. This good collaboration actually has potentially good results that have very direct focus on climate change and the way that the city is changing and developing. That should adapt to all these challenges.

Shreya Utkarsh 17:49

Sounds great. Yeah, we'll definitely follow up with the Regions for Climate and see how to make the connection as well with GoGreenRoutes. I mean, this was more on the health aspect. But of course, this relates to the co-benefits those NbS can provide. It can be health, it can also be other elements, which are related to more, let's say the climate regulation things as well. And you're working much more on that. So there are some linkages to see how the people can benefit as well when you do that. Great. Sounds good. So, do you want to also say a few words about yourself?

Local taskforce 18:37

I'm the director of the Directorate, I worked for the municipality since 2009. We work on different topics that are not only Nature-based Solutions, they are also mobility and energy efficiency, social services and so on. But let's say Nature-based Solutions and climate adaptation and mitigation measures are full topics at the moment. So let's say that's what connects us today, yeah.

Shreya Utkarsh 19:22

Thank you so much, okay. What we are here for was this Focus Group Discussion, Ivaylo probably also shared kind of what we are going to do today. But just to say that this is part of the whole process of what we are doing in one of the Work Packages and probably have come across these acronyms. What WP three mean. So we are Work Package three, and working together with RWTH Aachen, which is a university in Germany as well. And what we did is the Seedbed intervention as well, I think some of you probably were also there engaged.

Ivaylo Trendafilov 20:05

Yes, some of my colleagues were there.

Shreya Utkarsh 20:10

That was super nice. Thank you so much. And also the videos and stuff. So we have uploaded everything on the on the website as well. I don't know, if you've checked this GoGreenRoutes.eu. There's like pictures, at least, we did that. So you can take a look, it's on the website. That was the first engagement process. And now, that Ivaylo will maybe tell us a bit more in terms of if the implementation is ready. You said a lot of different things could happen, in terms of providing space for recreation in different ways. So the yoga places or some kind of resting spaces. And this is now for us to kind of follow up on that to see what has been the benefits? How do you see the process of this co-creation? And what could be the future of it? Like, what could you take out of it? And I have one more question, which is a bit more kind of prioritization. So just to get to know, what kind of area would you prioritize in the future, when you do Nature-based Solutions based on? Is it about trying to mitigate the noise level? Would it be more about trying to find places for people to have recreational activities and so on. So that's one of the last ones to tick box, so to say which one, but maybe you want to say a few words about like the implementation process?

Ivaylo 21:47

Maybe my colleagues here, will be able to tell better at what stage the construction is. However, it started around like, two months ago, maybe more, we will see how far it's gone. But for me personally, this renovation process more or less, is a common thing for the municipality. But the benefit to me from the process so far was this workshop that we did with the citizens, because the local administration hasn't done public discussions in this way, we used to take on discussions. In the recent years, the approaches getting better and better, but still, we kept gathering people for one hour, telling them what we want to do. And that's it. Now, with this project, we stayed there at the place for two days, all day. So more or less, we managed to capture all the people who live in the area, who will be the main users of the park. So if this approach is our intention to do this public discussions for the future, if we can keep that and put that in our everyday work, I think this will be the most beneficial for us as an administration and for the for the citizens of Burgas.

Local taskforce 23:30

May I add something? What do you think, is this something which cost a lot of resources to make it on this way in the future?

Ivaylo Trendafilov 23:51

No. Of course it costs your time. If we don't count the time of the people who are involved, of course, it costs nothing.

Shreya Utkarsh 24:09

Yeah, I think it's like a new way of trying to engage more people and do the co-creation process, which sometimes can have challenges as well. So maybe you've like heard from some people who are, I remember that you said that most people were positive and wanted that change. But sometimes, like we've seen from cities when they start to say, or like some citizens would say, oh, but not here, or I rather need a parking place or I wouldn't want this and so on. So sometimes these things come out as challenges. But I think it's really important to do that.

Ivaylo Trendafilov 24:43

I think it quite depends on the place and on the things you want to do at a place. For example, for this area right there, no one was against it.

Local taskforce 24:55

It was quite unusual because these buildings were ment to be demolished.

Local taskforce 25:14

Because people, they usually pass by this area and they want to spend much more time there for recreational purposes. It makes the area much more attractive, no more big parking spots. Usually the people who visit hospitals could not spend time there.

Ivaylo Trendafilov 25:38

Hopefully the added value of the whole thing is that we keep this measurement of the territory. So because we are not doing the park, but we also plan to plant 20-30 trees on the parking plot itself. Three or four years, we will mitigate a little bit.

Shreya Utkarsh 26:07

Yes. Sounds good. And engaging with the biodiversity NGO, I could imagine

Local taskforce 26:13

In any case, they were very clever to choose. There are many other processes. There is another small project, active citizens here in Burgas. And the people from the municipality who work on this, they have many difficulties, because the places were not so nice. And there are many, many other obstacles who made the process different. One of the places was over there. It's an abandoned area. But at the same time, there are plans for future reconstruction of the former cinema. And there's a veterinary shop on the opposite side, there's a coffee place and the bistro. And at the same time, it's used by many dangerous people, homeless people, and you want to make some good intervention in the area and to make it a nicer place because it's in the middle of the town. But at the same time, there are so many obstacles that it's not possible, because it's temporary, you don't know what will happen next year. It's not municipal property impact. So in this case, it was very good selection.

Shreya Utkarsh 27:52

It's also about the selection of the place, which is super important. And also what kind of NbS you're doing, like with the greening, but it could be also recreational stuff for the hospital visitors and so on.

So win-win-win!

Ivaylo Trendafilov 28:13

It's also about the different areas within the park. Because honestly, I cannot remember.

Local taskforce 28:22

First, the previous point. I think on the one side, it's possible to have a lot of misunderstanding when you have such a big difference between like a governing body which is moving the project and every citizen who asked what we're doing. So this middle process of consulting and public engagement, I think it's very important for establishing how to have a formal process of tracing. I am still reading some articles which are not relevant to me they are about the project-

Ivaylo Trendafilov 29:08

but they are about a different idea. One previous idea.

Local taskforce 29:12

Yes, so it's very possible to not check with a credible source of information, such as the public engagement, and if such a process is missing, then it gives an opportunity for a lot of speculation, which, of course no one wants to happen and how you manage this public expectations of what people want for a place. There could be a lot of speculation whether to listen to what is right now, or to do what you think will be right for them in 20 years. So, again, because it's kind of bridging the gap. When it comes to zones of the park, from the beginning, I think from very early on, you were engaged, which was at a stage when we had the upper against, particularly where this project goes. Once we got familiar with the core shakes, all of these things kind of narrowed down. And there's a specific thing about this project, it is that it doesn't have a very large area for the amount of things that we were able to propose. And the result that we're hoping to get from this is instead of learning from projects in first five years, we are now able to construct this in a few months and immediately start seeing what the result is from only small interventions on site. So the right frame of walkable Park. But within that, we are proposing different, very specific things. We have like different nuances. The strategy was first, starting from the point of how we can propose something that can teach people probably through lifestyle, these things got broken down into dealing with the idea of nature, independence of nature, and how we can recreate them in the city. So this place, I think it was strategically chosen, because it was the largest aim, which was able to remain green in the center. So where we have the basis building context, we're able to propose this, which is very important, otherwise, mothers with children, they have to go a long way, it's very different everywhere else from the center because we have this kind of large scale planning, large green areas. So then what we were looking for is how we can recreate a sense of nature without recreating a cliché, which already exists. So we were trying to through different informations which can give you a sense of aromatherapy, the therapy of water, the ability to move freely and rediscover the park through your senses, the opportunity to propose tactile design for the furniture through product design. What you mentioned earlier about the birds and even the sound therapy and the ability to be close to nature. So at the moment we are at a very interesting stage, right at the border between let's say the large construction works, and the specific installation of every individual piece of equipment. What this idea of being in this park is it's a bit small for all the heavy machinery that has to like pick the ground. And the fact that it's broken down into several green islands means that the the contractor has to be very careful when they finish a specific place and depart. Sometimes that will not be possible. to go with them. She moved in. So we have to kind of prepare the ground for something that happens in a month's time to make sure that everything is there in place. So just kind of completing it really from the bottom. And at this moment, we have a lot of collaboration between the makers for designing and producing the specification and the

preparation.

Shreya Utkarsh 35:32

And also a question about how, at the moment is it causing, like, I don't know, because I haven't seen the park, I would just ask, is it easy to access for the citizens around or to be able to pass through or is it sealed space at the moment?

Local taskforce 35:54

At the moment it's for the construction workers, yeah.

Ivaylo Trendafilov 36:06

Once it's renovated, the buildings on the one side, it depends on where you enter the park. If you're coming from there, it will be wide open and you can access. If you are going along the street, there is a building, the park will be right behind the building but anyway, the people will be there.

Local taskforce 36:32

I mean they pass by the street, and the pedestrian sidewalks, so these ways are still accessible to them.

Shreya Utkarsh 36:40

Yeah, and they will make it easier for them.

Ivaylo Trendafilov 36:46

If you walk along the street, you cannot see to walk along the street on the one side, you cannot see the building. However, it's very approachable.

Shreya Utkarsh 36:57

Okay, sounds great. That sounds really really cool, like the different kind of preparation how you have to make sure that one thing does not lead to the problems with the other small installations and so on. So there's a good communication I imagine with the construction people.

Local taskforce 37:21

Yeah, we just have to know that if it's not prepared in the right way for example, if you imagine we have to know exactly where something will be mounted. So this place is left waiting for this specifically but everything around is finished, the pavement and so on.

Ivaylo Trendafilov 37:51

In fact, for this to this project, there was supposed to be a ramp which goes imaging into like a second floor on the on the ballpark. However, the budget was not enough. But in my opinion, it is better that this ramp is not there because the space itself is not so big. At least I image like that, it will be too packed with many many equipments.

Local taskforce 38:32

I think the way without the ramp, the focus of the impact of the park goes in a different stage. So we still think it is the complete project, with or without.

Shreya Utkarsh 38:56

I think like before, I have some more questions. But I was just thinking like, you've all been, you've also been

involved throughout the GoGreenRoutes as the Local taskforce and part of the challenge workshop and seeing people, when the Seedbed intervention, when you were part of it, like all of you have been involved in that process just to check in. Okay, yeah, yeah. And you see benefit in like, as you said, public engagement and how it can become like kind of a standing thing that you do in each project from from then on, so the benefit of co-creation?

Local taskforce 39:35

I think that on-the-ground communication brings direct beneficiaries. It is very important because it's especially good for them in terms of communicating what the city wants change, what they want to implement, and especially when we try to communicate climate change topics. It's something new. People, they don't usually understand all these measures that changed. So it's very good for them to explain what changes and measures we want to do and somehow make them want this.

Shreya Utkarsh 40:18

Yeah, definitely. I think the follow-up question to it is basically to know how, like with this kind of NbS, I know that you've been working on other greening projects and so on. And if I'm not mistaken, you're also part of urban greening, how's it called UGP plus project? So like really expanding in this like NbS domain. So just to understand also, why do you or how do you think it's a catalyst to make people come closer to nature? How is this NbS you know, a good catalyst for bringing nature closer to people and connecting them to the environment? Maybe you have some thoughts on that?

Local taskforce 41:20

I guess from the different points of view, it would be a different answer for everyone. For us, the main thing was that, first, we were really trying to understand what we're proposing based on the needs of who we expect to be there. And that was quite a complex mix of people, because of the hospitals and the local residents. Then the next thing is to try and really see, if you propose something that is more unique, and more, someone says, a point of pride in our city, a point of interest that you can enjoy your time in nature, not only because it's just this type of environment, because it's well thought through. So every specific object design and in fact, how you experience it. In the long term, we believe that this is a road that doesn't necessarily have an endpoint, but it can keep developing. And we can learn from it. So yeah, it's alongside trying to be ambitious and, in the process, we have been discussing things that are not installed anywhere. So it's very important to see how they're taking the smaller scale before trying to propose something more.

Ivaylo Trendafilov 43:36

Nobody else can tell us, we are imageing quite an open space, which people enjoy.

Local taskforce 43:43

For us, it's very important to connect people with a wild nature, because we have this chance here in Burgas, as Maya mentioned, we have these three lakes, which are quite different, and the access to them is quite different also. And some of them are part of the city, some of them are outside. And together with the sea, it's really a nature puzzle. As we always joke, according to us, it's a paradise for nature. According to architects and developers, it's a very, very challenging area. And then, of course, as a big town has many problems helping develop the area and to keep the nature and to give more space to people and things like this. So during all these years, we had these discussions how to make the balance. And for us, it's very important that people can go out and go directly into the nature. This lake for example, it's very close to two, even three of the neighbourhoods in Burgas. And at the same time, the north park, there were small villages around, which become part of the city and they are now neighbourhoods of the city, they are not

villages anymore. And during this last year, the lake around city lake become inland. It is now a city lake surrounded by different neighbourhoods, also by an airport. So it's very important people who have access, especially in the in the south park, they have different access. Several years ago, municipality made a project, the cycle road between sea garden and one of the neighbourhoods, it's maybe the most beautiful area and alley in Bulgaria. From one side you see the sea, and from the other side, it's the lake. And there are 1000-2000 people per day who are visiting the result, it's really fantastic. Fantastic place. Of course, there are many difficulties, but that's the question of a different discussion. So for us, it's important people to go out and to see the lakes and have cycling access to all of the three lakes. But at the same time, it's very important to have places in the town, in the city, which are green and help us, because one of the biggest problems that we have in Burgas is related to the air pollution and the refinery make big problems for the local residents. And especially for the people who are visiting. Because we are very familiar and for me, it's not such a big problem. But for the guests in the summer it's a very hot issue. So we have the very nice see garden with a lot of trees, a very nice place to visit and to relax. But at the same time, we need some green islands. Especially this parking, it's a hotspot, because it's very close to the beach, very close to the center. I don't know, what is the capacity, it's maybe 300 cars, it's open air, and now in the summer, there are no green places at all. So you can imagine how it's used. So that's why I'm saying that they make a very clever decision to choose this place.

Shreya Utkarsh 48:53

So you want to do de-sealing? That's already been done, I could imagine. In the design process to like depave and de-seal.

Ivaylo Trendafilov 49:03

Some of the parking lots are already done, not with concrete, but with this-

Local taskforce 49:11

No concrete blocks, but with holes, actually, which enables the vegetation to grow and actually also allow the water to flow through.

Ivaylo Trendafilov 49:33

So, we will make some more of the parking lots like this. And we will plant some trees. So, hopefully it will not be perfect, but it will be much better than than it is now.

Local taskforce 49:44

And actually, it's very important, when we provide the Nature-based Solution infrastructure for citizens, main infrastructure, for example, to work in this role with the citizens from the beginning, I mean, the codesign of the area is very important, the co-production and the maintenance. Because in the initial stage, you obtain feedback with the community, what there desire for the area is and when we have touching points, this enables us to develop them to plan the area in this direction, not only provide an infrastructure that nobody wants to be there. So, especially in our region to test this, for ownership and for design projects, before the actual implementation of the Nature base Solutions. And this will provide us with the opportunity to work in close relations with the community and to conceptualize the area in terms of a best way to fit their needs and to bring benefits for the society. It's very important to explain that the Nature-based Solutions have multiple benefits for the citizens, not only for example, heat islands, they can affect a lot of climate change challenges, real challenges in terms of flooding, noise, in terms of pollution. All these hazards that actually nowadays, cities and large agglomerations are facing. So it's very important this close cohesion and communication and cooperation with the citizens to start at initial phase, and to continue during all the

project implementation in all the stages. So this is another approach, another policy that we try to follow in all our projects, to solve all these actual problems.

Shreya Utkarsh 52:43

Maybe based on what you're saying, totally like this early communication and early feedback is really an important thing. But I also I wanted to ask about like, do you have plans, once it's like completely finalized with all your construction, to then bring the citizens for an event? Is the municipality is thinking about that?

Local taskforce 53:09

Yes, the municipality is planning to show the people the final result.

Shreya Utkarsh 53:31

Yeah. I was just asking that if you would do, because you did in in the Seedbed intervention, you went two days and collected so much wealth of information. And now to know, when the NbS intervention will be finalized, let's say, after that, will you have another like, grand opening?

Ivaylo Trendafilov 53:53

For sure! The other thing is, it will be good to have like, I don't know, maybe after six months to have another Seedbed intervention to hear the feedback of it.

Shreya Utkarsh 54:09

Exactly. Yeah.

Ivaylo Trendafilov 54:10

But I will lie to you if I tell you that we will do such a thing. [Laughter] But it would be good, honestly!

Shreya Utkarsh 54:17

But even even within the welcoming, so when you do this grand opening or some kind of opening, maybe you can have a survey, just questionnaire on the side and say how it improved your feeling around it and just get the feedback, not like in this way of two days of your time and effort, but just to have a survey circulated. Because that would be great, because you're doing this baseline, you did the baseline as well. You saw the area in terms of air pollution, noise and so on. But then the same way for co-creation. It would be really relevant to check in afterwards, if they are satisfied, and if it can be something that they would like to use and how they're using it in a daily way. To get a bit of a feedback, I think that would be, at least from our side, really interesting for the project.

Ivaylo Trendafilov 55:15

We will do that! The way I see this, the way I want to make it is this Bulgarian site for protection of birds, biodiversity. They sold a calendar that they made, for each month, there is a bird and there is a barcode, so you scan the barcode, and you start hearing the voice of the bird. Maybe we can get like this in the park with different birds, and may be somewhere between all the information there will be this barcode for feedback.

Shreya Utkarsh 55:25

Yeah, and it can be simple one, even just like, do you like it, really simple perception of how people-

Local taskforce 56:13

Burgas made a whole chain with a primary school, with a High School, the University, developing IT

specialist. So we work with this primary school. And they are very active, trying different technologies. So last month, we made the big panel, and the kids, they make a QR course. And when you scan it, you go to a special website, which will show information for the birds. And additionally, they make a special game for the nest of the birds. They draw the pictures of the nests and of the birds. And the most interesting was that they needed money for this to make all these things. So they organised cooking preparation of Flamingo and pelicans. They go, we have an international camp, which visited the lake. So they go speaking very well, very good English, presenting themselves the idea and selling the cookies very expensively, but they collected 4400 And printed the panels.

Shreya Utkarsh 57:49

This is great!

Local taskforce 57:53

Kids are the future. We can educate them in this way for a resilient way of thinking of nature preservation, yes.

Shreya Utkarsh 58:08

And it's also good, because you talked about this IT field and how they can connect with the environment field as well. If you make them do things on biodiversity, and so on, then it becomes part of the environmental education, even from a specific area. Exactly. This would be great, Ivaylo, to keep in touch, get in touch with the school, and to do it. Because, as you know, there are projects now on NbS education as well. I'm working on one of them. And they are also doing very similar things, engaging with the schools and getting to know how the teachers are responding to NbS, what they think about including it in their curriculum, so training them as well. So this is definitely coming into the idea now, that we have started the urban planning and implementation, but what about the children? What about the teachers? What about education? So it's really, really going. And I just wanted to quickly also show this, I think it's underneath there. Ah yeah, it's it's the same one. So we also did a lot of posters, I'm sorry that I didn't carry everything. But this is like the same one for the Seedbed intervention that we did. And we produced also a report. And the plan would be that after getting the story from your side, to also put it together into a story book. And this will be really through the city network or through our RWTH Aachen, like distributed to other projects, other cities that are involved. So it's also kind of education, even, in a certain way for professionals, like to know, how did one city find out the challenges and how they took it forward. So we are trying that a little bit. From that perspective as well, but with education activities.

Local taskforce 1:00:06

Can I have a look on that?

Shreya Utkarsh 1:00:07

Yes, for sure, please, I think I could give one to you.

Dionysia Giannopoulou 1:00:10

You can also scan the QR code!

Shreya Utkarsh 1:00:12

I can give one to each of you. I think you might have even seen it. So this was a two pager. And there's also 10 pager to explaining the whole process. Because this is what we are taking out. And I think one question that I still have and it's about like, how do you see the future of the group or park, how, do you envision it

and I know, I would really like if the school children are involved, but also what else could happen that could create this community engagement in that area?

Local taskforce 1:01:05

We can get a feedback from the patients from the hospital, for example.

Ivaylo Trendafilov 1:01:28

We have recently won one project- five million euros and something and the thing there is that we will not only renovate one sports hall, make it almost a passive building, but there are abundant green areas surrounding it. And so what we will do there, maybe we will finally create a sense of community between the people, because we can do a lot of things, but until the people- I know it sounds like imaginary or some idea well, but until the people don't start taking care of their place themselves in preserving this place, we will always see like trash everywhere, because us as an institution surely can do can do better, but we cannot go everywhere and clean up. So if you do not give this sense of property in preserving the place, not only your home, but the place surrounding.

Shreya Utkarsh 1:02:51

Yeah, I mean, this is what you said, this co-ownership kind of idea, that they feel that this is my place and this is the park in front of my house.

Local taskforce 1:03:02

We want to renovate, regenerate this old sports hall and make it more like a community center, more multifunctional spaces for co-working, for traditions between old generations and younger generations, like crafts and different things, and outside to integrate these green areas, to regenerate them and bring them as a community garden. Like urban farming spots, where some target groups like retired people or migrants or people with low social status can- even kindergarten schools and small-wage-people can take part and also learn from the elderly, how to grow their plants and how to take care. Also differnt areas like therapy gardens. We plan to have some major events there, like a festival of traditions, arts and crafts. After that, it would be a lot of major events. I don't know how we can manage that. But we want to make the space for the community, for the residents there, but not only because it's now it's used mostly for the sports clubs, but now we want to bring the retired people to provide these spaces where we have support. A fitness studio for elderly people here, habilitation rooms, so we wil provide provide the acess and make them use the space more functionality. So they will have basically to the right to do events, to make their own calendar. Like, for example, you can have some art or craft that you can teach, you can reserve a spot, and then some people can just come to see or make an event around this. So you can feel more vulnerable as an elderly person.

Shreya Utkarsh 1:05:42

Yeah, but, I mean, that's what Ivaylo said. You mentioned in the start this, kind of, I don't know, getting the people engaged is is a challenging process anyways, but I think this is what we need to do to make sure that they get the multiple benefits and use the space.

Local taskforce 1:06:08

Yes. So elderly people, they're quite isolated. So we started Nature-based Solutions and regenerating this green space, provides mental benefits, not only physical, but also mental. And we want to bring them outside to connect them again to younger and more active citizens, because we feel that they have something to say and want to keep these traditions somehow. Something that is missing nowadays.

Local taskforce 1:06:40

When we talk about NbS, we create a vision, to create a green necklace, urban spaces, that will provide green access to all vital public spaces in terms of green bridges, green corridors. And we will try to follow this ambition in our projects, even in Regions for Climate, we're planning with an urban green bridge that connects two urban green areas, renovating space that used to be an abandoned railway network and we'll use this space as a showcase of this holistic use of Nature-based Solutions, aiming to solve multiple issues with heat islands, flooding, air pollution, and at the same time providing good access for people to the green areas and the renovated space, where they can relax, they can have a walk, they can do sports, or use spaces the best way they look for. This is part of it, to use these measures to solve multiple climate issues at the same time, to improve the environment and the living area.

Shreya Utkarsh 1:08:50

Yeah, I mean, I asked this last question about like the future. If you were to imagine like this Gurko Park kind of becoming something where people can engage quite a lot and so on, do you think that could be also tied to the hospital as well? Like do you have some connection? You said that maybe you can do some kind of feedback round or something. Is there connection with the hospital?

Ivaylo Trendafilov 1:09:18

Yes!

Dionysia Giannopoulou 1:09:29

It's very positive. That there is a strong connection between the municipality and the projects in the hospital. You can bring all of the members together for the future!

Local taskforce 1:09:46

Actually, a lot of people are always in mind with the patients in the hospital. First it started because between the three current and one future hospital, there is very little space to go right after you leave the building. And this is, on one hand, a space like this would reply to purely physical needs, to sit down and rest or travel or work, but also emotional needs, maybe you need to see someone, to craft some space for yourself. And the spaces inside the park are so like this. So there isn't a cluster of benches for a big group of people, there are more individual benches where someone can sit down. And this is also the reason to have quite a few walkways. Not all people end in the same place. But there is more of a feeling of wandering promoted in the past. There is the possibility to play gentle music, there are installations. So the kind of major connection is to experience the place as a place for health and therapy, indirect well-being. And like the others mentioned, I think it is very clear for us. We've had cases before when for example, before and after the renovations in schools. When the new environment is realized in the school, there is a drop in violence in schools for aggressive behavior. And I think everyone could agree that you can also witness this in urban spaces, a place that makes the people feel well there, they would like to protect it and care for it. Maybe if you've gone around, you see the neighbourhood people do take care of the garden, which is right next to them. So specific future things, we do imagine that people will recognize the place together, maybe a place to do a workshop for birds, bees, just small ways to act in their own way. And a big sign would be if this place is kept, because violence happens at different stages, often connected with the state of the environment. If people play in this way, it will influence how people behave.

Shreya Utkarsh 1:13:13

Thank you so much . I think it's really interesting. And I'm really excited what actually happens with all the installations, also that you've planned and how it can be connected with, as you said, like these workshops,

maybe they're doing something on the biodiversity, there are so many birds in the area and so on, to check that. I have one question, which would also help us to understand what kind of area could be chosen for new NbS interventions? You mentioned one, you also mentioned one what you're doing in your projects, but generally like for us to kind of get an idea, what areas would you prioritize? I have 16 different. This comes from our other colleague from actually from IS global, who's doing much more research on the health aspects as well. We are more cocreation people, but they're more on that side. I will just read out the many different areas that she has mentioned. And so the first one is an area with a lower amount of green cover, vegetation or green canopy, area that lacks public parks, area with lower opportunities to play and recreate, green space already available, but with the need for improvement, area suffering from urban heat island effect, area with high levels of air pollution, or the one with noise pollution, area with easy access from surroundings by walking in cycling, area with access with the road transportation and metro train, for instance, like these different ones. And then from the coast, for instance, as well, an area with high proportion of population with low economic, low socio economic status, for instance, or with a lot of population of migrants in that case, or children and adolescents or elderly. So, the last four is much more on the social context. The starting few are more on the, let's say, is it a lack of public parks? Is it a lack of green cover? Or is it more about your opportunities for engaging, and some are more on the pollution elements. So if you can, I don't know, each of you can just say what strikes you as the top priority? And I will send you the question so that we can get the prioritization, but just to talk about what could be the next NbS?

Local taskforce 1:16:08

If I can say, because I should go, for me, it's important to involve this social groups. There are still very tricky areas, because in one they live on the coast. One of the most beautiful parts, of course, but at the same time, they live very poorly and there are ideas to remove these people from this area to go somewhere else. But no politician is ready to do this. But in any case, their lives are going on there, so they need some special measures to be taken and really to get this magical solution and to benefit from the coast. Because at the moment, it's not very nice.

Shreya Utkarsh 1:17:20

As I understand, there is not so much engagement with the community?

Ivaylo Trendafilov 1:17:27

It's quite difficult. It's very difficult to engage with them. Honestly, despite all the efforts through all these years, I don't know, maybe 30 years already. There is almost no effect, there is some change, but a very, very small change, which, honestly, I don't know if it's worth the effort, it's always worth it, but it's very difficult.

Local taskforce 1:17:55

I'm sorry, I should go. It was a pleasure. I will check the website to see the information!

Shreya Utkarsh 1:18:04

Thank you so much.

Local taskforce 1:18:10

This group of people is focused on the mental needs, not to see the whole picture. The focus is on money and work, they have a lot of opportunities. So we're working, being engaged, but it's very difficult and very complicated to work with this part of the society. There are also ways, we tried in years to do so because we have this municipal mediators that work with this social groups in different parts, mainly in those parts of the city that are inhabited by these people. And some of them are very easy going, and we can work with

them, but they are only a small part of the whole community. It's very difficult to reach all of them.

Shreya Utkarsh 1:19:38

But maybe through them, like these people who are accessible?

Local taskforce 1:19:44

Yeah, their main goal is to try to work with those people, to address their needs, to obtain feedback. So, we use such kind of expertise, but still, it's a very initial phase. So very small extent.

Shreya Utkarsh 1:20:11

I mean, I know for instance, from one example like another project, if you're mentioning the Roma community, I don't think it's that, but it's more about the refugees in Hamburg city, and how to connect with them. So not to really to be able to integrate them into this open social fabric, so to say, I think they also worked a long time with the project. And what they did was they started with urban gardens. And I think one of you mentioned that you're trying that. And I think these are some NbS possibilities that can bring people together, regardless of their education level, regardless of their needs for recreation, or however the lifestyle could be. But like urban gardens can provide them the necessary vegetables, for instance, that they might need, or some kind of community and so on. So this is an idea. I can also share more information on that, Ivaylo, if I if you like, but they really managed quite well. And it's also with the municipality engagement as well.

Local taskforce 1:21:33

Just like the idea you have mentioned, we have this idea for a demonstration area, in the Roma populated area, because we were discussing it with our vice mayor. And it's an opportunity that we put into one future project. Yeah, see what will happen, but it's very tricky and very difficult to be implemented. So we will try to find ways.

Shreya Utkarsh 1:22:13

For instance, I can also say, like I was in Romania, actually just before this, and we work with a small city in Covasna. And they also have a big Roma community. And they hired social workers and psychologists to be there, to really start this kind of engagement and get to know them a little bit, I think it's in the initial stage, I have to say, but still, at least to come closer then to, I don't know, displace them from one place to another, but like, get close to them somehow, through social workers or people who have training on this. And then to kind of get them to assimilate in the society that you would see representation of Burgas. This is one example as well. But definitely really interesting that you also face similar challenges to some other countries even in that way. And that's why I think it's great that Burgas is part of ICLEI as well, so he can exchange information from one city to another and being part of GoGreenRoutes as a big project, to see how different cities work. Really interesting!

Local taskforce 1:23:38

In your experience, for example, with the projects in Hamburg, to what extent a local project can- like I think local initiatives can get an insight, which can then may be part of this, can be learned and applied nationwide. Because obviously, on a nationwide level, you can't maybe not always, you can't engage in such specific things. And specifically with problems, which may be nationwide, you can only rely on local projects, like really large projects. So have you seen examples of where like different scales of project can learn and help each other somehow? Because in Bulgaria, this is a big thing. The education of the children, the way these communities live...

Shreya Utkarsh 1:24:58

Really important and interesting question: the scale, like to see local initiatives and how nations are reacting to it. One example I remember from Poland, what they did was that they used the kindergarten playground, after the school hours, they used it for getting the local population to come there and have some events or use the space. So they really did that for one school. And they tried to do it, now they have almost 10 to 12 schools who are using the same idea, I still see it as a local one, but it's spreading quite a lot. So sometimes there's some small initiatives that can be replicated in the same kind of environment, so to say. But one thing I also want to mention is like, as you know, or maybe you have heard of the EU nature restoration law, which has been passed now, thankfully. So the idea would be that the nations make the plans on how they will do the nature restoration on a national level. And that's why it's so important that the city, region and nation collaborate somehow, to feed into the information. So what Burgas is doing, how it gets to the Bulgaria level, you know, completely and so on. And if it goes into the plan, into the national plan, that you want to really focus on the integration of the different groups and so on and with Nature-based Solutions being as a connecting solution, then it could be a way forward to replicate.

Local taskforce 1:26:50

I think there was an example of another city in Bulgaria, where they identified the problem that when children from Gypsy communities go to school, there is a language barrier. But I hope it turned out well, it sounded clever from seeing this decision, they actually started looking for people from the Gypsy community to start teaching in kindergartens. So the children then go to school, scared thinking no one understands them, and in reality, no one understands them. So there was just kind of, well, collaboration between the different institutions.

Shreya Utkarsh 1:27:36

Yeah. To some kind of these. This idea could be taken up in projects that you're doing. And, yeah, definitely.

Local taskforce 1:27:46

I want to say that in terms of the next NbS plot, perhaps, you know, sustainable development, it requires both economic development that balances environmental preservation. So that's a very sensitive NbS. So in case of Burgas, we always try to apply these solutions in areas where we can affect most beneficiaries to improve the living conditions of the area but also the environmental aspects. All these projects, right now they're in very visited places like this one, another one that is forceful is also a very big residential area that needs improvement and regeneration. Also, the green corridor Yorgi is doing, it's right next to a hospital building, the major one in the city. So these are very visited places, but they are not somehow well used right now. Not very accessible. So we apply these solutions, make them more visible to the community. Make them more useful, improving older areas.

Local taskforce 1:29:06

We try to incorporate multiple benefits.

Shreya Utkarsh 1:29:11

That's why I think the question that we asked about prioritization, but still, we would like to know at least, like, I think we got a clear answer from from one of you. And then to also if all of you can just give us an indication of like, what high priority you see, and even an explanation. So that would be great. I don't know if it's okay, if I write you directly, or I send it to you Ivaylo, and you share it.

Dionysia Giannopoulou 1:30:28

Can we have the emails?

Shreya Utkarsh 1:31:48

That would be great. If that's okay for you. Just to answer this one, if you can check which one was yours. And I also have some material for you. In case you're interested, so maybe you can stop recording. Thank you so much!

Transcript of the Focus Group Discussion in Limerick

Thursday, October 03, 2023 8:30PM CET • Duration: 01:05:16

Zoom meeting

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

greenway, question, NbS, intervention, site, workshop, antisocial behavior, nature, area, tree planting, project, trees, hand, process

SPEAKERS

Maria, Sarah, Elena, Kate, Sharon, Áine, Julia Gäckle, Jannis Meul

SETTING

The Focus Group Discussion we did with the Local taskforce from Limerick happened online via Zoom. Three members joined this meeting to sum up the work of the last years. After Sarah O'Malley shared some photos of the process with a short summary of the events the discussion started cautiously. After a bit of uncertainty of some participants about what they're allowed to share, the atmosphere became more relaxed when everybody understood that they are welcome to also share negative thoughts. The discussion became even more vibrant when it came to some controversial topics like seating to also address older people. It became clear that anti-social behavior is a problem on site and our attendees had different opinions on solving this issue. However, everyone remained friendly, respectful and let finish. As the discussion ended with the fourth question, every participant had ideas not only on how to maintain the greenway but to improve the site and the involvement of the public.

Sarah O'Malley 00:00

I'm just going to share a little, just a couple of pictures of the drone images, just to get us thinking about what we have done and what you have done for the last couple of years. This is a drone shot taken in May on the Greenway.

This is the start of it, you have the girls' school, the primary school here, straight down along around the corner, and up to the far end where the secondary school is. And this just shows the play area that we did last year, the kind of the water area, we've put paths through there.

This is the extension of the play area here for this year. And also, you've got the tree stumps, the carved tree stumps here, you've planted the trees along here, all along there and all up there as well. And then just a couple of little more overheads here, you can just see the patterns of them in the soil. And I suppose the evolving development around it, and maybe the importance of this space for people as they grow into the community as well.

And here's just another closeup. So again, you can see the difference between the further along- this is this year's play area, it's quite bare and rustic, we didn't know whether to plan more or just hold our nerve. But you can see within the year it did green up a bit, and we were glad we didn't put in footpaths on it, because people seem to like to use it themselves in a freedom of movement, movement and mobility feel to it.

I hope it was a very co-creative process. We did a variety of workshops where we walked together decided what we would like, and to trial things, which you have been wonderful in trialing, because this was the first of its kind in Limerick and we gave it a go and extended it again this year. So, within that context, it's quite a nature-based solution design. We used as much as the materials on-site as we could. The sand was brought in, the tree carvings, we had to take down the ash trees unfortunately, due to ash die back and to repurpose them, but also then have them as a piece of artwork. So, I hope that gives you just a little indication, just the images to remind us of the space.

And I'm going to hand you over to Julia, who just will give a short little presentation from where she's coming from in terms of that research aspect. And then we'll quickly go into the discussion boards where we have a few questions laid out for you. And hopefully we can have a nice open discussion for a few minutes. Okay, so Julia?

Julia Gäckle 02:32

Perfect. Thanks a lot, Sarah, for this good welcome. I will just share my screen. Let me check if this works. So now, you should see it all. So, where I come from my side- I just want to briefly introduce you to our meeting here, just explaining quickly.

As you already now, what we want to do today here and what the aim or our goal behind that is. We are doing further research, in addition to our first Seedbed intervention we implemented together with you all in Limerick. And then afterwards, the NbS intervention took place. And now, of course, we want to tell the whole story to listen in. To review our process and hear what you have to say. How the NbS intervention was experienced by citizens on site. You as citizens were active participants of the whole process. For that reason, we are lucky and we have the chance to tell that story in GoGreenRoutes, while we still have one year left in the project.

