Approaching urban agriculture as a social innovation
Guidelines for the development and implementation of an action plan

AgriGo4Cities
Urban agriculture for changing cities: governance models for better institutional capacity and social inclusion

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Guidelines for the development and implementation of an action plan

Editors: Kaja Cunk, Matevž Straus, Răzvan Zamfira

Authors: Mirna Buić, Kaja Cunk, Jani Kozina, Peter Kumer, Anja Kozlan, Florian Lintzmeyer, Arianna Luccarelli, Saša Poljak Istenič, Claudia Schwarz, Matevž Straus, Máté Szalók, Lucia Vačoková, Mateja Šmid Hribar, Drago Kladnik, Jernej Tiran, Răzvan Zamfira

Design and DTP: Răzvan Zamfira

Koper, 2017
Association for Culture and Education PiNA

Interreg
Danube Transnational Programme
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Bridging the Gaps

Agricultural production is not "the antithesis of the city", but an integral urban activity without which cities could not exist. Urban agriculture represents a practice that stretches back to the earliest cities. It gained a new momentum during the period of industrialisation when millions of people left their farms in the countryside in order to find their fortune in the city. In those times, concepts such as garden cities and allotment gardens emerged, providing city dwellers with opportunities to produce food themselves. Nowadays, grassroots as well as institution-led urban agricultural projects are mushrooming in cities world-wide, reshaping urban landscapes, experimenting with alternatives to the capitalist organisation of urban life and co-creating public spaces. Urban agriculture has become of great interest in the search for innovative solutions to address the recent social, economic, and environmental challenges of cities.

Urban agriculture is a broad term which describes food cultivation and animal husbandry on urban and peri-urban land. It is characterised by heterogeneity of involved actors, dimensions, backgrounds and objectives on the one hand, and by multifunctional external effects for the urban economy, society, and environments on the other hand. **During the last few decades, new forms of gardening and farming practices using high levels of social innovation, environmental friendly lifestyles and mixed bottom-up or top-down approaches have been emerging;** for example, community supported agriculture, community composting and gardening, guerrilla gardening and squat farming, urban food strategies, support of small entrepreneurs, local food chains, including market gardens and farmers' markets, the Slow Food initiative, including a revival of local food production and farm shops and markets. All these examples represent clear evidence of the contribution of urban agriculture to sustainable urban development. Urban agriculture can tackle issues such as urban poverty alleviation and promotes social inclusion, urban food security and nutrition, and urban environmental challenges.

Urban agriculture has become an important topic in recent years as there is an increasing convergence in motivations to do urban agriculture related to food security and the development of livelihoods, particularly for the poor and disadvantaged segments of society. However, for urban agriculture to be sustainable as a livelihood and resilience strategy

requires decision-support tools that allow planners and participants alike to jointly develop strategies and assess potential leverage points within urban food value chains. T**he lack of inclusion of urban gardens and farms in politics and planning makes them the most endangered green space category.** Urban agriculture is also seldom used as a cross-sectoral field of action by local stakeholders. It is crucial that planners start recognising the importance of urban agriculture in the rich mix of activities that characterise modern cities.

Recently, there has been **a significant disconnect between those who drive and organize urban agriculture and those who regulate and manage it.** Without any formal support, urban agriculture has mostly been a bottom-up process, typically initiated by individuals or non-governmental organisations rather than by governments and urban planners. Indeed, while attitudes towards urban agriculture have been shifting among planners over the past few years, the mainstreaming of a policy consensus to facilitate urban agriculture remains lacking, as does knowledge at the planning level to support it. Given the important role that urban agriculture can play from a livelihoods and social cohesion perspective, the question is **how to support and mainstream urban agriculture as a strategy that could be used not only as reaction in times of crises but also as a livelihood strategy that can enhance the resilience and sustainability of urban areas and populations.** More specifically, what types of systemic planning tools are available to integrate planners, practitioners, and civil society in a process of joint learning that can guide the development of urban agriculture more effectively?

The solution brought to the fore by this book addresses **urban agriculture as a process of social innovation in order integrate participatory mechanisms into decision-making processes, increase the social inclusion of vulnerable and marginalised groups, and stimulate the liveability of cities.** More specifically, the publication offers guidelines for the development and implementation of action. By following the steps in the next chapters, it is possible to improve the capacities of public administrators to involve relevant stakeholders and civil society into governance and public participation through the means of urban agriculture.

dr. Jani Kozina

5 good reasons for urban agriculture

1. It brings people together to work on common projects.
2. It provides food (and income) for those who need it.
3. It significantly reduces fossil fuel consumption.
4. It facilitates education around sustainable local agriculture and food systems.
5. It provides nutritious food for deprived communities.

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STADTACKER URBAN COMMUNITY GARDEN
Munich, Germany
2011 - ongoing

Actors involved: Ackermannbogen e.V.
In collaboration with: Citizens, neighborhood association, citizen project group, municipal administration
More info: ackermannbogen-ev.de/projektgruppen/stadtacker

On one of the green areas in the housing project Ackermannbogen northwest of the Munich downtown area a neighborhood association has initiated and maintains the community garden Stadtacker.

The Stadtacker is an urban community garden in the residential quarter Ackermannbogen. A neighborhood association – Ackermannbogen e.V. – is legally responsible for the 1,000 sqm garden and 40 volunteers are jointly working in the garden. It took six years for the initiative – from 2011 to 2017 – to finally receive a gardening plot in the area. In the meantime, it was actively promoting and keeping alive the idea among the population through decentralized, small-scale and mobile gardening events in the neighborhood.

The garden is intended to be a true community garden, meaning that there are no single plots allocated to individuals, but the entire gardening groups maintains the garden together, subdivided into thematically specialized groups responsible for e.g. vegetables, herbs, compost, berries, bees/flowers.

The municipality of Munich supported the infrastructure of the garden (fencing, groundwater well, storage facility, top soil, fruit trees) through an urban development measure. In the framework of the National Initiative for Climate Protection (NKI), the Stadtacker receives public funding from the German Federal Environmental Ministry (BMUB).

Lessons learned

• It can take a long time for initiatives from idea to implementation. In the meantime, small events and activities keep the engagement up.
• Even though volunteer engagement is elementary, there is also a need for professional coordination.
• Community gardening works, theft and free-riders are not a significant problem.

5 good reasons for urban agriculture

BRIDGING DIVIDES

People of all social groups, ages and ethnicities can understand the language of gardening: planting, growing, watering, caring for the soil and harvesting are tasks every gardener has to do. Doing these things in a community or neighbourhood garden almost automatically causes people to exchange their knowledge. They can work as a sort of 'future lab' and contribute to creating the fresh minds which are needed to create urban communities that cross economic, educational and cultural divides.

SAVE OR GROW EXTRA CASH

The diet of people with low income, especially those in urban environments, is usually unhealthy because fresh fruit and vegetables are more expensive than industrially produced food. Poorer people often live in flats without gardens, and so urban gardening projects offer them the opportunity to grow healthy fresh food. Whether or not it is possible to sell garden produce depends on the national legal framework, but direct sales of small amounts of fresh vegetables, fruit and honey is often allowed or at least tolerated. Small-scale gardeners could team up and improve their economic and social position through cooperatives to process food, and it is here that the help of administrators and NGOs is most appreciated.

REDUCING ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT

The ecological footprint is the only concept that allows us to measure what natural resources we have and how much of them we use. By localising production, urban gardens (and urban farms) reduce the significant amount of fossil fuel consumed by transporting, packaging and selling food. Urban agriculture helps consumers reduce their 'foodprint' by giving them with the opportunity to purchase food that was growth within their community. Agriculture in cities also provides more green space. Greenery adds aesthetic appeal, reduces runoff from precipitation, provides restful spaces for community use, counters the heat-island effect and fixing carbon through photosynthesis.

EDUCATION AND LEARNING

Urban agriculture addresses another inherent issue of our current culture —disconnection from the source of our food. By involving children and adults alike in education around sustainable local agriculture, farmers increase the health of future food systems. Effective garden learning involves an experiential approach that links action and understanding, a strong element of social learning while transferring theory into practice, and a dimension of personal and life skills development that gives learners control over their futures. This is another way in which urban gardens contribute to social, economic and ecological development, civil engagement, intergenerational learning and the transformation of passive ´consumer´ identities into active ´producer´ identities.

FRESH FOOD FOR ALL

An increasing proportion of urban populations suffers from malnutrition and a variety of other diet-related health issues. Bringing nutritious food to local communities has many direct health benefits, including reducing the risk of harmful conditions like heart disease, obesity and diabetes. Involving individuals in tending the garden itself provides an opportunity for exercise and a deeper connection to agriculture. Small-scale local markets provide an opportunity for farmers to raise a greater number of unique varieties. These farms preserve biodiversity by cultivating heirloom varieties or those with lower shelf-stability. The proximity and connectedness of the market makes fresh, nutritious produce available to communities that have never previously had access to it.

5 good reasons for the inclusion of marginalised social groups

1. It increases equality.
2. It produces an active civil society.
3. It has positive effects for the whole of society.
4. It promotes innovation and investment in sustainable development.
5. It brings economic growth.

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LEGISLATIVE THEATRE OF KOPER
Koper, Slovenia
March 2014 – February 2016

Initiator: Assiociation for Culture and Education PiNA
In collaboration with: The Centre for the Legal Protection of Human Rights Piran; non-governmental organizations of vulnerable groups (The Academic Cultural-Artistic Society KOLO; Croatian Cultural-Artistic Educational And Sports Association "Istra" Piran, the Albanian Cultural Association of Slovenian Istra); vulnerable group representatives; the University of Stavanger, Norway
More info: enakost.pina.si

After Slovenia gained independence, the members of local national groups from former Yugoslavia were faced with a situation of unregulated systemic status. Since they are not recognised as official minorities they are faced with challenges which hinder their proactive participation in decision-making processes in the Slovenian society and their general participation to civil life. PiNA used legislative theatre method (by Augusto Boal), followed by a brainstorm and discussion of policies or laws that could help solve some of the problems that came up in the performance.

Through the theatrical exercises typical for the forum theatre, a newly-formed group of vulnerable social groups discovered the problems that nationality and religious affiliations bring into their everyday life. Together they have created a short play that ends in a crisis, which the audience is then invited to help solve by taking the place of one of the characters. The play was performed seven times for the locals, each time followed by a discussion under the supervision of the legal team from The Centre for the Legal Protection of Human Rights Piran. The summarized suggestions were voted on and later drafted into laws or policies suggestions for the Slovenian Coastal municipalities.

Lessons learned

• Active inclusion of vulnerable groups in their problem solving is key element of their employment and success of the actions.
• Non-governmental organizations can be a mediator between the needs of the citizens and administrative procedures of the municipalities.
• Municipalities can use participatory approaches when solving issues of the vulnerable groups.

5 good reasons for inclusion of marginalised social groups

INCREASED EQUALITY

Equality is unquestionably valuable. It is not just a great idea in terms of human dignity and social cohesion, but it has definite practical benefits. Ensuring equality contributes to the democratisation of society; it can facilitate better governance. Making people who were once excluded feel part of society prevents social conflict and reduces crime, hate and violence.

PRODUCTION OF
AN ACTIVE CIVIL SOCIETY

Increasing access to social services is an important aspect of inclusion because these services enable people to function in, contribute to, and feel they are an important member of society. Therefore, municipalities, stakeholders and policy makers should keep in mind that social inclusion increases the agency and the capacity of diverse (groups of) people, empowering them to become responsible and participatory members of a community.

POSITIVE EFFECTS FOR ALL

Social inclusion does not just benefit vulnerable/marginalised groups but has a huge effect on society as a whole. Other members of the community become open to diversity and new ideas and, as a result, they gain new skills and experiences which help their own self-development.

PROMOTION OF INNOVATION

Inclusive work environments improve innovation and creativity. Employees from varied backgrounds bring different perspectives on local, regional or (trans)national markets, ideas and solutions that result in new products and services. Meanwhile, national and local governments should promote social enterprises that are models of innovative and creative sustainable development or diversity on a larger scale, such as creative cities.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

One of the most harmful consequences of social exclusion is limited access to employment. People who want to work but cannot find a job are an unused human resource and reduce economic performance. Consequently, providing equal opportunities for vulnerable and marginalised groups can channel previously unused members of the workforce into the economic production. This also decreases the demand for financial support from the municipality or from the state, reduces unemployment and increases the income of people living in poverty.

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5 good reasons for participatory planning

1. It enhance trust between decision-makers and communities.
2. It empowers local communities (including vulnerable groups).
3. It indicates the legitimacy, transparency and inclusivity of decision-making.
4. It ensures wide support and shared responsibility for decisions.
5. It embodies participatory democracy.

© www.nova-gorica.si

PARTICIPATIVE BUDGETING OF NOVA GORICA
Nova Gorica, Slovenia
May 2017 – ongoing

Initiator: city councilors of the City Municipality of Nova Gorica
In collaboration with: citizens (local community), city administration, city commission, local community leaders
More info: www.nova-gorica.si/proracun

The Slovenian municipality of Nova Gorica has introduced a participatory budget: a system of allocating part of the municipality's budget for a use to be determined jointly with citizens.

In the process of participatory budgeting, local citizens themselves determine which investments in the community are the most urgent and help build a higher quality of life. In this way, the funded projects respond concretely to the needs of the community. Every citizen has the right to participate and co-decide which projects should go ahead in his or her neighbourhood. Citizens have also the right to suggest projects which aim to improve the standard of living.

A participatory budget is not currently required by Slovenian legislation. The municipality of Nova Gorica decided to institute it in cooperation with civil society, following examples of some other Slovenian municipalities and, in 2018, earmarked 250,000 euros for participatory budgeting. The model allows direct decision-making on the implementation of queued projects in urban areas. Citizens establish a priority list by voting on the proposed projects. Those projects which receive the most votes are included in the municipal budget. The money is then equally distributed between districts based on population size and density, number of settlements and distance from the city centre.