As Work Package lead it's on my part to organise a so-called storybook, as a last task for us. And to follow-up on our intensive work of the Seedbed interventions and the NbS interventions. We want to have a really good conclusion and a broad picture of the whole process.

We brought some questions today with us. But before I just wanted to just give you a brief, refreshing introduction into our Seedbed interventions. Later on, we will also give you the chance to just introduce yourself quickly. Whether you joined the Seedbed interventions or not and so on.

So the Seedbed intervention, which was before the NbS intervention, meaning nature-based solution. The intervention in Limerick took place last year and this summer. The seedbed took place during, what I've been told was the four hottest days of the year in Ireland. So, we were all very happy about the tents, sunscreen, and the refreshing ice coffees on site. It was really important to create a good atmosphere.

Besides our workshop, we had a bug hotel building workshop, which Sarah organised together with other participants there and also really motivated kids. Which you can see here, it was really a good experience for us all, to actively interact with nature and bring a piece of it home. We also had a nice explanation of the Greenway, led by a landscape architect on this day. Me and my other colleague from RWTH University, who is not here today, were there. We successfully, more or less, implemented a few creative methods here. You had a chance on the day of the Seedbed intervention to draw your ideas on a big canvas, we handed out a camera, which was the so-called Photovoice method. It's a big term, but basically your participants or you took pictures, you connected your picture to an emotion and wrote that down on the picture. And this gave us a really good emotional insight into your experience on site on this day. And what you also wish for the actual NbS intervention afterwards. Also, we did a survey, and a lot more in between talks we also really appreciated on this day. What you can see here is a flyer, we did for the Seedbed intervention afterwards. You can check the QR for more information on all the results.

Normally, if we would meet in person, I would hand out flyers to you, but we will hand out the digital version so that you can just download it yourself.

Just to keep it brief and short here, I just will not talk so much about the actual NbS intervention on site. I want to present you now already our questions. I think you already got a glimpse of what we are doing today here, but basically as Sarah explained at the beginning, we want to get the story right. That's why we want to ask you about your feelings, how you experienced the NbS, if you maybe see some future improvements for the site or if you can imagine maybe some other sites in Limerick as NbS site, or what you can imagine more for this area? But we will go into detail for each question in a second. Before that, I will stop my screen sharing now and just want to give us a chance to get to know each other. You can introduce yourself and

maybe let us know if you attended the challenge workshop, or if you attended the Seedbed intervention. Let us know how you were involved in the whole co-creation process. Also, totally fine if you weren't at this point, just to get this right and the story afterwards.

Sarah O'Malley 10:15

I'll just jump in. So the Seedbed intervention was our nature workshop and opening of the natural play area, the challenge workshop was our nature walk when we walked along the greenway last March. Because I wouldn't have used those terms with people. So that's what we're talking about. So that it makes sense for you.

Julia Gäckle 10:37

Thanks a lot, Sarah. Sorry, I totally forgot that we use different terms in each city, so that it's a better message to the citizen and participants on site. But for the project, we needed to have the same terms for each action event on site. We framed it under Seedbed interventions or challenge workshop. Good addition, Sarah, thanks a lot. So just a few words regarding my person. I'm Julia from RWTH Aachen university. As I mentioned, I'm leading the Work Package, mainly focusing on co-creation in GoGreenRoutes at the beginning in 2020. And since then, as Sarah described, we are actively involved in implementing the Seedbed interventions and each workshop and also the NbS interventions, not as much as the seedbed ones, but we also try to help as much as possible and cities with that, in our six cities and the project. And me myself, I was on site in Limerick at the Seedbed intervention. And by the way, I'm a landscape architect. Sorry, I forgot to mention, it's a bank holiday today in Germany, excuse me if I'm not so concentrated at some point. The floor is yours!

Jannis Meul 12:09

Hi, I'm Jannis. I'm studying architecture in Aachen, and I'm helping Julia out since about one year now. I layout everything and put together all the information we get. Also the layouting of the reports.

Julia Gäckle 12:33

Maybe Áine, a couple of words?

Áine McBeth 12:37

Hi everybody, I am Áine. I work with connect the dots. I've been part of GoGreenRoutes to support Julia and her work, but also help and support Sarah, and organizing a few events throughout the last three years. So that would have been the tree planting day. The workshop before that, the challenge workshop, which was the walk? So, we've been involved a few times. I think I might have met some of you before. It's been great to work with you over the last three years.

Julia Gäckle 13:20

Thanks a lot. Sarah, let me just, I don't know. I think everyone knows you.

Sarah O'Malley 13:27

No problem. So, I suppose for those attending, again thank you. This is kind of the background team that you're probably meeting for the first time. And all of these people would have helped me in developing each of the workshops. It's quite a complex project, but I suppose it's quite a layered one, as well. But I'm the lead for the council on this project. Sharon, do you want to go next?

Sharon Lynch 13:53

Yep. Hi. So, my name is Sharon, I live in the Castletroy area. I'd be very near to the Greenway. So, I would have attended the initial kind of challenge workshop with mapping the routes and looking at the areas to see what we could enhance. I would have gone to the Bio-Blitz. I went to the tree planting and the meeting today. All very enjoyable and very informative.

Julia Gäckle 14:14

Thanks a lot, maybe Maria next.

Maria Jenning 14:17

Hi. Similar to Sharon, I'm a resident of Castletroy. Trixie, here she is. She loves the Greenway. And she is there about three times a day and we sometimes run into Sharon. I was at the, I think you're calling it the nature walk. I think I was on that one where we looked at the routes or looked at the different areas with the architect, I think it was the landscape person from Dublin. And I was there the day we planted the trees. I didn't manage to make; I think we were away for the seedbed one. So yeah, happy to contribute and have the ceiling.

Julia Gäckle 15:07

And Kate, maybe, I mean, at least what my screen shows next.

Kate Cannon 15:14

Thanks. So yes, obviously live locally as well. I think I've only been into the online workshop in the beginning, I was signed up for a few other things, and then stuff came up. So, I didn't we didn't go to it. But obviously, we use the Greenway. I actually was thinking I should have gone there today, because I haven't been for a couple of weeks. So, if that's an anything new that has been added or grown in, in the last couple of weeks. But we would use it a good bit.

Julia Gäckle 15:45

Thanks a lot Kate. And last but not least, Elena.

Elena Secas 15:48

Yeah. Thanks very much. Thank you very much for the introductions. My name is Elana Sucas. I'm a local councilor in the area, a big supporter of the Greenway. I will have attended a couple of workshops online. And I think I did the nature walk. And back in March last year, I unfortunately missed the summer events, because I was away. But like everyone else, I'm here to see if I can support this project in any way I can going forward. Thank you

Julia Gäckle 16:25

Perfect. Thanks a lot. I think I forgot earlier to mention it, I think Sara, you mentioned that. It's a safe place. You can ask questions at any time. And also, of course, I would like to ask you to silence your phones. This will be a good one. And yeah, if you want to ask a question, just maybe raise your hand physically or digitally. Here with an emoji. So that is that. Jannis, did I forgot anything before we start with the questions?

Jannis Meul 17:03

No, I don't think so.

Julia Gäckle 17:05

Okay, perfect. So maybe Áine, it's a good idea if we just show once the miroboard and that you post the link again to the chat, for the miroboard. Because in the background, my colleague Áine will take notes also on the miroboard, that we can also actively use together. The link was just posted into the chat. And you can feel free to just look at it in between, think a bit about the questions, but no pressure, you don't need to actively write all the time. So just talk to us and Áine will also take notes of that. And afterwards, in our conclusion part, we can just take a look at everything together again. And from time-to-time Áine will also share her screen again and show the process. Basically, we have today brought with us four questions, as I already showed quickly. With respect to the time, I think we just take more or less maybe seven or eight minutes per question, up to ten maybe. I think if we aim for like seven minutes more or less, I will keep an eye on the time so that we maybe have in the end more or less a couple of minutes left. Then we can take a look at all our results here on the miroboard and also discuss further questions if you have some. But respecting all your motivation, we will try not to keep you longer as needed here in the zoom meeting. We are still aiming for like maybe closing the meeting in 35-45 minutes. We will try at least to keep this not too long. Our first question would be, in what do you see added value or improvements through the Nature-based Solutions? Meaning the nature playground, also the planting of the trees. And what generally has changed positively for you, more or less on-site on the Castletroy greenway? And what do you see as a positive change in general? Just give it a go. Just let us know.

Maria Jenning 19:42

I guess I'll jump in. The playground is nature based is an alternative to the conventional playground that's very close by across the road. It's a place. Are we supposed to write or say this?

Julia Gäckle 19:59

No, you can just talk freely. And if you want in between take a look at the miroboard, but you can also add some buzzwords. For example, if we already have the next question and you think: 'Oh, I forgot something', you can also actively write on the miroboard. But for now, just let us now talking through the process as a discussion.

Maria Jenning 20:20

Yeah. I presume by Nature-based Solutions, you're talking about each of the concrete things you did, like the playground. The woodcarvings, the wood.

Julia Gäckle 20:33

The changes on-site more or less? Yeah.

Maria Jenning 20:38

The playground is good. It seems to be well used, you would see a lot of people, with small kids in particular using it. And the wood carving is very attractive. It certainly attracted a lot of interest to the Greenway recently, you'd find people just going there specifically to look at them. And I ran the positives. I don't want to go on the negative if we're on the positive. Should I stay in the positive?

Julia Gäckle 21:15

No, just share all your emotions with us.

Maria Jenning 21:19

I guess what I think my overall feeling about it is, people in and around the locality have no idea of the

amount of effort that's gone into it, and what's involved, what this project has behind it, they have no concept. And actually, the conversation recently about the Greenway is, it's not a place to allow your kids to go, because of antisocial reasons. Which is unfortunate. You push any place out of view of the general public, and it becomes like a place for antisocial behavior. Now, I don't really think it's an issue, there has been a couple of incidents there. But it's certainly something that's creeping in, this concept that it's not a place to go because of antisocial behavior. We were there the other evening, and there's kids setting off bangers and fireworks for Halloween. But like overriding the whole thing, I just feel the locals, I don't know what Lena thinks about this, but people just don't have any appreciation of the work that's gone in. And I really think more signage, information on the information, where people are walking to let them know for example, this is water area, would be good. You wouldn't know the water was there. There's nothing to tell you, it's there.

Julia Gäckle 22:51

Okay.

Maria Jenning 22:52

And I think it's sold short. But maybe that's not the purpose of the GoGreenRoutes. I don't know.

Julia Gäckle 23:03

Either way thanks for sharing this information, your impression, what is happening on site. And just to interrupt short quickly is a question party. I forgot to mention, of course, we have our formulated questions we need to ask.

Maria Jenning 23:20

Yeah, sorry.

Julia Gäckle 23:22

No, no, it's not a problem if you want to add some information afterwards. For example, you answer the question regarding in what you see value, but of course automatically you think, 'But I also see a big problem there', which interferes with the value. So please share this with us as well. Regarding the questions and of course we will also hand you out what we will transcribe here from the Focus Group Discussion. Since we have to summarize it for the storyboard.

Maria Jenning 23:57

So, unless somebody has contribution...

Sharon Lynch 23:59

Yeah, so I suppose,

Julia Gäckle 24:04

I think, sorry to interrupt, but I think there was a hand raised by Kate, and next is Sharon, then.

Kate Cannon 24:12

Sorry, I'll be quick. What I think the nice thing about the nature is, that it's not just a route to get somewhere quickly, that people will kind of stop and have a look around and notice what's happening. It's been difficult to assess certain bits of it, because there was a lot of building work going on, at one point this summer. Like there was a terrible smell from the building work. And so obviously, things are going to mature, and I think

that we will have more appreciation of the nature because it'll probably shelter us a bit from noise from the road from and building work and give people a bit more privacy as well where they're living. Do you know where the students are, in the Castletroy college and the girls school? I think from that point of view, I also think it's very useful for my children, they are a bit older now, when they were younger, to have somewhere that they could stop and rest, rather than seeing somewhere as a long walk. I think having the little play areas is brilliant, especially for younger children, so that they don't see a big straight road to get somewhere, they know 'Oh, there's a fun place halfway along this walk' and I'll enjoy that. And then I'll be ready to go for the rest of the walk. And so that's probably my contribution for the moment.

Julia Gäckle 25:41

Thanks, Kate. Now, Sharon. So sorry to interrupt you earlier!

Sharon Lynch 25:47

Oh no, I didn't see the hand. I agree with Kate. It's been the kind of enhanced from the initial purposes of the greenway were, towards more it's not just a walkthrough anymore, you can actually stay and enjoy the space. So, there is definitely a positive. The habitat has definitely been improved through the tree planting, increased habitat with the deadwood, the Wildflower sowing of the seeds. In time, after the initial BioBlitz. We should maybe go back again, in future, to do further surveys. It is obviously a huge increase in wildlife there, because of the enhancement of the forestry and the flowers and the deadwoods. So, it's all very positive.

Julia Gäckle 26:24

Prefect, thanks for sharing that. And Elena, do you also want to say?

Elena Secas 26:28

Yeah, I'll come in here. I don't want to repeat what everybody says. But if you look back at when the Greenway was opened for the first time and if you look at the Greenway now, there is a huge improvement. In terms of Nature-based Solutions, the play area there, is a big improvement. The planting of trees was hugely positive. And then the wood carving it's something unusual, something which would draw the attention, that would make children and adults curious. From speaking with people around the area, they are saying that they would like to see more of that, more woodcarving. So, any ideas like that would be very welcomed, and definitely will have a positive effect. Both visually, but also from a different perspective, like engaging with nature, becoming curious. I don't know how to phrase that in one concept, but that's what I mean. Thank you.

Julia Gäckle 27:51

Thanks a lot. Sarah, do you want to add anything as well? Did we forget something?

Sarah O'Malley 28:01

No, I think that covered everything really. I'm happy to answer any specific questions if people have them. But I think in the meantime, it's better if people just freely talk. And I can take it all in if that makes sense.

Julia Gäckle 28:14

No problem. For all the people in our small Zoom meeting, just to let you know, it's the first time we're doing this in this constellation, digitally. Our next time will be in Umeå, in two weeks on-site in person. So, this Focus Group Discussion format is for first time. Excuse us, we have some maybe in between travels. So just let us know, if you have anything to add, also in regard of the process. How we do things if you want to talk

more. Just let us know if you have any thoughts. So, Áine is perfect on time sharing her screen again for the next question. Because in regard to time, we are already behind? We should start with our next question. If you haven't any questions so far, regarding the first one. So, just to repeat what we just discussed, the added value or improvements to the NbS interventions. What changes you saw positively; I think we discussed them just now. But do you have any questions regarding that, or can we jump to the next one? Is something unclear?

Sarah O'Malley 29:51

I think that's okay. Áine, would you mind zooming in on that? Yeah, just so we can see the prompts as well, thanks.

Julia Gäckle 30:00

And don't worry, we will also, of course, let the miroboard open after our meeting here. So also in this week, you can check if we get everything right. Or if you want to maybe make a note, maybe please don't change the notes we did so far. But you can comment on that or add something if we maybe get something wrong, which we can't see today, due to the limited time. Okay, I would suggest Áine, we jump to the next question. And hopefully, we have like a couple of minutes left in the end and can look at the overall result there. So, our next question would be about your personal experience of the whole process. As I understand all of your experience, you more or less joined the whole process. Some of you already really early. I think, Kate, you mentioned you were already there for the first online meeting, but in between, then not at every event. So maybe just describe from your own point of view: How have you experienced this the process you've joined so far, and of implementing seedbed, NbS, and other activities or either one of them? Or in regard of what you've joined so far? Should we give it a go? Let's open the round now. Who wants to start and share a bit of answers?

Maria Jenning 31:41

I'll start, I was only at two events. Very well run. Well explained, started on time, finished on time, welcoming and friendly. The tree planting was nice, it was very interactive, you could use a lot of choice in the trees you could choose and you know, something that's there for the future that you can go along and look at and say, I planted that 30 years ago. So yes, positive experience of the events. And the tree planting was on a particularly horrible day. So, it was well, well supported, I think, by the community. And I didn't get the other ones. Unfortunately.

Elena Secas 32:42

Me? Yeah. So, as I said, I would have attended a couple of workshops online, and then they nature walk as well. I wasn't able to attend all the events, but I found they did the workshops, you know, very engaging. I think the team behind the projects were very proactive and very open to ideas and proposals. So, the workshops were quite good. From that point of view, there was a lot of interaction with the people who participated in the workshops, lots of good ideas thrown and explored afterwards. And, like, you know, we can see the results on the Greenway. Those workshops, and so the process, as far as I'm concerned, has been quite positive. And I think that was a great thing, because at least, you know, if you go back, you can say, well, we got the community involved, even in in the activities on the ground, you know, there were people of various ages involved, various interests and various ideas as well. So, you know, you can look back and say, well, you know, we engage with the local community, we try to deliver what the local community wanted where, you know, which you can work their ideas. So, in that respect, I think it's been a positive process Thank you.

Julia Gäckle 34:22

Thanks a lot. And then just one question in between, on general question also for the others, maybe you can also share what you may have experienced as a negative process, for example, maybe, I don't know if there wasn't enough knowledge transfer during the events at some point, if you wish maybe for more clarity regarding also getting new inputs. I don't know. For example, Maria, you mentioned joining the tree planting workshop. Yeah, did it left maybe some open question at the end? And what were you wished for more information or more a positive note here or positive direction? Would you wish for more of this event kind of events, for example, just trying to understand what was positive and negatively in more detail, but maybe we continue with Kate, I think there was a hand.

Kate Cannon 35:28

Sorry, I was just touching my face.

Sharon Lynch 35:33

It's up there anyway. It was all very interactive, very hands-on, you were given great opportunities to go out and kind of learn from doing rather than being shown that. You got to plant your tree. You got to go out with your sheet and you got to record and look for bugs yourself and can identify them. It was very hands-on the initial kind of walk around the maps and there were the prompts to kind of pull the strings and the markings showing where you could put the seating or spaces, you might like to sit and enjoy a bit of sun or see where it was windy. It was all very kind of interactive, and you'll realize kind of plan out what you thought could happen or where you would like to sit in space and where you thought you could enjoy some time in nature. So that was all very positive. I don't think there was anything negative as such, the weather probably against us for some of the events maybe. But I suppose it was more interactive things and more events would be something like in the schedule, more kind of, either this project aims to have something that we can have last on maybe yearly, bio blitzes and yearly food vending events or something that will bring people back into the area, not just to kind of stop.

Julia Gäckle 36:44

Thanks for sharing, Sharon, and I don't Kate, do you want to add anything? It's also okay if not.

Kate Cannon 36:52

Yes, obviously, I wasn't there. But it's brilliant that it did happen. I'd love to see something like Sharon just said, it'd be brilliant to have maybe a follow-up in a year or two years to see how things are working.

Julia Gäckle 37:05

Okay, so I don't know Sarah, Áine, you joined also the Seedbed interventions. I don't know if you want to add anything that we missed.

Áine McBeth 37:24

I'm trying to think and double check that the next questions don't answer this. But do you think that approach and having multiple events and bringing people in to help, citizens and community to design the area themselves, has led to an increase the ownership over the area? Or a sense of, you want to look after the area? Did that change anything? Or do you just think it's not something you thought about?

Julia Gäckle 38:03

Really, really good question. Yeah.

Kate Cannon 38:08

I wonder, is it just very variable, because it's a huge amount of people living here there. And so like, I've discussed the Greenway with some people saying, 'oh how gracious' and they are living right beside it and not having as positive an experience. And there is this other noise, some people have reported and stuff. So, maybe they have ownership, but maybe they didn't know about these workshops. I know people that hadn't seen it. In other places that it feels it just depends if you're lucky enough, you've seen it because you've been on the walkway, or you've seen it advertised locally. I know the information was shared widely, but there's so much noise, people don't see everything that does take place. So, I'd say it's probably more the people who were involved or maybe their children go to the girl's school or Castletroy college where it's actually touching it that maybe they have more of an ownership.

Julia Gäckle 39:09

Ok. Maybe Áine, time to share the miroboard again at this point. Time is running. I would love to talk, longer and in more detail with all of you because it's really, really good to listen into your thoughts at this point. Also as a feedback loop for us. I mean, Sarah, I think shares this opinion, it was a good process, of course also quite a complex one to start. I always call it the co-creative process even before co-creation started, developing the whole seedbed thing and everything together with the city. It was a valuable process. And I really think it was worth it and it's a good addition to the research methods which are out there. So, good to get this feedback now. At least from my side here. So Áine, maybe zoom out again, just for a second. To our second question. Just take it, we can take a glimpse at your notes, maybe zoom in a bit. Of course, we will take a look together at that at the end of our meeting today, but also, for each individually. Take a look at the miroboard afterwards. And you can always reach out, as well to Sarah, afterwards if something's unclear. Our next question then would be: How could you picture the NbS in your city as a catalyst? How do you think that the NbS will continue to contribute, to attract more residents to stay in the urban green area? We are aiming with this question to understand, if maybe the intervention brings more people into the area, hopefully? And what do you think about that? If this is your impression? And have you gone out in nature more because of the new intervention, for example?

Elena Secas 42:00

I can start here. Yeah. So basically, I think the purpose for the Castletroy Greenway is somehow different from what you are asking there. I would say the purpose of the Greenway is more about connectivity, rather than encouraging people to stay more in green areas or enjoy more green areas. So, for example, if I was to choose between going to the greenway, to enjoy green areas, and going to the Castletroy park, which is just across the road, I would go to the Castletroy park, because it's greener. I put it this way, is greener. So, to get the greenway to the point where you would go there just to enjoy the greenery around you, it needs to be still developed. For example, I can compare, you know, I'm originally from Moldova. So back home, they developed a three kilometers Greenway in the capital city, in one of the districts like you have here in Castletroy. You have a district there called Botanica. They have a greenway in the middle of the road, in between very high buildings. But if you look at the Greenway, and if you compare that, that's really green, you have so, so many trees. Obviously, this space with Castletroy Greenway wouldn't allow you to develop what they have there, because the Greenway there is quite wide. You have plenty of room for a cycling lane, a footpath, then green areas, and then play areas every I don't know how many meters. So it's a huge difference between the two greenways. And I was actually looking last summer when I went there comparing and the people there seem to see the Greenway as a destination, to walk around, to enjoy the fresh air in the evening, to enjoy the greenery around them; to enjoy the play areas as well. Somehow with the Greenway here it is a little bit different, because I see the Greenway more as a connectivity project rather than, you know, a destination project. So, I think to get to the destination point, we need to develop it even more.

Maria Jennings 44:52

At that point, you know, if you're considering the concept of staying there, there's nowhere to sit. Unless you're sitting on a log, correct me if I'm wrong now, but the only place to sit is by the sandpit. And it's very, very low, you know, for an older person or somebody with poor mobility, that struggle to sit there. So, if you expect people to stay, you don't really expect them to stand around. So, they'd need somewhere to sit. As regards going out in nature, would it encourage me to go into nature more. Not particularly, I go out in nature anyway. So yeah. So not on that one.

Julia Gäckle 45:50

Okay. Thanks for sharing. I don't know, Sarah, if you want to add to that a bit, I was just thinking about the point of sitting possibilities. At some point I think we discussed and...

Sarah O'Malley 46:05

It's a balancing act, because when seating was often mentioned, people wanted it, but then it attracts anti-social behavior. So particularly that near the housing estates, and it was clear to put any seating along that corner. So that's why we tried the play area. And then I suppose speaking with mothers that were using that space, they just wanted anywhere to sit that they had a good vantage point. And we had the material on site to do it. Budget is another point with seating because there's an elderly community there. So, if we were to put in seats, I'd like them higher, you know, not just you know, so it's comfortable to sit in, and potentially, again, just looking at budget and what we could do there. But generally, when people want to see seating, there's an equal arm that says we don't want seating because it will attract anti-social behavior. So, it's a complex one to do. I don't know what the right answer is.

Maria Jennings 46:58

Yeah. Sarah, you get the antisocial behavior anyway, you know. There's no seating there. And they can manage to hang out down behind the sandpit area anyway, regardless of if there is seating or not. But I do understand challenges around this. But if you want to be more inclusive of other parts of the society, and not just people with small kids. There is a whole, that new apartment block is for older people, 55 years and older. There are 64 apartments going in there. And it's all for older people. And they live right beside the Greenway. They should have somewhere to sit on.

Julia Gäckle 47:47

Sarah, you wanted to add anything?

Sarah O'Malley 47:53

No. I just think potentially, Maria, more seating will just attract more. I just don't know what the fine line is, well, do you find the option there is to try one or two seats, and that they're made in such a way that they can be removed? If they are a problem? You know, so it's maybe they're semi-permanent and to look at the design of them. Because they're certainly from some residents they were quite vocal and living close by, and I'm just mindful of that. But equally as the community grows, why not try it? You know.

Maria Jennings 48:29

But I think the way to and I've said this people, you know, I've been standing at football matches, and besides other moms, and they'd be talking about the Greenway and I said the only way for us to keep it safe is for everyone to continue to use it. People like us to use it constantly. And if there's opportunities for people to go and sit. Anyway, there's two sides to it.

Julia Gäckle 48:58

Yeah, the phrase of the balancing act here really covers it well. I remember now discussions as well. So, what we had before and of course, we need to keep in mind. So this was a really intensive co-created place in a way where we discussed also before, of course, as you all know, a lot and Sarah, as you mentioned, half of the people say no seating, half says seating.

Sarah O'Malley 49:26

Yeah, yes. Yeah, signage was another one. There's no signage there because anything I put up was pulled down or damaged or vandalized. So again, looking at budget. And I have signs to go in for the woodland, for example, but I actually didn't want to draw attention to the saplings to give them a chance, whereas if the sign went up, they could have been pulled up after all that effort. So that was my my thinking along those lines. So, signage. The stencils on the path are kind of a little marker of the opportunities you have there. And it just, we just, it's budgeting and signage, it can be free to be quite robust. You know, it's something to think about. But I'm very aware that people are looking at it, and not knowing what they do. But every effort is made to communicate. It's just, that's what's happened in the past. I suppose I just felt I wouldn't try it again for a while.

Julia Gäckle 50:19

Jannis, you raised your hand, I think. Time or an addition?

Jannis Meul 50:25

Yes, an addition, I just really want to know if you think if there are any improvements or added value through NbS interventions, for projects like these in general? Yeah.

Kate Cannon 50:48

I just wonder like, so this is just off the top of my head, I saw recently, which you're probably all familiar with. They're offering pond dipping workshops for children. And I thought that sounded fantastic. Now, obviously, there's no pond in the Greenway, but I think it shows that there is, you know, there's an appetite. And I mean, I think it wasn't just for children, I think it was for anyone who's interested. And, there's a lot of us who would enjoy, you know, like, again, another BioBlitz type thing. The other thought I had is, you know, I've seen a lot about these little libraries. And I was wondering, like, is there a seed version of that? Maybe we could do like maybe the end of the summer, you could deadhead some of the wildflowers and pop them in little paper envelopes and suggest that people bring them home. And you could say it's a seed exchange, if you have stuff in your garden that you're happy to do. And I used to live in an apartment block, and people used to like leave out herbs that they had too much of and stuff, you know, randomly in the foyer. So, I mean, I think sometimes there is, and I told you, it's very disappointing here about the anti-social behavior. And unfortunately, that's going to be everywhere. But I suppose small things like that. It's low value, like you're not paying for the seeds, you might be paying for a place to put them or signage or whatever. Or it could be just a drop-off on a Sunday, it could be a Friday afternoon or whatever, that it's like, it's only going to happen at that time so that people aren't going to leave it over the weekend. So that's a possibility.

Julia Gäckle 52:34

Thanks Kate for that, because it already more or less cross bridges. Next question or last question. Indeed, if there are no other comments on the one, we just discussed, from maybe Sharon, if you want to add anything to our recently discussed...

Sharon Lynch 52:58

I suppose Nature-based Solutions are still very new in Limerick, I would think so it'll take time for people to

kind of see the benefits of them and how they can change our perception. We don't need plastic equipment to play toys, we can have kind of small rain gardens or just planting and just very naturally kind of enhance the area without having to go to too much cost or effort. I think this is a pilot, and this is new for Limerick. I think this will be a guiding example of what can be achieved, if you kind of look away from the traditional methods of tarmacking and plastic playgrounds and putting in expensive equipment that you don't really necessarily need per se. So yeah, I think come back in a year and you can ask us that question again. And maybe we can see.

Julia Gäckle 53:40

Thanks a lot, and good input for our next question. Maybe I just ask you our last question now. You can also discuss afterwards. But I think time is running a bit. You just have one minute left for my promise of 60 minutes, I think we will take a bit longer. Hopefully not too long, if it's okay with everyone. So, what can you imagine in the future for the NbS site, which we are discussing right now? How do you think it will be used? We recently already had some ideas from you. You are mentioning maybe some future behaviors, usages of the site? I think you just pointed out some first initial thoughts already. Just feel free to share your thoughts. Everyone can come in here for sure. Again, maybe also, I don't know, Sarah. You can also come in new on that at the end. So, who wants to be the first one who share on our last question?

Elena Secas 55:02

I'll go first, that's okay. For me, I would like to see the Greenway in the future as a destination. So, if we were to get more trees planted, seats or sitting areas, I think that will change the dynamic. And you have people around most of the time that will kind of address the anti-social behavior. Anti-social behavior happens when there is nobody around. If it was a destination, and you've had people there most of the time, I think that would help with anti-social behavior. So, that's what I would like to see. I would like to see the Greenway developed into a destination, rather than a connection. Thank you.

Julia Gäckle 56:06

Thanks a lot. Sharon, Kate?

Sharon Lynch 56:12

Yeah, I think with the proximity of the schools, like even the primary, the secondary, outdoor classrooms are getting much more popular here as well. Getting such diverse habitats, you have the kind of wet areas, we have the future forest coming up, you'll have the kind of meadow flowers. So children should be up more using it as an outdoor classroom, they can go out and they could do like kids in a pond up maybe here. Or maybe other things like they can have their own mini BioBlitzes, or water could be a feature that will come in the future that they could have pond-dipping workshops. Today, I think more of more of the education has basically been more science education, what lives there, what kind of develops there, how can we use it more that way they would have a learning experience as well. Because it is going to be a very densely built-up area. And that could be one of the few green spaces that they have, so definitely an educational tool.

Maria Jenning 57:02

Yeah, I'd say that that's a really important one, there's three very big schools right beside it. There is the monoline, which isn't too far away as well. There is a strong interest in green issues with overall schools. But I also wonder, is there anything that could be done to integrate it more with the upper-value shopping center? They have a lovely market there on a Friday. Could you somehow try and integrate that into the Greenway in some way? I was just throwing it out there. We just have a group of people there who are maybe likeminded. I don't know how that will work. But it is something that could be thought about? And what

about the idea of trying to get more wildlife into it and more like foxes and it being a wildlife corridor from one area to another?

Maria Jenning 58:19

Yeah, like bat boxes? You know, I saw some things about the fencing. The fencing is not ideal at all for, you know, between the school and the new development. It's like a trap. There's actually no way for animals to go from one site to another. I know security is a concern, but say an animal is trying to get across the Castletroy college site over to across the Greenway. It's very, very difficult for them currently, because it's like a prison with fences down both sides. And we need more trees, particularly if our climate is getting warmer, just to provide more shade in the summer. And like there's a massive lost opportunity with what's happening with the piece behind the Guelph school. That's the biggest piece of land. That's there. Is that part of us? The slightly the raised section?

Sarah O'Malley 59:38

Undecided, Maria.

Maria Jenning 59:40

Yeah, like it's an opportunity, I suppose, like what, when we chose allotments were thrown out there in the past as our community garden. What's going to happen there?

Sarah O'Malley 59:59

It's undecided.

Maria Jenning 01:00:02

Is there any budget for us, like what's happening? This sounds like this is coming to an end, there's a year left. And then what happens? Is there a phase two?

Sarah O'Malley 01:00:13

No, that's it for this project. So, what was the view that I've tried to do is that we layered it, so that a, with minimal maintenance, and that things will grow around us. So, whatever we planned by the next year, we'll have come up, the large piece of land between the schools from the council's perspective is just undecided. We don't know what that land will or could be used for, depending on the needs of the community, for example, in five years' time, they could want that for something else. So, it's completely undecided. We just kind of hoped the trees that we planted just across the front.

Maria Jenning 01:00:54

Yeah. Okay, thanks.

Julia Gäckle 01:00:55

Thanks a lot Maria, for your input. I think Kate, we missed out on you. Regarding the last question, if you want to share.

Kate Cannon 01:01:07

There's nothing particular I think it's just; you know, I'd love to see more of a wider thing. I mean, Elena, what you were describing in Moldova is like the ideal. I mean, while we have the walkway long UL is fantastic. But one of the really key things to me, is that it's away from traffic, that you're not breathing in the car fumes, and that it's quieter, and it's also a lot safer during the day in terms of cycling and walking and stuff. So, the

ideal would be that somehow, it's seeded into the other parts of the neighbourhood that there were safe cycle ways that had nice greenery beside them and less of the concrete jungle.

Julia Gäckle 01:01:59

Okay, yeah, just checked the time again, okay, thanks Kate, for sure. But maybe last input can now come from Sarah, if you want to share some of your dreams for the site. What you can imagine for the future, in regard of usage onsite.

Sarah O'Malley 01:02:28

Just that, I hope that through this project, we've laid foundational pieces that are potentially multifunctional. So, anything that has been put in there, like the metro play area, if the community changes and evolves, it can just move. It's not a man-made structure, as Sharon was describing, it's quite a flexible site. And I suppose we started off with the smaller play area, and then extended it as we were hearing that it was being enjoyed and through feedback. Hopefully it laid a foundation for it, and that people are enjoying it and using it. If there are any questions you have for me, or if I haven't answered anything, and you want more clarity on it, please feel free to email me. And, you know, at any point, if you have any queries like 'I've heard from some of you throughout the project', or if something has come up on the Greenway, or if there's something you would like to see more of, please don't hesitate to ask me any questions, and it would be great to have your thoughts and insight.

Julia Gäckle 01:03:30

Also from my side, please feel free to contact me, either way Sarah or me directly. If you have any questions regarding today's session, also our actions we did so far on the site. Kate, thanks for joining. I think we should come to an end as our meeting is already 10 minutes late than my earlier promise, so maybe we will leave out the part where we look together once more at the miroboard for final conclusion, and you just check it out yourself afterwards. Please feel free to write me if there are any questions or unclarities. Okay, Maria. Thank you.

Maria Jenning 01:04:26

Thank you. Bye.

Julia Gäckle 01:04:28

Bye. I also don't want to keep you in much longer. So, I will say let's call it a day and evening here and really thank you a lot for participating here. We will get in touch with you with our final results.

Elena Secas 01:04:53

It's no problem. Thanks very much. And hope that was helpful.

Sharon Lynch 01:04:59

Bye Bye

Sarah O'Malley 01:05:09

Stop the recording here?

Julia Gäckle 01:05:12

Yeah, let's stop the recording here, Áine, please.

Transcript of the first Focus Group Discussion in Umeå

Wednesday, Oct 18, 2023 1PM • Duration: 01:07:37

Umeå kommun

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

interventions, project, city, seedbed, nature, process, part, kids, discuss, preschool, create, park, today, municipality, participate, discussion, children

SPEAKERS

Julia Gäckle, Eva Maaherra Lövheim, Alejandro Haiek, Rebecca Rudolph, Anna Tjäderborn, Andreas Nilsson, Mikael Ringh, Vera Shaswar, Jannis Meul

SETTING

The first Focus Group Discussion in Umeå took place at the local municipalities' facilities after a planting event in the morning on site where children from the preschool nearby planted bulbs under the new trees. Overall we had a good discussion that sometimes was very vibrant and specific, but sometimes a bit hesitant, especially after asking a new guided question. All members seemed to be interested and had plenty to say about the interventions, the co-creation process and the communication within GoGreenRoutes. Some members also took notes, other checked their phones recently. All interlocutors agreed on the others' opinions and gave visual feedback by nodding in agreement or leaning forward to say something additionally. As the discussion went on, all members appeared to be more relaxed and over all very positive about the ongoing construction work as well as the whole process behind that. They also agreed on some points how the process could be improved in future projects and an overall appreciation of a co-creation, more nature-based approach.

Julia Gäckle 00:00

Ready to start? Hopefully, it will work with my device. So let's start properly now. I'm Julia, I'm working in the GoGreenRoutes research project you are a part of since, I think, right from the founding of the local task force, of the gathering of different stakeholders for the project, and for the implementation of Seedbed interventions first of all, and then NbS interventions right from the beginning. If you don't know me yet, I'm responsible for the third Work Package in the project. It is all about co-creation, participation, how we can make sure that we're on the one hand partners of the project, work well together, but also partners on site, like municipalities, or city partners in the project and also citizen work together. And that we develop the design together with you, as you know, as Local taskforcemembers. But also maybe for not Local taskforcemembers here today: This is more or less our main work in this part of the project I'm working on at the moment, and our main focus was a Seedbed intervention last year, interventions we developed. And this year, it's all about NbS interventions, and also for the next two years in Umeå to come. Other cities are already done, depends on the cities. So this is so far everything, just a quick glimpse of what I'm doing in the project. I thought we can do it this way, this discussion today is that we just introduce ourselves quickly at the beginning. I would just also mention afterwards some basics for the discussion, how we want to do it. And after that, we just dive into the four questions we brought today with us, we have an additional fifth question as well. But it's more of a surprise question, so we'll see how much we will discuss that. I would give you now the floor to just introduce yourself. Also feel free to add any information regarding your involvement in the project. If you, for example, already know what a Seedbed intervention is or if you're totally new to the project, if you want to ask me some questions before we start so that you get a better hold of the context of today's discussion. And maybe also from which angle, point of view, you're coming into the

project, if you live close by, or if you're a planner, or if you're just engaged citizens. So maybe we just start on from there.

Alejandro Haiek 02:50

Alright, my name is Alejandro Haiek. I'm an architect and studio leader in the master Umeå School of Architecture. I became super happy to participate in this project that is a long-term project. Now, when I see it together, the seedbed plus the NbS, I understand that they've been mentioned and the importance of participating alongside a process. And it's nice that these two things are connected to the first interventions and see how well we create. What the first thing is, we are having graded collectively, actually open up ourselves from a feature perspective and something that's going to happen next year, going to change, going to pop up and engage again and we're going to keep going. Until eventually, as we joke once in the side, that I'm feeling that the part will disappear into a new nature. It's like something interesting to imagine, that we create something that is evolving through nature, and it will eventually turn for a natural environment within the city. This very beautiful challenge to participate in.

Rebecca Rudolph 04:14

I'm Rebecca Rudolph, I'm also an architect from Umeå school of architecture. I'm teaching there now as well but have been involved in to the two architecture parts of this project in Umeå, two installations, and designing. And it's super interesting to be involved also. I'm a quite new architect so it's very interesting to get this kind of relation to the municipality and to you guys, the focus group and continue to develop as well as working with Vera, super fun. Nice learning process and with a longer perspective.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 05:05

You all know me, Eva Maaherra Lövheim, I work normally as a traffic planner and also with this GoGreenRoutes thing. [Laughter] We just had a very nice planting event, it was completely new for me.

Anna Tjäderborn 05:21

I'm Anna Tjäderborn. I'm the headmaster or principal for the preschool who I have been working on this project for one or two years.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 05:30

Three years I think.

Anna Tjäderborn 05:34

Our kids have been enjoying the project. I'm not so good in English, you hear? So I take it slowly. In different parts of ways. I don't know if we are going to tell all about today, we enjoyed today and other times also.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 05:53

We had some other five years old for this interview. They're at the preschool, so that was the first thing and then they have drawn some pictures how they would like the park to look like.

Anna Tjäderborn 06:05

They wanted a, how do you say "rondell" in English? A roundabout for cats they wanted! [Laughter]

Andreas Nilsson 06:15

Andreas Nilsson, I'm the assistant principal at Internationella Engelska Skolan, international English school. That's really close to preschool. And I guess we've been involved in this for three years as well, yes. Different

types of meetings and our students have been involved in like, what do you want it to be? Like, you know, do you have any special ideas, and they were walking around in the nature and doing stuff. And they created this small architect stuff, so that they had on display in the school. We've used our students a lot. I know we will live really, I mean, our school is next to Bölevägen. And for us, as a school, it's a big environmental change for the better. It's not just a straight traffic road, it's going to be... We're looking forward to!

Mikael Ringh 07:23

Mikael Ringh, I'm working at Bostaden, we have 15.000 apartments in Umeå, one area is the rank and we want to work with the project and see if we can find any connections that we can work with the project.

Vera Shaswar 07:46

My name is Vera Shaswar. I work here at the municipality together with Eva, they go to the park here. And I have been in this project since like the start of this year or end of last year. Beginning of this year. I am a landscape architect, maybe I didn't say it. I have also worked together with Eva, planning some things in this project, but also with the design, you (Rebecca) have done most of it, but I have also added the green aspects into some parts.

Jannis Meul 08:39

Yes, and I'm Jannis, I'm studying architecture in Aachen and I am doing all this layout stuff, gathering all the information and putting them into texts.

Julia Gäckle 08:57

He's really helping me out a lot with meetings as well. I already introduced myself, I'm Julia, but maybe also good to mention, I am also landscape architect and working in research but also in practice. So really interesting for me to see research serious, put down and practice in a way. I really love this about this project, and I am also there from the beginning. So yes, this is better for me. I would like to ask now if you have some general questions about the project, I mean, you (Eva) joined the project quite a couple of years ago already, Vera, I think you also know everything about the context of the project. Also Seedbed intervention and everything, but do you want to know more? Maybe some terms now? If you have some questions, just ask me in between. And also let me know if something is unclear.

Rebecca Rudolph 10:02

I don't know what the NbS actually is.

Julia Gäckle 10:05

The acronym is for Nature-based Solutions. And we just put down at the end also an intervention to implement that. So it's a Nature-based Solution intervention, which will be implemented at the end. In saying as simple actions inspire through nature. Like we discussed earlier, not so much concrete, built playgrounds, more natural ones may be, but not necessarily. It's also all about solutions which aspire through nature in a way. Okay, so first of all, we will come to the questions, maybe some basic rules and setting the scene a bit for our discussion today. About the rules: as you mentioned, we need to speak in English for today, of course, I hope that for everyone is okay. Please, let's keep it slow, because my English is also not the best. So let's talk slowly. Sometimes I want to speak faster than I can, but let's do that. And I also wanted to say that this is a safe space. If someone feels maybe not, I don't know, not well, if something is unclear or something you're not agreeing with, just let us know, if something's not right in a way. And just simple rules like that we let everyone speak out, not to interrupt, of course, in some discussions that can be a bit hectic, and you want to say something, but maybe just raise your hand, then I know your next, just basic rules. It's

also the first time that we are doing this in person, we did this one time before, the Focus Group Discussion, online, it's a totally different deal. But I think I like it more in person, it's way better to keep it also analog in this format, just my first impression, but we will see what we come up with in the end, and how it will let go. Just one more thing about the aim of our discussion today, we are now at a point in the project where we need to wrap up the story about all the processes, about innovative parts of co-creating such as an action package more or less. It's not one action, in your case. It's more like the different implementations from seedbeds and different areas. Most of all, Eva is leading the whole process, but we try to guide, provide guidance and help, as best as we can, from our Work Package there, from our positions in the project to help Eva out. We are a part of this whole journey from the beginning. Now it's a point in the project where we want to get your opinion more or less, normally after finalization of the NbS intervention. I know in Umeå it's different, just started apart as one but there will be more construction work until 2025, as you mentioned, so it's a kind of ongoing process. But I think it's not a problem that we're doing this Focus Group Discussion now. I think it's good and valuable that we get some impressions from you, also about the whole process before being part of Seedbed interventions, getting to now the different processes of co-creation there. From your side, maybe I can imagine what you saw today and also being a part of any project processes may be freshly, but what you got so far. Hearing different voices is really the aim of our last task in this project to create storybooks in the end. For each city we want to have highly graphically created storybooks, which we can also communicate with other cities, maybe in the EU and also communicate it in the final presentation of this project. So that maybe other cities can also get inspired and see this whole concept of spreading the seed of an idea of how to better co-create, to better create locally appropriate interventions in cities and not just some of us are planners and in our discipline it's always difficult to have a lot of co-creation, but I think so necessary and valuable. I really would like to have more approaches like that seen in cities in Europe, this is more or less the aim and goal. We are following this discussion, results will go into the storybooks. As I mentioned, we will let you know what we create there. We will send you the report afterwards. Now it's time we can start the questions. Discuss the questions! We have planned one and a half hour for the whole session, we are going already for 30 minutes. I think we try to stick to the one hour we have left now to not extend your time here. We will see how the discussion will develop. Maybe we don't need so much time, maybe a couple of more minutes, but I will check the time.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 15:42
At half past two there will be Fika.

Julia Gäckle 15:45
So there will be coffee! [Laughter]. Do you have any questions before we start now? Did I forgot anything to mention?

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 15:57
I go to the keys. I haven't brought it back. But you can start!

Julia Gäckle 16:04
Maybe we just wait a second for Eva. But just regarding the information we handed out: It's, as I mentioned, a consent form for taking pictures. The other is about participation in the discussion and the other ones are the questions we are discussing today. Four main questions. As I mentioned, I brought a fifth question from another partner with me from the project. But I would like to send you the fifth question afterwards via mail, if it's okay for all of you, because I will introduce this question at the end. It's more like a really individual question. It's not so much to discuss, it's more to think about in time a bit more longer to cross/check some numbers, stuff like that. I will present it later and you can decide if you want to have it as email or if we still

have time to discuss.

Vera Shaswar 16:59
Should we fill in this form?

Julia Gäckle 17:02
Yeah! Maybe do that now.

Vera Shaswar 17:04
We can do it now while we're waiting.

Julia Gäckle 16:05
Because I need them afterwards back and then Eva will be back maybe. Take your time to read it. I mean, it's just saying you will be recorded, we will use the data, but anonymously.

Julia Gäckle 17:33
Today is the 18th.

Anna Tjäderborn 17:49
And you're the investigator?

Julia Gäckle 17:52
Yeah. I'm more or less the leading investigator at this one, but we have different partners who are doing other ones, so they're named and there also the other ones named who created the content forms with us.

Rebecca Rudolph 18:04
So we don't have to fill it in?

Julia Gäckle 18:06
No. So maybe I can already present the questions, Eva already know them. I presented a couple of times. We developed the questions together with Eva and the other city partners. Yeah, maybe also good for you to know, I'm not sure if you know all cities involved in the project. We also have this flyers about all the other cities and Seedbed interventions.

Anna Tjäderborn 18:49
How many cities are there?

Julia Gäckle 18:50
Six cities in total and with Umeå included. It's Limerick in Ireland and then we have Versailles in France. Let me think. Lathi, Burgas and Tallinn. In all of them we already did the Seedbed interventions like the one we also did here, but of course differently in every city. Now, it depends from city to city. Some are already done with the NbS intervention. For example Limerick or Lathi. Because of certain reasons, it's always different. I don't know, at some cities it's material crisis that's really coming in so they couldn't develop so far. In Tallinn, they will not start before the end of this year, weather conditions play a role. So maybe next year, they will have a first look to show what is there, but maybe they will not be finished in early spring when we go there again. It depends from city to city and Eva told me in 2025 here in Umeå will be maybe finalized this whole action.

Vera Shaswar 20:05

But you will also come back? Is it in spring? You will come here again? Or when do you come here to evaluate?

Julia Gäckle 20:15

With Umeå I have to be honest, it's a bit different because it's after the end of the project when it will be finished: 2025. The project ends in 2024 next year in August after that. I'm no longer on the project, maybe privately I can come to Umeå and see. I will for sure come back to Umeå, I really love it! Last year was my first time in Sweden in total. So yes, but not from the project. We can't go again I think.

Vera Shaswar 20:52

But is it going to be some- or you mentioned some kind of evaluation or something?

Julia Gäckle 20:57

Yes, this will happen from another partner of the project. They do baseline data assessment. They measure different aspects we are not measuring this way. We are approaching methods like this qualitative method, discussion formats, taking photos, get emotions about that, more this kind of methods and they are dealing with different ones. I think when they went to Umeå Tadgh and his team...

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 21:32

...They were here in April. Yes, they come back in April or May next year. Seeing this park that we finished today, I think.

Julia Gäckle 21:43

Okay, let's start. I will introduce these four questions. You have a copy of them there as well, we will start with the first one: In what do you see added value or improvements through the nature-based solutions, like the interventions, which are already implemented fully or about to be implemented? I mean, I think all of us here in the room now plans already for the other areas. And you already know what is already implemented, so I think we can discuss this properly. We just go for that now. We have more or less 15 minutes for that. 10 up to 15 minutes. Depends on how much you want to share with us. We can just build around what do you think and let us know, what is your impression of the added value?

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 22:38

I think maybe you said it when I was gone: The NbS site is the whole stretch, the whole Bölevägen, the road and the four parks inclusive this park so I think maybe the site is not easy to know, what's the site?

Julia Gäckle 22:53

It's a whole thing in nature-based solution in which we refer to, but you can also see the different interventions as single NbS interventions, of course, because you have it in different steps of time, like one is already finished, more or less. The other ones will follow, so you can also call that a nature-based solution in a way. We can discuss that, refer to that. If you refer to the whole planning and context, just let us know. Just say, you know, I'm referring to the whole idea for the area, or you're specifically talking about certain planning parts. So you can just give it a go! The floor is yours! Just let us know what comes to your mind here. You can also share if you don't see any added value. It's also okay, of course. It's always difficult to break the ice.

Alejandro Haiek 24:03

I found of course value in several directions and perspectives. What I can see is a shift in the way that we understand material sources in the protocols to build the city, see infrastructure. I think for one sense, if we compare the ways that we operate this time, in relation with other kinds of city improvements in terms of infrastructure, first there are the main objects that could represent that expense. We're not talking about just economic value, but expensive in terms of bringing new trees for producing benches. And that kind of a line of developing is completely different than the one that we took. See these trees: some of them were falling off from storm, some of them were sick, they needed to be cut and they are repositioning, adding different values. As I said, not just because it's economic, but also because we are extracting sources not for making products, but instead to transform the material that is there always for different sort of conditions and processes. There is material available, so then shift completely the perspective, and also to see in what was last year: how much could cost to buy 200 pallets, then suddenly they were donated by someone that wants to collaborate. Or how much cost 50 threes and put it there. So then instead, I think we collectively found a way to put it together, discuss about aesthetic, discuss about the functionality, about the future of how it should be. And there were different points of view, some more technical or all seem more from a planning perspective. But also on the ground, the builders and the people that have been working on the field, also with another perspective. It's quite beautiful, in competitive ways, to be in the city. Of course, if we think in this in terms of it can compare with the normal way that the city is developing. So probably it involved many more people in the process, the cost reduce, the material is recycled and reused. There are several issues that will be important to reflect in comparison to see. Any policies or protocols that can be repeatable and instrumentalized in a simpler way. Always not just from the municipality plans, but also from things coming from the school or from different ways in articulation. This seems to be the correct way.

Julia Gäckle 27:26

Thanks. I don't know, maybe also for the local task force, what do you see has maybe changed positively in this area? For example, in this part which we can already use, or maybe in discussions what the people wish maybe for school kids, citizens in general let's hope will change positively also for the not yet developed areas.

Andreas Nilsson 27:57

I just, like you, reflected that when I first presented this, like two and a half years ago, for my staff, there were only two concerns, how do we get to work and how the kids going to get to school, because we need to change the bus stop, so they have to walk. And I would say the more I presented in the meetings, and I showed this is what's going to happen, the kids are in this park, and then we're going to have this recreation area. And this is going to look kind of like this, it's more like everyone is just looking forward to it! So all the problems that they saw, kind of disappeared. I think overall, more people thinking about the nature and how you can in an inner-city place actually make it more accessible, available and more relaxing. What else did I want to say? No, I think it's going to be interesting to see, because this area, where this intervention is, is also an area for development for a lot of apartments and a lot of houses. And for me, it's kind of interesting that they actually do this first. Because this is kind of, you know, first the landscape. Normally, it's the other way around, you want to make sure that the traffic situation is solved and everything. And now, they read this, and then it's going to be like, 2000 apartments or whatever it is, a lot of them and then they have to solve that issue. When this road is finished, they can't change this. So it's kind of an interesting thing to see how they're going to what their approach would be!

Anna Tjäderborn 30:10

In the preschool, it's almost the same at all, but the most parents are living close to the preschool, they don't

go by bus. They come with the car and with the bike. And that's important for them that it could be safe for the children. So I think the green parks and everything, that has been important for us. I am proud that we have been enjoying this project with also the children because there is something where most of the time we forget to talk to the children. So it's been a nice thing that we can enjoy our small kids in this project, too. It's important for us to tell the parents too, that we are going to enjoying this project. And today, we will send the pictures to the parents, what the children have been doing today.

Julia Gäckle 31:21
And the next spring, they can see the tulips!

Anna Tjäderborn 31:25
Yes, so the children can tell "I did that!"

Julia Gäckle 31:28
We talked about that! I think it's a good, another way of connection with nature in a more, unconscious way. So for this age, I think they were between five and nine, the kids who joined today. They just do that and in six months or four to five months later they see that and they can even remember and I think it's a good approach here. This is kind of small actions.

Anna Tjäderborn 31:57
And one thing that's been good for me in my part of my work that I been thinking about what is more of Bölevägen, then my preschool! Volvo, everything else, you almost think of your own part other times. But I think more about your school today than I thought earlier. So it's been many good things on the way.

Mikael Ringh 32:24
Same, we have 600 apartments in the area. We now have a project for three years, we are going to make new places for the people who will hire the apartments. And before, we often ask the parents: "How do you want the environment to be?" We never asked the children! And now we, since last year, going to even ask the children how the playground should look like. We have loans all over the places. Now we have meadows and educate the children why it is important to have it. Often the children have a better understanding for it than the parents. I also told them the date today when they were planting seeds, some stuff like that, they told the parents back home and educate them. And then it's going on because I believe sometimes when we are making places to see each other, we are thinking old in some way. We were making a place where we meet, we barbecue, taking a beer, bottle of wine, a glass of wine, but we never think of other religions. The place should be for everyone! City gardening! And because different cultures want different things, places to meet, you need to ask everyone what they want and what they need. And yes, and we want to join and see how we are working here, how we are thinking.

Julia Gäckle 35:16
Just an additional information, because I think it's a really good start for discussion: I really like how you share your experience and your opinions about this question. Maybe just to add: from the beginning, also with Eva and the other studies, we tried to frame this NbS interventions in a more social way. How can actions like that, like implementing new green infrastructure, can be more social in a way, because this is actually discussed in research as in practice, but not so much as necessary, this was our aim from the beginning. That we can make it more social, also more inclusive, more focusing on justice, and how we can reach a different range, a broader range of user groups, making sure that everyone feels included in different ways. We also have the GID panel, you know, we did this workshop. So this is a good approach. Good start

for discussions! I'm just checking the time, if it's okay for everyone, we go to the next question. Vera I don't know, if you want to share for the first question or should we continue?

Vera Shaswar 36:29
Yeah, I think everyone has said many good things, we can go on.

Julia Gäckle 36:33
Then I would like to continue. The next one would be this one down here, talking about your experience of the process itself. So implementing, if you joined the actions, the Seedbed interventions, but also maybe parts of the NbS interventions now, and also other activities. You as Local taskforce members, for sure joined different, various meetings, maybe with Eva, discussed different topics, how and also joined activities with citizens. So just let us know how you experienced this process of co-creating such a space and maybe not following the normal approach of planners come in, maybe external landscape architects or planners and they do their thing. And then it's done. Like you said, it's like a place where you can drink beer, but is this really inclusive? Stuff like that. What do you think about the process of trying to do it really in a co-creative way? Did you experience it positive, negative, complicated? Tell us about challenges you experienced in the process. Don't want to pick but I think Eva can talk about it.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 37:59
A challenge was COVID! The first year, there were only online meetings, one and a half year. So that was the first challenge, I think. And it's not already afterwards, but I think we could have been more inclusive as the EU and also the other Work Package say, there are no organizations, no NGOs in your local task force. We only have the companies and schools along the street, we don't have the football club or the gymnastic club. When I asked them, they didn't want to join, or they didn't answer the paper. But how to get them? It's easier to get people who can join during daytime as a part of their normal work. It's easier to get such people on board.

Anna Tjäderborn 38:50
For us in preschool it can be a problem with the time, but I think you have been doing that good. Today, half past eight is a good time. Maybe two o'clock in the afternoon is more of a problem for us. Because then some teachers have got home or...

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 39:06
And the children are tired. [Laughter]

Andreas Nilsson 39:21
I think you've done really good because you've actually set up different forms, what day, what dates, what time would suit you guys and then we can pick and choose. I would say from that point, you couldn't have done it better. I think that was really good, but a little bit like Eva said, we met each other a few times. But it would be nice to have had some of their organizations for housings, like one of their CEOs or whatever, could have joined. Like how does it affect and what does the close neighbours think about it? I'm just representing, my school, my kids and my staff. But they're not many of them that lives exactly on the road, we'll be interested to hear if they had concerns for the outdoor gym that I know we have been used for PE, but do they see different areas where this could create a problem more, because it feels like we've been very positive. And we think this is a good idea for the area, but hasn't been many other voices. I don't know if you got them.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 40:34

The only time we met them was at the Seedbed intervention. When there were a lot of people living in the area and just people passing by.

Julia Gäckle 40:44

Adding to that, also just understand you, you suggest that it would be better to include from the beginning citizens who live close by? I mean, we tried. But Eva mentioned COVID was a problem at the beginning, because exactly at this time, we needed to form the Local taskforce as a stakeholder, maybe that stakeholder finding different engaged citizens was at this time where we could just meet online, so it was difficult. But I think the Seedbed intervention was a great opportunity then, luckily we could make that in person. We tried to include the opinions as best as possible. Also to forward this to Eva and her team. Maybe other opinions could also influence and can still influence the development process in a good way. Vera, do you want? If you wasn't maybe a part of the whole process, you can also maybe share your thoughts about what you already know about the processes of co-creation.

Vera Shaswar 42:05

I have not been a part of the whole process, I haven't worked too long in the municipality either. But it still feels like a kind of unique way to involve stakeholders. Normally maybe you don't meet this much stakeholders. Here we have used a lot of things they said into the design, straight away. It has formed a lot of those ideas. I think it's really inspiring for other projects as well. That's my main thing I take away from it.

Mikael Ringh 42:58

But it's also a very good one, you explained the environment that you are building now. We are new, and I don't want them to compete at each other. So I can make one place and it's unique for the nearest neighbours. And if you want that you can go to the local place and do that, like play gardens we have for the smallest children near to the house where they are living and the elder they get you can go far away from the neighbourhood. On that we also have worked together with Umeå community. It's our children, don't play there. We are helping each other. We are talking to each other. And I think you explained it very good. Last time, the only thing I was a little bit worried about was the safety in some equipment. Because we have the laws tell us you have to check it every year and I'm not a specialist but just something when you reuse things. They may not be safe.

Alejandro Haiek 44:28

That's very challenging, that part now. Yes, I agree that it was very rich, the interactions between the actors. It always needs more and more people participating tough. I remember that the beginning was very, well, I can see that there were more people but if any kind of people participating in this online meeting, I remember, there were more people until the circle have closed and that always happens I guess in participation processes. Something that is fantastic, you can see in many other countries where people are asking municipalities for help. And that is a style in different way.

Julia Gäckle 45:14

Yeah, exactly.

Alejandro Haiek 45:16

That is something that you mentioned that I think is relevant and with everything that will come fall into them systematize and forming something else, I can see that it was a wide process of brainstorming. From that there were small assemblies that some of us were more in relation with or encouraged the co-creation.

Some others were also based on consultation, like providing guidance, and there was a nice process. A document coming with it and collective intelligence that grow from that was quite fascinating. That is what I think the group found on the way. There were also other important physical lines like education for instance in the streets, like an open classroom. I remember that there were so many students that came to build in the pallets and participated. And now as I say, also the kids planting and that is likely to have the classroom basically just in the street now serves as an open classroom. Other fun kind of learning process, this is quite relevant for us, if we reflect, of course, the continuity of these plans, what is needed, what do I get out from this project. But even these kids who planted, if they see in three, four or five years, when the apples really happen, they are in another, completely new moment in their life, if they can participate again, and again, and again, in all the things, it gets intergenerational.

Julia Gäckle 47:13

Definitely the point was to necessarily discuss how to maybe also post-evaluate the status of the project in a way. It's always in this research projects that at some point, of course, it ends, but maybe there's a chance to do it in another research? In another context to see what comes out of it and how it develops in every city. Okay, does anyone wants to share his questions or thoughts? Otherwise, we can already go to the next one, just trying to keep the time. Or do you want to share anything?

Rebecca Rudolph 48:07

I think the way to develop kind of, not a format, but ways to participate, which everybody already said, but from all the different, all of us from different places. Establishing formats or ways to participate is very, like you learn a lot, actually and keep using that. Like you say how the street is developed through a democratic way, and with the citizens, the whole street develops, which is very rare, I think. And very bottom-up, it feels quite bottom-up.

Julia Gäckle 48:58

Thanks, just stop me, if you want to say anything or add anything. But then, of course, we can also afterwards come back to other questions, but just to keep it on track I would like to continue with this one here. "How could you picture the NbS in your city?" How to describe it? We described it as a catalyst to better connect with nature, but how in general can the intervention function as an element of, a situation and experience to better get in contact with nature? We talked already about a couple of examples. For example this one I described. What I found really fantastic in a way is that the children put the bulbs in there. And on a subconscious level next year they see the tulips and are like yeah, or I think you mentioned in a couple of years, there are trees, and they will remember this action. I think it's a different way to connect with nature, then maybe normally in an urban context. I try to stick to my moderating role, but it's really hard. [Laughter] I also want to share, but that's not my role today. So you can share about that, how maybe you see it. Did you go out more into nature, for example, because of the interventions? Did you have some inspiring thoughts? Or did you saw something, shared some thoughts with other people, other members of society? Maybe in your case, the kids?

Rebecca Rudolph 50:56

I can just say, from a perspective of which I mentioned before, of a kind of forest perspective, or countryside versus city, I think that it's quite nice that with the Nature-based Solutions the kids get to experience nature in a different way, even though you're in the city, you kind of get a relation to real nature. It's not just a playground that feels very artificial. But it really is something in between a forest and city, kind of the way you would play in a forest. And I guess that is quite valuable within nature.

Julia Gäckle 51:51

Thanks. As I mentioned, it's a safe place. So you can just share your thoughts, even if maybe you see something negatively.

Vera Shaswar 52:06

I can say something about them. I'm thinking about the area, the site where we were today. Just that this thing that you talked about, it is something in between city and forest or something that it's not a typical, we haven't made a typical park there. But the material, as you also mentioned, it makes people first wonder why are these here, what is this? it's not like the typical park benches or stuff, but it's something else. Maybe it makes them think more about how the cycle of these materials looks like in nature. Compared to other things that we create here, like in the municipality and inside the city, I think this can make a lot of people interested in those processes, and why it is important to think about, other aspects and the aesthetic part but also biological parts of it.

Julia Gäckle 53:28

Maybe also referring to this, just to understand this fact, for example, that it helps like a catalyzing effect. Kids get taught early on about insects, wildflower meadows, which are not maybe common. Then the parents, the auntie's, maybe the grandmas get information from the kids.

Vera Shaswar 53:49

We have a lot of those ideas in this small area, a lot of those ecologically.

Alejandro Haiek 54:02

Really, for us it was a super nice experience to enjoy the perspective from the landscape knowledge that was there so we questioned that the other park is just a green surface. When you were showing the presentation that you've seen and like why is it different to have a grass carpet or to have biodiversity ground? Something that we take for granted, so we forget what is real nature! It is green and it is nature but maybe it's not. It's not complete. That is about processes, things that will happen with the composition of the logs, we can see fungus already there. So their routine is going to be below, the plants are going to attract pollinators, the ecosystem that are just simple small spaces could provoke! There is a strong reflection that we can really participate in co-creation through or within nature.

Vera Shaswar 55:10

Also that it's easy to do it maybe like put seeds in the ground from flowers. So how it's not that complicated to create these things so the kids will learn and it's not so...

Julia Gäckle 55:28

It's not magic. [Laughter] No, really, sometimes it's maybe hard to understand. Once you did it on your own, it's a more natural process.

Mikael Ringh 55:45

It's just like when the children are small, they have a credit card. "I don't have any money, it doesn't work, shit card!" [Laughter] But they don't know money, they haven't seen a real dollar. And I think it's also the same, I want sometimes take a step back, because I think what you create, it's sometimes like when I was small. You have some tree, you have a hammer, you have a nail and you created things in the forest, and you play there, but now that's not allowed to do! The students, the kids, the safety files. And sometimes I am a little bit sad about that. Because I think you're stopping all the imagination for the kids. They think money comes

from the wall and the flowers and the trees just came up, they don't know how and why. I think this is a very, very big step to take a step back and introduce everything for them and learning. Because it's very, very important to do it. This is a big way.

Julia Gäckle 57:39

It's a good phrase, the big step to take a step back. Actually good scene.

Alejandro Haiek 57:49

It's nice this perspective of the park, I will always have a learning outside.

Andreas Nilsson 57:56

But I mean, when you're saying kids are not out in the woods, you know, playing as they used to do, I remember when I was a teacher at a different school, the forest was right by the building. Then the kids were out there, they were creating these creations like this courtyard or small houses and blah, blah, blah. I don't know what happened a few years later, they were like no, they can't do that, they're not allowed. It's not a safe place for kids to be in the forest. So all the rules came up. And you know, no one got hurt previously, but it was more like we force them to stay on the artificial or the fake playground instead of being out in the woods doing creating these playgrounds by themselves. Which is kind of crazy when you think about it. So in that sense, I think this is the right way to go.

Mikael Ringh 58:50

Yes. And it's because you educate the children. Like at home, the stove is hot, when you just used it. Learning by doing!

Julia Gäckle 59:08

It's hot, just touch it and you know that it's hot!

Mikael Ringh 59:10

The playgrounds, they are built to educate the kids. It's your come. I don't know what to tell. Because the children are not allowed to hurt themselves too much, but it can hurt a little and you're learning from it, but you're not going to die or be very injured, that's why we have the playgrounds. If you read the direction from the EU: they are built to educate them and learning to try and error things. That's much of it. But sometimes, I agree with you, it's gone too far. Sadly.

Julia Gäckle 01:00:19

I agree as well.

Vera Shaswar 01:00:21

This is a whole other subject also. Like playing, health, safety, something.

Julia Gäckle 01:00:27

You're also from practice site.

Anna Tjäderborn 01:00:30

Is it the same in all countries?

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 1:02:25
It's same European Union rules, I guess.

Vera Shaswar 1:02:37
There's so much to add to it. Like what artificial playgrounds cannot give. It's so much that nature based playgrounds can give children.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 1:02:51
Yeah, but this is not a playground what they just built today. There's a place where they can play because we left an open space, doing what is unprogrammed and also with the logs and it's allowed to play there even if it's not a playground.

Julia Gäckle 01:03:10
Exactly. But this is at least in Germany not so common. Some experimental areas are doing it. It seems that in general it's still this normal playground.

Vera Shaswar 1:03:25
We're talking more and more about it here, some cities are going back to more nature, like playgrounds. It takes a while.

Rebecca Rudolph 1:03:39
I think it's good also for the kids to not only have a designated place to play, this is more multi-generational. It's for everybody, but everybody finds their way to interact with the space. So maybe the grandmas and grandpas, they enjoy the flowers. Meanwhile, the kids have to climb on this, but you have to watch out for the flowers. It's not just that they get to do whatever they want there, it's something with respect as well. And I think that's an important aspect.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 1:04:13
I'm normally planning the grey parts of the city, it is really interesting also to see the green. Otherwise, I think also when I travel to other cities, I see that Umeå is pretty green in comparison to other cities. So I get another pair of glasses I think now, I don't just see bus stops, pavements. Now I see some trees too!

Anna Tjäderborn 1:04:45
Can I ask why Bölevägen was in this project and not another region in Umeå?

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 1:04:51
So from the beginning of the application, there were two parts. It was Bölevägen, and it was the green wedge in Mariehem. Then the application was approved to come to the second round, then we just continued with Bölevägen and we didn't use the Mariehem part anymore because of the Bölevägen, the street has been really on the list to do something about Bölevägen, because it has been not that good for many years. The 10 last years it had been on the top, the first one in line, but before we started always came something else that was more important. And now we got this project and we said no, now we have to do Bölevägen because otherwise this money will go back to the European Union. Now we put Bölevägen there and do it. I think that's the backstory of it. But the two persons who wrote the application, one of them works still at the municipality but in another unit and the other one doesn't work for the municipality anymore. So we really cut out and I call them somehow, what did you mean with this sentence? What does it mean? What should I do? But they didn't remember either because they work with other things now, so we

also have to reinvent, what did we mean? I think we mean this so that's why. I think that's the story. The road was the main thing and then the four parks. The landscape architect who was in the project before Vera, she saw those but we have this four spare areas, we don't use them that much. They are just green areas. We put snow there in the winter and in the summer, people just...

Vera Shaswar 1:06:48
...don't even think of them as parks. They are just lawns.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 1:06:52
Yes. You weren't really sure if they were parks or part of the property of the neighbours, so you didn't know if it was for everybody or for someone living there. Now we do come on parks that you see that you can go there.

Julia Gäckle 1:07:14
I just saw that the coffee arrived! Should we do a small break? Should we drink a coffee or should we just go with the last question? You can decide, coffee and a small break, five minutes and then we just start discussing again?

Andreas Nilsson 01:07:31
Maybe we do that!

Julia Gäckle 00:00
I think it's running. Then, together with coffee, I think we can tackle the last question! It's this one here. In general, we are interested to know what you can imagine in the future for the NbS site, and here I'm referring to the whole site. But if you want to talk about specific parts, also happy to get information about that. You can also talk about the whole project, including all the different sites. Maybe to help you out a bit with what we mean here, what we want to refer to how do you think it will be used in the future, and how it will develop, from the point of view, nature development, but also usage, so this is how the kids will use it maybe in the future. But also what you want to add to that. Feel free to tell us! So just to understand what they maybe didn't see before the actions took place, or maybe they get approval to use desired ways of using the area.

Andreas Nilsson 01:24
What I can see is that pretty close by, Bölesholmarna, the area with the river and islands and stuff, normally you see people who take the car down there, and then they go running around the tracks that they have. I hope and I can see that this road hopefully become a part of that area more. So that, you will use that as a part of your running or biking in that sense, I hope that it will be better. It will be more movement along that road. And connecting also to the other side. It's kind of like people will find new tracks or areas to run or bike.

Julia Gäckle 02:26
Yeah. Just to understand: what they maybe didn't see before the actions took place, they get approval to use desired ways of using the area and how to use it area differently, maybe.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 02:42
I think the vision for Bölevägen was that it should be that nice that you can, when you go around the bridges, as an alternative to go at the river, go up to Bölevägen and think it's also nice, a nice road, not only a transport stretch. That was to make Bölevägen nicer for pedestrians and bikers.

Andreas Nilsson 03:22

And for us as a school, I know that some class kids are six years old, we didn't send them today, we sent the three years old, no, the nine years old. I know that they are very eager to you take them on field trips into these different areas and parks. And also, like I said, the PE teachers using the outdoor gym and using that area for different PE activities as well. I mean, it's prettier. It's nicer. It's something that is fun to use. I think that our students will use that road area a lot more than what we have before, in educational matters as well.

Mikael Ringh 04:19

But I also think for our guests or people when, for example, grandma and grandpa are visiting. They take the children away and go to a place for both of them, is very big. It's important, because now when we are building our places, we create just for the kids, grandma and grandpa standing there. Now we can have a place where kids can do stuff for themselves. Mother and father and grandma and grandpa- it's a place for both of them! And I think that's very important as I said from the beginning, it's multi-usable.

Alejandro Haiek 05:25

I like to say that the people will encounter other ground, other features in the everyday life and this is very exciting. There are things that will be more establishing, maybe Volvo will be having lunch there every day. I think that could activate more with a different frequency while there are older people who will discover what happens and that is also exciting, to discover a new landscape. And I guess it will change with time. It will create other scents that we are not seeing now but nature will introduce changes that will come from nature more than from humans. But it's very exciting. I also like to hear this: since the beginning you were mentioned this idea and we remember the first time that we went there to the parking lot and there were piles of soil that just someone put there and then we were discussing the value of this biotopes that were spontaneous. It was quite incredible and sensible to say "hey, we cannot destroy this biotopes and the wild!" People just going to see a pile. This was very beautiful to see, the sensibility and see there were some teachers bringing in the students to see these reaction, they were using it as an open classroom. It's exciting. Also maybe you got a class every year there and they will be able to follow the track and see how the spaces are evolving and understanding the time perspective. I think it's very useful.