Lessons learned

• Participatory budgeting reduces corruption and increases transparency.
• Local communities are equally represented in decision-making, although motivating them to participate (i.e. to come to a local meeting and speak up) is a demanding task.
• Local communities feel decision-makers listen to and value them, which, in the long run, increases each side's confidence in the competence of the other and strengthens active citizenship (including voting, decision-making, cooperation in public issues etc.).

# 5 good reasons for participatory planning

EASIER ANALYSIS

The organisers of a project are responsible for analysing and evaluating the process and its results. But participatory planning means they also need input from those who participated in the activities and the stakeholders involved. An evaluation which comes from the people themselves provides an increased understanding of the impact of actions, and such inputs make it easier to make adjustments where necessary. Their final opinion maximises the legitimacy of the process.

EMPOWERED LOCAL COMMUNITIES

When planning is participatory, a community is given an opportunity to influence not only the decision-making process, but also the goals and outcomes of a project. Such a process allows different interest and social groups – including marginal and vulnerable ones – to voice their needs and wishes. It empowers a community (as well as its groups and members) to make decisions affecting the public good and to take responsibility for the sustainability of the outcomes.
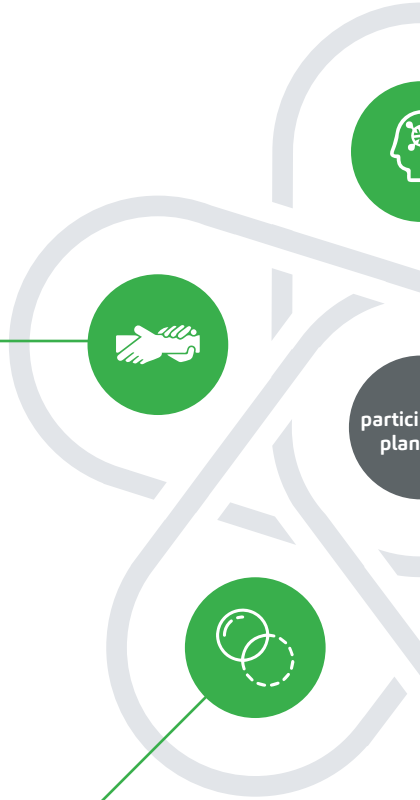
particip
plan

LEGITIMACY, TRANSPARENCY AND INCLUSIVITY

Broader participation and the engagement of key stakeholders leads to greater public transparency and increases the legitimacy of the decision-making process. The implementation of policies tends to be more effective when new programmes and projects are oriented towards the inclusion of multiple stakeholders and reflect their needs and views. Also, and importantly, public advocates have greater legitimacy when decisions that are taken are based on discussion with an entire community.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES

Throughout a planning process, ideas, information and expectations are shared and decisions are made about different options. In this context, a consensus can be reached because knowledge is shared, built and challenged. An approach that brings the different faces of a community together to plan a project will ultimately consider aspects from the administrative, economic, social and ecological realms, and the whole community will be responsible for obtaining the best possible outcome.

PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY

An inclusive planning process embodies elements of 'participatory democracy'. It creates new models of co-decision-making and co-governance in the local community. This also benefits authorities, as citizens become keener to get involved in governance and understand the processes behind policy implementation.

Social innovation in the world of agriculture, participation and inclusion

Understanding participatory urban agriculture as a social innovation creates distinct expectations of the endeavour. Urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) is not just the setting up of a neighbourhood garden in an urban environment, but a complete concept that must meet social needs, create social relationships and form new collaborations.

Urban participatory agriculture should thus emerge from a deep understanding of the social groups involved, the institutions that shape their neighbourhood, and the space in which they live. The innovative element stems from the solutions that tackle the challenges and bridge the existing gaps in provision of social services and market function in different and unique ways. As an innovative approach, it does not have an end or an ideal form – it is ever-evolving, always keeping in mind the needs of its users and, thus, each UPA should be different and unique.

Moreover, UPA is a process, not a project. It should not end with the creation of a garden, but should continuously evolve according to needs, while its effects and impact are monitored. If it is successful, then there is the opportunity to scale – and increase the number of users upon whom it has an impact. And so a vision of systemic change can emerge: a long-term vision that goes beyond growing vegetables, but changes in social structures for the benefit of marginalised social groups.

DIAGNOSIS

Understanding is the key. Diagnosis may be split into three steps: analysing the social circumstances of target groups, understanding relationships between the stakeholders (NGOs, public institutions, civic initiatives and business) involved in their neighbourhoods and communities, and exploring the spatial dimensions of the area set aside for urban agriculture.

IDEATION

Ideation is the spark of innovation, but it never happens in a second. It demands an iterative process of revising and refining the concept. It starts with envisioning the desired 'feel' (mood board), organising different ideas (mind maps, problem trees), evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis), creatively expanding on the selected idea (lotus blossom), assessing features (MoSCoW, Harris profile), envisioning the experience (storyboard) and, finally, summarising the concept (social business model canvas).

PROTOTYPE

And now, the test. This could start with feedback on the concept (proof-of-concept testing) and, after it has been refined, move into prototyping, remaining aware of those aspects that need to be changed quickly (rapid prototyping) and those that will evolve gradually and incrementally (slow prototyping).

MONITOR

How do we define success? We could compare the progress made with the goals (scoreboard) or with other comparable examples (benchmarking), but we can also measure improvements in users' life satisfaction (measuring subjective well-being) or ask them about activities (inhabitants' opinion survey). The extent of participatory democracy can be evaluated (formal and informal governance structures), and the monetary value of an UPA defined (direct market valuation, SROI, stated and revealed preference methods).

SCALE

Why stop when you are succeeding? Spreading social-sector innovations in order to achieve greater impact should be the next step. After initial assessment of the opportunity and definition of an innovation, an effective way of scaling should be determined and next steps envisioned.

SYSTEMIC CHANGE

But why not think bigger? Could our UPA facilitate change that would pervade different elements and truly change the system? Indeed it could – by introducing a new type of social service, redefining ownership, developing new funding models or facilitating the circular economy. UPA should not end with urban gardens, but with a change in the position of its users within the social system.

The social innovation spiral

A successful urban participatory garden is a social innovation – it tackles unmet needs of marginalised groups in an innovative way. To design it as such, it should follow the six steps of social innovation from good diagnosis of the situation, through a creative process of ideation and iterative prototyping to continuous monitoring. Once successful, the UPA could be scaled to new locations and aim higher, changing the system.

Ideation
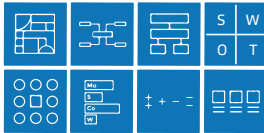
Prototype

Monitor

Systemic change

Diagnosis

Scale

Diagnosis:
Understanding everything

In social innovation, as in medicine, prescription before diagnosis is malpractice. Therefore –understand. Understand people, the institutions involved, the space, the system. Understand everything.