Rebecca Rudolph 07:44

I agree with you on the time perspective and the circularity. On an annual basis, they see the landscape transforming but also in a longer perspective of several years, I don't know, decades. The apple trees will grow and get bigger and the logs will probably just disappear. There is something pedagogic behind that too. Seeing how nature actually change naturally.

Mikael Ringh 08:25

But I also think it's the meeting places where you can do something together. Because nowadays, I think as a parent, you want a place where you can say "I don't have time to be with you. And I don't want to be with you because I just stand there for an hour when you're playing." Now you may have a place where I can see the children are playing around. I'm sitting there reading a book, take a cup of coffee, we take a biscuit together. I think we must go back to that. We are doing things together. Today the school has to educate the students or the kids. The parents, it's not my business. It's your business to take care of them and educate them. We have to take a step back! We are doing this together. You are my kid. Come look, I will show you how stuff works and they are helping me, but they are not responsible for educating my kids. And this is one step. I maybe old but I think some things were better before. [Laughter]

Julia Gäckle 10:18

No, just joking. Totally agree. Interesting to hear your voices on that, as well. I would like to discuss with you the whole afternoon, but I think it's also good to stop at some point. If you want to share something regarding one of this questions, we can now also discuss for example the question one again, if you have some thoughts on your mind for that, but if not, I would just continue and present you the fifth surprise question. Just let me know if you want to add some?

Andreas Nilsson 10:58

Just one thing that I would like to add is, that I just hope that Umeå kommun, the municipality, have learned from this process, when they are creating new areas. When they are opening up houses, and they'll be in this area, that they actually try and get more input. What is needed? What do you want? What will make it more attractive? How do we, both with the environment, but also have the process. I think one of the reasons that we didn't get that many participants was that we're not used to it. It's not something that we get involved in or not expected to get involved in. So that's my wish.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 11:41

I think the park department are really good at involving people. I think we from the streets part are not really that used to it. We answer questions when they come and they are done. It's always too late. [Laughter] Then obviously, everything is already planned.

Vera Shaswar 12:03

It's not so easy to find the right way to reach people.

Andreas Nilsson 12:24

I'm not saying that you're bad. I'm just saying that when you plan things in the future, in different areas, doesn't use that to be gold, that it could be different things. Just get the public involved! A little bit.

Vera Shaswar 12:41

Yeah, it's really important.

Julia Gäckle 12:42

And I think you also, I mean if I understand correctly, you're also referring to the innovative character of this action in general, because it's not usual, overall, to include citizens that much like we did with this project, for example. Maybe at some actions, it's a part planned, a part already. I have also taken care of projects with landscape architecture work that specifically focuses on participation, but in general it's not. Maybe opinions coming in, at some point in the process, but not from point zero or before already. I always called, for example the seedbeds, we're already starting before zero a bit. It's a bit like that. And as a general process, maybe it can be a good innovative approach for now speaking for citizen in Europe, you know, like we are getting more used to that. I'm also thinking on my cities close by in Germany.

Alejandro Haiek 13:55

I agree, there is something that we should not underestimate, this process. It is there, it was a practice, it was an experiment, a collective experience. And left a lot to reflect in the still. For instance, I remember, and it's true that we are educated to be autonomous in our disciplines in the settings. Now architects need to be more, they cannot just design a building and send them from the office, they need to include people. Even a personal work study they made to work with our commitment is to be and all the disciplines to be in that direction. And this is fantastic, but also the architect is not formally established. I guess it's

another participant, so you're making participation because you believe in that, but maybe it's not that it is embedding your work, description or if we make a project for someone we just describe the square meters that we're going to design such as so often time periods for participation. This doesn't exist in, make it always add off, and good intentions and not something that could be embedded in a normal protocol. But I found it fantastic, I can remember moments for instance and also related with the cultural production that the city has, the event, again, the Seedbed intervention, and I know that maybe because there was proximity with musicians. But to have an agenda where you can see kids, from the music school, but then later on a little bit another age of the trend bands that are in the city. In the afternoon there will come in the grandpas to play the bass or something- unbelievable! I mean, I remember Umeå on music, to watch, but no so often that happened. To have been in a parking lot, they're not even in the main theatre, this is some special character.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 16:21

I think it was fun to have exactly those band because they are practicing also along the street. There practicing room are nearby. So they're really, really local bands, practicing 500 meters from there!

Alejandro Haiek 16:41

In the context where most of the theaters closed or in that context, around the world with music and use or cultural institutions can trap in budgets and things. This was a very beautiful example of how to produce, provoke culture and whatever it is, in a corner of a parking lot. That is with a wave of different accuracies and as examples will disseminate and communicate.

Julia Gäckle 17:19

I don't want to end our discussion, but we are way over time. Okay, we had coffee in between. So that doesn't count, but I mentioned this surprise question. Sorry, I just have it on the phone. I prepared it on this device, but this is recording. I mentioned it, it's not a question we will ask in the context of creating this storybooks, telling the story of NbS interventions itself and Seedbed interventions, but it helps a bit to understand better. It comes from the partners we mentioned earlier who do baseline data measurements, who come back next spring. So I just read it for you. I will suggest I hand it out via mail afterwards. They basically did a list: "If you would choose an area for new NbS intervention in your city, which area would it?" And would you prioritize and put an order from the highest priority to the lowest your numbers and then they just did a list of a lot of examples, "area with low amount of green cover", "area with lack of public park's etc. At least 10 different options, 12 I counted I think, and then you put the numbers in. I think it's a good question. It also helps us for our stories but I think it's better to sit down at home, just think five minutes about that and not discussing it in a group. If you agree. I don't know if it's okay for you. Okay, then we do that, you're prepared for this mail.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 19:08

And how do they answer? They send the email to you then?

Julia Gäckle 19:13

Yes, I will send it to you and you can maybe forward it to our group there and then you can contact me back for the answers maybe or directly write me as you wish. I hope it's okay for everyone. I stop the recording now.

Mikael Ringh 19:37

I have one question. Because we are the biggest sinners. Nowadays, when we build new apartments, it's

more expensive to build in the city or maybe five kilometers outside and I think this project that you have done here, you should have done in a big city, because we are building away every park. We have no garden, we have no spaces to see each other, because you have concrete.

Julia Gäckle 19:57

In the city center?

Mikael Ringh 20:26

Yes. But I think it's all over the world. Because they have no place when it's raining very hard, nowhere to put the snow. Instead of saving the planet, we are transporting snow in and out. I believe we are thinking very, very, very wrong. I mean, if you have a problem like this in the real city, you're maybe lifting up the problems, what we are building.

Julia Gäckle 21:16

To reach a broader audience.

Vera Shaswar 21:20

And also we have most problems with that in the city center because it's more dense.

Julia Gäckle 21:26

Yeah, for sure! I mean, I know it's a complicated process to choose an area, we explained earlier to focus on the local target area in the end which was chosen due to various reasons, of course, and also budgeting and etc.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 21:43

I think the hard thing is when you do a European Union project, you apply, and then you don't hear something and you don't hear anything then you got it and then you have to do it and then you stopped the procurement process and everything is very slow and we should have started it before but then we didn't know if you get the project or not!

Julia Gäckle 22:07

I tried my best to communicate also between research speed and practice speed! Because sometimes there is a gap. Like okay, we can't tell two days before that we want to order I don't know, trees or a lot of, gravel for doing some construction work. What, it needs first budgeting approval, and then, I don't know, shipping time, material crisis maybe needs like for four months for example, in Limerick it was like taking a long time once you decided of course which trees you want, which material. I experience it like that, like a real gap in between this theory work, research work and projects like the European Union project, and then looking into the practice world where things work differently! Always communicating between cities and other partners.

Eva Maaherra Lövheim 23:14

But it is really fun to make new knowledge. I'm not a researcher but now I can be a researcher, doing new things and create something, learn something new that other people can use too. And we can use it in other ways too!

Julia Gäckle 23:35

Yeah. I would stop the recording now. We can continue to discuss just to wrap up.

Transcript of the second Focus Group Discussion in Umeå

Thursday, Oct 19, 2023 11:30AM • Duration: 0:19:44

Volvo Lastvagnar AB, Umeå umeverken

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

questions, Nature-based Solution, Seedbed intervention, city, NbS, involved, municipality, Volvo, process, meetings, surroundings, company, work, employees, talk, health

SPEAKERS

Elisabeth Lundell, Julia Gäckle

SETTING

To also catch the opinions on the guiding questions from the Local taskforcemember Volvo, we met at the local production plant. After lunch we started a thoughtful and vibrant talk about the value of Nature-based Solutions. It became clear that Volvo sees improvements on their attractiveness as a company to support projects like this one and to stay connected to the neighbourhood. Our interlocutor seemed to be happy to share the companies' but also her personal opinion on the questions we discussed. She pointed out examples to underline her arguments, always tried to make sure to answer the questions as a whole and was open to answer additional requests that came up during the talk. All in all we could have been talking even longer and more into detail about several points as it was a fruitful and comfortable setting.

Julia Gäckle 00:01

Yeah, so basically, these are our four questions. I'm sorry for the laptop. Normally, we want to keep it analog, to have printed versions. We would like to start with this first question, more or less, really, what do you have on your mind? In what do you see added value and improvements, for example, to the first redesign of the site from yesterday we went to and also, maybe in general, of the whole planning process of the other sites for the Nature-based Solution interventions.

Elisabeth Lundell 00:43

Would you like me to speak from like the company perspective, or from my more personal perspective?

Julia Gäckle 00:55

Your personal perspective would be interesting, and you can be like really honest, we can also say, off record, if you want to mention something.

Elisabeth Lundell 01:04

Because, personally, I really appreciate the lifestyle that is supposed to be highlighting the health environment, and so on, that attracts me as a person, because I really, I like that the outdoor kind of feeling and the nature close by, that is, important for me, as a person. But then, in this case, I have been involved through the company and we talk actually a lot from the company perspective as well. The citizens are important both for our existing colleagues, it's nice if you have this nice view to look outside, when you work in, but we do to have good surroundings and to be able to take a lunch, walk or whatever. It is something that is beneficial for us. And we would like to utilize our riverside more if we could. But there are different obstacles there that are hindering us. But then, when we think about what is our? How to say, EVP, like the employee, what's valuable? When you look for new job? When you search for a new job, what do you look for? And we have actually talked quite a lot about that. What stands out with our plant here, that is actually

our location, and that we have this, you don't only come here for the work assignments, but you come here for the lifestyle, and I think that the city's degree in health and focus on more the feelings, that you get when you walk in nature to connect. That is, as a company, really valuable for us, because that is what we think attracts people to here from other parts of the world. And also, like where are we? We are in an expansion area where a lot of industries are both like popping up and expanding and to be able to compete with the others. We can't, for starters, we can't compete with them. If we start to compete there, we will kill ourselves. But to be attractive, I think that to move so far north, you don't only move for the work tasks, then you can move somewhere else. But to move here for the lifestyle, that is one of our key selling points or how to say and for that I think this is really important. That we connect to the city and how to plan the green environment. Was it the answer to your question?

Julia Gäckle 04:44

Perfect. I also want to correct myself: You can totally talk about your personal opinion, but also let us know what you think of a company opinion, so to say, or company thinking. I think the both sides are really interesting to hear and also valuable for our whole story. Co-create creation. And just an additional note, Jannis is taking notes about how the whole scene is set up. And you say a bit, and me, I'm more like in a moderating role, I should not share my opinion, but it's sometimes a bit difficult. [Laughter] So yesterday was especially difficult, but today I try my best. So yeah, just in concern of time, I would say we just progress. We can also in the end maybe tackle some other questions again. But the other or the next question good to discuss would be how you experience the whole process? Like I explained before, it's a new approach to start already before point zero, I always call it. It's not a normal, but a unusual kind of participation process. It's more before participation even begins, we already created this local task forces, looked out for stakeholders with the city of Umeå, etc. So, how you experienced the whole process and maybe let us know, from which point onwards you were involved in the activities around NbS and seedbed.

Elisabeth Lundell 06:20

I will say this, I've been involved for almost two years. I got it when I started my position here, that was in the beginning of 2022. And then they have already had some startup meeting, I think, but they came in quite early in the process, I think. And we've been involved with the process, all along the way. We didn't participate in one of the Seedbed interventions that they have at, I think, the International School. And I think that it has been, it has been really good for us to early on here. What is going to happen? What is the purpose of doing it this way? And how will it be formed? And how can we communicate to our employees and so on? But it has been also a bit difficult to see, okay, what are the expectations from us? How can we contribute? We have, of course, our interests we want, we would like to have certain things as well being a big employer and so on. But I mean, it's, it's been, it's been really good to have early dialogues, I would say. And it's been a bit fluffy sometimes. But it's also been, it's been, it's been a possibility for us to express. Express where we have like concerns on like specific crossings and so on that are nearby us. For instance, maybe this is too detailed, but they, they will move the bike way to the northern side of the road. And that means that a lot of kids going back and forth to school, they will now use, they will walk in back close to our facade. And they will pass a crossing where all of our employees drive in when they come to work and when they go home. And that time is exactly at the same time as the school ends in the middle of the day, at 14:30. So that is a big, like safety issue that we see. But to be able to be early involved to see, okay, it will, it will become perhaps more dangerous, but how can we make that crossing safer by being early involved? So, I think that we have had really good dialogues about that. And that is something that if we haven't been a part of the process so early than that, perhaps, I don't want to say that it would have been forgotten or fell between the chairs. But a fear from us would have been that it would not have been less highlighted like it has been now.

Julia Gäckle 09:41

It's a really good example for the benefits of being early involved, as you mentioned, but also like the appreciation you just mentioned to be a part of the process. Not only, I don't know, via one participation event where you maybe can write your opinions on post-its and then then you will never go back, for example.

Elisabeth Lundell 10:02

It's been really good. And also, we have had several meetings here. And that is also something that has been good for us both, because it's otherwise it's a bit of like to go somewhere else that then it becomes obstacles and you have meetings and so on, but to keep it, to have the meetings here, has been good for us, but also, then we can see, okay, that is the crossing that we are talking about. You pass it on the way here so you can see, where the problem will be. You get better understanding because we are here and not in the municipalities' office somewhere.

Julia Gäckle 10:43

Yeah. I just had an additional question. You mentioned, the whole process was a bit fluffy. You mean, it's not so detailed decisions, for example, for new products or...

Elisabeth Lundell 10:56

No, more like the fluffiness has been about like the GoGreenRoutes, the purpose that is like becoming a more like healthy, healthy route? Or how to say, and how can we participate in the in-depth message, because we have, it's easy to understand when we talk about for instance, safety, because that is one of our like a business core value. But then, what are the expectations when it comes to the health part or when we want to enhance the feeling of like, close-by nature. So, what is expected from us as an employer, not being outdoors? If you have the school, for instance, they spend a lot of time outdoors between courses. So there, it's maybe more natural to see the connection, but we are like, we are inside. And we have our main entrance for all transports on the other side. So, it's not, it's like okay, but our ground ends here and your ground here. So, what do you want us to participate with?

Julia Gäckle 12:30

But after the meeting, it was clearer, in a way, maybe still open questions. But once, I can imagine, once everything is developed finally, maybe there are still open questions then. But maybe then the benefits of enjoying all the surrounding, which is benefiting for health and well-being for employees after work or in between breaks. Even more than it already is in your area. But yeah, okay. We could talk about that longer, but maybe we just go to the next question. And it would be this one: how could you picture the intervention or the interventions, as we, we described it as a catalyst to better connect with nature, which just means how can it, generate a better connection to nature? For example, did you experience that you use, I don't know, nature here, in this area, more through for example the NbS, Nature-based Solution, which was implemented? Or, I don't know, do you see other? I don't know, yeah. How to explain it? Do you see maybe other benefits from nature and your surroundings through this NbS interventions? You mentioned at the beginning, it's a different way to use, maybe green infrastructure. And this is the starting point for think about nature in cities a bit differently, maybe?

Elisabeth Lundell 14:04

I think in Umeå, we are quite aware. I think also that we have closeness to the nature. So, we maybe, already take it a bit for granted. We expect the nature to be a natural part of our city. That those times it's been, how to say, more like the blocks and the cement vibe, then it's not been appreciated. So, I think, in general at

least, my personal opinion is that it's been more writings in newspapers when we have solutions that aren't based on the nature...

Julia Gäckle 15:08

...inspired action?

Elisabeth Lundell 15:09

Exactly. But it's a, it's a hard question to answer.

Julia Gäckle 15:14

I can imagine, it was the hardest one we discussed also with the city, with Eva from the municipality. But it's really interesting for us to also compare with the other cities, because we have, I think you know, Versailles, Limerick, Tallinn and so on. So it's everywhere, but of course differently.

Elisabeth Lundell 15:31

And I can also imagine that we have, like our nickname for Umeå is "the city of birches". And that is also, I think it's so a part of who we are here, that the leaf, the birch leaf is the symbol of Umeå. And you can see, I mean, if you take a look at our logo that we have, here, we have that as a part, because that is such a huge part of who we are. It is both, I think, good because then it's so expected. I'm not sure if I answered your question, but I think it's such a, it's such a natural part of who we are. It's part of our identity.

Julia Gäckle 16:25

I think it's perfect! No, really, I mean, it's good to understand because I mean, of course, we guessed. Because we have a lot of contact with Eva since a couple of years. But yeah, it's also in the, after our Focus Group Discussions it will be finalized in every city. It's really good to compare, I think, as well. And to understand. Regarding time, I'm pulling off that last question. We have also a kind of fifth surprise question, so to say, but I will send this via mail if it's okay. Because once for regarding time, with respect your work, working time, but it's also a question which I think needs a bit more of time to look at and to cross some points. So it's not like a discussion question more or less, but we'll see, if it's okay, if I send it to you.

Elisabeth Lundell 17:23

Yes!

Julia Gäckle 17:24

So our last question would be what do you can imagine for the future of the NbS? Because of course, it's not done after it's implemented. It will develop, grow, change over time, because it's nature, but what do you can imagine maybe also for additional design for the sites or what do you can hope for usage of the site?

Elisabeth Lundell 17:50

I think I hope this will be a part of the municipalities' way of working here, and also because we have a goal to grow as a city to become 200.000 habitants by the year 2050 I think, and then, if we grow, then we need to have places to live and when we have new places to live we need to have new parks and we need to have new infrastructure. So, I really hope that this is something that they will continue to have as a base in that work. Because to be involved early on and to have this also, quite like it was something to even though it was fluffy, it was good to have a purpose as well. Not only, okay, we are going to rebuild the road, what do you have for inputs, but to have a bigger goal together I think is also something that has been fruitful for the discussions and for the development of the area. Did I answer your question?

Julia Gäckle 19:26

Everything alright, perfect. Just keeping an eye on the time, so I hope it's okay. It's 11:55. I will just stop the recording now. We can have a couple of exchanges after that.

Transcript of the Focus Group Discussion in Lahti

Thursday, Nov 02, 2023 2:23PM • 43:10

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

forest, people, health, Lahti, nature, idea, city, project, target, work, area, close, good, citizens, talk, different kinds, intervention, understand, NbS

SPEAKERS

Shreya Utkarsh, Suutari Taru, Local Task Force, Dionysia Giannopoulou

Shreya Utkarsh 00:00

Today, I had four guiding questions that I shared with you, it's after a long process of thinking about what we would like to know, we thought about just for, like, different elements that we that we consider important to now gather feedback on. The first one is more about getting to know about your experience in general about the whole process.

Taru Suutari 00:31

Sorry to interrupt, I don't know who will know about the Seedbed intervention. Before maybe, we could explain a little bit like, one year ago, last autumn, last September, we had the Seedbed intervention in the Health Forest, there were 20 participants from the hospital staff. And they were like volunteers to participate in this pilot study. And we walked up the forest path with them, they were divided in four different small groups of five people. And we walked the path and we made some small exercises there and how to set stuff nature. And then we made a questionnaire for them before and after the walk, and asked about their experiences. And then we also had group interviews in the end with this five people, and we were talking about how they could use the forest in their work, and how would they develop the forest and then we analyzed the results. The important part in the Health Forest development that we asked the people who are going to use it, how do they want to develop it. And this same Seedbed intervention was done in every of these six cities that are involved in GoGreenRoutes. And each of the cities have different target areas, but every city have receive an intervention last autumn, and now they are developing these target areas.

Shreya Utkarsh 02:21

It's really interesting, every city is so different in their own ways. For instance, in Burgas, they are really like using a park, which is very close to it was a car park actually, and they're transforming it into an area which will have therapy areas with sound therapy, but also physiotherapy elements in there, and so on. So they really like trying to build in those health angles in the park as well, with designers and so on. And I think every intervention has shaved out very differently. But the idea was like for today to just understand about the whole process. I know that you have not been clearly involved. But maybe you have something to share about like, just a reflection on the GoGreenRoutes process so far, and maybe are with the infrastructure now in the Health Forest.

Local taskforce 03:25

I'm not sure if I have any deeper answers on that, because I have not been involved in the Seedbed interventions. But of course, before this process even started, I have been involved in initial planning, because this has been a long journey, we have had planning on how to start this Health Forest for quite many years by now. And because of this process, we were able to proceed with the planning and now we are in this situation that we are opening the health for us and that's really great. And of course, this Seedbed

intervention was very important because it actually showed how the health professionals can take and utilize this Health Forest for their own well-being. But as far as I understand, it's all also the idea in the future, if they can utilize it with the patient as well. Of course, it's not suitable for every patient. But as far as we're taken, they can do that. So that's important. And, of course, the results of the seed interventions are important. It's important to know how they reacted and what kind of development ideas they had. And, of course, we are getting more information now, when the Health Forest is opening, and we can see how citizens and how they react and what kind of responses they have. But I have to say that I haven't been visited to help for us, myself before. So, of course, one of the faculty of healthcare was quite close to that area before, but it was couple years ago, so, I'm looking forward to visit there myself as well.

Shreya Utkarsh 05:40
Sounds great.

Local taskforce 05:42
You should go tomorrow.

Local taskforce 05:44
Yeah, I probably will, it is in my calendar.

Taru Suutari 05:47
We were supposed to have this visit to the Health Forest first with our Local taskforce at the beginning of August, but then there was the storm in Finland. So we need to cancel it. Yeah.

Shreya Utkarsh 05:59
Yeah, thank you so much. I think it's also something that was, it's so interesting to hear, because like working on different projects, and trying to understand how important co creation is. And what it brings to the Urban Planning sector, as well, in terms of change of mindsets is really important. Because sometimes, if the place is not utilised for the purposes, that you intended to be, for instance, on health, or for instance, for easy access to mobility in the area, it's a really important process to engage with the public, right from the start. And that was the initial plan to make sure that the people who are going to use the people who can make their patients, it's a ripple, like a snowball effect a little bit like if you feel about being kind of aspect involved in that process, then you will also bring more people to try it out. It's a snowball that we find. And so it's good to hear that. Have you been to their headquarters? Yes, yes, we went there. And what do you think about it?

Taru Suutari 07:24
Just really nice. Yeah. We made a tour in there. You showed us the yoga thing. And then there was this benches and all the artwork, And then it was so nice. And then we had some snacks with us. And then near sort of, was it a lake? Or was it more like a pond? There are some benches and it was really nice. In June, we had our light lunch in there.

Shreya Utkarsh 08:09
And looking forward to tomorrow.

Taru Suutari 08:10
Yeah. And it was also nice for us. We just started so getting to know better, the whole team and so on. So in that perspective, it was kind of like a tight team retreat.

Local taskforce 08:27
I also enjoy the forest. And like, I spent quite a lot of time in the nature in my free time. So it was really nice, because there was like, different kinds of parts in the forest. There was more typical forest and then there is like a pond and a swamp. And it was really nice. I think that people will like it. And even though in some parts, you can hear the cars. But still the landscape is like that you are in the middle of the forest.

Shreya Utkarsh 09:04
I remember there was some construction work going on, like close to the entrance.

Taru Suutari 09:08
Yeah, when we had this Seedbed intervention, they were just building that area right next to the forest. But now it's ready. There are those houses already.

Shreya Utkarsh 09:16
So the people living there can access the forest?

Suutari Taru 09:21
Yeah, the houses are very close to the paths at one point.

Shreya Utkarsh 09:28
Yeah. Really nice.

Local task force 09:32
Yeah, it will be great to see it because I have only seen the plants and to see how they are come true.

Shreya Utkarsh 09:44
Yeah, really nice. And I think it also kind of helps for the city to understand which direction and I know that with Lottie, you're already surrounded with the forest and how to make use of existing thing and not to have like this idea because sometimes when we do urban development, we think about how to bring people closer to the green as well and making like, easy accessible. So I think this is really great for me to understand that it's surrounded by forests. So just make it making it more accessible making going there and trying out, and especially connecting with the hospital, I think it's really an important part.

Local taskforce 10:31
I think it's, especially those who are not spending much of the time in the nature, that's gonna be like a good part. Because I know that those who are like heavy campers and hikers, they probably visit there, but they will avoid it if there was a lot of people because we want to find the places where nobody really is.

Dionysia Giannopoulou 10:54
Can I make a small question? Lahti is so green, and so close to nature. And it's really a nice place, from the perspective of environment. So people have the chance to go around, and even either no hike, not so much of hiking, but more walking, because it's quite flat. But the forest, how is it different to the actual nature to Lahti? The Health Forest? what's the difference of that? And what kind of value does it bring? When we compare it to the actual nature which is so rich here?

Taru Suutari 11:49
I think this is the most typical question that people asked me that what's the difference between Health

Forest and no other normal forest or other forest, it's like almost every forest can be a Health Forest for person if they go there and relax there. So that's the one thing that we want to also show people and, like, tell them that your own forest close to your house can be the Health Forest, you don't necessarily need to go to this particular forest. But I think it's more like, we want to somehow spread the information about nature, health benefits, and if we name one forest as a Health Forest, and hopefully people will think that, okay, there is some connection between forest and health. Yeah, so I think it will, hopefully, people will understand this better.

Shreya Utkarsh 13:00

It's the same way as like, you have the planetary health doctor, it's also giving this kind of edge to the idea that okay, we need to create some kind of skill set in even in like health professionals or the other way around, and urban planners and so on, so that they can connect with the existing environment, but also make sure that they kind of because I know in Australia, they have these like nature prescriptions, and you know, like people can talk to them fine and stuff. So how can it become like a, I don't know that it just starts to percolate everywhere and everybody can do it. I think it's really important to start with these like champions, sort to say, who are role models and then to spread it throughout and I think that's, that's one way to know like the Health Forest idea.

Taru Suutari 13:54

Yeah, you can communicate that way. And of course there has been made some researches about what's the difference like if people go in the forest where there is old trees and in the forest where there is like young trees and there is a difference in how people react or what's the impact of the forest or nature in today health. So, in the Health Forest there is like many typical elements that are good for people's health, well being for example, it's a big area. So you can spend there like a lot of time, you can relax better, there are like many diverse areas there. There are many forest types, different forest types, and there is like this water elements. There are many elements that are mentioned, that are like typical for Health Forest.

Local taskforce 14:59

And you know, in Finland, it can be a challenge for us to combine the idea of health and well being and forest. Although we all know that, of course, being in forest or being in nature is good for us. But because we all are so accustomed to be in the forest and the forest is always near. So we don't necessarily identify these connections so well, although of course we know it.

Taru Suutari 15:35

And it's also like the that you think about it, when you go to the forest, you think about it, you consciously try to relax, if you go to some other forest, and you don't even thought about it, maybe the impact, it's not so powerful. But if you try to connect with the nature, try to sit and listen to nature and do these exercises.

Shreya Utkarsh 16:02

So more conscious understanding when you're in the forest, because as you said that it's a culture. When nature and finding time for yourself in nature is like so important. But like, just to get back to this, to have some guidance on that particular moment to say, Okay, right now be in the present, be conscious, feel, touch, sense is really interesting.

Local taskforce 16:32

And adding the elements, which makes make you want to stay and sit down. Of course, we can sit in a in a in a fallen tree or something like that. But it's different. I think that, yeah, that's why we need help for us.

Shreya Utkarsh 16:46

Exactly. That's a really good point. To have, for instance, as you made this yoga place, I know that was something that we discussed, like, oh, how does it fit with the idea of eye health for us, but I think it makes so much sense to have like, or not sense, but like it was a need also asked from the people and also to just position it within the forest element to create this consciousness of relaxation, as you mentioned.

Taru Suutari 17:15

When there is this kind of places, then people will spend more time there. Stop there and have a break. Otherwise, they will just continue.

Shreya Utkarsh 17:26

Yeah, true. The second question I had was, more on the NbS side. You're working also on the urban greening side of things.

Taru Suutari 17:40

Our project is called Nature positive life. In this project, it is a paradigm shift that we want to get lastly, we have this climate neutrality target. The target is still 25 and targets for circular economy and so on, but what is missing? The nature is missing, we need nature target to lock the and also, we will define a roadmap with concrete actions, who is doing what and when, and during this project, or what it is called anyway, of course, starting this, this new things and what leads to nature positive life. So in that way, it's very much connected to the Health Forest or planetary well being or Nature-based Solutions and so on.

Local taskforce 18:52

It's connected to everything. [Laughter]

Shreya Utkarsh 19:01

Especially as you mentioned about these targets, and I have been following the news a little bit about the EU nature restoration law and working on it. And, yeah, we had this discussion with the Finnish MEP, you know, position of like, do we need more green? How does it work in the urban environments? And so on? Because that target set and how does it work? And I think like, it would be interesting to see how Finland also approaches this EU nature restoration law with the national plans and what would connect to the existing greens and what would connect to how do you define the administrative boundaries of like, how much do you calculate as like the urban green area, it would be really like interesting work.

Suutari Taru 19:55

Yeah, that's really interesting what you're saying because well, I like how, how the discussion on EU level and on national level has been, but I maybe do positive but to nature positive. It would be really interesting also, to write down all the observations, like how the discussion will be on a city level, because we need now the city level decision from the city board. What is the nature target? And of course, it has connections to all these national or EU plans. But anyway, I hope it's not going to be in real life, it's going to be different the discussion.

Shreya Utkarsh 20:48

It's such an important role that cities play in that because I think you can have a national plan. But if you don't really bring the city focus into the perspective, it won't work.

Local taskforce 21:03

Exactly that is what I do. They are doing the job.

Shreya Utkarsh 21:07

Exactly. Yeah, definitely. So it's really relevant to have this connection. And as a city network, that's definitely what we try to bring to to the forefront of the European policymaking as well, how to raise city voices as well. So definitely a point to make there.

Local taskforce 21:28

Yeah, and of course, if we want that the citizens are involved, cities have to be kind of role models, help citizens to meet this targets.

Shreya Utkarsh 21:40

Yeah, definitely. And the more citizens will engage, I think it's also, as you said, another paradigm shift and of whom, like, you know, how do we engage with these people, and that's what would need to be solutions. That's the idea, like co creation is at the basis, we don't want to create urban green spaces without even noticing what the people actually need. So the processes are a bit longer over time, but it's always like, making sure that it is useful for people and for the nature and also is economically beneficial for the problems that the city might face, per se.

Local taskforce 22:26

And it's also a way to bring the topic closer to citizens, because when we are hearing the voices, even your national level and not talk about on EU level, and comparing it to city level, there are so many conflicting party conflicting ideas, and different kinds of noises. And it's really very hard to actually try to understand what's going on what we are going to do, what is the goal? So I think it's very important to hear what the citizens need, because their needs are in line very much with EU level targets, but they might have different kinds of priorities and viewpoints.

Shreya Utkarsh 23:22

yeah, definitely. It's like preaching to the choir now. Because you already are like, people working on nature, positive life, you're working since 2008 you said-

Local taskforce 23:39

I've been planning this whole whole GoGreenRoutes process. So maybe we are a little biased group here.

Shreya Utkarsh 23:50

But no, it's still great to have this discussion. And then I think tomorrow, we will have more time to also talk a little bit to the citizens and also see like how they are feeling about the Health Forests. But it's just good to like get this picture a little bit from all of you as well, in general. And then I will not keep you too long. I will take two more questions small ones, just to understand about the added value and improvements, as you mentioned, nowadays, already nature there's already this existing, but what would you understand as added value of Nature-based Solutions in cities, for the citizens, so health and well being.

Local taskforce 24:44

That's one of the main reasons of course, and probably and hopefully, main benefits, but if I think there's also other aspects because we have so much knowledge and know-how on Nature-based Solutions and how to develop them, I think this has the potential to bring added value also to economical point of view. And

that's where we were discussing in that workshop in June. So that's really important as well. Also the social benefits, if, for instance, citizens take Health Forest as their second living room. So it can add to the social well being as well.

Shreya Utkarsh 25:49

Yeah, the social connection is definitely is one of the big things that brings people together. When we were in Umeå as well, we went to do the seed bed as well, people said, oh, it would be nice to have like some benches to sit, it was close to the school. So they were talking about if there were parents who walked by, if they could sit, and maybe then they will start to talk to each other, or, it's cold, and you want maybe some cozy environment. I think social benefit is definitely something that NbS can cater to.

Taru Suutari 26:30

Like during our team day in the forest, the social benefit. It was nice, but it was beneficial!

Shreya Utkarsh 26:42

Yes, definitely. I think it's like about getting closer to each other. Because you spend time out of the office environment, you probably talk different topics. What your hobbies are...

Taru Suutari 26:58

And this also, in the seedbed results, this came out that many people said that, in the forest, it was very easy to talk with other people. And even though these five people didn't know each other before that, our walk in the forest, they said that it was very easy to talk. And some person even started to cry there and tell them how the forest affected them. So they said that it would be really useful in the future to have some team meetings in the forest, because there people can speak and they feel that everyone is like equal. And I have been thinking about like, a lot of different kinds of, like groups who could somehow benefit from the Health Forest, like at the moment we are marketing it like for all the citizens, and it is, of course, for all the citizens. But I would like to somehow in the future to still think about some like marginalized groups, and how could we somehow invite them to the forest? Because at the moment, of course, we have made like, all this material, it's open for everyone, but it's not, as we have discussed, it's not the same, like some people don't understand Finnish or English, or it's not open for them at the same way. So how could we invite them and I think it would be good also for the integration and everything.

Shreya Utkarsh 28:53

Yeah, definitely. That's a really good point. Because sometimes it's done with the idea that it captures everybody's interest and is helpful for everybody. But sometimes it's also good to have this targeted interventions, at least like not that you changed the area in that way. I mean, some cities to the end, you also probably have some areas that you designed according to the needs of the local state or so on, you know, like the Umeå case being one of those where they design the bus stops with the idea of how teenagers were using or would like to use the space and had this whatever the gender equality officer for instance, they have this thing. So I think like Lahti probably you have some similar ideas probably to target like certain groups with the idea of urban planning and development. And I think this could be something that already exists but you bring like certain marginalized groups and could be different age groups, it could be different vulnerable groups that are existing in Lahti. I don't know, depends like there are people, as you said, like from other countries.

Local taskforce 30:18

I was thinking that because we are carrying out a lot of projects, which are targeted for immigrants, and

where we try to enhance the social well being and social inclusion, perhaps we could incorporate visiting the Health Forest.

TaruSuutari 30:35

Yeah, because I have been thinking that it would be really nice to organise some, some like tours or visits to the forest for some different years, that usually wouldn't go there.

Local taskforce 30:50

And the project has ended, but we had one where we were trying to increase youth understanding of different kinds of education and career paths on equality aspect, and gender equality aspect. And the basic idea in that project was that we were training coaches and teachers how to discuss on these issues with teenagers. And also in the project, we actually took that teachers and teenagers to the forest, it was not the Health Forest but another forest. And by doing different kinds of activities in the forest, and by applying better cortical methods, which were nature based. They were adapting nature vessels, and they were able to broad ideas and understanding of what is available for these teenagers. They don't have to choose their normal path or something, what is meant for them, they were able to see that there are other possibilities as well. And, of course, in the future, because now we have this Health Forest we can incorporate.

Shreya Utkarsh 32:24

I think that's a really good project idea to make. That sounds like a really wonderful idea to show the array of choices that you can have.

Local taskforce 32:38

And I also think that using the Nature-based Solution creates like a positive reputation to the city. So that people example want to move here, we get more citizens more tax money, or some investors want to invest.

Shreya Utkarsh 32:58

Good pragmatic point, things that we sometimes don't talk about!

Local taskforce 33:06

Also for the citizens, that we can feel that we can be proud of our city. It's noticed.

Taru Suutari 33:14

Of course, this is like, we want to be by we are the, like finished Finland's leading environmental study. And we want to emphasise that's why we also did this marketing video of the health for us, because it comes from many pieces that we are an environmental city and Health Forest is one practical example of that.