Diagnosis is the initial, yet decisive, step as it is the foundation for all further phases. Thus, it is worth spending time on a good analysis, carrying out additional interviews, asking more questions or returning to the target groups again and again.

Explore how to approach diagnosis in the fold-out. >

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TABOR PARK
Ljubljana, Slovenia
2010 – 2014

Initiator: ProstoRož, Zavod Bunker
In collaboration with: Inštitut za politike prostora (IPOP)
More info: prostoroz.org/portfolio/items/park-tabor/

The Tabor Park project was built on the basis of a study prepared by the Bunker Institute, with the help of IPOP, which aimed to determine a strategy to revitalise the then-abandoned Tabor Park. The key problem was that local residents had avoided the degraded park. Following renewal of basic infrastructure and changes in the traffic regime, the initiators encouraged the local population to use the park and integrate it into their lives. This was done through a series of events that were held regularly between May and September during the project. Today, after the end of the project, the Tabor Park is still a lively public space, where local residents and visitors meet for self-organised events.

Lessons learned

The research identified key problems in the neighbourhood and the park, and also provided insight into the wishes and needs of local inhabitants and institutions. Renovation of the basic infrastructure and interventions in the traffic regime enabled the initiators to organise a variety of events that attracted the local population, encouraging them to participate and use the park. As a result of the conclusions of the research, regular events were organised for each week between May and September throughout the duration of the project. Thus, over four years, with the cooperation of one hundred and fifty organisations and individuals, 950 events took place. Among them were regular fairs, marketplaces, garage sales, seed exchanges and an outdoor cinema. Work campaigns were organised to clean the park and so encourage residents to take care of the area and continue their activities after the formal close of the project. The project served as a positive example of how to integrate local initiatives and develop them into sustainable strategies, and is still an inspiration and model for other similar initiatives in Slovenia.

Diagnosis:
Understanding everything

Understanding is the key. There are a variety of approaches to analysis, and each of them has its strengths and weaknesses. Exploring a broad range of possible approaches might be confusing, but it is necessary because each case is unique and needs a specific set of diagnostic techniques. The more the merrier.

From statistical analyses of demographic data, surveys and interviews, through more creative photo elicitation, a day in the life of … exercises and photo safaris, to stakeholder matrices and participatory mapping. By combining methods, the gaps can be bridged, while, by employing diverse methods, the understanding of the circumstances becomes less and less grainy and increasingly rich and deep.

Furthermore, analyses do not have to be done solely by trained professionals. On the contrary, analysis can be a group and social activity, engaging people of all ages and skills. If done with passion, it can be fun and lead to bonding. Although it is natural for human minds to jump to them, quick conclusions are not wanted in this phase. Curiosity is a virtue, leading to new insights and hidden information.

In the case of participatory urban agriculture, we propose looking at three areas: analysing the social circumstances of our target groups, understanding relationships between stakeholders in their neighbourhoods and communities (NGOs, public institutions, civic initiatives and business), and exploring the spatial dimensions of the area to be used for urban gardening.

Social analysis starts rather broadly, with the general (statistical analysis, surveys), and gradually gets more intimate and detailed (participant observation, interviews). Here, different techniques (photo elicitation, resource flow, a day in the life of …, cultural probes, photo safaris, guided tours) can be used to deeply and truly understand the social circumstances and lifestyles of our target groups. Only by intimately understanding their everyday challenges, fears, interests and aspirations, can we create fictional, generalised representations (personae) that help us connect with our target groups.

Understanding stakeholders and the relationships between them (stakeholder map) is crucial for the success of a UPA. Every project, UPAs included, is part of a larger network of activities and services, run by diverse, sometimes opposing, stakeholders (stakeholder matrix). These create the institutional environment in which actors need to cooperate and support each other (focus groups), in order to ensure the success of a UPA.

Space is never just a backdrop. It is an integral part of any activity and needs to be explored and analysed at both the city and neighbourhood level (participatory mapping, spatial asset mapping, mental maps).

Statistic Analysis

Quantitative data can be helpful both in deciding who will be your qualitative research subjects and as a method of enriching the results of your fieldwork.

WHEN: When you want to obtain a data driven overview of the problem you wish to tackle.

WHY: Data can be a very useful way to frame general information regarding a specific problem.

OUTPUT: A set of trends that can help you decide why to interview and what types of questions to ask.

Survey

A survey or questionnaire, is a primary research tool. In most cases it is designed for statistical analysis.

WHEN: When there is a need to validate information quantitatively.

WHY: To obtain an aggregation of answers regarding a specific topic.

OUTPUT: Statistical information regarding the topic you are researching.

Participant Observation

Participant observation can help you gain a close and intimate familiarity with a given group of individuals and their practices through involvement with people in their cultural environment. This method can also help you refine your interview guide by adding fieldwork observations.

WHEN: In the initial phases of field work.

WHY: It can help you understand how your quantitative data look on the ground. It can also help you enhance your interview guide with more contextual questions.

OUTPUT: A series of notes or a research journal.

1-on-1 Interviews

A one-on-one interview is a conversation between a researcher and a participant in a face-to-face situation.

WHEN: When there is a need for information from users.

WHY: Facilitates quick and early discovery; best for personal information; works well in combination with other methods.

OUTPUT: Notes and recordings of the interviews.

A day in the life of

A study in which the designer observes the participant in the location and context of their usual activities, observing and recording events to understand the activities from the participant's point of view.

WHEN: When you need to understand how your subjects go about their day and how your proposal could fit their routines.

WHY: Following a subject allows you to see how they behave in the real world, which can be different from how they say they behave.

OUTPUT: Storyboard(s) of users' routines that allow you to understand how your design can fit in them.

Cultural probes

Cultural probes, or design probes are a window into the life of the user. Probes or information gathering packages are handed out to participants, who are asked to track themselves for a certain period.

WHEN: When you need details about the user's life and context.

WHY: Unobtrusive manner of collecting information for the design process.

OUTPUT: Collection of data from the user's life and context.

Guided tours

Having research subject give you a guided tour of their home, workplace, or daily activities will help reveal not just the physical details of the person's life, but the routines and habits that animate it.

WHEN: When you want to obtain a deeper understanding of what people define as important aspects of their lives, which they want others to see.

WHY: -

OUTPUT: A deeper understanding of a person's daily patterns, their values, routines and habits.

Persona development

A Persona is an archetypical character that is used to represent a group of possible users. They share common goals, attitudes and behaviours towards a particular product or service.

WHEN: After doing research on the user and when a summary of insights is needed.

WHY: Personas allow for the team to speak about the needs of users and not about opinions on how users might behave.

OUTPUT: Summary of insights on user types, represented by fictional people.

Stakeholder Matrix

The stakeholder matrix is a simple, but very effective tool for analysing stakeholders. Stakeholders are analysed against their interest (x axis) and influence (y axis), followed by spliting the matrix into four diagonal bands (Key players, Active consultation, Maintain interest, Keep informed).

WHEN: After you have identified the stakeholders, but still need to define priorities for engaging them.