Shreya Utkarsh 33:38

Yeah. I'm really excited to watch that video. Is it only like you said, there are different interventions, so not just the Health Forest.

Taru Suutari 33:49

I mean, that there are like, many projects, and many things that are related to this, that we are the environmental city, so the Health Forest is just one.

Local taskforce 34:04

But adding those two is important because normally when we talk about that Lahti is an environmental city.

So at least in my mind, and I know that in any other mind, we definitely start to think circular economy. And that's important, but there's there's also this nature side!

Taru Suutari 34:31

I understood that it's a new thing that now we can together also amplify. Maybe we have emphasised more the climate and circular economy more before.

Local taskforce 34:48

Yeah, because we have taken nature so for granted!

Shreya Utkarsh 34:56

True. Last question is more about imagination of the future with NbS sides. You already mentioned a few, what could be like that you could have some projects where you connect with the youth to go or immigrants to go into the Health Forest. But like, just to imagine, how would Lahti, and you have to meet some targets here. So how does the future look like with NbS for Lahti?

Local taskforce 35:34

Bright! We have all we need here, but we have to find out how we can exploit the opportunities we have.

Taru Suutari 35:50

That's a tough one. But still, we need to do it.

Local taskforce 35:57

Because we don't have to invent the forest or green areas. We have them, so, how do you realize them.

Taru Suutari 36:06

I think that there is a great potential in this finance and business thing? How can we somehow, for example, also with this Health Forest, how can we get some business there, and that's the thing that we also need to focus on. I think that Isabel workshop was really good. And now we are continuing this work, and hopefully, it will lead somewhere.

Local taskforce 36:34

Yeah. And of course, when we are not talking about business opportunities, which are, which instantly lead to global market and billions, it might be difficult to find funding, how to initiate this kind of business. And that's one one area we have to think as well.

Shreya Utkarsh 37:00

And also like local businesses to change. Because the idea, I have to go back to the paradigm shift, because I think I really like this. Also, I think the idea is that people leave this business as usual, of working style and move towards more major positive life, if I may use that. So I think that's the real value in it. And I think like, the more you engage the private sector, the more you engage the people who have the kind of the vote, so to say no, like, the better it will get closer to nature anyway, it's good to bring it because we, like the people who have already chosen a career in nature, as all of us is different, but like, people who were doing their businesses based on maybe it's not following the circular economy rules, maybe they're not following nature, positive ideas, how to build this connection to the private sector, and how to have services and products that could be beneficial for the citizens and beneficial for the city, in the end to cut down the costs on health, the cost on so many different areas that you work on. This would be like, I think, a very important

next step. And I think like this nature, positive economy, I don't know if you've heard the term, it already exists. So, this is also growing quite a bit in that direction. Dionysia, we have a project starting as well. So there's quite a bit going on to connect this private sector by in in this way as well. I think and I think one other aspect I would like to think about or touch on is career paths for young people and like education on Nature-based Solutions, because I think this is really important because we can try to get the private sector as Isabel might have talked about, but it's also about like, do they have the skills to do like, how do you do this skill training for them to develop products or services? which relates to this, the same NbS concept as well. So I think it's really important to go into the education field as well, connect with schools, connect with universities, connect somehow to make it not a specific university course on NbS, but how to spread this in different works with for landscape architects for even others like for business development for innovation management, how can you have a course on NbS a little bit so that they integrated?

Suutari Taru 39:56

Yesterday I went to the Health Forest with a students group, there were 20 students who are studying forestry management. So they were really interested. And they were asking that, would it be possible for us to someday working with this kind of project?

Local taskforce 40:18

We also started a new project, which is called a sport and health innovation factory. It's a multidisciplinary course, which we are piloting this year, and perhaps the city of Lahti could set a challenge for the students how to develop Nature-based Solutions, that would be one option we can discuss. Or maybe how to identify NbS from a student perspective. It was the topic of the summer school, wasn't it?

Shreya Utkarsh 41:01

Yeah, that's exactly like to be able to get this paradigm shift. A reality. I think it's like, the younger you got, or not only, but it's about like, you remember the photo of the seedbed? We started with these the seedbed like the literal translation, like when we put a seed and how it goes up. How to do this for younger generations. And yeah, to get them to choose career paths, which are going in the direction of NbS, even if they are producing material, even if it's products, or services, or both. How to connect it closer to nature, I think it's really key. Sorry, I spoke about what I think the future of NbS is.

Local taskforce 41:59

It brings back some other ideas. Because one project which has ended two years ago, called let's go to the forest. Our students and our international students were identifying different kinds of activities you can do in the forest. So and they were very interesting ideas, as they are not ready as such to become a big business, but by developing the ideas, it might lead to that. Thank you for reminding me!

Shreya Utkarsh 42:40

Pleasure. Yeah, thank you so much, I don't know what time it is, but I think we said until three, but we covered at least our questions. So we can have a quick chat about your project as well and the things that you were doing just to connect it and see how GoGreenRoutes can stay connected.

Transcript of the Focus Group Discussion in Tallinn

Monday, Jun 10, 2024 12:32PM • 60:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Nature-based Solution, Seedbed intervention, Co-Creation,

SPEAKERS

Shreya Utkarsh, Stella Shaumyan, Karin Luhaäär, Maria Derlos, Andres Kodre, Viktoria Panova, Maxim Zuev, Irma Remma

Shreya Utkarsh 4:00

Thanks a lot everybody for joining this meeting. I would have preferred to meet you all in person but given technology we can do it virtually, which also helps me stay in Freiburg, which is in Germany, so I would have had to fly for this so I just decided it makes sense and I hope it's also okay for all of you.

Of course the conversations were, well, you will do it mostly in your native tongue, but I just wanted to present the concept behind the Focus Group Discussion. I think Stella and Maria might have presented a bit about GoGreenRoutes and also what's the plan and design for the nature based solutions, the seedbed interventions and so on.

So you've been involved, I think, for a while now. But just in that regard, as a local task force, as what's going on, our work in the, in this project has been to engage the, the local residents and the local people who are on the ground understanding the importance of nature based solutions, which are basically actions which are inspired or have taken inspiration majorly from nature and to introduce solutions to challenges that might be there.

So in that regard, we have come up with four different questions to understand your perspective on this. And I would start, but maybe it's also good to hear a few quick words from everybody just to say where you're coming from and also just to know how long have you been associated with the local task force? Just a bit there and then we can start with the with the questions.

Stella Shaumyan 6:23

So who will start? Everyone is so modest. You can start, Karin, maybe.

Karin Luhaäär 6:27

Hello, my name is Karin. I've been working with GoGreenRoutes since, um, let's say three years. I can't put the finger on the exact date, but I believe it's more or less three years and I'm working as a communication manager for this project.

Shreya Utkarsh 6:51

Thank you so much, Karin. Who would like to go next?

Irma Remma 6:55

I will continue. I am Irma Remma and like Karin, I have also been in the project for more than three years since it began. And basically I have been working there, with the project manager. We did together with project manager and helped with different activities. So yeah, that's about it.

Stella Shaumyan 7:25

Yes, and I'm Stella Shaumyan and I'm a project manager of GoGreenRoutes project and I joined last

December. So my history is not so long in the project, so far.

Maria Derlõš 7:47

Hello, my name is Maria. I have been part of this project from the start. I'm an expert helping with Local taskforce and also nature-based solutions. (Switches language)

Karin Luhaäär 9:04

So Andres is, uh, living next to Wadham Sea Green Area.

Shreya Utkarsh 9:08

Okay, thank you so much Andres for joining. And also to the others who are here, I see two more faces. That's great that you're here. So basically we want to start.

Karin Luhaäär: 9:22

Let's maybe let Maxim and Victoria also introduce themselves.

Maxim Zuev 9:28

Hello, I'm Maxim and I also live nearby this area. So I participated in some activities organised by Green Routes and this summer I have NGO as well. And we organised some activities for this area this summer. So it's to involve locals to investigate this area and get some information about nature and also to clean up a little bit of this area because some locals are not as responsible as we are so we do our best with regards to this area.

Shreya Utkarsh 10:24

Thank you so much.

Karin Luhaäär 10:28

Victoria, you're muted.

Viktorija Panova 10:32

Sorry. Hi, everybody. I'm Victoria and I'm a representative of the district administration and I have been involved in the project since maybe for 2 years. I also helped to organise some activities there.

Shreya Utkarsh 10:58

Perfect. Thanks a lot. Thank you so much. So maybe now you said a bit about I think all the three of you definitely have some experiences that that you have had over the past certain number of years around nature based solutions in the area.

And as you know, like working on co creation, it's important to talk about the experiences. So I will start backwards from the questions that you see on the screen. So if you look at the fourth question, the question is, how was the experience of the whole process around implementing seedbed intervention, NbS intervention, and other activities from partners and GoGreenRoutes project?

So just to understand your experiences, what you felt while you were working on the field or engaging with locals and also with the people here. If you can share a bit that would be great to hear from you. And you can use your native language, that's also fine. We will ask afterwards to just get a translation for it.

Maria Derlõš 12:11

Just to be clear, Shreya, we're starting from the fourth question.

Shreya utkarsh 12:13

Exactly. I think it's easier to just go through the experiences than to look at how you could imagine the future and then also think about what it could do to an upscaling. So not only about the warm Sea Park, but then catalyst for the whole NbS in the city and last question, how does it add value and improvements for that? So kind of going, let's say, from a perspective of experiences to going to how is it actually making a bigger impact. So I just flip this around if that's okay so that we can hear about the experiences first.

Maria Derlos 13:05

(Estonian)

Karin Luhaäär 13:39

(Estonian)

Andres 13:49

(Estonian)

Maria Derlõš 14:43

So shortly, Shreya, for you, for Andres it was a very good initiative and he's maybe a bit surprised that it's still going on despite the changes we had recently in the city administration and city government. Yeah. But he's happy that it's moving. He's a bit pessimistic if it will be ready at the end. Because priorities could change as the city administration changes. We will see.

Shreya Utkarsh 15:31

Yeah, that's an important aspect, no? The political will and the political direction sometimes changes with new ideas and new agendas that come. So it's important to have good relations with, let's say the kind of, yeah. Well, keeping in mind that there are some from the departments that will still stay on, even if the political position changes and the agenda changes, there might be some allies, so to say. There might be some, of course, funding might be an issue that could, could cause an issue and yeah, continuing the process. Of course, you might have a design, but if there's not enough over time, then it could be something to consider. But maybe that's really good to hear. I know pessimism is also an expression of hope in some way. So I think let's hope that it continues, but yeah.

Anybody else want to share experiences?

Irma Remma 16:42

If I may comment only shortly that, actually a couple of weeks ago, our department did meet our new vice mayor and I have to say he was positive about this project, but of course, Andres, I can't promise you anything, but we just cross our fingers and hope for the best.

Shreya Utkarsh 17:06

Perfect. Yeah.

And Andres, maybe a question more in the terms of experience on, having the say in such kinds of projects. What do you think was most striking for you? So the fact that the city municipality tried to be in touch with the locals to try to understand or was it a different process or was it something that you have been engaged in previously as well? Maybe a follow up to that.

Andres 17:48

(Estonian)

Maria Derlōš 19:15

So in a short, this process that we had where we communicated directly with local residents, it's actually something that should be in every project, regardless of the site or its magnitude. Yeah, that this practice should be actually a wider practice. And to just comment on what Andres said before about the pessimism, considering that this area has its own specifics, the wetland seasonal one, it needs financial investment and that's why there's the pessimism if it will be allocated. But actually this area already is very used and very loved by locals. They go and do their picnics or grill there. And actually also Andres remembers when we still had the old school building there that burned a couple of decades ago. Yes, thank you. 1989. So more than a couple of decades ago, which I'm trying to remember how many years, but it's still positive that it's moving, the project is moving. There's nothing wrong with the current situation, but it would be, of course, better to have it more accessible.

Shreya Utkarsh 20:55

And what are you, your views, Maxim or Viktoria? Anybody wants to add?

Viktoria Panova 21:04

Maxim, who will be first?

Maxim Zuev 21:06

Yeah, me. Sorry. So, first of all, I was quite surprised to see that some global program is touching the quite local area close to the place I live. So it's quite unusual, actually. Maybe I'm also a little bit skeptical because in this area, as I already said, some people who used to go there, they're not so green minded or responsible to nature. So even if the project will be finished successfully, then probably in a few years it will not be destroyed, but damaged by locals, but let's hope that everything will be fine.

So in general, I would like to see the results and the finished project. In general, on paper it looks promising. Already I saw that the sponge garden has started. So I saw that and I didn't know what it was, so another surprise. So I'm looking positive to see results, but yeah, skeptic of the locals.

Shreya Utkarsh 22:56

Yeah, it's a process that takes so long now in terms of behavior change of people that are actually using the space and how they can understand the importance of nature around them and also respect the environment. I think it's something that is bigger than the issue of this small project that we are dealing with, because even though it's a big European project, there are some local context that we, you know, struggle with, which is not possible to take into account in four years period of time, it needs a bigger paradigm shift a little bit. So hopefully there's a good outcome and that people also start to see the value of the nature based solutions, and I think the sponge garden is a very good first step towards that direction to just show the importance of biodiversity and natural elements in that area. And also combining with the wetlands aspect. So how can the rainwater be collected in a certain area without damaging the neighbouring parts and also collecting on the streets, for example, and so on. So I think it's really interesting. We'll see. Okay. Anybody else wants to add something?

Viktoria Panova 24:30

Yes, I'm glad that our district was chosen for this project. This is the most important. It was very exciting to participate and I'm also very glad that I saw the same faces practically during every event. There are not a lot of local organizations here because the citizens are not very, I don't know, not very friendly. Maria, maybe you can comment on that. But I felt that the feedback intervention was not very understood. Maybe people like to hang out together and they still have to see how it will turn out. And I don't know what

you know about the process of this recent project, but personally I am not very happy that we decided to choose the green color and not the pink one.

Maria Derlōš 26:14

Yeah. I can maybe just comment. I don't know actually, maybe something that also Maxim can comment. Why don't we have that many local NGOs in last? I personally don't think that maybe it's because people are not that friendly. Maybe it's because people are not that proactive or they don't have that many good examples in their environment.

It means that they don't know that many people who are active in NGOs. It's still something that is developing, maybe, that being a volunteer, being an active member of NGO is not that common. And about the color, I can just show that. We had a really long discussion with our project members and designers about what color to choose and also with local district administration and the signature color that is will be used is this color, this kind of green blue, although the initial color was more bold, it was pink. But the district administration felt that maybe pink is too bold for locals and it will be better to go in a more neutral direction.

Sorry, we didn't ask Andres and Maxim from you what do you think about colors, but hopefully you like the color we finally chose. There will be no pink at the end, so now you know.

Shreya Utkarsh 28:18

Thanks a lot for showing that idea. So my next question, and I think we have not so much time.

I see that the two questions were already answered, because what can you imagine for the future of the NbS site? Maybe a quick word on that, because you already said a few things that could say what you think about the future, but anything that you expect or wish for, in terms of the future of the NbS side of the WomCyPack. Anything that could be different or anything that could be integrated in the future. And also, what has been left out or what could be, let's say looking into the community that will also use that space, basically. So I see in the chats, there's a lot going on about barbecues. And so I just want to ask also in terms of community engagement, are there plans in the Wormsee Park to, you know, in the future to have some activities?

Karin Luhaäär 29:46

You mean like within a closed time range or when?

Shreya Utkarsh 29:53

In the future, not so much close, but just what your expectations are of the nature based solutions. Because as you know, when we develop nature based solutions, they should have long term societal impacts, right? In terms of social cohesion, in terms of getting different community members together, that's where the question kind of lies, what is expected in, let's say five years from now, or more.

Karin Luhaäär 30:24

I'm not sure if I'm the right person to answer, but I'm going to do it anyway. I believe when the project really has ended on good circumstances I believe we should do an introduction of everything we've done. What are the possibilities of the area? What are the options for kids? For elderly? For family, friends and other social groups? This is definitely something we have to keep in mind.

Shreya Utkarsh 31:06

Thanks, Karin. Yeah, that's good. Anything from you, Andres or Maxim, Viktoria, anybody?

Viktoria Panova 31:19

I hope that local residents will see it as local, as an added value, and they will behave well and keep clean

and take it as a part of their own home. Yeah.

Andres Koldre 31:42
(Estonian)

Maria Derlõš 32:29

So shortly Andres said in the beginning that he doesn't have anything to add, but actually he has. He's maybe concerned about how really this area will be managed in terms of vandalism. So if there's some people who don't respect the area, any bench can attract people with asocial behavior.

So we have to really think how to manage this. If from the same building, people are using it as it's intended, and at the same time, they also file a complaint about their neighbours who actually don't do that. So something to keep in mind, and it's a problem or challenge in every public space.

Shreya Utkarsh 33:31

Yeah, thanks. I think it's important. Yeah, of course. The intended purpose should definitely be at the core, because of course you might get some people, if it's not used for the purposes if the value is not seen. And I think that's my third question to you in terms of, I'm switching questions, but I'm going back to back to to the first one now, which is looking in, what do you see the added value improvements through the changes or addition of the NbS?

So this is what I think, Viktoria, you also mentioned that hopefully the, the people will start to see the added value. And maybe if you could say a bit about what added values you see by implementing such a project in the area.

Viktoria Panova 34:37

For me, it was surprising that we acknowledged the variety of plants that grow there. And maybe in the future, parents will also tell their children about the plants and the trees. And it will be some kind of educational project for them.

Shreya Utkarsh 35:00

Yeah, definitely a very good point, thanks a lot.

Any other ideas, creative ideas, what could be some added value of the nature based solutions that are there now, or will come soon, and also with the sponge garden starting and so on. So what would you see as some also, connections between human and nature, maybe that is an aspect which could, I know that we said that maybe some people might not consider that, but some people might, you know, as you say, awareness raising and education might improve through even the youth that are engaging in that area or playing in the playground and, and so on. Any other ideas for added value?

Maxim Zuev 35:47

I could say, as I represent an NGO here. I think it will be a great point of interest. So when the project will be finished it could be a good place to organise some kind of events. So it means that we create space for new activities. For example, I have some ideas how it could be used to organise some kind of quest using all the information that will be spread on this area, et cetera. So yeah, it also looks promising.

Shreya Utkarsh 36:40

Yeah, that's great. I mean that's exactly what the idea is, to engage the NGOs as well to take opportunities of the green space that is being created because it has to serve the purposes that people come up with which are good for the society so that sounds great, Maxim. I think it would be great to follow up in a few years

what's going on there.

Maxum Zuev 37:10

For example, now we utilize sport round to organise a cleanup event with Zumba. So we start with the dancing and then just give people some instruments and something to collect the trash, on the playground and nearby territory.

So yeah, it could be something similar just to combine, for example, a tour showing the plants that grow here, giving some information and collecting the trash at the same time, for example, so it could be something like this.

Shreya Utkarsh 38:03

Yeah, that sounds great. So is it something that's already happening in other places, you would say, the Zumba?

Maxim Zuev 38:11

The Zumba plus cleanup, it's happening there, it will happen tomorrow.

Maria Derlõš 38:21

And it's actually happening within our project. So, we are supporting this NGO that Maxim is also representing to engage people who live in that area through taking care of that area and also learning about something. So there's Zumba and, as Maxim said, there will be also tours about local nature with horticulturist specialists.

Maxim Zuev 39:00

Upgrade of this territory will give some more opportunities.

Shreya Utkarsh 39:06

Yeah, definitely. I hope all of you will go for this. That sounds really interesting what's happening. That's definitely a good added value or addition on top of what is already there.

And also it can continue and even get more interesting with the sponge garden, for example, developing and so on that might add more interesting elements in the background, so sounds great. I think maybe, and Andres, do you also have some thoughts or not really.

Irma Remma: 39:51

Maybe I can only comment shortly that we do have in our city different lovely corners and the city gardens, but actually people can go and sit and read their books or just relax. And I think I have seen in the last, I don't know, two or three years that we are going to have more and more that kind of places and I think in general, it's really positive for our city.

Shreya Utkarsh: 40:22

And maybe also connecting it with different NGOs that have good ideas for how you can do some activities on the ground such as what you are doing, Maxim, and others could really profit from green spaces, not only individually, but also as a collective, so to say, to have some community engagement.

It sounds quite nice. Then I will ask the last question and then we can close and have some wrap up if there are some thoughts. But my last question is how could you picture the NbS in your city? So now we were talking about just the Wormsea Park, but now I'm talking in general in Tallinn.

How could you picture the such kind of interventions, such kind of engagements and such kind of nature based solutions to act as a catalyst, which can promote the connection between human and nature. I know

that in the start you expressed that maybe some people are not so connected and don't really see the importance, but how could you see that if we do more of these activities where there's engagement with the locals in the area, that it could improve the conditions overall in the city?

Any thoughts on that?

Viktoria Panova 42:00

I think that the key could be a variety, in a sense that different districts or different places will have some special nature based solutions. And they could be gathered in one place, like a database. And it will give a prospect on different nature aspects in the city.

So the people will feel that their place is different from others.

Shreya Utkarsh 42:39

That's a very interesting point, because usually we try to see replication, no? We try to see if this works in this area, it might also work in the other district and so on, but it's also important to take into consideration the local context.

How do they feel in that area? What do they need? What could be useful for them? Not only just thinking from a perspective that everything can be replicated, that okay, if it works here, it will also work there, right? So even if it works, it's important to consider what the people actually want and how they can feel some kind of, I would say even pride, some civic pride in that area.

Viktoria Panova 43:25

Yes, my point was that, the people at Warm Sea can say that, oh, we have, for example, beaches here and, sadly, not being like a scene, but the people at the other districts, that's interesting, but we have something else coming to visit us.

Shreya Utkarsh 43:55

Yeah. That's a really good point.

Okay, anybody else wants to add something or thoughts around? I think it's important to think from a city perspective, no? Like, of course, you're living in a neighbourhood, I know, Viktoria, you said you're from the district administration, so you also see a specific district, but it could be that you have friends in a different district or you kind of go shopping in a different area or you, I don't know, go for a run somewhere else. So it's also important to think kind of like holistically, how would the city, and I really like what you said, that if the NbS, the different NbS could be mapped, you know, and, and shown the differences on a certain platform to show, oh, here is the Warm Sea Park, which has this uniqueness, and if another district has another uniqueness and you map it using tools, then you can actually show the differences and encourage people to go there. So, yeah, that's kind of the city development with NbS idea. So how do you go forward with thinking about the local context, doing community engagement, but making sure that the local needs are being met. So any ideas from you, Maxim, for example, what would you consider could be useful from a citywide perspective when we think about nature based solutions?

Maxin Zuev 45:42

I had an idea that our own right behavior could be key to a better connection with nature.

So for example, we personally started using an app called Merlin. So it helps to record the bird's voice and then find out which species made this voice and then I knew that in this warm sea park we have a nightingale, which sings every evening beautifully. So then I started to speak about this application with my friends and some of them were really interested to do the same. So they started to collect and at some point you just understand that so many species are around us, not only sparrows, et cetera. I would say that we should be

like ambassadors explaining to people how to communicate with the nature in a modern way, maybe using some application or something else because yeah, there is some implication, for example, for the plans as well. And it's also the new door.

Shreya Utkarsh 47:25

Yeah, that's true. Yeah, I mean, to identify plants, right? Like you can just take a photo of it, of the tree leaf and with PlantNet or I don't know, there are so many applications that you can just use to find out what species it is. So, and I think it's not only good for the people who are using it, but good for science as well, because, you know, the more pictures you take of plants and upload onto that application, the more database you collect, actually, in the end and support science because it's actually citizen science that you're engaging in as being aware of the bird songs or the tree species and so it acts as a dual purpose somehow. So it's really good to think about technology from a perspective of even connecting with nature, and not going away as it happens usually.

Any thoughts from you all, Stella or Irma, or?

Stella Shaumyan 48:51

Yes, not thoughts, but maybe just, I'm seeing this nice tendency for cities to test Nature-based Solutions in different places, in different districts in Tallinn.

For example, Tallinn is testing Nature-based Solutions for filtering polluted meltwater, like snow water, and also engaging people who are in the area near our Linnahall. It's an old concert hall that we have. And near there, people are, it's like near the sea and people are swimming there, it's like a small beach. So we have another project in the Italian strategic management office. The main goal is to filter that, because we are also putting all the snow during the winter near that place and near that beach. So this project it's called UrBreath, it's having this tactical urbanism interventions as well as testing a system for filtering snowmelt water. So, yes, I'm excited for our city for testing that kind of solutions. So I hope we will continue with things like that.

Shreya Utkarsh 50:33

Yeah, that's great. And also because, you know, nature based solutions can also provide a lot of technical support to the system. That's actually what we see in what is in the urban setting, sometimes difficult to grasp that they can act as such as pollutant control, removal mechanisms for controlling floods, for avoiding heat stresses in the urban areas, and so many, but it doesn't necessarily reflect on that it has a multifunctional use. So you know, like it has this multifunctionality and it's super important that the technical aspects are made use of.

So yeah, I will take a look at that, maybe you can send a link Stella at some point? So it would be really, really nice to take into account what's going on in Tallinn on that. Well, from my side, at least like all the questions I had are quite nicely answered. Thank you so much. I think it was really, really interesting to hear like different points, your starting from a pessimistic perspective as well, but going into the direction of maybe there are some activities, maybe there are some added value of nature based solutions, just to understand that we should not forget, and what Maxim, you also said about the behavior change being kind of at the center of all of this, and I think nature based solutions and these projects are kind of stepping stones, so to say, in that direction.

So it tries to engage people and give societal benefits, you know, in the sense of community engagement and so on. So, hopefully the future looks bright in that area in Wormsey Park, especially and in the city. So I think it was really interesting for me to gather all the input. So just so you know, I don't know, Stella, if you already mentioned the purpose of why we had the Focus Group Discussion was basically to kind of touch base with you to understand, all the answers to all the questions, experiences, your added values, do you see it as a

catalyst to be able to put it into a storybook. So we will be producing a storybook about all the six cities that are engaged in the GoGreenRoutes project. And this has been now recorded so that we can just analyze a few quotes from your side and maybe Stella, I will reach out to all of you via email if that's okay, or maybe I can, send it to you, Stella, but just so that you fill out the consent form just to say that you're okay with us using your quotes or using, well, we didn't take pictures, so that's not needed. But, just to say if you're okay with us kind of putting it together, into a package and it will be quite small, quite short because, yeah Viktoria, go ahead.

Viktoria Panova 54:04

Yeah, so I just wanted to ask, it's really interesting. How do you feel that Estonia's talents project is different from other GoGreenRoutes projects?

Shreya Utkarsh 54:17

Yeah, I mean, I think the main interesting part in my opinion, was the fact that the people that were there were exhibiting some, let's say, antisocial, you know, behaviors and also the focus on cleaning, for example, I think it's very interesting as compared to, let's say, in Umeå, you already have like a big kind of, sealed area. So they had a sealed area, which was not necessarily a park, but they wanted to deseal it and make it into a, it a bit of a park. And you already had the green area. So it's not that you had to make up, you know, more space for greening, but it was more about how to do a social NbS.

So that's how I see a little bit of a difference that this has a bit more coming from a community building, community perspective, engaging the people, understanding the value of the of the park that already exists and thinking about the aspect of, how do you connect with nature while it already is there, as you said, Maxim, in terms of recording bird sounds or so on

So it's a bit different as compared to some others, for example, in the case of Lahti, they also have like this Health Forest idea, which is very much using the space that is already there, but actually, engaging the hospital staff to look into engaging with the forest elements, which are, you know, like going to the forest for a guided tour, sensory walks, yoga and so on. So it, it also had a kind of a different flair to it. And I think it's very interesting. There's some common threads, I would definitely say, you know, there are some common things that are always considered in all of this, well not all, but some of the six cities, but there's some uniqueness as well.

So I think it has been interesting to see also that in the case of Tallinn you wanted to expand it as well, or the municipality thought that it would make sense to not only think about the particular GoGreenRoutes project supporting the Wormsea Park, but actually going a bit beyond and having the NbS see it more as a bigger program than just a small intervention that just sparks the interest of the, you know, of the work that's going on in the urban development side.

So I think it varies quite a lot, for example, I would say in the Health Forest, they are really much focused on the health angle, very clearly. So they are very much looking at how the hospital patients can use the green spaces. So it's a very clear it's a bit that way.

So, yeah, I think these are some kind of differences. I don't know, maybe, from the city you also know some differences, right? If you've heard from Versailles or from the case of Burgas as well had a very different approach.

Okay. Thanks a lot for your time. And I think it was really, really helpful to get an overview and to understand this connection that you have as the Local taskforce together with the city as well. And that you're working quite closely on this project. Thanks a lot for that. And good luck to all of you.

And I hand it back to Stella, for any closing words.

Stella Shaumyan: 58:43
(Estonian)

Transcript of the first Focus Group Discussion in Versailles

Thursday, Jun 19, 2024 14:00 PM • 23:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Nature-based Solution, Seedbed intervention, Co-Creation, Park, Versailles

SPEAKERS

Julia Gäckle, Simon Racé, Jannis Meul, visitors of the inauguration

Julia Gäckle 00:00

Okay, recording started now. So, I will start introducing myself. I'm Julia. I've worked on this project for almost four years now.

Simon Racé 00:16

I'm Simon. I'm working for ICLEI, and I've joined the project very recently in December. So, it's the first time I've seen this in person in Versailles.

Jannis Meul 00:24

I'm Jannis, I am from RWTH as well, and I joined the project two years ago, I think. So, it's great to see what's happening since I've joined.

Julia Gäckle 00:24

And maybe you will also introduce yourself, just quickly.

Visitor 00:43

I'm Cecilia. I'm a landscape architect. I drew the park. I was responsible for the drawings of the new park design.

Franck Rémy 01:08

Hello, my name is Franck Rémy. In this project, I try to coordinate different actors, and I try to make the link between the city of Versailles and Europe, the GoGreenRoutes construction.

Julia Gäckle 01:32

And also, we have with us today, Cathy. She's coming. But she will join us in a second. May you can also introduce yourself quickly.

Visitor 01:43

Bonjour, Audrey, je suis la directrice de maison quartier qui s'occuper du parc.

Simon Racé 01:51

[Simon translates the previous answer] So, hello, my name is Audrey. I'm the director of the district house, which is very close to the park.

Visitor 02:00

Et mon rôle a été de permettre de réunir à certain moments du projet les habitants sur les questionnaires.

Simon Racé 02:12

[Simon translates the previous answer] And my role was to gather at some point the inhabitants close to the area to involve them in the project.

Julia Gäckle 02:21

Okay, perfect!

Visitor 02:25

My name is Bevery. Je suis référente famille à Beaubrois. Je suis venu voir ce qui était devenu l'ancien parc. J'ai connu il y a... Il y a fait même huit 2023 [Audio hard to understand].

Simon Racé 02:25

[Simon translates the previous answer] I'm the referent for family and [Bevery added more details in French] now I'm thrilled to see what becomes and has been done to the park.

Visitor 03:05

My name is Amie, je suis un référent des enfants de la maison quartier et en fait, à la même quartier, on a participé aux customaires pour que les familles puissent se donner leur avis sur ce qui soit des aménagements sur le parc.

Simon Racé 03:24

[Simon translates the previous answer] In the district house, we have also gathered the families to have their opinions on the park and for the development.

Julia Gäckle 03:36

Ok, cool! Ah, maybe, Cathy, you would like to introduce yourself? Just one or two sentences, so we can start?

Visitor 03:44

Okay, so I am the head manager of the green space of the City of Versailles, and I manage 80 people and 50 gardeners in the green spaces and 12 gardeners in the cemetery. That's it!

Julia Gäckle 04:13

Perfect! We just start to talk a bit. We have a couple of questions now, just four questions, we have some printed questions.

Visitor 04:27

Ok, en français, en anglais?

Julia Gäckle 04:29

We can do both. We can talk in french, we can talk in english, because we have Simon, he can translate and we can do everything with this recording. No problem!

Visitor 04:42

Ok. Salut! Ça va?

Julia Gäckle 04:50

Bonjour!

Visitor 04:54

C'est ça! C'est Gabriel! Et François d'Archine, notre élu, connaissait tout. Simon connaît peut-être pas encore François d'Archine, donc mérite -toi à l'envers.

Simon Racé 05:08

Pas près de français, puis il est près, je peux traduire.

Visitor 05:10

D'accord.

Julia Gäckle 05:10

We are the only ones in english, but we get a translation!

Visitor 05:11

This is your time, we will make some effort!

Julia Gäckle 05:23

We can hand out some paper, just look at the questions, we can discuss freely. Just questions about the progress in the park, what do you think about that? What do you see in the future?

Simon Racé 05:37

Je vous donne les questions qu'on a préparées. Donc elles sont en anglais. Shall we start with the question?

Jannis Meul 06:07

I will take some pictures in between. I hope that's fine for everyone.

Visitor 06:12

Ça vous aime pas qu'il vous prenne ensemble? Ok, non.

Visitor 06:16

Pour le roteur.

Visitor 06:20

C'est un sujet d'actualité. Oui, c'est bon.

Julia Gäckle 06:24

We also have some consent forms for that, we can do it afterwards. So I would like to start with the first question above here. Which added value you see by the changes here, by the actions which took place in your area, in Blaise Pascal?

Simon Racé 06:50

[Simon translates the previous question] Ok, donc quelle plus-value vous voyez à propos des améliorations à travers les solutions fondées sur la nature dans l'intervention qu'il y a eu ici?

Julia Gäckle 07:02

You can speak freely, there are no wrong answers or opinions. We are interested in your emotions and feelings about this place.

Simon Racé 07:13

[Simon translates the previous information] Donc, pas besoin d'avoir de très grandes réponses, c'est aussi juste à voir vos sentiments, vos émotions sur ce qui a été fait. Vous pouvez parler de manière libre.

Visitor 07:23

Peut-être que vous, qui venez de découvrir le jardin, parce que nous, on le connaît depuis le début. On connaît depuis le début et puis comme on a construit le projet, c'est plus facile pour nous. Vous, êtes arrivée tout à l'heure. C'était quoi votre première impression?

Visitor 07:37

C'est beaucoup plus familial. Pour les enfants, c'est très adéquat. Il y a de l'espace pour sauver les piquets, les enfants peuvent s'amuser pour un adulte.

Simon Racé 07:59

[Simon translates the previous answer] Family friendly as well. Children and teenagers can come, play, have picnics et cetera.

Visitor 07:59

Je trouve des espèges, des espèces pour tous les oeufs.

Simon Racé 08:02

[Simon translates the previous answer] So, there are places for all ages.

Visitor 08:07

Moi, je trouve que la première réaction que j'ai eu, c'est de voir effectivement toutes les générations. C'est -à-dire qu'il y a des tout petits qui sont dans un même espace avec les plus grands. Et ça, c'est une réussite par rapport à ce que c'était avant, où ils étaient un peu disloqués.

Simon Racé 08:26

[Simon translates the previous answer] So, my first reaction would be to tell the intergenerational aspect of this park. You can see very small kids, teenagers, the parents, the elderly as well, and before that, it was very much more... separated.

Julia Gäckle 08:27

So, more different groups coming together, connecting to this new design. Yes? OK cool. That was our goal! Good!

Frank Rémy 08:53

Ma première réaction serait : Wow, un endroit aussi bondé, où tant de gens se rassemblent. C'est aussi lié à la Monthe-Molière, un mois d'activités culturelles à Versailles.

Simon Racé 09:41

[Simon translates the previous answer] My first reaction would be: wow, such a crowdly place, to see all these people gathering. It's also connected to the Monthe-Molière, a Month with cultural activities in Versailles.

Julia Gäckle 09:42

I don't know, Cathie?

Visitor 09:57

Il y a des petits détails critiquables qui sont plus de l'ordre des travaux purs et durs. Mais ma première réaction, c'est d'avoir vu l'espace sec dur avec le sable se transformer en oiseux. Et encore, il faut du temps pour que le gazon pousse et les arbres, que le végétal apprenne sa place, qu'on travaille le gazon en pelouse écologique, en biodiversité, donc il nous faut encore quelques années. Toutefois, on peut imaginer que cet espace va être un espace de fraîcheur, un espace de zénitude pour la population parce qu'on sait que le verre fait du bien aux gens, c'est un espace de bien-être.

Simon Racé 10:46

[Simon translates the previous answer] For me, I designed the area, so it's a little more difficult for me to answer that. But I would say that we can hope that it will become an oasis. Before it was a very sandy place and we hope that it will become a space, a zen space for people because we know that green spaces have a very positive influence on well-being of the inhabitants.

Julia Gäckle 11:15

Okay, maybe we can switch to the other question here on the right.

Visitor 11:18

Am I allowed to answer?

Julia Gäckle 11:19

Yes, sorry, I was intended to ask the next one to you but you can also answer it.

Visitor 11:24

But my reaction is that I was surprised to see so many people for sure. But the fact that it's a dense occupation. What we had before were spots which were not connected to each other. The young were here, very young, and then the adults and younger kids over there. And it was not a place to live, it was a place to take care of everybody themselves. And in the middle there was a kind of... football area, which was not very well used. There are few people. In fact, if you want, and that's part of the GoGreenRoutes story, that you want to merge all those, you know, people from different ages and so on, they didn't exist. So this site is due to exist! And I think that's the reason why people came today, to understand what is different. You have this reaction to say it's different. It's the same place, but it's all different. So the surprise effect, the wow-effect is a lot different. So I'm very, very glad. This project took a long time and there was a lot of, you know...

Julia Gäckle 12:42

discussing and co-creating!

Visitor 12:45

With Europe, but also with local people and so on. But at the end of the day, we made it collectively!

Julia Gäckle 12:50

Yeah, collectively is a good word for the next question. Maybe you would like also to say something to the experience of this co-creation process for the site. So, is the effort worth it? Was it good to discuss this much? Is this the reason why we, or why you created this kind of, the same place, but a totally different one, because everyone is coming together now and user groups are connecting?

Simon Racé 13:22

[Simon translates the previous question] Donc, quel résultat y a-t-il sur le processus de co-création? Est-ce que cela vaut la peine de prendre autant de temps pour mener ce processus de co-création?

Visitor 13:22

Eh bien, c'est probablement moi qui en parle. Cathi, parce que?

Visitor 13:38

[Audio hard to understand – following answer based on notes]

Débutant avec le projet, nous avons réalisé l'ampleur du travail effectué avec les membres de notre quartier, essentiels pour recueillir les informations nécessaires. Ensuite, notre approche localement a favorisé la connexion avec différents groupes d'âges, une priorité pour nous. L'idée centrale de notre projet est de créer un espace accueillant pour tous les enfants, quel que soit leur âge, et de réunir les familles sur un même lieu. Avant, les enfants plus jeunes et les adolescents étaient séparés visuellement, ce qui posait problème aux familles mixtes. Aujourd'hui, notre réussite réside dans cette unité familiale sur un même espace, même par 42 degrés sur le terrain de foot lors de la dernière canicule. Nous sommes convaincus que cet été, avec des mesures adaptées, l'expérience sera différente. Ce succès est le fruit d'un pari audacieux, celui de créer un oasis de verdure, rendu possible grâce aux fonds européens. Il est important de souligner l'apport financier de l'Europe, sans quoi ce projet n'aurait pu aboutir.

Visitor 15:14

J'aimerais rajouter aussi...

Visitor 15:20

Maybe just a short summary, that was difficult! [Laughter]

Simon Racé 15:24

Je pense que ce serait mieux aussi de couper.

Visitor 15:27

D'accord.

Visitor 15:27

C'est un bon résumé.

Simon Racé 15:33

[Simon translates the previous answer] I would say that we really achieved, in this place, the cooperation process, but it was with it. We have involved the house, the district house from the beginning. And then we had a whole moving process to involve more citizens. And today, we can see that the greenery area is less separated. So, before, we had a space for teenagers and a space for kids. And now we are bringing them together. So, that's very important for the families of the area. And we managed it thanks to the money from the European Union. And we are very grateful for that. Last summer we had 42 degrees with the heat wave in this area. This year, we are hoping to have a cooling effect thanks to the intervention.

Julia Gäckle 16:30

Cool!

Visitor 16:30

Le fait d'avoir fait des ateliers coopératifs, donc autant la marche que les boîtes à questions sur les workshops, ça a créé une grande application citoyenne autour du projet. Et de se faire avec l'ouverture. Du parc aujourd'hui, les gens ne découvrent pas non plus un projet de lutte en blanc, c'est un projet auxquels ils ont participé, où ils ont fait des choix, donc ils s'attendaient à quelque chose qui est peut-être encore mieux que ce qu'ils avaient imaginé, mais en tout cas c'est moi c'est mon bébé que j'ai conçu et je pense que les gens ont tous mis leur part aussi et donc c'est vraiment un projet coopératif, on a réussi à mener du début à la fin avec la population.

Simon Racé 17:24

[Simon translates the previous answer] It was really my baby, they designed the process, but thanks to the inhabitants, to the tools to involve all the inhabitants, we really co-design and co-built the space and people could really much more co-owning the space, thanks to the engagement of all citizens.

Visitor 17:59

The surprise is more about or is even nicer than we imagined, and discovering something which was not part of their responsibility. So engaging local people is absolutely good, and I would like to extend this to a general statement that we have more novels here. The mayor is that if we really want to have a enjoyable city, we need to involve the inhabitants from the beginning. And there is a lot of local initiative that we are not necessarily aware of, that we can include in our durable city. It's very important. So this is a time where we have checked the methodology, and we've learned a lot from the construction of course, and we have seen how it works. If you want to have an institution, people together, not having a whole, you know, everybody having his own opinion and an after what you get is a project which is the minimum of everything, really understanding that by listening and by creating at the same time, we get to the best observation.

Julia Gäckle 19:10

Everything we wish for.

Franck Remy 19:11

Je voudrais répéter ce que François vient de dire sur l'engagement, l'engagement de la population. Alors peux-tu te présenter?

Visitor 19:12

Oui, je suis membre du conseil de district, mais le président devrait être là en ce moment.

Franck Rémy 19:22

Oui, du conseil de district. Je suis membre de notre groupe de travail local et il a participé à tous nos ateliers, diagnostics sur le marché et à tous les différents ateliers que nous avons organisés dans le district. La Local taskforce est arrivée!

Simon Racé 19:43

[Simon translates the previous answer] So the Local taskforce is arriving, and the new person was involved from the beginning in the taskforce.

Julia Gäckle 19:59

Cool, welcome! [Laughter]

Visitor 19:59

Il a traduit ce que tu as dit.

Visitor 20:05

C'est vrai, c'est vrai ce qu'il a dit.

Julia Gäckle 20:17

Okay, just one last question, and then we can, I'm sorry, take all the time here. Maybe directing this one to you: What can you imagine for the future of your park? Is there anything maybe missed out in the co-creation process where you think there needs to be another discussion about adding?

Simon Racé 20:41

[Simon translates the previous question] Donc, imaginez-vous pour le futur de l'endroit, est-ce que vous pensez qu'il y a eu des manques, qu'il y a des choses à rajouter, peut-être pour le futur de ce lieu?

Visitor 20:51

Je pense qu'on le verra avec le temps. Pour l'instant là, on passe de rien à tout, parce que ça reste un bel espace où il n'y avait rien. Il y avait juste un espace avec des terrains de foot, des paniers de basket, là il y a un espace pour enfants, voilà, il y a tout qui est réunis. Donc je pense qu'on verra ça plus un peu plus dans le temps.

Simon Racé 21:10

[Simon translates the previous answer] So we will see really with the time passing, because at the beginning we really had nothing at all and now we have some new areas. We need to see how it evolves in the future.

Julia Gäckle 21:23

Time will tell!

Visitor 21:28

Moi il y a quelque chose que j'aimerais, c'est qu'effectivement ce qu'on ressent là, cette population qui se réunit, se partage, ça perdure. Ça me ferait de la peine, enfin vraiment, c'est à dire d'avoir ce côté wow aujourd'hui et dans quelques semaines que cette beauté du lieu soit plus autant attractif par les habitants.

Simon Racé 21:52

[Simon translates the previous answer] So what is really important to me is to keep lively this wow-effect. Because today, we have a really crowded place, but in two to three weeks the use could be different. It would be a shame, so that's the most important thing to me. To keep it crowded and lively

Julia Gäckle 22:11

That's a good closing word, because of time.

Franck Rémy 22:12

Our major is coming, we should go over there. But after, we can have another discussion.

Julia Gäckle 22:12

Okay. Just one picture! Who could take a picture of us?

Transcript of the second Focus Group Discussion in Versailles

Thursday, Jun 19, 2024 3:00PM • 12:25

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Football, Blaise Pascal Park, Versailles, nature, project, area, citizens, Seedbed intervention, NbS

SPEAKERS

Julia Gäckle, Simon Racé, Jannis Meul, Local taskforce members, visitors of the inauguration

SETTING

The second Focus Group Discussion convened in Blaise Pascal Park, bringing together several group members. Julia Gäckle facilitated the session and posed the questions, while Jannis Meul took notes and handled the audio recording. Simon Racé provided translation between English and French as needed. Although four questions were initially planned, only three were discussed due to the apparent time constraints and fatigue among the participants, who, despite these challenges, remained briefly motivated.

Simon Racé 00:17

Donc le but de la discussion, d'abord on va se présenter chacun et puis ensuite on pourra parler de ce qui a été fait sur ce site, voilà donc vous pouvez répondre en français je vais traduire en anglais voilà et puis ce sera enregistré d'accord, okay, pour qu'on souhaite on puisse retranscrire et utiliser des extraits pour le projet européen Voilà le contexte.

Julia Gäckle 00:42

Le contexte. Le contexte. It would be nice if everyone can just say their names and...

Local taskforce member Brigitte Chaudron 01:01

Yes okay, I first. Brigitte Chaudron. Je suis luie á Versailles, conciere municipalje suis la president de quartier.

Simon Racé 01:20

[Simon Racé translates previous answer]:

So my name is Brigitte Chaudron. Iam elected at the municipal council and Iam in charge of all the house in the the district.

Local taskforce member Brigitte Chaudron 01:15

Dominique present toi.

Dominique Vercours 01:30

Ok. Je suis président de l'association des residents... [audio not understandable background noise]

Simon Racé 01:40

[Simon Racé translates previous answer]:

The president of the association of the (this) residence in charge of [audio not understandable background noise] very close to the park.

Julia Gäckle 01:59

Okay premier question. Quel plus value voyez vous á travers a lintervention? So what do you think...

Brigitte Chaudron 02:10

What do you say?

Simon Racé 02:11

[Simon Racé translates previous answer]:

Simon Racé repeats the question in French

Brigitte Chaudron 02:17

Ah, ce manifique. Ce change toutes. Avant c'était un terrain de foot, un terrain de basket, c'est tout. Là c'est convivial, tout le monde a envie de venir. Déjà le fait que les petits, les moyens soient ensemble, beaucoup de verdure, beaucoup de...c'est agréable à mon avis pour toutes les générations.

Local taskforce member 02:37

Les mamans apprécient parce que les jeunes avaient leurs petits -enfants là -bas, les autres ils sont, ça c'était le discours.

Brigitte Chaudron 02:43

C'est beaucoup mieux. On peut surveiller tout le monde en même temps.

Local taskforce member 02:49

C'est ça l'idée, déjà ce soit plutôt pour les jeunes enfants, là -bas les ados et les adultes au grand milieu, que les adultes puissent surveiller à la fois.

Simon Racé 03:00

[Simon Racé translates previous answer]:

So it's beautiful, it has nothing to see with what was here before, before we had a large area of a football area and now basketball area as well and all the generations were split in the previous space and now we have gathered everyone so we have a space for kids very close to the space also for the teenagers as well and this was the purpose of this intervention.

Local taskforce member 03:33

I think it was very interesting to chair before the realisation because the old person in the quarter has the possibility to explain what is necessary for the small, the biggest etc. and the methodology it was very useful...

Julia Gäckle 03:57

...so everyone got a voice in the end in a way.

Local taskforce member 03:58

We make a lot of meetings like that, we know also before what we must do inside this project.

Julia Gäckle 04:13

Yes, okay this leads me to my next question immediately. So you were part of the whole process, this

co-creation, talking a lot, more than usual, so and beginning at the beginning of the whole process of implementing the intervention here and the co-creation activities, how you experience them, was it really hustling, like was it really difficult, this lot of co-creation.

04:52 Simon Racé 04:52

[Simon Racé translates previous answer]:
Simon Racé repeats the question in French

Local taskforce member 05:04

[Audio not understandable background noise]...par rapport à la méthodologie d'avoir avant pu changer et partager ça c'était bien ça c'était bien et ça a permis aussi de dédramatiser parce que beaucoup de personnes se posaient plein de questions sur tout ce qui était là donc le fait d'expliquer ça a permis d'expliquer ce qu'elle a fait il a fallu expliquer dizaines de fois je vous demande de réunions et ce qui était bien aussi c'est que c'était comme tout à l'heure tous les acteurs qui ont qui vont utiliser.

Brigitte Chaudron 05:30

Ce et c'est vrai que pour l'instant parce que nous habitons tous les deux là d'accord et moi j'ai le roi de jardin là donc voilà vraiment et au départ c'est vrai qu'il y avait beaucoup de gens qui étaient très inquiets posés des questions depuis pour l'instant on n'a plus rien bon l'instant il n'y a plus rien c'est calme c'est calme.

Simon Racé 05:55

[Simon Racé translates previous answer]:
So it was a good process. People at the beginning were fearing of the change of the area. They were worried about what will be achieved. So engaging them from the beginning was useful like to retraumatise their feelings about this whole change. And we are both living right here in front of the park.

Local taskforce member 06:30

For me it was very important we worked a lot with the technical services from the municipality and this point was very important for us, because like that it's not only a project from the municipality but the municipality plus the different actors.

Brigitte Chaudron 06:46

[audio not understandable due to background noise]

Simon Racé 06:54

[Simon Racé translates previous answer]:
Simon Racé repeats and translates the answer of Brigitte Chaudron in English:
It's really important to have taken into account the opinion of every inhabitants, that would be the main point.

Brigitte Chaudron 07:00

[audio not understandable due to background noise]

Simon Racé 07:32

[Simon Racé translates previous answer]:
It's longer, but it's more efficient on the long term and usually the municipality is not really involving the citizens so that was a great opportunity to have this element.

Julia Gäckle 07:42
Good.

Local taskforce member 07:43

C'était moi, je veux ajouter que c'était très enrichissant bien sûr, mais nous avons déjà parlé avec Julia. D'un autre côté, ce qui est difficile, c'est d'impliquer un groupe de travail pendant une période aussi longue. Oui, c'est trop long, c'est très difficile et d'autant plus que nous on a un peu la barrière de la langue ce qui fait que parfois c'était très difficile de traduire certains concepts par exemple seedbed intervention si on traduit les interventions sur l'it semence pour nous c'est difficile de traduire ça d'autrefois on était un petit... [audio not understandable due to background noise]

Simon Racé 08:44

[Simon Racé translates previous answer]:
So a difficult point was translating the concept in GoGreenRoutes for example the Seedbed interventions is a very theoretical term, so having it translated in French and also making...

Julia Gäckle 08:59

...Communicating it to the inhabitants...
So finally my last question. Future!
What can you imagine for the future for the area. The whole area, maybe also including the other parts there [points to the part of the park which was not developed so much yet]. What can you imagine?

Local taskforce member 09:42

We have already an idea for the future...[audio not understandable due to background noise]...200 years ago we had a lot of horticulture. The persons developed a lot of... horticulture. We have a lot of horticulture. All this place was occupied by them and now... we want to transfer this place like this [memorial in horticulture] in Versailles. Versailles is a green city. That's important to know... [audio not understandable due to background noise].

Simon Racé 11:52

[Simon Racé translates previous answer]:
There are different projects. For the future one of them would be to expand the area of the district house and connect it with this green space/garden. But it's still in discussion and that's why we need to involve as much as possible the citizens. Motivate people to decide on their future.

Julia Gäckle 12:20

Final word. Thanks for your time.

Transcript of the interview in Versailles with Cathy Biass-Mourin

Wednesday, September 25, 2024 2:45PM CET • Duration: 00:02:20

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

greenway, question, NbS, intervention, site, nature, area, tree planting, project, trees, hand, process

SPEAKERS

Cathy Biass-Mourin, Julia Gäckle

SETTING

On September 25, 2024, an activation event took place in Versailles at the site where the Nature-based Solution (NbS) intervention was implemented. The event was organised by the City of Versailles and the A Playful City initiative to re-engage the community with the site three months after the NbS intervention was introduced. Various elements were installed in the park to capture people's attention. Additionally, several interviews and discussions were conducted throughout the event.

Julia Gäckle 00:00

Où voyez-vous de la valeur ajoutée ou des améliorations grâce aux les Nature-based Solutions (NbS)?

Julia Gäckle (Translation)

In what do you see added value or improvements through the Nature-based Solutions?

Cathy Biass-Mourin 00:10

De plus valu par rapport à l'aménagement du parc Blaise Pascal, le fait d'avoir replanté des arbres et d'avoir réensemencé les pelouses apporte beaucoup plus de fraîcheurs et de nature dans ce parc qui était beaucoup plus minéral.

Cathy Biass-Mourin (Translation)

In terms of added value, compared to the redevelopment of the Blaise Pascal Park, the fact that trees were planted and the lawn was seeded brings much more freshness and nature to this park, which was much more sealed before.

Cathy Biass-Mourin 00:21

Et du coup on est satisfait de la fréquentation puisque quand il fait chaud, les gens viennent du coup beaucoup plus dans le parc. On a eu une fréquentation beaucoup plus importante depuis la réouverture du parc parce que les aires de jeu sont plus importantes et on a beaucoup plus d'adolescents qui viennent parce qu'on a le terrain de basket ici, l'arbre à basket qui permet de jouer entre parents et enfants avec les différentes hauteurs d'éthagne et puis l'air de jeu est très apprécié.

Cathy Biass-Mourin (Translation)

As a result, we are satisfied with the attendance because, when it's hot, people come to the park much more often. We've had significantly more visitors since the park reopened because the play areas are larger, and we have many more teenagers coming since we now have the basketball court here, the "basket tree," which allows parents and children to play together at different hoop heights. The play area is very well appreciated.

Julia Gäckle 00:55

Comment s'est déroulée l'expérience du processus de mise en œuvre de Seedbed intervention, des NbS et d'autres activités dans le projet de GoGreenRoutes?

Julia Gäckle (Translation)

How was the experience of the whole process of implementing the Seedbed intervention, the NbS and other activities within GoGreenRoutes?

Cathy Biass-Mourin 01:01

À rapport à la co-construction de cet aménagement qui était une demande de l'Europe et de Gauguin -Routh, on a eu une demande de la part du conseil du quartier et de cinq associations pour essayer de planter d'autres arbres et des arbres tritiers, palissés, de façon à ce qu'il y ait une histoire qui se passe par rapport au site puisque c'était anciennement les pépinières Mosaire et Truffaut qui étaient anciennement ces focites et donc on veut fêter les 200 ans de l'anniversaire du Truffaut qui est un pépiniériste très important.

Cathy Biass-Mourin (Translation)

Regarding the co-construction of this redevelopment, which was a request from Europe and GoGreenRoutes, we received requests from the neighbourhood council and five associations to plant additional trees, including espaliered fruit trees, in order to create a narrative linked to the site. This used to be the Moser Truffaut nurseries, and we want to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Truffaut, a very important nurseryman.

Julia Gäckle 01:40

Comment pourriez-vous imaginer le NbS dans votre ville comme catalyseur pour mieux se connecter à la nature ?

Julia Gäckle (Translation)

How could you picture the NbS in your city as a catalyst to better connect with nature?

Cathy Biass-Mourin 01:44

Alors par rapport à notre démarche et notre politique de nature en ville, on a travaillé ça depuis nombreuses années avec le maire et le maire adjoint François Darcy et nos paysagistes, notre bureau d'études.

Cathy Biass-Mourin (Translation)

As for our approach and our policy of incorporating nature into the city, we've been working on this for many years with the mayor, the deputy mayor François Darcy, and our landscape designers and the design office.

Cathy Biass-Mourin 02:00

C'est quelque chose qui est nouveau, c'est quelque chose qui nous a permis d'aller encore plus de l'avant sur ce parc et plutôt de faire la co-construction avec les rivres. Mais notre démarche de nature en ville, elle est déjà très très forte depuis longtemps. Donc ça a été un catalyseur financier, ça c'est sûr grâce à l'Europe, mais cette démarche on a depuis au moins 10 ans, voire 15 ans.

Cathy Biass-Mourin (Translation)

It's something new; it has allowed us to push even further with this park and engage in co-construction with the local residents. But our commitment to incorporating nature into the city has been very strong for a long time. So, it was a financial catalyst, thanks to Europe, but this initiative has been in place for at least 10, if not 15 years in Versailles.

Transcript of the interview in Versailles with Brigitte Chaudron

Wednesday, September 25, 2024 3:00PM CET • Duration: 00:02:01

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

greenway, question, NbS, intervention, site, nature, area, tree planting, project, trees, hand, process

SPEAKERS

Brigitte Chaudron, Julia Gäckle

SETTING

On September 25, 2024, an activation event took place in Versailles at the site where the Nature-based Solution (NBS) intervention was implemented. The event was organised by the City of Versailles and the A Playful City initiative to re-engage the community with the site three months after the NbS intervention was introduced. Various elements were installed in the park to capture people's attention. Additionally, several interviews and discussions were conducted throughout the event.

Julia Gäckle 00:00

Où voyez-vous de la valeur ajoutée ou des améliorations grâce aux les Nature-based Solutions (NbS) ?

Julia (Translation)

In what do you see added value or improvements through the Nature-based Solutions?

Brigitte Chaudron 00:10

Dans l'ensemble, c'est très bien, le parc est très beaucoup, les nouvelles formules avec le doigt, les nouveaux jeux, le mélange pour les parents de tous les âges, les petits, les moyens, donc tout l'ensemble est très bien.

La partie fuite de lui, oui, ça fuite de lui voler, marche très très bien. Alors moi qui habite juste à côté pour le son du ballon, c'est parfait, parce que j'entends bien, même quand il y a beaucoup de monde, on n'entend pas trop.

Au niveau du terrain de voler, il y a beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup plus de monde fuite avant, c'est bien.

Le seul problème, c'est qu'il y a des jeunes qui s'installent avec de la musique. Il y a beaucoup plus de jeunes et beaucoup s'installent avec de la musique, ça s'intrigue moins bien. Au niveau des jeux très bien, sauf un peu le gazon, l'herbe, avec la pluie, on s'enfonce, ça c'est moins bien. Il y a un jeu qui est beaucoup demandé, c'est la balançoire. Je vous ai écrit des films.

Beaucoup d'enfants aimeraient qu'il y ait une balançoire. Alors les personnes âgées, je vais essayer de lancer une de tes vues plus âgées. J'envoie un petit peu, mais pas, c'est surtout un gros succès pour les enfants. Et autrement, tu t'es bien connu, genre des autres quartiers. C'est pour ça que il y a beaucoup de monde avant de venir que les enfants qui habitaient au -dessus. Les enfants, les adolescents, les grands viennent de partout.

Brigitte Chaudron (Translation)

Overall, it's very good, the park is excellent, the new structures with the slide, the new games, the mix for visitors of all ages—children, youth, and older—everything is very well done. As for the volleyball area, yes, the volleyball court is doing very, very well. As someone who lives nearby, the sound of the pit is now perfect for me, because even when there are a lot of people, you don't hear too much noise.

In terms of the volleyball court, there are many, many more people now than before, which is great. The only problem is that there are young people who set up music speakers. There are many more young people, and they often bring music, which makes it less pleasant.

The playground equipment is great, except for the grass—the lawn. When it rains, the ground gets soggy, and that's less pleasant. There's one equipment many children wish for, and that's the swing. I've mentioned this in reports already. Many children would love to have a swing.

The elderly, I try to encourage them to come more often. It's mostly a big hit for the kids. Also, it's well-known among people from other neighbourhoods. That's why there are so many people here now, not just from the local area. Children, teenagers, and older ones come from everywhere!

Transcript of the interview in Versailles with François Darchis

Wednesday, Sept 25, 2024 3:20PM • 26:00

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, usage, courtyard, mayor, Nature-based Solutions, Olympic Games, story, express, city, question, money, government, procedure, complain

SPEAKERS

Julia Gäckle, François Darchis, Jannis Meul

SETTING

On September 25, 2024, an activation event took place in Versailles at the site where the Nature-based Solution (NBS) intervention was implemented. The event was organised by the City of Versailles and the A Playful City initiative to re-engage the community with the site three months after the NbS intervention was introduced. Various elements were installed in the park to capture people's attention. Additionally, several interviews and discussions were conducted throughout the event.

Julia Gäckle 0:01

So basically, why we are here today is because there's some time now that has been passed. Since June, like the opening and everything. How do you see the developments here in the area? Like we ask you, for example, in June, what do you see at a values in for this area, and what has changed since then? Is there a different experience for you?

François Darchis 0:26

For me, I don't know. I'm not sure, but certainly a great experience for the mayor first. I mean, he was kind of impressed by the fact that we could change such a drastic park like this one, and having a lot of good remarks coming from the citizens, about, the park. In the city in general, what you get is mostly, you know, requests, complaints. And what I've received, really is about the fact that it was a drastic change. We changed about everything and the fact that we have pushed point that it has to be a multi cultural, multi age and everything as it's the first time we do something, as I would say, as a signal. So the mayor is very often using Baise Pascal as an example of what we mean by durability for a city and how we can, I would say, change little bit the usage and everything. So in general, what we do in the Square like this, like garden like this, that we change piece by piece. And that's it. We don't change necessarily, based on the on the usage, based on the money, not changing too many things. Here, we change everything based on the usage, absolutely. Brigitte Chaudron, who is the president of the quartier, she was a little bit resistant at the beginning, because it was perceived as going too far, too quickly. My main argument has been at the start with the money, but as long as we spend the money, it's okay. if we don't spend it, it's gone, okay? A lot of people of the council were a little bit resistant by the fact that their main in concern is that they wouldn't have the same thing that they had when they have their own children. We need to, to push this idea, convince absolutely, and the change is not to the worst, but that it can be to the best, but you cannot pull that different. I mean, so people imagine that it's going to be not, hey will not be listened to, they will not be satisfied. They are going to have complaints. So if we say, okay, we will be included in the satisfaction. And you know, change in the city, depends on the city, but in Versailles, maybe it's not only on the place, but people intend to imagine the worst. And, you know, and it has nothing to do with the park, but everybody has been surprised by the Olympic Games. Everybody was expecting, including the foreigners, that's going to be a mess, because it's in France, in fact, it worked very well. So people were quite surprised that we did something correctly, okay, because it's a permanent complain

Julia Gäckle 5:31

But you're referring to the general mood of complaining.

François Darchis 5:34

Yes, absolutely. And people were very surprised that it has been a great success. And here I would say it's my Olympic game story. You don't know what's going to happen, but it should be good because we are listening to you, because we are including you. The reason why the Olympic Games worked quite well is, that they have been a large involvement of the people we asked for, a lot of you know, people to come for free, by the way, to be benevolent and coming and one instruction was being given to those people, not, again, not paid, but associated with the Olympic Games, was: "be yourself, and if you want to amuse people, do it!" So we just liberated the whole thing. And you know, at the same time, we had some, well actually, some issue with having a government, stable government, for different various reasons. And in fact, here there have been no people making decisions, but allowing people to express their wills and express what they are able to do. So for me, it's my Olympic, Olympic story. You propose. You say, we have the money. We are ready to go. Express yourself now, and we will listen to you. And Brigitte was quite surprised by the fact that we were very flexible, but that's something I've asked Cathy to make sure that it's all about how they will use the park, and not as this is what I want to design. You just cannot assume that people will be happy. You don't even think about that. If you say it's your story. Okay, we have the money, we have the capacity to do that, but we need to have consultation. We need to have this talk different, and that is, for me, the new battle. We are another one, which is called Park de nuet, which is close to the forest, we did exactly the same story, meaning that we had some complaints, because people said, it's a, what we call a Forest Park. So it's a park managed by the city, but in the National Forest System. So we don't own the track of land, but we have to manage it. But we have been asked by the national system of forest in France, yeah, we have been asked to stop doing the concrete things and everything. It has to be as close as possible to nature.

Julia Gäckle 6:31

Just for understanding. So you've been asked also to involve the people, like also do co-creation there?

François Darchis 8:50

It was not from the not from the office national de forest, but they were asking for a certain setup about and what we did, we applied exactly the same philosophy to say: "let's talk"! It is not "what do you want", but "how are you going to use it". It's a big challenge, because what I want, I want this, this, and this. At the end of the day, you want it gold plated. What will be the use, what you consider today, is not as you would like to use it. The concept of having families being put together worked really well. We did the same thing, exactly.

Julia Gäckle 9:44

Did it work?

François Darchis 9:45

It's working very well because people are not complaining firsthand, and they don't have to express all their wish kind of, you know, Christmas wish, it used to. It's just: "How do you want to use it?"

Julia Gäckle 10:02

Yes, exactly this is what we intended.

François Darchis 10:04

Yes! Based on that, it's, it's neutralising all the stupidity, because it's just like an architect who is building a

house. What would you like makes no sense. Okay, what do you want? How many kids do you have? These kind of things. So based on usage, you neutralise the different opinions which are making no sense, but they have to describe what they will do.

Julia Gäckle 10:31

So maybe last, last small question, in reflection of what you said, can you imagine that it would be a good thing to maybe put this kind of processes like you just described- you did same thing with the other project- as a common procedure into the planning machine in its government or city, not government, sorry one word, municipality.

François Darchis 11:00

Yes, but here for sure. For instance, there is another good story that we have now, which is what we call the Oasis concept, which means that in the courtyard of the school, a primary school, mainly, that we have managing on the behalf of the government. that's the usual stuff in France. We want to adapt all those courtyards which are basically concrete, all concrete, lot of heat building up and so on. So what we do here? It's the same story. Say, Okay, you have girls and boys, they don't have necessarily the same usage, but what we do is that we manage or we modify the courtyard by planting trees, by having games, like having those kind of wood chips, but based on the conceal of the school with the parents, and we have asked from the beginning the children, so it's not the parents, it's the children and the parents. And also teachers. It's just incredible, because the first one people did complain: "you are never listening to us" and so on. And now that so we made the first Oasis concept, we've applied this concept, which has been put together by Paris, by the way, and the first one was a little bit complex because people were a little bit skeptical about if they really listen to them. And after the first one, second one, they are now all asking this to be accelerated. And the mayor have understood that it's a good point, especially because there will be election in two years that we will convert all the courtyards. This mindset, which is close to this one, by the way, which is the Oasis, because it has to be looked as a place where you are better protected. It's a high heat level also, but behind this, it's more about how the kids are going to use the courtyard and what we have, what I've discovered, I never noticed that for the last 10-20, years, they have put games which are more likely, Football games, and only five, six kids playing, and all the others around sitting and watching the game. In fact, it was, it was making absolutely no sense what we did. Exactly what we have done here: we have pushed the smaller football pit, and after, a big different, where, in fact, the kids, girls and boys, would do their own business, I would say, and it, it works very well. It works very well. And you don't have any more the concept that you have to put the football ground and then you would have a few key kids playing. No, it's not! So it's all about having those different places with trees, like this one, and it's exactly the same story. So for the mayor, it's very important: we have a story to tell, and which nobody can say it is not right.

Julia Gäckle 12:50

And the story can grow, in a way.

François Darchis 14:58

And the fact that we are asked to accelerate, yesterday, and to finish that, yesterday we got the budget for 2025. Everybody was, I mean, those who were going to the session to apply their budget, being banned because of the situation. And then they said to Cathy, okay, it's fine. I mean, you need to accelerate. So we have all the money we asked for. I was kind of surprised, because the benefit for a mayor is just wow, because it's not that expensive. This one was expensive because it was large, but when you speak about a courtyard for schools, it's about 100,000 euros. You can show something. So it's easier!

Julia Gäckle 16:11

So this process over the last two years had an influence of your actual budget planning now, because the mayor was such a fan?

François Darchis 16:20

Yeah, because it's clear that it's showing something the population, that, of course, we are serious about durability. But more than that, based on usage, people cannot complain, because it's always the same story: "You don't listen to us!" and here, you don't say that.

Julia Gäckle 16:52

We can finish with a nice sentence. I don't know, not a nice sentence, but your hopes and wishes?

François Darchis 16:56

My experience is to say, okay, you don't speak. You ask, you ask, "What do you want?" So you don't start to speaking of concepts, you're asking: "What do you want?" So you push the question to them, and instead of them asking us: "What are you going to do?" So what do you want? They have to agree by themselves. And then pick up back to you, and in a second step, you say, okay, based on what you said, which is now fixed, because you are not going to change the usage, we are going to come with. back to you is two or three propositions. "Which one do you want?" People have to make a decision based on what we propose to them, that we know we can do it and we can finance it, they have to say: "I want this one." It's not an open bar, because they want something that we have proposed based on what they said.

Julia Gäckle 17:00

One last thing, if you have two more minutes? Because it's like, I mean, this procedure that you ask people what they want, and normally they react was like, complaining, this is bad, this is bad, this is bad. This is often the normal procedure. But then, of course, we had a lot of participation also, since the 70s and so, and there are a lot of actions, like, I don't know, people come together for a long time. They express what they want, for, wish for, like a list. But what do you think? Maybe it's a bit complicated question, but what do you think, what was different this time? Like, maybe, was it the long process we developed together with the citizens?

François Darchis 18:59

Yes, we took the time. Yeah, we took the time. It was very often said that you need to shorten as much as you can the design, so that you can start the fabrication. You know, everything. And this is a mistake. The mistake is that you don't have enough time at the time where the sequence is more important. But this long time you took is not to ask them what they want, but how they are going to use it, it's a little bit more substitute question, because what people would say is: "I want everything". Because when you say this what I want, you are not realistic. Because you want to expand as much as you can.

Julia Gäckle 19:46

Like you said, you want some gold!

François Darchis 19:50

They consider that they will have at least a piece of it. If you ask for the usage, they will never ask you the maximum of usage, because it's not practical. So it's a practical question.

Julia Gäckle 20:03

But this was also the reason, actually, why we gave them, for example, cameras to express themselves, like

pens, to draw something, because you just draw what you want to do in this area, or you take a picture of something you think is beautiful and not something you wish for. You know what I mean?

Francois Darchis 20:31

We have used the GooGreenRoutes story to push for that element, because yourself, I mean all, all the questions and everything that you have put together, were in general, about usage. It was not about the money or about what you want. I think it has given Cathy the capacity to understand that this period where you ask, not again, what you want, but how you are going to use it, she has understood it was the right way. So I would say, personally, we have used the GoGreenRoutes story by saying to work like this. And in fact, it's the way you operate with all these different countries. As you have, not only the money, but also the benchmark story on everything you have done, which has forced the system to slow down at the beginning, which is exactly what I want. And for another park, it has been for years debates about what you should do, etc. And in fact, nothing came out of all those debates and discussions. Nothing. And here we are applying the same methodology that Cathy has understood, that it's the way to go. And that people have understood. And the mayor, it has changed quite drastically. So thank you for GoGreenRoutes to be clear, because you helped me by the fact it was international. Even the fact that the people have to make some effort for speaking English. And so force the system not to slow down, but to go step by step by step. And not try to imagine what could be because, in fact, you spend your time to imagine what has to be done. In fact, you just have to listen. And it will give you exactly a substance you are looking for. But, you know, I was in the industry, when I was working, and it was the usual thing that you have to listen to the customer. You have to consider, but when you speak with a customer, is not to say yes to everything, because you will not be qable to deliver, and even the customer will be not sure if it's going to work. It was industry, heavy industry. So if you define with the customer the right solution, people will relate all the discussion to what has been decided. It was called head of agreement. So I've pushed all the support in English, of course, but several times I said to Cathy and the team, okay, one page summary about that. In the industry, the two parties has to sign the document. Here, you will not sign the document between the quartier and the mayor, of course, but it's the same mindset. Take the time of defining what has to be done. Then, after, we speak about the money.

Julia Gäckle 24:03

And all the practical stuff.

Jannis Meul 24:06

So it's a win-win for the people and the city.

It's a total win-win. But you know, if you want to be elected, the citizen wants to win too. When you are in a negotiation with your supplier or customer, you don't have such an unbalanced situation, because you have an initial customer with an official supplier, so they speak the same language. And here it's one to many instead of one to one. So it's a mayor and 80,000 people, but the mayor has understood a few things based on that, because the politicians, it's the difference. I'm not a politician because I am an engineer, but I've always been impressed by the fact that the politicians try to imagine what people want, instead of asking the question what they want. And very often, because you have parties and so on, they are just among themselves, on the same world and so on. And in fact, at the end of the day, nobody understand what they want, but they just do. You just see that they are fighting against each other. But for me, it's out of the reality. And that's a problem of politicians, for me, that they have their own language and their own fights, and during the Olympic Games, we had no government. It was perfect.