WHY: Not all stakeholders require an equal approach. Defining how to approach them is essential for efficient and successful management of large partnerships.

OUTPUT: A 9-square matrix with four diagonal bands defining the required approach toward stakeholders.

Stakeholder Map

A stakeholder map is used to document key stakeholders. The map is a brief summary of their relationships and can therefore be used as reference for the design team.

WHEN: At the beginning of a project to understand relationships between the different parties.

WHY: Understanding relationships is an important aspect of (service) design.

OUTPUT: A summarized map of all the stakeholders and their relationships with each other.

Participatory Mapping

A good spatial data collection method which allows users of the space to share their knowledge and expertise regarding potentia spaces, empty spaces or the absence of public services in an area.

WHEN: When you want to enrich your knowledge about an area by involving inhabitants.

WHY: To discover hidden spatial opportunities for change.

OUTPUT: A spatial map of spaces and needs.

Mind Maps

Participants map a physical environment by what they remember based on their knowledge of a space.

WHEN: When you want to understand how people perceive their physical environment.

WHY: To understand a user's spatial references.

OUTPUT: An overlap between a collection of individual mind maps as well as an analysis of what each individual map says about the daily routines of an inhabitant.

Ideation:
Sparking innovation

I deation is the spark of innovation, but it never happens in a second. It demands an iterative process of revising and refining the concept. It starts with envisioning the desired 'feel' (mood board), organising different ideas (mind maps, problem trees), evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis), creatively expanding on the selected idea (lotus blossom), assessing features (MoSCoW, Harris profile), envisioning the experience of the idea (storyboard) and, finally, summarising the concept (social business model canvas).

Explore some methods in the fold-out. >

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Initiator: ProstoRož, V. I. B. E., MHP, Saprabolt!
More info: prostoroz.org/portfolio/items/savsko-naselje/

In 2013, the initiators implemented a pilot project the main purposes of which were to build a strong local community that would be able to articulate its wishes and needs, and found the city authorities to respond to them. The inhabitants were directly involved in the revitalisation and renovation of their neighbourhoods, and NGOs emerged as a link between them and the city's institutions. Today, the area has been is renewed, and social potential and self-initiative have been strengthened.

Lessons learned

Given that such projects do not develop according to a pre-defined scheme, but according to the needs and aspirations of local residents who, through the project, become more coordinated and develop more coherent social structures, the key long-term aim is that the neighbourhood community becomes an equal and competent interlocutor in its dealings with the local authorities. A neighbourhood community connected in this manner can also, to a certain extent, help to take care of its own public spaces.

Ideation:
Sparking innovation

Cartoons have it all wrong. Ideas do not just pop up in our minds. There is no switch to turn on the light bulb. Ideation is the most creative, yet demanding and time-intensive, phase of a project. It is the result of continuous thinking, brainstorming, expanding, selecting and refining.

Ideation is the bridge between problems and solutions. It is based on the analysis and outcomes of the diagnosis phase, and leads towards prototyping. During ideation, different possible ideas, scenarios and approaches are considered and evaluated. One needs to look at the emotional, organisational, experiential, economic, social, cultural and spatial aspects of the proposed ideas - only by understanding the breath of proposed idea, can one imagine its consequences. Variety in ideas and options is cherished as each uncovers unexpected areas of innovation and opens up new perspectives. This is why, to obtain the best results, cooperation with diverse stakeholders and consideration of a variety of points of view are fundamental.

The core activity of the ideation phase is sharing ideas, knowledge and expectations, so that decisions can be made from the various options. The process includes an analysis of what could be achieved according to the constraints pointed out by different people, as well as an attempt to find the optimum solutions for (or ways around) such constraints.

Moodboard

A Moodboard is a collage of images, words and/or samples of materials. It helps you form an emotional image and overall 'feel' of the intended design.

WHEN: When planning is needed.

WHY: Summarizes the findings of your diagnostic stage.

OUTPUT: A moodboard conveying a feeling of your design (in terms of general emotion, aesthetics, experience, etc.).

Mind Map

A mind map is a diagram used to represent a number of ideas or things. Mind maps are methods for analyzing information and relationships.

WHEN: Whenever the project needs to organize information.

WHY: Organize information visually.

OUTPUT: A visual representation of ideas that clearly displays all the gatherd information and how it interrelates.

Problem Tree

A problem tree is a tool to clarify the hierarchy of problems addressed by the team within a design project; it represents high level problems and related sublevel problems.

WHEN: When you want to structure problems hierarchically.

WHY: To have an overview of the problems faced.

OUTPUT: An overview of which problems are at the core of a project, and which are concrete.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis (alternatively SWOT matrix) is an acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. It is a very versatyle and structured planning method that evaluates those four elements of an organization, project or business venture.

WHEN: After you have structured your diagnostic data.

WHY: It allows you to structure all the diagnostic data in a single diagram.

OUTPUT: An index of your findings.

Lotus Blossom

The lotus blossom method is a creativity exercise. It is a framework for idea generation, starting from one central theme. Eight conceptual themes grow out from the main theme and each of them are used as a central theme to generate 8 more themes. Explore!

WHEN: When there is a need to generate a large number of ideas quickly.

WHY: Using the first 8 ideas as a basis can help to expand the ideas further.

OUTPUT: A map of different ways to explore an idea.

MoSCoW

MoSCoW is a method that allows the team to prioritize the different features that they will work on. The features are then categorized into "Must have", "Should have", "Could have", or "Would like but will not get".

WHEN: When you want to filter through a large number of ideas.

WHY: Allows to make a clear hierarchy of what needs to be implemented, and what is not feasible to include within the current constraints.

OUTPUT: A work plan that can be distributed among the design team.

Harris profile

A Harris profile is a way of visualizing the strengths and weaknesses of different design concepts.

WHEN: After an initial filtering of design concepts and before moving to prototyping.

WHY: You will need to rate your concepts to decide which ones to develop further.

OUTPUT: A short list of concepts to develop, and a clear overview of which concepts to the requirements.

Storyboard

A Storyboard is a narrative tool derived from cinema. It's a form of prototyping which communicates each step of an activity, experience, interaction or event.

WHEN: After diagnosis, and when you want to see how users experience your idea.

WHY: Storyboards allow you to display an entire story and get feedback on specific stages of an experience.

OUTPUT: The storyline of an event, interaction, activity or experience that can be presented.

Future workshop

A future workshop is a method that aims to have stakeholders design their desired future, avoiding constraints imposed by experts or organizations.

WHEN:　　When ideas need to be developed outside of the design team.

WHY:　　This method allows discovering what an ideal shared future looks like.

OUTPUT:　Ideas generated by users that show what their ideal solution would look like.

Planning Groups

A planning group can help the development of a shared agenda with different identified stakeholders as well as a long-term advisory board for all the stages of the project development.

WHEN:　　When you want to bring your stakeholders closer to the decision making process.

WHY:　　In order to develop a service with its stakeholders and users in mind, throughout the process.

OUTPUT:　Ideas for implementing the project.

Prototype:
Test, test, test

And now, the test. This could start with feedback on the concept (proof-of-concept testing) and, after it has been refined, move into prototyping, remaining aware of those aspects that need to be changed quickly (rapid prototyping) and those that will evolve gradually and incrementally (slow prototyping).

Explore prototyping in more detail in the fold-out. >

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BEYOND THE CONTRUCTION SITE
Ljubljana, Slovenia
August 2010 – ongoing

Initiator: KUD Obrat (Stefan Doepner, Urška Jurman, Polonca Lovšin, Apolonija Šušteršič)
In collaboration with: z Nino Vidič Ivančič
More info: onkrajgradbisca.wordpress.com

This project, launched as part of the Young Lions Festival, was initially known as the Garden by the Beam and is today called Beyond the Construction Site. It offered the population of the Tabor quarter an urban garden on the then-degraded land of a long-closed construction site. KUD Obrat implemented various initiatives and organised open workshops in response to a public call, thus encouraging and empowering the local population to co-manage, regulate and use public spaces. Initially conceived as a temporary intervention, Beyond the Construction Site has become a model example of the potential of temporary interventions in degraded urban areas.

Lessons learned

The cultural festival paved the way by allowing the necessary land-use permits to be obtained – initially only for the duration of the festival, but the landowner (the municipality of Ljubljana) has since given the initiators a temporary free-use contract that is renewed annually. The programme and content is still coordinated by local residents working in cooperation with KUD Obrat. About one hundred people take care of about forty gardens and participate in various public and community events, which are governed by the shared rules of the Beyond the Construction Site. The rules vary from year to year depending on the findings. They determine the approach, duties and rights of users. Beyond the Construction Site has become a community space with clearly defined rules of use, one that started as an intervention as part of the cultural festival. KUD Obrat provides a unique link between the owner of the land and the users of the gardens. The organisational structure, programme and contents have allowed inhabitants to again make use of formerly neglected local land.

Prototype:
Test, test, test

The word prototype drives from the Greek prototypon, prototypos or protosy and typos, meaning primitive form, original, first impression. So … what do primitive forms have to do with participatory urban agriculture? Well … a lot.

The rationale behind prototyping is that no plan is perfect from the beginning; thus, it is better, cheaper and easier to implement an idea early in the process and gradually improve the service – based on user feedback – until you find the optimal solution. Instead of planning the final format of an urban garden, implementing it and hoping it works, you should consider several smaller and gradual steps before that. Prototyping allows you to gather feedback from users while you are still planning and designing your UPA. The prototypes will always include some compromises and might look chaotic, unfinished, but that is the beauty of them. A UPA cannot be enforced from the offices and heads of service designers, but can be gradually built with users through an iterative process.

Prototyping should prevent you from investing a lot of time, energy and resources in devising a plan, implementing a costly solution, and only later realising you missed one important point. Through prototyping, users have a greater say and may point to elements you could otherwise miss or that would not be given enough attention. Consequently, despite the project being more chaotic and always 'under construction', prototyping should result in higher user satisfaction.

However, prototyping is not just laissez-faire experimentation. It should be properly documented and moderated. You should take notes about why and how something was done differently to the plan, and always have in mind the goal of moving through several steps towards a conclusion. Strong leadership is – despite the very participatory process – of the utmost importance.

Proof of concept testing

Proof of concept testing is a method for testing the idea. It usually involves asking members of the target audience to assess, rate and/or refine the concept before practical prototyping in the real world.

WHEN: After ideation, when you want to check the idea with relevant stakeholders.

WHY: It is a useful way to recieve feedback and adjust the idea before practical testing.

OUTPUT: A reflection on the idea.

Rapid Prototyping

Rapid prototyping is an approach to prototyping that is based on fast moves and numerous small changes of the idea. Fast-paced development ensures quick learning and finding the optimum.

WHEN: As soon as possible. Stop talking, start doing.

WHY: A useful approach to development when time and resources are limited.

OUTPUT: Continuous and never-ending search for the optimum.

Slow Prototyping

Slow prototyping is - contrary to rapid prototyping - based on slow, incremental, carefully considered and formed changes. Slow-paced development ensures creation of connections and deep understanding.

WHEN: All the time, yet slowly.

WHY: A useful approach to development when deep connections and understanding are required.

OUTPUT: Continuous and never-ending search for the optimum.

Monitor:
What is success?

How do we define success? We could compare the progress made with the goals (scoreboard) or with other comparable examples (benchmarking), but we can also measure improvements in users' life satisfaction (measuring subjective well-being) or ask them about activities (inhabitants' opinion survey). The extent of participatory democracy can be evaluated (formal and informal governance structures), and the monetary value of an UPA defined (direct market valuation, SROI, stated and revealed preference methods).

Check out some approaches to monitoring and measuring the success of social activities in the fold-out. >

© Suzana Kajba

Community gardens on campus
Ljubljana, Slovenia
2015 – ongoing

Initiator: students
More info: dovoljzavse.si/praksa/studentski-skupnostni-vrtovi/ prostorisodelovanja.si/
studentski-vrtovi/

This community gardens project was created on the initiative of students from student dormitories in Ljubljana. In cooperation with the administration, students managed to acquire land on the basis of a self-management agreement. In 2015, they created two community gardens, one in Rožna dolina and another in student dormitories in Mestni log. Participants gather weekly to take care of the community gardens. In addition to meeting its basic purpose – food production – the garden is a sustainable community space for socialising, connecting, learning and relaxing. Students and the public are taught about permaculture at organised public workshops and lectures, which are the basis for the organisation of the community garden.

Lessons learned

The student community garden project is an example of good cooperation between a civil initiative and a public institution. The project proved to be very successful for both parties. In return for the land and the means to cover the most basic material costs, the leadership and the empowered students enriched the activities offered by the institution, improved the quality of living of the students, and improved their reputation among the general public. It is one of the rare examples of a civil initiative that has been maintained and continues to be self-managed. Everyone is welcome to participate in the activities. Participants are responsible for the entire garden area, from maintaining the basic infrastructure and equipment including sheds, rainwater butts and composters (in cooperation with the canteen kitchens) to landscaping the wider campus by planting herbs, spices and fruit trees. Crops can be harvested by anyone who takes care of the garden irrespective of the amount of work invested. The division and planning of work is coordinated at regular weekly meetings. Social events enable new users from younger generations to be integrated and ensure the sustainability of the project.

Monitor:
What is success?

An intervention with no monitoring of progress is just an activity. Monitoring thus ensures effective implementation and the achievement of the final goals of a project.

During monitoring, participants collect and analyse data about the ongoing project in order to get detailed information about the work that has been done. The project management team should not just examine whether or not the project plan has been followed, but they also have to examine if they are making progress towards the results they planned to achieve. Thus, to be effective, monitoring must assess the difference that the project has made. It also helps to identify possible deviations from the plan during the implementation phase, so they can be tackled on time.