Julia Gäckle 25:47

I remember, okay, I'll stop.

Transcript of the Interview with Dr. Tadhg MacIntyre, WP1

Tuesday, Jan 21, 2025 09:30AM • 15:50

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

walking interviews, co-creation, engagement, local, people, COVID, Seedbed intervention, project, university, challenges, groups

SPEAKERS

Tadhg MacIntyre, Julia Gäckle

Julia Gäckle 00:03

Perfect. Okay, now we can start with our quick interview, Tadhg, good to have you here. The first question would be here for our storybook. Have you been in contact with the cultivating cities between the Seedbed interventions and the final NbS implementation intervention?

Tadhg MacIntyre 00:24

yes, thanks for highlighting this question. So look, there's two roles here. One is as coordinator and PI in the project. What's our role is to build, to establish, foster and cultivate our relationship with the cities, because this is a city centric project, so they should be at the center of what we do. So in fairness, the Seedbed interventions had a huge impact, because Julia you, for example, were able to initiate this relationship with the cities post COVID. During COVID times, it was very difficult to establish activities in person, obviously, and develop that relationship, but you gave both online and in person, which laid a foundation for not just the work of myself as PI, but actually for multiple other Work Packages. So during that time, we have met and traveled to a lot of the cities. I think I've been to Versailles a dozen times in the time of the project. And that's not in terms of air miles, that's in terms of note. There were some distinct opportunities in in Versailles, we knew about, given the diversity, we knew that there was some distinct political and contemporary issues in Versailles, both when the mayor got reelected and then, with more recent national elections. We knew in some cases, there was a huge opportunity for progress, not for the project, but actually for the citizens. Similarly, in Limerick, which I've been to maybe 20 times over the timeline in the project, because I initially wasn't based in Limerick, and then I moved to Maynooth University. So since then, I've had many visits. But the purpose of these visits is twofold. One is, in some cases, it's task orientated. I'll come back to that in a minute, which is for monitoring or interviews, for other tasks in the project, but mainly it's actually for listening. I think the most important thing we've learned from our work in the project, and the Seedbeds have showed us, that actually listening to citizens, speaking to the key local actors, and the city staff, the municipality staff, that's central to getting the job done, but getting the job done in a way that meets the needs of community. And interestingly, we didn't clearly articulate in our proposal exactly what would be done in the cities, because it required co-creation. This is both a challenge and an obstacle. The challenge is, sorry, a challenge and an opportunity. The challenge is that you don't have such a strong plan. It's not robust. You don't have contingencies, because you don't have plan A and the the opportunity is you get to co-create. You get to shape with the local's ideas. You become part of a knowledge ecosystem. And I would say that really what happened on the Seedbed interventions, is that our team led and created a knowledge ecosystem, and we are able to enter that, and then we're able to do our subsequent things.

Julia Gäckle 03:59

It's really great. I mean, it covers already the next question, for sure, I intended to ask, if you have, you had a

field trip, of course, and what was your impression? I think it covers already that one, but the third one would be more, maybe diving more deep into this question: Did you experience any kind of obstacles during your visits on site, during hosting, maybe a workshop? Did you host a workshop or organise an event, stuff like that?

Tadhg MacIntyre 04:35

Yeah, I can get give some examples. So, and this are probably our challenges in the cities, are probably best to understood by example. So depending, and this is a critical point, depending on how the local university partner had fostered the relationship with the city that dictated, to some degree, how effectively the city would work. In two cities, we didn't have a local university partner. In Maynooth and Burgas, and what that meant is that it was our workload in the city and our capacity to do things that now dictated a little bit by the capacity the city to act in the absence of a local academic partner. For example, Limerick had an academic partner. Limerick city had UL first. I had BBSQ, Lahti Had TLU, etc. Now it turns out Julia actually had high capacity, so they were very well able to do things, it was a little bit more challenging, partly because Burgas were on another EU project, they were tail ended on Connecting Nature. So we also had to be ensure that whatever we do, there is distinctive and different from the previous funded project. And in the end, we ended up bringing on a university in Bulgaria to help with the physical activity intervention. So in the end, we worked out a model that if you have a local university, a partner in the project, that can really allow you to get the job done in the city in an efficient manner. What we did on those visits where we had challenges, for example, in Versailles, we wanted to do virtual reality and VR given the sentiment of the mayor wasn't, you know, his priority, because it's really about people and about nature and art and the amazing initiatives they run there. So this is almost a counterpoint to what they do. So we actually brought it to the university, to USVQ, where we did it. In Ireland, we brought it to different sites around Limerick, rather than actually in Castletroy or in the university. So we had to adopt our needs. And I think this gives us lessons learned later on. But the other piece is, when we did monitoring in the cities, so we did both pre-NbS monitoring and post-intervention monitoring in five of the six cities. Now, in some cities we turn up, we'd be given access to like bikes, they'd hire a car to ensure that we were transported. They would meet us. We'd have a high-level meeting at the beginning. We have access to the points of contacts in the city. So the work in Umeå, in Tallinn, in Versailles, it was absolutely, uh, amazing. Similarly, in Burgas and Lahti, we had amazing support. I mean, we get to meet mayors, deputy mayors, high level people in the city, to understand the context in which we're doing our work, which ultimately knowledge is power in this situation, but not power for us, but power for the intervention to match the needs of the citizens. And then, the other example is Limerick where we had Dr Sarah O'Malley, who is, you know, a researcher in her own right, very highly qualified, very good understanding, but they had limited capacity. So Sarah would meet us and she'd commit her time, but that was one person, whereas in other cities who have a different way of working, it was more effective. And I think that's not on Sarah, because she gave a huge commitment to the project. Is an advisory board of the follow-on project GoGreenNext, has her own specialist expertise, which you brought to the project. But in absence of them having a large team dedicated to NbS, you know, this was, this was definitely a challenge. So in that case, we literally brought a team. We would have bring from a new university, from isepi, from other partners. We bring a team from TU Dublin, we bring a big team to help support our monitoring. So that probably gives you an outline of those obstacles and how we overcame them.

Julia Gäckle 08:05

Yeah, also already about another question I have, like, what we're talking about your main obstacles and in terms of relevant Work Package work, as you just described it. But maybe we can hop back to the previous question about conducting interviews in the cities. Maybe you can just tell a bit about your experiences of that you mentioned already. What did you do?

Tadhg MacIntyre 08:40

We had two different types of interviews in the cities. One more brief walking interviews, which is, you know, capturing the thoughts of people while they are in the space, in the NbS. So if you take the sites in Lahti, you have to walk for about two kilometers to even get there. In Burgas, you'll be through it in two minutes. If you walk straight through it in Limerick, it's a 1.4-kilometer Greenway, so it can take some time. These all give different opportunities to engage with citizens. The walking interviews allowed us to capture citizen views in real time in the natural space, and that overcomes lots of issues we have with retrospective bias or memory. We're actually speaking to them where they're getting the emotional support and positive emotions from the environment. And we actually really found out something really interesting. So one is it's all inclusive. Whoever goes to a park, they don't say, you know, rich people go this way. People who are unemployed go this way. Migrants go this way. There is no everyone chooses their own path, irrespective of social, economic status, diversity, etc. So we were able to speak to members of the traveling community in Limerick, our ethnic minority, able to speak to diverse groups virtually in every city, people from overseas. Some were visitors, some were local users. Others were people who were refugees, for example, from Ukraine. And where this gets really interesting is what we call the Versailles effect. In Versailles citizens told us what had changed, because the park had been redeveloped, essentially repurposed and upgraded, but in a way which was based on the concepts which you had iterated in the Seedbed intervention. They told us something extraordinary. They said, we're actually meeting people from different quarters. We are friends, but we haven't seen them a very long time. But they came to see the new park, and that's what they described. And by the way, note that Square Blaise Pascal is a Square, not a park by name, and now it's going to be renamed because it's now offers something different. So the citizen said, we're not here just to talk about the trees or the environment. We're actually here to talk about politics, because we're in a very challenging time with the election. So honestly, I never knew, even though you know, many researchers, practitioners had written before, social cohesion is one of the big wins from nature. Well, here we are seeing that actually reducing extremism enhancing social cohesion was actually a direct impact, according to the people in the walking interviews. So this is just an example of what happens when we use participatory approaches, like what we've done is they feel they own it. The people in other quarters feel they can own it too, that it's for them, not ours. That sense of ownership is huge. The second interviews were amazing, because these were done with high level people in the cities. So high level includes NGOs, includes the point of contact in the city. For example, in Burgas, it was a local NGO and the designer of the park who explained their concept, their thinking and the process. In, let me think, in Versailles, it was the deputy mayor representative the quarter, and the head of parks, who is a major thinker for the project, also Cathy. And then in - I'm trying to think of - not Lahti - oh, in Umeå, it would have been the head of the green space department, a young innovator, as well as a local politician. So we're actually getting a multi-faceted view of where this will bring them in the future. Now we didn't in many cases, for example, when I did it in Lahti, in many cases these interviews were done outside, while walking, while I was giving feedback on the environmental properties of the area, the area qualities like this according to our app. Here's the biodiversity, here's the tree canopy data. What does this mean for your city? So by contextualising it and not just doing a zoom interview, we're actually creating a rich space for thinking and learning. So the only issue about the interview is like this one, sorry, Julia, it went way over time, so it's okay. This interview in Lahti ended up walking in about 25 degrees and 26 degrees for like an hour. So we're both melted by the end of it. Certainly, I was. So this is an interesting point. The walk, a outdoor walking interview, an extended one with key stakeholders, allows them to point out things, to contextualise their experience and their future vision, because that's what we were concerned with. What's a future vision? And I don't think I could get the future vision so easily on zoom right. So these two different interviews we did, and yeah, one of them is in the walking interview methodology, and the other is actually part of the urban health and well-being plans.

Julia Gäckle 15:17

Yeah, I totally agree with you. Also, in regard of the Focus Group Discussions or interviews we did on site, connecting everything together and bringing different people together, it was another different experience as doing an interview via zoom, but it's good to have one today. So it's really interesting that we get that contextual information, yeah, we need to step into other people's world. I think that's the first start of empathy. I think it's a good end sentence for an interview. Yeah, I just stopped the recording. Thanks!

Transcript of the Interview with John Gallagher, WP2

Monday, Dec 11, 2023 12:00PM • 6:44

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

cities, interventions, monitoring, city, Versailles, interviews, question, engagement, timelines, people, team, researcher, cultivating, tasks, visit, seedbed, activity

SPEAKERS

John Gallagher, Jannis Meul, Julia Gäckle

Julia Gäckle 00:00

Thanks, Jannis.

Jannis Meul 00:02

I think it's working. So the first question would be if you have been in contact with the cultivating cities in between the Seedbed interventions and the final NbS interventions.

John Gallagher 00:17

I have, but only to Versailles, specifically because Versailles have undertaken more focused monitoring that was relevant to me. And the quality of their data allows me to undertake more, I suppose, in-depth analysis. So, my engagement between seedbeds and the interventions has been focused primarily with Versailles.

Jannis Meul 00:55

Okay. And did you have a field visit there in that time period? Or how did you meet?

John Gallagher 01:02

Last summer, I met with them but that was maybe a bit after- trying to get my seedbed timelines-

Julia Gäckle 01:10

We can help you out with that. Seedbed intervention started around May-ish last year, until September.

John Gallagher 01:21

It was July/ August. So it might have been actually in that phase. And then obviously, my researchers visited Versailles in other cities for monitoring. So not me specifically, but sort of the Trinity team as part of the baseline monitoring, a group of people doing that from different institutes. So that would have happened this year in spring and summer, spring into summer.

Jannis Meul 01:50

Okay, and did you have a specific workshop or event?

John Gallagher 01:57

No, it was simply an exercise to carry out monitoring for Work Package 8. So it was a field visit with a small team where there was some engagement with the city representatives to support, but no activity as such, in relation to like a workshop or anything, no.

Jannis Meul 02:22

And could you maybe just share what you did there? Or what was your impression of the site and the team?

John Gallagher 02:30

So I personally didn't go, but the process was that about three or four researchers from the Work Package 8 participated. They engaged with, it depended, one, two, three members of the city. And they visited the green route in each city, spent three days actively assessing the setting. And obviously, they did some engagement in one of the cities with people, but a lot of it was observatory and passive.

Jannis Meul 03:18

Okay, and how did it turn out? Did you experience any obstacles or something?

John Gallagher 03:25

Logistical challenges, I think. The cities were supportive. I think there was some changes to the timelines, trying to get the cities' representatives to be available and obviously the team on our side to be coordinated. Could you repeat that question? I'll make sure I cover everything.

Jannis Meul 03:54

Yes, I think it's fine. Yes. Julia, do you want to say anything?

Julia Gäckle 04:01

Just thumbs up, it's fine.

Jannis Meul 04:03

Okay. So the next question would be if you conduct any interviews with the cultivating cities, or how did you observe?

John Gallagher 04:17

No, I was not participating in any sort of interviews. I had meetings with the respective cities around some activities, around data and understanding who had responsibility for certain items. But no interviews, per se, it was more just in meetings to kind of identify key stakeholders.

Jannis Meul 04:46

Okay, yes, I think we already covered the last question, but maybe we can pick up another part. How or what is your observation of the cities themselves? How they progressed over time, could you say something to that point?

John Gallagher 05:06

It's varied with each city. The people and who was responsible has changed. And sometimes the team was one person, and they don't have the skills or knowledge required to help with specific tasks. So they have to get other people involved and it's not as clear sometimes, between that, that can be done to the skill set is not available in the city for the specific support activity. But that, yeah, it's been dynamic, there's been changes going on on their side. And other priorities for them as well, in many occasions. So yeah, I think it came down to how well or not the cities were resourced. And, you know, the budget subsidies vary quite a lot. So their actual capacity to support was also quite varied. Obviously, different economies and different, might reflect different budgets, but not quite. And so that's one of the challenges and the goals changed as well. So then responsibilities changed as part of that.

Jannis Meul 06:33

Okay, thanks. I think that's it with the official part.

Julia Gäckle 06:39

So I think at this point, we can stop the recording.

Transcript of the Interview with Isobel Fletcher, WP4

Tuesday, Dez 05, 2023 11:30AM • 07:12

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

question, NbS intervention, GoGreenRoutes, Seedbed intervention, Work Package, entrepreneurship, workshop

SPEAKERS

Isobel Fletcher, Jannis Meul, Shreya Utkarsh

Jannis Meul 00:01

Okay, I think it started.

Shreya Utkarsh 00:02

Yes.

Jannis Meul 00:05

Good, thank you. The first question is if you have been in contact with the cultivating cities in between the Seedbed interventions and the NbS interventions.

Isobel Fletcher 00:17

Yes, we would have. Our Work Package is around finance and innovation and nature based entrepreneurship support. We would have held workshops in Maynooth and in Tallinn. I've been out to Lahti to do a business model canvas workshop with them and we've created the concept to innovation and delivery program, which I'm rolling out with Lathi. With regards to the finance and business models, I'm hoping some more cities might come on board between now and the end of the project and all six cities will be doing the entrepreneurship strategy with me between now and the end of the project.

Jannis Meul 01:00

OK, so you've had a field with it, right? Or did you just visit the city itself? Did you see the NbS?

Isobel Fletcher 01:09

No, I haven't seen the NbS. First, because we were working on scaling up beyond the health. We were looking at the next nature based intervention that might happen, but I did see Vormsi park when we were in Tallinn in September, yeah.

Jannis Meul 01:26

Great. I think that covers the second question and I don't know, did you get any impression of the in NbS? At least what you've heard about it?

Isobel Fletcher 01:41

Yeah, I got a great impression of the the NbS in Lahti, even though I didn't visit it in June. I think they were kind of getting ready for launch, so it was quite busy but and they were putting the final touches to it. And then certainly Annie and I would talk to the lady about every six weeks. So they've been kind of keeping me up to date around sort of all the initiatives that are going on in the forests and we've actually kind of talked about and looked at some sort of revenue generation models, maybe that might happen in the forest. You

know, that could contribute towards the maintenance of the forest going forward and things like perhaps some sort of least thing out the infrastructure to sort of yoga instructors are far as by either.

Who can run classes so that way you're looking at generating income that can be used on the upkeep of materials and signage and so on. And so they're open to that.

Looking at that and there wasn't something that considered before so that's what I've been most involved with.

And just hearing good feedback from the others!

But I know even Vormsi Park is going to be finished by the time GoGreenRoutes finished, you know? So what I want to do with them now is try and get them looking at how the based enterprises can really support with the implementation and delivery and long term maintenance of those. So that's my strategy for the controversy season.

Jannis Meul 03:21

Alright, thank you. So you've talked about a workshop or some things you did with the cities in this time period. What was your intention and how did it turn out? Did it meet your expectations?

Isobel Fletcher 03:41

Well, I think we've all had challenges in this project. What I would have loved to have done would be what I did with Lahti and going round of financing business model workshop in each of the six cities, but I had to do it last year and I didn't. This is the challenge but be careful. I write this now and so that didn't give me the same amount of scope as I would have liked. Also I think the other challenge is also because cities have been so involved in actually creating the nature based enterprise and they're very focused on that, thinking a little bit beyond outside the box sometimes without there is beyond their skill set. So they are uncomfortable talking of finance, innovation and entrepreneurship. Also some teams are really, really small. I'm thinking of Sarah in Limerick. There's only her, and she can only do so much, you know?

But you know, I have to say overall, I mean, I think they're very open to us and if they had additional capacities, I think if they'd know really the extent of everything they had to delivering, the project and teams, some of the cities may have alter their approach somewhat.

Jannis Meul 05:07

Okay, that's good to hear. The last question is what your main observations in terms of your relevant work in your Work Package was and how the cities progressed over time.

Isobel Fletcher 05:24

A lot of our work is really ramping up now kind of towards the tail end of the project with the entrepreneurship and the strategy and so on. So it's kind of interesting waiting to see or to see what the potential is. I think there's great potential in some of the cities and just for example, I mean Burgas have been through this process with us before in connecting nature. So they know what's expected of them.

I would expect positive outcomes from them last year.

I think Tallinn, given the fact that they are a city of innovation and entrepreneurs, should be, you know, should be great.

Jannis Meul 06:02

Thanks.

Isobel Fletcher 06:02

And the others then I think it's been probably require a little bit more intensive work with them. But I I think, to

me actually, are quite positive about it as well. I'm kind of looking forward to this work with them and it's also a little bit different from what they've been doing as well.

So certainly on my past experience, cities, once they kind of get going on us, tend to enjoy this because it is different from the intervention side of things.

Jannis Meul 06:34

Okay, thanks. So anything else you want to point out or say or ask?

Isobel Fletcher 06:44

No, I mean not really.

I'm kind of interested to read the storybooks and see what everyone else is saying. I think it'll be great to.

I think we discussed this before, the story books were probably the best tool to capture the impact of GoGreenRoutes. And if it does, that if we manage that within the storybooks, I think it would be a great output really, you know.

Transcript of the Interview with Rossano Schifanelli, WP6

Monday, Dez 04, 2023 01:00PM • 21:55

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

questions, NbS interventions, cultivating cities, VR, implementation, meeting, GoGreenRoutes, Twitter, data, Work Package

SPEAKERS

Rossano Schifanelli, Shreya Utkarsh

Shreya Utkarsh 00:00

Okay, so I hope you've had a quick look at the questions.

I know they are just two questions. The first question is mostly like trying to understand if you've been in contact with the cultivating cities around this. You know, the Seedbed intervention last year to this year's NbS interventions. And if there had been some field visits in this time, so basically from last year until now. If yes, what was your impression of the visit?

Rossano Schifanelli 00:30

Yeah, to be honest from my side, I didn't have much contact with them because the work in our Work Package is not related to the interventions. I think the interaction with the city have been mostly for the VR showcase. Giovanna's team is organizing all the events for showing the showcase around the cultivating city, she got in contact with them in order to organise.

Shreya Utkarsh 01:18

Hmm.

Rossano Schifanelli 01:19

Related to the intervention in the cultivating cities, I think that Work Package 6 is not directly involved in activities. So we didn't have much interaction around it.

Shreya Utkarsh 01:25

Yeah. I mean, actually it would also be good later to add because from the VR showcase, right, because all of the cities, at least the ones that we were at, I also met with Giovanna there. So maybe just to get an impression of the visit based on what is happening on the NbS side in those cities.

Rossano Schifanelli 01:45

Yeah. For that, I think I'm not really prepared. This says that probably we can ask Giovanna and the team. You met them, so they were there. Probably they have a little bit more. I spoke with Giovanna, but just generally, so we spoke about how the the VR showcase went. We talked about the positive and negative, what were the issues and so on, but it wasn't really related to the interventions or the Seedbed interventions let's say, so that's not really what we discussed. So maybe we can also include Giovanna in the conversation.

Shreya Utkarsh 02:28

Yeah, I think that makes really sense.

Actually, I totally agree with you that maybe it's good to bring that up because that's the one link that we

have with this aspect because you did those workshops. You had those moments of VR showcase and then people were interacting.

So it might be interesting to see how was the connection or was there something that the cities were providing and saying about the NbS being implemented? For instance, the Health Forest in Lahti.

Rossano Schifanelli 02:57

Yeah.

Shreya Utkarsh 02:58

So maybe that would be a good idea. Let's keep it like this for now. But maybe, I don't know if you want to take a stab at this last question, which is about main observations in terms of your relevant Work Package work and how the cities have progressed over time. Just a general observation on the NbS implementation so far.

Rossano Schifanelli 03:30

I think I probably need to give you the same answer in the sense that we don't have much. I'm thinking now about the task that we had, but again they weren't really related to the to the NbS solutions implemented. So I don't know exactly how to answer to that.

Shreya Utkarsh 03:59

Maybe one question, I'm sharing my screen quickly, do you see my screen? So this is what we got right, like right now to do the kind of deliverables and mapping of all that and I just actually came across this which I think I had seen before. The emotional map of emotion aware roots in each cultivating city and I see that this is under Work Package 6. Is there something that relates to the NbS as well in the cities or how is that being seen? Just a quick thought on that.

Rossano Schifanelli 04:45

No, I would say, so technically, what is this emotional mapping? Let's say comments or anything people say about relation with nature and what are the emotions that are triggered by being in nature. But the issue is that's part of the Work Package. The task was made at the beginning of our journey, so the first I would say one year enough too for two main reasons. First, because it was planned like this is to build. This maps then using mostly Twitter data to abstract notions not specifically related to the intervention, because the interventions weren't there at that point. So now I think we have two problems. Even if we want it because we spoke with Tadgh, so why we don't do like an analysis of social media data if there is any? Comments or discussions are going on in some cities related to the actual NbS intervention and the issue, and I you know if you follow that a bit, the issue is that the management of the main social media we were using, so Twitter, changed drastically.

Shreya Utkarsh 06:12

Yeah.

Rossano Schifanelli 06:15

And they put the political let's say. So how they manage the API right? So now everything is closed. So even if we want it because we we spoke with tag, so why we don't do like an analysis of social media data if there is any? You have to pay thousands of 100 of hundreds of thousands of dollars to get the academic. It was free and actually GoGreenRoutes add us to the API for academic purposes because we did all the request and everything. We have the data, but to that point the NbS where not there.

Shreya Utkarsh 06:55
Yeah. Okay.

Rossano Schifanelli 06:56
So what we have is the study of this emotional discussion, about emotions. There's a trigger in relation to nature in general, so in the cultivating cities, people going to parks but not specifically to the interventions because they are not there, they weren't there when we did this part and we cannot do now because the source of data now is not available anymore.

Shreya Utkarsh 07:26
Okay.

Rossano Schifanelli 07:31
So the only thing we can do, I think is from now on if we are interested, so basically the cities could give us, me or whatever, who wants to do this, access to their Twitter account. Basically, where they have maybe some discussion or any other social media account today, maybe we can use the same methodology with that data. Even the GoGreenRoutes we try and for example Tadgh gassed me to do analysis of social media for the GoGreenRoutes account in Twitter. But actually I can't access unless I have access to their email. So now everything is blocked.

Shreya Utkarsh 08:25
Ah, wow.

Rossano Schifanelli 08:31
So unless you pay or you are the owner of the account, right? If you are, then of course you can download the data and do it analysis.

Shreya Utkarsh 08:25
But is the GoGreenRoutes account not made by ICLEI or MU?

Rossano Schifanelli 08:42
Yes, but I didn't ask for the email, so it's a bit trickier because to access the Twitter account I need of course the password. But yeah, Tadgh gave me the password, but once you enter there is a security mechanism that says "is this the first time you log in the Twitter account of GoGreenRoutes? You are not the official client."
I send you an email to check with our code or whatever but I don't have access to GoGreenRoutes' email because this is the official email where the Twitter account was registered to. So in order to assess myself, I need both the Twitter account and the email account access or someone that give me the this kind of password that they sent to you to do this registration. It is a bit trickier than before. It could be done if someone, so the owner of the Twitter account, download the data themselves because they have of course the ability to, for example, to collect all the tweets that particular account received. I cannot do the same thing from another account. You can't get the data from someone else easy, unless you pay basically.

Shreya Utkarsh 10:21
Yeah, sorry that it's such a complicated situation at the moment, but in case, I mean if you need it, I don't know if ICLEI, I think like it's from side, but I could imagine because of the communication dissemination Work Package, at least we have access so I can also put you in touch with Adriana if you think that's like an

easy way to find out or get this information. If that works, or ask her if she can download, because I think for the communication dissemination Work Package we anyways have to provide some stats. You know, like some website unique visitors and I don't know, whatever, like these kind of things.

Rossano Schifanelli 11:01
Yeah.

Shreya Utkarsh 11:01
So there might be some correlation to Work Package 9 as well. Let's highlight it to Adriana and say if she has access she can get in touch with you, yeah.

Rossano Schifanelli 11:16
Oh, yes. Okay, so I also sent to Tadgh this thing, but probably he has so many things to do. You cannot manage everything, but if someone can enter the Twitter account, there is an option that says download all the data and it downloads all the tweets. Everything related to that account. So if you do that and you download the data you give me the data, the archive, the data archive. I can do all the analysis you guys want, so the only thing this is related to is the GoGreenRoutes account, right?
So maybe there will be some tweets related to the NbS in different cities.
That could be possible, but if, for example, the city Lathi as a specific account where they discuss about the intervention or yeah, they don't know the city account or whatever. So if they can do the same, that will be even better because it's more specific to a particular city.

Shreya Utkarsh 12:21
That would be also good, yeah.

Rossano Schifanelli 12:26
But for that they need to do it. They need to download the data or give me access to the data, but it's not immediate.

Shreya Utkarsh 12:36
Yeah, yeah, sure. I completely get it. I was actually just trying to like see if there's a way I can also support or at least like through our Work Package 9 colleagues. If there's something we can do, but in general, like I think for the cities, it would make sense. Even if you want to join one of our Work Package 3 meetings, today was one for example, to just ask the cities if they can do that and follow up with them over time. I mean, no, no pressure. Actually our questions were more related to the NbS interventions and how there's a link to other Work Packages. So that's what we were trying to understand like, you know, to see, okay, GoGreenRoutes tries to think about connecting health and Nature through NbS interventions and how has that progressed over time. And we wanted to tell a story. So that's our kind of last act, so to say within the project is to tell the story and we thought that we don't want to tell the story without involving all Work Packages because it doesn't make sense and that's why we started.

Rossano Schifanelli 13:44
That makes sense.

Shreya Utkarsh 13:48
Now, these lightweight, tiny interviews trying to find out: where are the linkages? How can we play that around and put it into the story? And as I said before, we will anyways like whatever snippets we put into the

document of course share with you. I think the plan is to do it by end of February next year. The deliverable is due in June, but end of February we'll just get in touch with you again to say, OK, this is what we were writing from your kind of small talk with us.

Rossano Schifanelli 14:21
Yeah.

Shreya Utkarsh 14:21
And I will also try to set up one with Giovanna to get specific on the VR showcase. I think that would be quite relevant, right?

Rossano Schifanelli 14:29
Yeah, I think this thing and then now that I think, maybe I can add in the text that you sent me because I'm not sure, another thing we did in our Work Package is this library or this digital audio and video library where people can upload Videos or images of the city and in theory, even in Gemma, so from Oppla, I spoke with them a week ago, so the system is in place, everything is working. The point is that nobody yet populated the library, so in theory will be the cities that if they have content related to. Maybe the NbS solutions right to the NbS interventions. So maybe one way to make another link will be if we push the cities to upload videos status audio about the NbS solution in that library. That could be another link.

Shreya Utkarsh 15:45
Yeah, I think Rosano, it's a matter of like actually taking it from Sciebo and putting it into the library because we already, this was our intention anyways, like to do a photo story as well. So the library came out like in Tallinn, right? Like that was the first time we heard about the library, but before that we were already doing the seedbed and NbS collection of photos.

Rossano Schifanelli 16:09
Of course, yeah.

Shreya Utkarsh 16:10
So what we could do, the only link now to make is to put these portals that have been collected on Sciebo on to the media library so that we can reference it in our storybook. You know what I mean?

Rossano Schifanelli 16:25
Yeah.

Shreya Utkarsh 16:26
So it kind of adds like mutually for both of us to say, okay, you did the library, we supported you with the provision of like this data through cities and then we have this kind of interactive element already in place. So that's that would be something to do. I can share with you this keyboard link anyways, just in case I think it's a I don't know if it's a manual thing because the cities have already done it. It's more about now. Should we ask them again for that or should we try to find someone who can take that data from Sciebo and put it on?

Rossano Schifanelli 17:02
Yeah, if we have already material from all the cities, we need just someone that uploads the data.

Shreya Utkarsh 17:08
Exactly, yeah.

Rossano Schifanelli 17:11
So it's yeah, it's the interface. I mean click upload and you put maybe the description.
Shreya Utkarsh 17:08
We also did that on the GoGreenRoutes website Rosano, because when we did the Seedbed interventions, you will see a photo library that we put on the GoGreenRoutes website as well.

Rossano Schifanelli 17:28
Yeah.

Shreya Utkarsh 17:30
So there is also material to pull out information from. So do you have access to Sciebo by the way, if you click on this link?

Rossano Schifanelli 17:47
Uh, I don't think so.

Shreya Utkarsh 18:04
Okay, I can give you the access to it. I'll give you the access to this thing so that you have all the material that you need for that. At least the photos, I mean yeah, because if I show you like I can share screen quickly, just not to take too much time.

Rossano Schifanelli 18:19
Yeah.

Shreya Utkarsh 18:24
But I just want to show what is already available. So you see, we organise all our Work Package 3 things in here and you can see here, we have already, well not from work side because Versailles that was like more from the Seedbed interventions, but for the others there's more from NbS. So let me go back. Pictures from planting event, 18th of October and the cities have already, okay, it's downloading now as a zip file, but cities have already uploaded quite a lot of material. Here you can see, I don't know if I can do anything, but yeah, these are the pictures we have. I don't know how good they are, but this is the construction side. So we have photos from the site and how they are changing it. Yeah, but like anything that you need will all be here. So I'll share the access to Sciebo just in case and also this link will be helpful.

Rossano Schifanelli 19:48
Yeah, okay, sure.

Shreya Utkarsh 19:53
Thanks a lot, thank you so much. And then I'll contact Giovanna separately, just to ask about the VR showcase so that we can also add this, the showcase angle. The emotional mapping and how that has worked or doesn't work because of the kind of Twitter and so on. And then the third thing could be this particular linkage with the media library or the library.

Rossano Schifanelli 20:17

So the last output is already out. Digital placemaking toolkits that is basically a set of suggestions. Let's say if you have to implement a digital placemaking in your city, what you should do, right?

Shreya Utkarsh 20:40

Okay. Do you have a link to it?

Rossano Schifanelli 20:44

Yes, I can share the link later so that there is a deliverable, let's say document. It's not in the form of a web or an online tool, but it's it's a document, let's say. So it's a set of the specifics and the suggestions. I should probably talk with Maria a little bit more if there is anything specific because I don't think specific for the NbS intervention and maybe there is any relational connection that we can make.

Not specifically related to each NbS intervention, but let me ask maybe that could be another small link that we can make.

Shreya Utkarsh 21:44

Thanks a lot Rosano,, for your time and I hope you have a good rest of the day and I'll share with you this keyboard link soon or the access.

Rossano Schifanelli 21:53

Okay, perfect.

Shreya Utkarsh 21:54

Yeah. Perfect.

Take care.

Transcript of the Interview with Giovanna Calogiuri, WP6

Wednesday, Feb 21, 2024 03:30PM

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

questions, NbS interventions, cultivating cities, implementation, GoGreenRoutes

SPEAKERS

Giovanna Calogiuri, Shreya Utkarsh

Shreya Utkarsh

Rossano mentioned that the right person to talk about city engagement and observations around that would be you and we kind of already knew, but we thought let's talk to Rossano as well. So we get a brief overview but also talk to you about it. So from Work Package leads we have interviewed I think 6 or 7, not all Work Package leads, but majorly the ones that are relevant to talk to and then they're just two simple questions and I'll start with the first, which is yeah, very simple. Have you been in contact with the cultivating cities in between the Seedbed intervention, which was 2023? What was the timeline and 2022? And 2023? So this year and have you been? Having field visits in that time period and did you organise any workshops or events?

Giovanna Calogiuri

Yes. I've been in contact, actually. I started a dialogue with the Paris City Partners quite early on in the process. I think it was just to start discussing or informing them about the VR showcase events. Because I realised that not many of them were aware of these particular events happening because they weren't in a different Work Package. So they weren't very visible, so we started a discussion. At least a year before the the planet, beginning of the of the events, and then of course just to have some preliminary. Through their perimeter, preliminary is confirmed interest and etcetera and then. There have been some delays in the implementation due to various reasons. When we were getting closer again to the events, then I contacted again the city partners. The WP3, you know, I participated in some of the meetings over WP3 where in all the cities, City partners were present and but I also contacted them when times were getting closer to the individual events just to discuss details on practical issues like where is it happening? At what time can we meet there? You know very detailed and so. And we in me and our team, of course we have organised three of the showcase events in Tallinn, in Lhati and in Umeå. To cover and want and for the next cities like Limerick, Burgas and Versailles that will are not implemented yet.

Shreya Utkarsh

Okay, so they're not yet implemented, but that's the plan for.

Giovanna Calogiuri

I don't think so. Either it was we had a semi plan for Limerick in October. But because of some technical challenges and that didn't happen and it has been postponed. So Tyke now has the has control of the Tyke, has the equipment as their VR installation and.

Shreya Utkarsh

Actually I saw it at the Lahti people and Planet conference. I think you brought it there as well.

Giovanna Calogiuri
Yeah. Did they manage to set it up?

Shreya Utkarsh
I'm not sure. I think there were people talking, but I didn't go because I was like, ah, I got the full picture in Lahti on reddys.

Giovanna Calogiuri
Yes, you have been there.

Shreya Utkarsh
See more you missed it. It was really interesting. Our other colleague Dyonisia was with me and then we tried on the VR. It was really nice, actually. I mean, a bit cyber sickness, but that's actually part of it. Did you also conduct any interviews or any I know that you did a survey with?

Giovanna Calogiuri
We have conducted the survey and you know we also pilot tested these events in Norway. In September 2021, so it's been a while now so. It was a brief survey. Since this is our public events, people come and go and you know, so we didn't want to overload people with long service. There were some general questions on which were suggested, but again also we use this validated instrument that is very short is just one visual analogue scale and through that we could see that one of our hypothesis, you know, with this virtual experience of nature. An increased sense of connectedness with nature, which is probably something we assume is temporary, not necessarily like change people's perspective or environment and everything. And we could see that. There was a significant increment after from before to after. Doing it these VR experience and the interesting thing was that we divided all the participants in people who had higher levels of nature connectedness before and also at lower levels and we saw that the increase was larger and statistically significant in the group with lower nature connectedness. And this is probably because those who start with higher values, levels of nature connectors, those who already feel connectedness, maybe they don't need too much of a booster. It confirms the potential of this type of experiences. And then, of course, we also had some feedbacks on the fact that most people felt that it was an enjoyable experience, that they may, it made them think about nature in their cities, because the scenario played with that nature and cities and the contrast, and that it was highly immersive, they felt very much like being there and they were fascinated by this virtual nature and that we didn't do interviews, but that they had the possibility to write. Some comments and some of them did use it and we found, among other things, that they did. Participant didn't see the virtual nature as necessary as a simulation of nature. But there's something else. They knew it was fake. It was visibly fake, but it was still a reminder. And it was enjoyable in his own right. First, go into the virtual world. So like you're somewhere and then suddenly you're somewhere else. And then also the feeling on going from the city environment, because the experience starts in this city environment with no greenery around and then they went through a portal and then boom, there was a lot of nature. So this transitions were finding quite impactful on the generate experience.