Although monitoring is usually done after or (ideally) during the project activities, a crucial step occurs at the very beginning. In order monitor a project successfully, the key performance indicators (KPIs) have to be defined beforehand. The most important of these are inputs (the resources you will need, e.g., workforce and financial resources), activities (the actual work that is to be done, e.g., designing an action plan), outputs (the direct and easily measurable results, e.g., a community garden with twenty plots and three benches.), outcomes (the changes that lead to the final goals, e.g., the number of people using the community garden), impact (the final goals, the effect of the activities, e.g., 20 % higher social inclusion as measured by the well-being of vulnerable/marginalised groups).

However, monitoring rarely remains just a descriptive observation of changes. We often speak of monitoring and evaluation, where evaluation examines whether or not the activities carried out contributed to the impact and achieving the goals of the project – it tries to judge progress. To ensure evaluation is objective, it is usually done by independent external experts.

Balanced scorecard

A balanced scorecard method is one of the most commonly used and easiest ways to monitor progress against a set of key, previously agreed strategic targets.

WHEN: Whenever results need to be compared to plans.

WHY: Facilitates evaluation of the performance of actions.

OUTPUT: A table with high level strategy elements, objectives, measures, targets, initiatives and results.

Inhabitants opinion survey

Inhabitants' opinion surveys are short, structured surveys for measuring the opinions of inhabitants on UPA elements and acquiring new insights of possible improvements.

WHEN: When we want to collect opinions of UPA participants and acquire proposals for improvements.

WHY: Simple and quick collection of relevant information.

OUTPUT: A basic analysis of information.

Social Audit

A social audit, often performed by external and internal actors, is a way of measuring, understanding, reporting and ultimately improving an organization's social and ethical performance. A social audit helps to narrow gaps between vision/goal and reality.

WHEN: When we wish to hear the evaluation of our community work from external and internal stakeholders.

WHY: An assesment from external and internal stakeholders might point to improvement potentials that we do not see (e.g. strategic myopia)

OUTPUT: A comprehensive assesment of the activities.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is the improving of performance by continuously identifying, understanding, and adapting outstanding practices and processes found inside and outside an organization.

WHEN: Whenever we wish to see our work in comparison to other (better) examples.

WHY: Besides comparison, it gives an insight into potential improvements and explanations of own problems.

OUTPUT: A list of comparable elements and learnings from best practice examples.

Social Accounting

When we wish to employ a holistic approach to identifying the impact of your actions.

WHEN: When you wish to evaluate the value of UPA. Assigning a monetary amount to UPA might help you convince stakeholders for continuation or pivoting of UPA.

WHY: It is structured and useful for reporting to funders.

OUTPUT: A structured documenting, reporting and communication sheet.

Measuring subjective Well-Being

A subjective well-being index measures subjective life evaluation, a person's feelings and sense of purpose in life. By repeating the survey, one can observe the changed life satisfaction of UPA participants.

WHEN: When we want to measure and observe the effects of our actions on participants and inhabitants.

WHY: Measures subjective satisfaction with life beyond solely economic and material indicators.

OUTPUT: Internationally comparable index of life satisfaction.

Direct market valuation

The direct market valuation approach is based on data from actual markets (e.g. sum of all incurred costs minus accumulated depreciation).

WHEN: When you wish to evaluate the value of UPA. Assigning a monetary amount to UPA might help you convince stakeholders for continuation or pivoting of UPA.

WHY: Easy to calculate. Adequate for provisional estimates.

OUTPUT: A numeric value of your UPA.

Social Return on Investment (SROI)

Social return on investment (SROI) is a method for measuring extra-financial value relative to invested resources. It can be used by any entity to evaluate impact on stakeholders, identify ways to improve performance, and enhance the performance of investments.

WHEN: When we wish to show social, environmental, cultural, psychological and even some economic benefits of investment in UPA.

WHY: It includes social, environmental, cultural, psychological and even some economic benefits UPA.

OUTPUT: A numeric value of your UPA.

Stated preference methods

The stated preference approach to exploring value is based on carefully worded survey questions, where answers are numeric. E.g. how much are you willing to pay to keep UPA activities in your neighbourhood?

WHEN: When you wish to evaluate the value of UPA. Assigning a monetary amount to UPA might help you convince stakeholders of continuation or pivoting of UPA.

WHY: It can be integrated in existing surveys.

OUTPUT: A numeric value of your UPA.

Revealed preference methods

The revealed preference approach to exploring value is based on observations of individual choices related to a service. E.g. the value of a good is reflected in the time and money people spend to obtain it.

WHEN: When you wish to evaluate the value of UPA. Assigning a monetary amount to UPA might help you convince stakeholders of continuation or pivoting of UPA.

WHY: It analyses the actual, not just hypothetical value.

OUTPUT: A numeric value of your UPA.

Scale:
Why stop when you are succeeding?

Why stop when you are succeeding? Spreading social-sector innovations in order to achieve greater impact should be the next step. After initial assessment of the opportunity and definition of an innovation, an effective way of scaling should be determined and next steps envisioned.

Explore different ways of scaling in the fold-out. >

© Zelemenjava Archives

ZELEMENJAVA
Ljubljana, Slovenia
2012 – ongoing

Initiator: Darja Fišer
More info: www.zelemenjava.si

Zelemenjava are public meetings where participants exchange surplus seeds, seedlings and crops, and also share recipes and experiences from the home garden. Everyone barters what they bring or simply gives it away. The purpose and key idea of these events is to give individuals an opportunity to socialise, network and offer mutual assistance. Zelemenjava is an independent movement: it is an exclusively civil initiative and relies on volunteers. All events are carried out at the discretion of individuals or local communities. There is a website that offers useful tips for organising an event.

Lessons learned

The spontaneous initiative of a group of friends, a unique public event where about fifty participants exchanged surplus seeds and seedlings, has grown into a movement that is today active in more than forty places across Slovenia. Participants share the joy of working in the garden, homemade delicacies, and the desire to exchange them. Among them are those with their own garden, and others who grow vegetables on balconies. They strive for increased self-sufficiency and mutual assistance. Therefore, they share tips and suggestions as well as crops at events. In the present economic crisis, Zelemenjava (the name comes from the words vegetables and exchange) has become an alternative form of access to goods and has quickly spread throughout Slovenia. The Zelemenjava website offers simple and clear instructions for organising a successful event, it advertises them, records and archives them, and complements participants expertise on the basis of experience from the field. The online platform allows an idea such as that of exchanging surplus crops to significantly expand its reach.

Scale:
Why stop when you are succeeding?

There are several reasons for scaling, but one argument beats them all: you need to scale to bring positive changes to more people. Thus, every UPA should have the ambition of spreading to new users and new locations.

However, not every activity should be scaled – and defining the innovative part might be a challenge. Once your way works, you still need to define what makes it successful and why. Usually, innovations can be framed in one of three ways – an organisational model (maybe your way of coordinating volunteers, engaging stakeholders and organising the processes is unique), a programme (perhaps your activities successfully address specific needs) or principles (is it your guidelines and values that distinguish you from less successful examples?). Understanding what is uniquely innovative and worth scaling is of the utmost importance.