Shreya Utkarsh
Yeah, definitely. I remember that was quite interesting to walk in the city and then suddenly be in nature be like, oh, whoa, who? OK, now that was quite cool. And then the second question is, I think we are also trying to understand because you know we did the Seedbed interventions where we tried to engage the public, the local task forces and so on. And then we did the Nature-based Solution. So they're they're like 2 steps and we just want to ask you also. Also, in general, like what have been your main observations in terms of the

work you did and how the cities have progressed over time?

Giovanna Calogiuri
Like you're talking about more like how it worked with the engagement of the CS isn't like that.

Shreya Utkarsh
Your work in cities and how did it seem like it was progressing?

Giovanna Calogiuri
Like you say, we have been only one day in each of the cities, so it it we can we can't really talk about the process of engagement and but I can say maybe something about the challenges that we encountered. And and it was interesting because those varied depending on the different events we did. For example, in Norway, we organised events in this and also in Sweden. No Umeå and the the kickoff event. Since we didn't in Norway. The events were organised like the showcase was displayed in. These larger events that were like popular scientific events where citizens are invited to come to the universities or various locations where researchers present their work. So the people who came there were very interested. In C2, but many people came and also in Norway for example, we took the showcase in some middle schools, so the participants there were prepared in act and wanted to try to experience indicate with that purpose. So, I think in those situations, maybe we're more effective in a way to engage participants and they were embedded in a larger context of popular scientific dissemination. In in the other cities, like in Lahti, in Versailles, in Burgas. Then OK in Lhati, you were there. So we were in this shopping mall and I would have expected a lot of interest from participants, but that didn't quite work as we hoped because people assumed we were selling something so they were not prepared. They didn't know what it was about and they were more skeptical. In Tallinn, the day was divided into like one day it was the first part of the day was based on invitations like the people working for the city were invited through e-mail to participate, and so again they came with the purpose of trying. They came because they were curious. They wanted to see what it was about. While the second part of the day we tried to engage people from the street, literally from the street, and again the response was a little mixed so, I think in this respect, my tentative conclusion is that for this type of event, it could be more effective to arrange this type of that showcase in a more structured setting, like popular scientific events or invitation based events. Or, maybe even more days, yes.

Shreya Utkarsh
Or maybe having more days of presenting it as well, because because you know either you because if you present it in a way, then it's everybody is kind of primed to the idea that they're going to a virtual reality showcase. But if you put it there and stay there for, let's say two times and then somebody who passes one or two times is like, oh, maybe I should take a look and then it's.

Giovanna Calogiuri
Like something with the preparing the the target audience anyway, informing them I had what it is about and. Yeah, because without assuming that people would come to anything, they are invited to, you know, they need to know what it is about.

Transcript of the Interview with Stephen Smith, WP7

Monday, Nov 27, 2023 11:50AM • 09:58

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

cities, people, workshops, citizen science, good, engaged, space, monitoring, access, site, Limerick, progress, process, point, green, partners, developing

SPEAKERS

Stephen Smith, Jannis Meul

Jannis Meul 00:01

Okay, yes. So the first question is, if you got in contact with cultivating cities, in between the seeded intervention and the final NbS intervention? And if you say yes, what was your impression of the visit? Did you have a field visit in that time period in general?

Stephen Smith 00:23

Just before I start, is it definitely recording? I don't think I got a recording in progress.

Jannis Meul 00:29

Yes, but not via zoom.

Stephen Smith 00:34

No worries, that's fine. In terms of contact with the cities we've been probably one of the least in touch Work Package I would say, mainly because because our task essentially is not so much working directly with the city partners, but with the connections that we're making through the city partners, so be at university settings. So two of our core tasks are based in universities across the cities, we also have a first task which is around designing a measurement tool, which has been more linked more broadly with experts in the field rather than cities specific experts. We have got some kind of expanded experts of what they've called the people involved with they're essentially people working with nature in their jobs who are not academic researchers, they might be landscape architects, they might be poet artists, etc. We're working with people who have a presence within the cities but probably not so directly with the city partners or municipalities per se. In terms of field visit, I have been on site in Limerick, that was mainly around assisting with the monitoring. But I have been there a couple of times, so I've kind of seen a bit of a progress across the duration of the project. So from where we started out, which was essentially a greenfield site to developing a quite nice pathway that links two sectors of the city. I think you can certainly see the progress, quite significant progress when you visit the site as compared to what was there two to three years ago.

Jannis Meul 02:34

Okay, so do you still remember when you visited Limerick?

Stephen Smith 02:41

It would have been starting summer, probably June of this year. I would have seen the site probably pre go green kicking off but the main visit through the duration of the project was in June 2023.

Jannis Meul 02:59

Great. Did you just saw the site or did you attend an event or something?

Stephen Smith 03:04

We were just on the site for the day trying to get public kind of feedback on what their impressions of the site, we were doing some of the walking interviews, doing some kind of monitoring around how this space was being used by the public. I feel like we got a good sense of maybe public perception of how the site developed and how people felt about the work we had been doing. Not even specifically in the monitoring, per se, but also just in the process of being around the site, we had kind of informal discussions with people working in nearby areas, who were saying about how the process of developing the Greenway had been very helpful for them. They use the Greenway all the time, they were speaking very kind of positively about the impact that it had on their life, both from a practical point of view, but also from improving the quality of their commute to work every day.

Jannis Meul 04:14

Okay, great, thanks. And did you ever organise a workshop or event in that time period in Limerick or in some other cities?

Stephen Smith 04:24

Not yet, we will hopefully be running six workshops through the first kind of quarter of next year. So again, that will link hopefully with the follow up monitoring. So maybe March, April, May, we will be looking at rolling six citizen science workshops across each of the cities. Basically, they'll be centered on upscaling participants around the tools used within GoGreenRoutes. But also, we're currently doing some surveying of people involved in citizen science across the cities. We're going to look at how we could- so that survey is looking at basically facilitators to engaging in citizen science, barriers to it, and what motivates people to become engaged and also stay engaged. So while the central point of the workshop will be around the tools, the monitoring tools used within GoGreenRoutes, we'll also hope to have a component of them, looking at developing kind of those more personal individual elements, looking at how you might mobilize more people to engage in citizen science, how you might promote those motivating factors and facilitators through the work that we're doing. So again, they'll be probably 90 minutes to two hours in duration. Some of them will hopefully be done in person. So we would hope that we will be across at least three of the sites early in 2024.

Jannis Meul 05:56

That sounds good. Do you expect any obstacles within this meetings?

Stephen Smith 06:05

I suppose one of the main obstacles is going to be actually getting people on board because we're not specifically, as I said, it will not specifically be through the city partners, it will be through the university. So we're looking for basically student samples to attend those workshops. That will be supported by online materials as well, we're hoping that if we can have the online materials as kind of a taster for what the workshops might be able to give you, we might be able to bring people in, grab people who are in that space already kind of, who have an interest in engaging in citizen science and promoting their activity and promoting their likelihood to engage in more activity but also remain engaged, rather than it being something that's more sporadic or once off participation, we're hoping that we can extend someone's participation across a longer span.

Jannis Meul 07:04

Thank you. And the last question is, what are your main observations in terms of your relevant Work Package work and how the cities progressed over time? I don't know if you could say anything regarding

that point.

Stephen Smith 07:19

Again, I can only speak more broadly as I said, our presence within the cities hasn't been massive, but what I can say is seeing where people have come from and where we're at now, again, the progresses are at different paces, which is completely fine. Everybody's going to get to their end goal anyway. But some of the progress made in some of the cities is really really impressive. I can speak more specifically to Limerick. about seeing first time the impact of how it's improved the quality of life for people in the in the area. So like, when we're surveying people, and trying to get a sense of what the greenway means to them, they're talking about a place to connect, a place to be active, a place to unwind. So it's kind of giving, its probably a lot of positive elements to an urban space that maybe weren't there before. It's also very convenient for people, which is something that maybe doesn't come to mind when you talk about urban nature. But we've actually made something there that's very useful for the people of Limerick, that they're using it in a very practical way, particularly because the site itself connects two schools, one boy school, one girl school, as far as I'm aware. It may be that people in the morning are taking one child to the school and then using the greenway to complete the process. So I think there's a convenience element that I really came to the fore when you were talking to people in the area. That maybe wasn't something that I was expecting from the kind of greening up the site, but it's good to see that that's kind of come out of it as well, that was maybe one of those ones that wasn't as expected on my behalf when I was there. Look, I can speak to what I'm seeing in the meetings, you can see that there's been a lot of brilliant work done in Tallinn, in Lahti, in Umeå, it's just the pacing of each of the cities is probably different. So some cities appear to be further along the line, but everyone will get to a point where they've made a significant impact in their urban space.

Jannis Meul 09:54

That was a good ending. Thank you very much.

Transcript of the Interview with Evelise Pereira Barboza, WP8

Thursday, Feb 29, 2024 04:30PM

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

questions, NbS interventions, cultivating cities, implementation, GoGreenRoutes

SPEAKERS

Evelise Pereira Barboza, Shreya Utkarsh

Shreya Utkarsh

Are you in contact with cultivating cities? Have you made a field visit? What was your impression of the visit in terms of the Seedbed intervention?

Evelise Pereira Barboza

Yes, we have been in contact at the beginning to understand how COVID was impacting the dynamics. In terms of the viability of the project, we were quite in contact with Julia through WP3, but not directly with cities. After that, we have been in contact with the cities to understand what was their context before the intervention, to facilitate our understanding and our baseline monitoring, considering the knowledge and different sources of information they had in cities.

After that, as part of the baseline monitoring strategy, we prepared a tool for a qualitative approach together with partners from Tallinn (ie, city council and university). Then, we provided online training with the city partners and others. Then we visited the six cities for baseline monitoring. We could apply the monitoring with the support of the city partners in all cities and the active participation of the city partners in most of them (except Limerick due to limited resources). The baseline was performed in April, May and June last year, depending on the city. It was three days in each city. Finally, we are planning to go to your meeting again to see if it is feasible. The score card is kind of a tool that will be proposed as a GGR method for future projects. The idea is to be used in other cities in terms of policies, as a baseline before defining different types of interventions. It focuses on the well-being perspective, with a connection to NbS. I have been in person in Versailles, Tallinn and Umeå, and each one is very different. The idea is to regenerate existing spaces. It was curious and interesting because, in these three cities, we had partners with us also working on the monitoring. As we were there for 3 days, monitoring from early morning to the evening, we had a lot of insights on the uses of the spaces. The feedback was quite the same in terms of outcome. We were discussing it with you and with David, but in the end David did not come. For the interviews, we did it also with members of the local taskforce. Two or three people attending were part of the local taskforce. We focused on individual interviews rather than discussions. The timeline, resources and ethics procedures varied quite a lot in each city. Hence, we decided to apply the qualitative tool only in Tallinn as a pilot to reach ethical approval. It was quite good as well.

Shreya Utkarsh

Here is my second question: did you organise workshops and events?

Evelise Pereira Barboza

We did not organised an event itself. The idea was to see how people use the space without any influence of events happening in the space. If you have an event happening, 100 people come and then you don't have a regular picture of how the space is being used day-by-day.

Shreya Utkarsh

What are your main observations on the progress? What about a citizens' perspective?

Evelise Pereira Barboza

In Umeå and Tallinn, both cities had an identification in the area publicizing the intervention in the area. In Umeå, everybody knows that it is happening. It is partially due to the Seedbed intervention. People know and talk about it. They also talk about the construction period, which was big. Anxiety about the results, etc. In Versailles and Tallinn, something was funny. In Versailles, the idea was around basketball, which is quite used by young adults and teenagers. They are against changing the basketball court. They are from the neighbourhood. It is an important space for them. This will be a conflict that will be generated in the future... And this conflict can even be positive, but we will see it later. We can see from the WP8 perspective (during the post-intervention monitoring period) how the use will change. In Tallinn, there is a drainage part, connecting to the forest and inside it, there are many people who go there to drink alcohol and to use drugs. They are also actors of the city. Where do they do their activities now? It could lead to a displacement. We talked to the people drinking alcohol. The area as it is has a social function for this group as well.

Transcript of the Interview with Adriana Duarte, WP9

Tuesday, Dez 05, 2023 10:00AM • 11:59

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

communication, questions, GoGreenRoutes, NbS interventions, cultivating cities, Work Package, Tallinn, Versailles, workshop, community

SPEAKERS

Adriana Duarte, Shreya Utkarsh, Jannis Meul

Shreya Utkarsh 00:02

You go ahead.

Adriana Duarte 00:03

You've got this, Jannis. I trust you.

Jannis Meul 00:07

Then I just need to share the screen with the questions I think, or just anybody of you have their questions opened right now?

Adriana Duarte 00:25

Oh yeah, I have. Well, wait, let me just put them into the chat, because I mean, I have it in a doc, but it would be weird to share it on the screen.

Jannis Meul 00:35

Okay, thanks.

Adriana Duarte 00:37

Yes, let's go back into the calendar, because I've got it open, but let's just make it accessible for all. Wait, did it go?

Jannis Meul 00:56

Yes, thanks.

Adriana Duarte 00:57

There you go.

Jannis Meul 00:59

So, thanks for joining. The first question would be if you have been in contact with the cultivating cities in between the Seedbed interventions and the final and NbS intervention. If so, you could maybe just name the date when you did.

Adriana Duarte 01:18

That's a great question. So most of my interaction with the cities has been digital. But last fall in Tallinn, in September, about mid September, I had the pleasure to go in person to see various sites they had in the city. And of course, most Vormsi park. I could really tell right off the bat that Tallinn had a really great priority

for the health and well-being of its citizens and that they were already doing a lot of great work in the city. But that GoGreenRoutes has really enabled even more to be done there. And of course, also enabled the local citizens to be more empowered to take part in these interactions, there was of course really noticeable because when we arrived to Vormsi park, we were even greeted by the local task force. I believe some of them were just there in their regular scheduled time with their kids playing in the park. Of course, they had really great signage there. So it was just really great to see in real life the impact that GoGreenRoutes was having on the ground.

Jannis Meul 02:18

Oh, great! You already answered the question I had for you.

Adriana Duarte 02:22

Oh, sorry.

Jannis Meul 02:23

No, that's fine. It's excellent. And did you visit another city or just Tallinn?

Adriana Duarte 02:30

So I had visited Versailles. I believe at the time I didn't make it out to the site. Visit that would have showed me that, I can't remember how to say it, some square park. I had been in the city, so I had seen some of the greenery around, but not the actual implementation side itself.

Jannis Meul 02:46

Okay, thanks. So what was your impression of the visit? Did you organise a workshop there, or did you had an event there?

Shreya Utkarsh 03:01

Sorry, I was just gonna ask like from the Work Package 9 perspective, Adriana, it would be interesting to hear that in case of your communication plans and whatever has been going on, also a little bit in that direction. So we can like tie Work Package 3 with Work Package 9 as well and see if there are any linkages there.

Adriana Duarte 03:23

Umm, like so the question is. Yes, of course.

Shreya Utkarsh 03:25

So even in terms of digital engagement with cities on specific things such as local communication plans or what you've actually gathered from that direction, not specifically on the NbS intervention, because that lies in Work Package 3, but like for us it would be interesting to hear what's going on in the Work Packages and that's why we set up these interviews to understand what are the linkages for instance with other Work Packages.

Adriana Duarte 03:54

So in the local communication plans, we of course work directly with the city to see the unique aspects of setting up communication channels on the ground. Different cities have different priorities and audiences, of course. Umeå had a pretty strong website already.

For example, some cities had a lot of Local taskforceinvolvement on the ground. I mean each place was a

bit different, but essentially it was a similar process. They all had a template they went through to see what their needs were in terms of materials, for example Limerick is pretty on the ground making signages for their sites.

And yeah, I mean the process really there was quite flawless.

The cities were very engaged, and I mean you could tell they already had pretty good communication with residents before, but it was good to see how GoGreenRoutes could help enable them to get more in touch with the local communities.

And also to assess for themselves. Like what has been working for us? What isn't?

Also just more importantly to figure out what the challenges are to getting in touch with the people in their community. Because sometimes it would come up as they were assessing these things with us. Yep.

Jannis Meul 05:14

Okay! Shreya, would you go on? Because I don't know which questions I should ask and which I should not ask.

Shreya Utkarsh 05:22

No, no, no. It's just to add because I thought like when you talk about the workshops and this question, what was there I think from our side, what indication and what interest was basically not if you've been at this site specifically seeing what Work Package 3 has been doing.

But in general, to connect the work within Work Package 9 through your, let's say, policy briefs or 360 toolkit and so on, you know, like these different activities, to see and that's why we ask these questions.

For instance, did you organise a workshop event in that time period, not specific to the NbS, but specific to your task? So I think it's important to like think from your Work Package perspective and not necessarily the NbS. You know what I mean?

Jannis Meul 06:10

Ah, okay. But then it's easier if you would continue because I don't really know about the different Work Packages and what they are actually doing.

Shreya Utkarsh 06:14

Yeah, no worries. That's why we let the Work Package leads come in and speak on behalf of their Work Packages. I just wanted to mention the hat that you wear, Adriana, right now is your Work Package 9 and not seeing it from a Work Package 3 perspective.

Jannis Meul 06:43

Then I got it.

Adriana Duarte 06:44

I mean, I think in the next questions I have more Work Package linked answers, but the first one kind of confused me.

Shreya Utkarsh 06:46

Okay, no worries. I think the next question is in terms of like have you been organizing any workshops or events in that time period, any digital or on site that has been working within Work Package 9?

Adriana Duarte 07:04

So the most recent workshop that WP9 organised specifically for the consortium was a workshop on

effective communication and sharing results about research, and this also came up because the academic task force had also requested interest in learning these kinds of skills. So we did this workshop where we had short exercises.

People would work together to pretend they were making a communication campaign on a specific output, and it was pretty interesting because there were a lot of different levels of skill in it. People were pretty engaged. What I found pretty interesting was the academics themselves at first really struggled because they were quite close to the work they had been really deeply involved, but the activity kind of helped break people out of their shell and look at things from new angles and even right after the workshop, there were partners that got really excited and got on social media and were sharing with people. It also mostly just enabled people to have a confidence in communicating about the project. That was really great to see.

Shreya Utkarsh 08:14
Thank you.

Adriana Duarte 08:16
Work Package 9 is also been involved with the GID panel as well, so we weren't necessarily like the lead organisers of that, but being in part of the GID panel has been really important for the work of GoGreenRoutes to bring that inclusivity angle and make sure that how we're communicating is inclusive and has everyone involved, yeah.

Shreya Utkarsh 08:37
Thank you so much. So then the next question is like, I mean you answered that if yes, what was your intention, how it turned out? Did you experience any obstacles?
I think that you have already answered, then the other one is: Did you conduct any interviews with the cultivating cities and during the NbS and Seedbed intervention duration?

Adriana Duarte 09:01
Yeah. So in at the Tallinn Consortium, which was a very productive meeting, we had conducted some interviews. Well, a few with city leaders and just other members of the consortium and the theme of that was about the 360 health toolkit concept and just trying to draw linkages between how their work is connected to empowering citizens for health, like the broader concept of health, we didn't want the questions to be too targeted because we wanted to make sure people brought in their own experiences. So we still need to edit those, of course, bring them out to- we want to bring them out when the 360 toolkit is ready and we would actually also like to bring in some more people and maybe do virtual interviews, but it was interesting to see a lot of the people got a bit shy at first. They weren't really sure how the linkages were, but once you got people talking, it was very clear to see how GoGreenRoutes like truly makes a difference for bringing communities to better community outcomes, health outcomes.
Yeah, just this holistic way that nature can really help people's lives be better.

Shreya Utkarsh 10:10
And one question about that. Did you have any cultivating cities that you talked to?

Adriana Duarte 10:17
Yes, Limerick and Umeå and I think we had also there maybe three or four interviews. There was also the virtual reality showcase team, I think we had an interview. It was quite good. I just need to get the footage and maybe get a transcript of that to see what it was about.
But yeah, we wanted a mix of things, but of course it was very important to hear from the cities and I would

also like to contact some more cities about it.

Shreya Utkarsh 10:45
Thank you so much.
I think the last question is basically main observations in terms of where the cities are in terms of progress over time from your Work Package perspective.

Adriana Duarte 11:03
Yes, I mean, there's a lot of work that's already been done in the cities and we're at a good place to really start sharing a lot of these outputs to the greater community. But the really key thing is just going to be demonstrating like a cohesive narrative about the impact that this has had.
Of course, we made the parks, we made the infrastructure, but just like really showing people how powerful it's been, the work that's happened and also how it's enabled people to have skills to do more of this, of course, like the upscaling aspect. People have been a part of this process and they've seen how it's going on and they can spread to more cities. I think we've really enabled people to have that capacity. The Work Package and this role is really to just share that with people in a way that's understandable and like accessible to the most number of people possible.

Shreya Utkarsh 11:55
Thank you, I think that's it for the interview part so I will also stop the recording here.

Transcript of the Interview with Mariia Chebotareva, WP10

Wednesday, Dec 20, 2023 12:00PM • 10:06

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

city partners, Tallinn, monitoring, visited, ethics committee, researchers, baseline, contact, question, research, area, cultivating, interviews, experience, WP, impression, seedbed, results

SPEAKERS

Mariia Chebotareva, Jannis Meul, Julia Gäckle

Julia Gäckle 00:00

Cool, thanks Jannis

Mariia Chebotareva 00:06

I can also see the questions here on my screen. Jannis sent me some beforehand. And I always think it's good to have them in advance, just to be prepared to know what we're going to talk. So I had an impression already beforehand.

Jannis Meul 00:23

So the first question is not going to be a surprise to you. Have you been in contact with the cultivating cities in between the Seedbed interventions and the final NbS intervention? That would be the first question.

Mariia Chebotareva 00:42

We have been in contact with, in particular with our city partners in Tallinn, when we were organizing baseline data monitoring. We keep in touch, we always keep this ball rolling. We, for example, in January last year, I think we made the presentation for our city partners, what are the results? Because okay, I'm representing Work Package 10, which is responsible for ethics. But also, we're doing research in Tallinn University. Researchers with the team were Bianca and Helen. They presented to our city partners the results of our research, so that they know what would be of interest, or we tried to help with the results to develop the NbS solutions for them. And hopefully, it was it was useful. And we had, I think it was a couple of our online sessions where we discussd the results. We sent them also all our materials. Yeah, and then we also got in touch before baseline monitoring. It was in May, if I'm not mistaken. That's short late, I think.

Jannis Meul 02:20

Alright. So you've just been in contact with Tallin or also with other cities?

Mariia Chebotareva 02:28

With other cities, it is more due to the ethics need. But I think it's not related to cities as much. In fact, we are cooperating more with researchers rather than with city partners, what we learned also during the process, or our package process work, that city partners are not so much I wouldn't say aware of these ethical issues but it's not their concern, because in their everyday activities in their practice, they do not have to deal with these issues. They are not researchers, so they are not feeling this part is crucial, this ethical considerations are important. So it's usually so that some colleagues and researchers come to Work Package 10. For example, we have contact with Work Package five, Tina is currently writing to me, she wrote to me and we are trying to help her with the ethics application in Tallinn. So the crucial part is whenever somebody wants to do research in Tallinn, they contact me, they contact Helen. Or if anybody wants to do

research somewhere else and they just need to get an advice how to start the process. For example, in Versailles, in Limerick, in Lahti, they come to us for some guidelines, for example. That's the contract, but with the city partners from other cultivating cities, I wouldn't say we were close cooperating.

Jannis Meul 04:27

Okay, thanks. And did you actually have a field visit in that time period in Tallinn or did you presented it digitally?

Mariia Chebotareva 04:37

So we visited our field, like the pilot area, you mean? Yes. That was during this baseline monitoring in in the end of May I see. Then we visited and we were involved in data collection. And also with the walking interviews, and with the 360 H tool, this is also this qualitative tool for sociological study with a study for visitors. Ben and WP 8, Evelise, are leading this this part of work. So we were in the pilot area as well.

Jannis Meul 05:27

And could you maybe tell me something about your impression of the visit?

Mariia Chebotareva 05:33

You mean in the sense of how the pilot area has changed, how it has developed or in which sense? I think the area slowly becomes more improved. Also in Tallinn Vormsi was a little bit dirty, I would say. There was some trash, I was even making this kind of presentation during our consortium meeting in Tallinn, said the area has improved. Thanks to the project and our city partners. So I see visually this improvement in terms of how nice the area starts looking.

Jannis Meul 06:23

Okay, thanks. And so you told me about this baseline monitoring kind of event? What was your intention with that? And how did it turn out? Did you experience any obstacles?

Mariia Chebotareva 06:39

Well, no, there were not so many obstacles. There was a big team involved from Tallinn side, it was me, Bianca, and also other colleagues from Tallinn University. But we had our partners who visited us and they were doing also observations with other sociological tools. And also environmental data monitoring. Tadgh was there, Evelise was there, Ben was there. So we didn't actually experience any obstacles. There was only one issue, which was not in our hands. Because when they came and we started this monitoring, there was some fire in the city and they couldn't start collecting environmental data, it would spoil everything. So we postpone and then we started the next day, that was the only thing but otherwise, we could collect quite a nice sample for walking interviews and for Ben's activity, for Ben's research.

Jannis Meul 07:51

Okay, thanks. I think that also covered the following question about the interviews with the cultivating cities. So our last question is, what are your main observations in terms of your relevant Work Package work? And how the cities progressed over time?

Mariia Chebotareva 08:12

Yeah. I was thinking a little bit about this question. It's quite a wide question. So it's my main conclusion, I would say we clearly need in all the cities partners who have kind of experience with ethics applications, with ethics committees, and especially those partners who have ethics committees, to keep the hand of

our city partners on spot, right, it's very hard to assist if we do not have research partners, like universities, or research institutions who have ethics committees there, and they would assist our city partners there on spot. You can give advices, you can give internal support, but still, without committee availability and experience in the ethical sense, it's quite hard to to keep up the level. All right. I think-

Jannis Meul 09:39
Could you repeat that?

Mariia Chebotareva 09:40
I think it's the main observation from my side.

Jannis Meul 09:43
Yes, okay. That's a nice conclusion. Thank you very much. Julia, do you want to add anything?

Julia Gäckle 09:50
No, I think not at this part where the recording is running. We can discuss maybe afterwards a couple of questions and can also add comments later to the text.

Jannis Meul 10:00
Okay, then I will stop the recording.

Transcript of the dialogue between ICLEI and RWTH

Monday, April 26, 2024, 11:00AM • 18:03

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

cities, NbS interventions, storybook, project, local, talk, Focus Group Discussions, partners, task forces, story, activities, creation, approach, elements

SPEAKERS

Shreya Utkarsh, Julia Gäckle, Jannis Meul

Jannis Meul 00:00

We find ourselves in one of Freiburg's eco quarters, Vauban, the sustainable district. And nowadays, nearly 5000 people are living here. It's nearly car free. It's low energy, social integrating, you can find a lot of playgrounds around here. It has its own kindergarten, and also community urban gardens. Vauban illustrates the development of a sustainable urban district adopting a co-creative planning process and social ecological values. You can find citizen engagement and community values that generate a sense of civic responsibility and shared vision for the district. You can find also green roofs and green facades, and most of the rainwater is collected on site, so it's relieving the receiving water course and protects the downstream residents and recharges the groundwater. Vauban tells an excellent story about upscaling sustainability, and it also contains various co-created NbS. Now, that's why we are here, we want to talk about our project, GoGreenRoutes. I'm here with my two colleagues, Julia from RWTH and Shreya from ICLEI. I have some questions for you! What is the main focus and the overall aim of the storybook for the project? Can you explain where the storybook is positioned in the project?

Shreya Utkarsh 01:42

After having worked for quite a while on the project, we have to tell a collective narrative to bring something together, to be able to speak about where the cities had positioned themselves, where the different co-creative elements had come in. So of course, the overall aim is to be able to somehow see the different narratives that have played around in the city, with regards to what was needed in the city the most in terms of the Nature-based Solutions, what were the expectations from the citizens as well. So we wanted to tell the story. And that's why we thought about positioning it in a way that it creates some kind of connection to the different Work Packages as well that have been playing a role. But in general, the center and the focus is on the cities, specifically.

Julia Gäckle 02:38

Especially focused on our NbS interventions, which were implemented in the cities already: four cities now and two more to come. Basically, this is the main focus. But of course, we're talking also in the storybook about procedures beforehand. Maybe to also mention here, it was really important that we created this report or the storybook itself in a really graphical way, so that it's possible to reach a broad audience, that we can have a really easy accessible document in the end, or even an ebook. How did we do that? We used a mixed medium approach here. What does it mean? We used different mediums to explain the story in this matter and we used, for example, pictures of all the activities and included a lot of sketches, hand drawings, then we created a really airy layouted document, you'll see it once it's done, and also, what was really important, to summarize everything in a good way and in a really easy, quick way to understand.

Jannis Meul 04:04

That's a good transition for my second question, that would be: are all activities from GoGreenRoutes comprehensively represented in the storybook?

Julia Gäckle 04:16

No, not all activities from GoGreenRoutes as one project, it's, of course, presenting all activities done by Work Package three, and especially done together with the Cultivating city partners. But also, as Shreya mentioned earlier, we tried to include other Work Package's activities in the storybook. More to that later, but our focus was to present first of all, NbS intervention itself. And this we did by really extensive Focus Group Discussions, which we covered in this storybook, in summarizing Focus Group Discussions in a short way again, and adding to that we tried to explain the NbS interventions, timelines, a lot of pictures and so on. Going back to the project here, of course, we couldn't stand out as a singular element in this story. We also summarized a bit to see the interventions which were done beforehand. Going back to methods we used, and, of course, explaining co-creative approaches, which we mostly started right at the beginning of the project, in 2020. That was a really intensive desk research appropriation. And so everything comes together in a way leading to our focus of presenting our NbS Interventions.

Shreya Utkarsh 06:08

Just to add also from, as I said, like you're not able to create this comprehensive story in one storybook. And of course, you have to see where the center lies. And that's where we thought that we know that the other Work Packages have also done some work in the cities and have been doing a lot of interviews or walking interviews, for instance, they did, and they did a lot of monitoring activities, and so on. So we did talk to the different Work Packages in interviews and tried to find out how they were engaging with the cities. And what were the kind of main elements that were captured from the learnings from being there in the cities as well.

Julia Gäckle 06:54

Maybe just adding to that, we also try to give kind of a sneak peek to their work by adding QR codes to our report, where they lead the reader to more information on their work in the project and also to reports and other activities. So this is a way of communicating furthermore, what happens in the project, just in a short way.

Jannis Meul 07:25

And in what do you see the innovative elements of the NbS interventions in this project?

Julia Gäckle 07:32

Good question. The innovative element, for sure, I can talk here a bit about the theoretic approach, we followed on developing the NbS interventions. And here, we can say, for Work Package three's work is that we try to develop the NbS interventions in a more social way. What does it mean? It's our aim to lay the focus more on citizens and their wishes and their needs, and to give them a really strong voice to communicate, their wishes and desires. Maybe to frame it in an easy way, we even did co-created the co-creation process in a way so to say, because we talked about everything right from the beginning with the Cultivating City partners and developed everything together. What is important here to mention is that, I think it's a bit about changing the role of partners. The role they used to step into when they work on such a project as a city partner, as for myself as a landscape architect, or as a different planner, and just stepping a bit into the background from which profession they come and just being open-minded to be a really strong part in the co-creation process. I think that was kind of innovative in our work. In this way, we gathered a lot

of local knowledge, which was maybe not possible to reach out to with a normal approach that they used to work with.

Shreya Utkarsh 09:20

I mean, just to add as well some examples, because we've been to the cities, right? So we saw in the case of Umeå, for example, that they were looking at kind of the NbS intervention and also the Seedbed interventions from a very new eye, so to say. They were thinking about gender inclusion, diversity, which is very central to our project as well. So they were not only involving the usual suspects that you would see that come to these kinds of meetings and gatherings, but they were going forward and inviting the kids and the school children to come to this space. That's the kind of audience that will be using that space as well. So it's important that they feel connected to that space, they can understand this nature connectedness, they can draw inspiration from being in that area and feel safe as well, to go to the schools on their own and actually have some, some inspiration on the way as well to see nature around them. And another example is, of course, Lahti. You know, we've written in the Focus Group Discussion as well, in the chapters, there's a lot about the Health Forest that Lahti has developed. And it's a concept that is not only about this particular Health Forest, but there are also local forests that will act as the Health Forest. So it's about creating one space, but thinking about how it can be upscaled in other spaces as well. So it's really innovative in that sense, because it's not only about seeing one intervention as it is, but actually kind of inspiring other areas to also take them into account. And what they are planning as well is that they will use this Health Forest to invite vulnerable groups such as immigrants who might not be able to speak the language to come and see the area and to understand the importance of this connection.

Jannis Meul 11:20

Thanks for the insights! My last question would be, if you target the overall process from task 3.1 to task 3.5 in the Cultivating Cities, what were obstacles you might have seen or potentials and chances, and also specific strengths?

Julia Gäckle 11:44

Maybe I can start right at the beginning with our endeavor to do co-creation with municipalities, which was not normal, maybe for some of them, some of them already were used a bit to participation processes and so on. But as I mentioned earlier, it was a really intense co-creative process we had in mind here for GoGreenRoutes in Work Package three. This was at the beginning of course an obstacle. I wouldn't call it a problem, but a barrier kind of to overcome, to really involve them and make clear to them how we can work together on that in a really co-creative manner. But really quick and in an immediate way they adapted to that, and also us as partners, as I mentioned earlier, stepped a bit back from our professional roles as planners and tried to be as open-minded as possible. For example, we did an urban morphology analysis with the city partners. I think most of them never did such an analysis procedure where they need to create maps, they need to really dive into a specific approach here to analyze their local target areas. It's more like a planner/architect thing to do, so to say. Through webinars and workshops, we brought this in context, we explained a lot, we tried to figure out how we can guide them best and also not to be too dominant, and to decide on where we need to go with our local target area. In the end, I think we worked really well together and they also had a lot of fun with that, I got the feeling.

Shreya Utkarsh 13:52

One thing to add to that is, you know, when we started, we were thinking about how to use this term Nature-based Solutions in different local contexts. Because it's not the same for each country. They don't use the term Nature-based Solutions in France, for example. So it was really interesting for us to also think not from

this European perspective, always, you know, from the Commission language, but also to let them think about how it would fit them the best, even though we kept the principles to also safeguard, so that it's not greenwashing in the end. It should be a Nature-based Solution. So we made sure that they understood what is behind that, but let them use how they wanted to present it to the local public. And I think it's important to mention the political landscape as well here because, of course, with the with the Commission thinking about the term Nature-based Solution, and co-creation been so central. The use of local task forces that we had was really important as well, because most of the projects would think about that in a later stage, when they want to do some kind of, let's say engagement, just prior to the NbS being implemented, but we worked with them from the start. So I think more of an obstacle was the time and the connections that we had to make with the local authorities, with the people. In Burgas, for example, they said that they will continue doing it over time, because this was new for them. So a lot has actually changed because of this. And it has been really a helpful process.

Julia Gäckle 15:34

And also, what comes to my mind is, when we try to reflect on all the work we did and how we tried to communicate and come to one level with different partners in the cities especially, for example, with the Seedbed interventions we presented them Art-based Methods like Photovoice, you can explain it later. But these are really new ways of trying to analyze a landscape or a city space, and in that we saw really big potential to furthermore understand how they feel about the cities. And even for them, it was a new channel to themselves to discover what they really want for their cities. Also here to mention the local task forces we created, put together from different stakeholders, maybe didn't knew before what they wanted to have for their cities in a way. We gave them sort of a way to communicate with Art-based Methods. I think this is really important to mention at this point, because normally, this is not an approach you usually see in this kind of co-creative NbS creation in cities. I mean, at least not so often.

Shreya Utkarsh 16:50

Especially also the the communication tracker, for example that we used, right? What we did is that we asked them to always track, we were actually talking to the local task forces to make sure that they're doing it over time. And any kind of critical turning points are captured in writing, so that they can really see there what the local task forces actually want. That was really a good process in that way.

Julia Gäckle 17:16

And overall, I mean, it leads again to what you mentioned earlier in the policy maker topic: for example, the leave no one behind principle, because overall, it led to this guaranteeing that no one is left behind, in a way. Maybe we didn't succeed fully. But in a way, it was really helpful to approach these principles to really try to implement also relevant GID parameters in implementing the NbS.

Jannis Meul 17:57

Thanks a lot for your

Julia Gäckle 18:01

Thanks Jannis!