There are several ways of scaling urban participatory agriculture activities – depending on your aims, capacities and the needs of the users you want to involve – and each has its advantages and disadvantages.

The most commonly used approach is influencing: actively providing information and raising awareness about social issues and the potentials of your approach. The impact is indirect and you do not have much control over the implementation, but such activities open up possibilities such as expanding knowledge about the issue, proposing and advocating public policy, influencing public opinion and behaviour and, finally, mobilising larger networks of similar actors for a common purpose.

A more direct and engaged approach could include replicating branches in new locations or creating new interconnected UPAs. Investing in the organisational capabilities of your team could also lead to the development of new locations and inclusion of new users.

Between these two extremes is dissemination. This involves actively supporting and providing information (through publications and presentations), consulting and training to those replicating your approach. In some cases, you may even license your approach to existing organisations in other locations or deliver the UPA through partnerships.

Finally, do not keep knowledge, ideas and experiences to yourself. Through sharing, lobbying and branching out, all scaling activities contribute to the improvement of the social circumstances of your target groups.

Scaling
Steps

Step 1: Assess the opportunity

Should we consider scaling up at this time?
Do you have anything worth scaling up? If not, scale deeply. Work more closely with your groups and increase participation.
Is there significant unmet or poorly met need elsewhere? If not, gather evidence. Be sure that others need what you have to offer.
Do you have sufficient organizational support and stability? If not, build your organisational capacity, invest in your people or find a partner.
Is this a particularly good time for exploring scale seriously? If not, wait. A chance to scale up might occur later.

Step 2: Define the innovation

What is truly worth scaling up?
Identify the core of your UPA success. Is it the organisational model (structures, systems, staffing policies, financial strategies), program (activities) or principles (values, guidelines)?
Determine transferability. Is your UPA universally applicable - can it be easily understood and adopted by others?

Step 3: Identify promising paths

Can we scale up our innovation effectively?
Assess the costs and benefits of coordination. Coordination demands resources and entails some organisational risks, but is highly valuable when the risk of incorrect implementation is high or when your UPA could benefit from close cooperation with others (raising brand awareness, increasing quality, learning, economies of scale ...).

Evaluate channel tradeoffs.
Creating a new organisation is better when you want greater control, want more focus or need to foster innovation, while establishing networks and consortiums is good for faster expansion with lower start-up costs.

Step 4: Designing action-learning process

What steps should we take to test conclusions and start scaling?
Develop a viable resource strategy.
Create an encouraging action plan.
Plan for experimentation.
Demand honest and tough assessments.
Be ready for continuous learning, adaptation, and innovation.

Scaling
Strategies

Organizational Branching and/or Affiliation
Replicating branches in new locations that remain part of one, multi-site organization. Creating a network of affiliated but independent organizations connected by shared principles, goals, or activities.

Expanding the Organization's Delivery Capacities
Making investments within your organization that improve and increase its effectiveness to deliver programmatic performance.

Technical Assistance
Providing technical assistance, train
offering similar programs or activitie

Knowledge Dissemination
Sharing information with others
presentations.

Packaging/Licensing
Packaging a successful program ar
other locations.

Partnerships/Alliances
Collaborating with other organizatio
new locations.

ning, or consulting to others interested in
es.

through publications, the Internet, or

d licensing it to existing organizations in

ons to deliver services or address needs in

Research & Public Policy Development
Researching and generating knowledge about the social issue and proposing public policy, i.e., a think tank approach.

Influencing Public Awareness, Norms or Behaviors
Using various means of communication to inform, educate, and influence public awareness, opinion, or action about the social issue.

Direct Advocacy & Lobbying
Engaging public policy makers, legislators, and other government officials to influence the legislative or resource environment for the social issue.

Convening Networks
Organizing social-purpose organizations or individuals from the same field into a network or association mobilized to advocate shared goals and policies.

Systemic change:
Think bigger. Change the system.

But why not think bigger? Could our UPA facilitate change that would pervade different elements and truly change the system? Indeed it could – by introducing a new type of social service, redefining ownership, developing new funding models or facilitating the circular economy. UPA should not end with urban gardens, but with a change in the position of its users within the social system.

Read more about the four different phases of changing the system from within in the fold-out. >

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THE RAKOVA JELŠA PARK
Ljubljana, Slovenia
Exhibition 2013 | first phase 2014 | second phase July 2016

Initiator: Mestna občina Ljubljana
In collaboration with: Mestna občina Ljubljana, Univerza v Ljubljani, Fakulteta za arhitekturo, Biotehniška fakulteta, Oddelek za krajinsko arhitekturo, Društvo arhitektov Ljubljana
More info: www.greenljubljana.com/funfacts/rakova-jelsa

The Rakova Jelša Park project was developed from a series of exhibitions by the Ljubljana Association of Architects VISIONS ARE which highlighted overlooked issues in Ljubljana and many unused areas of the city. The construction of buildings and other unregulated use had degraded Rakova Jelša. The project began in 2014 and its main purposes were to connect the city with the Ljubljana Barje Natural Park, to stop negative development processes, and create a more attractive natural environment. It was achieved with minimalist interventions that included the provision of footpaths, cycle paths and waterways, and the installation of urban equipment. The second phase included the landscaping of the park, and arranging the gardens and the public orchard so they could be self-managed.

Lessons learned

The project was carried out in phases. It began with the removal of large quantities of waste from unregulated landfills, invasive plants, and the replacement of these with suitable native plant species. The illegal gardens and constructions that had been built around them were removed and later replaced by the park and 320 gardens with the necessary infrastructure. The investment of urban authorities in regulation of the natural environment enabled the revitalisation of the area, making it more attractive to the urban population who gained the opportunity to garden as well as a park and recreational areas. In this way, the municipality has created the conditions for further and comprehensive development of the area. In 2017, the MOL Public Housing Fund and the Chamber of Architecture and Space of Slovenia published a public call for the construction of social housing in Rakova Jelša. The Rakova Jelša Park project has had a positive impact in an otherwise marginal neighbourhood and shown how regulation of the natural environment can stimulate the revitalisation of an entire area.

⤢ Systemic change: Think bigger. Change the system.

As a social innovation, UPA is addressing urban and social challenges in a unique and complex way. It emerges in the gaps of the existing system, grows there and has the potential to create a new, better system.

Consider a thesis. Given its multiple facets – local food production, community-based social work, exchanges between people of different cultures, ages and backgrounds, resource-saving lifestyles, cooperative multi-stakeholder processes – UPA can be an accelerator, one that has a broad impact on sustainable urban development.

You want to set up UPA on urban land, or market your produce to consumers or institutions? This may require changes in the planning framework, or the regulation of the food trade, or public procurement procedures. You want to transform the promotion of UPA from an ad-hoc-initiative to the permanent responsibility of your municipality? This requires the establishment of a municipal level contact.

Beyond growing vegetables and participation, UPA is about establishing structures that secure and strengthen the breadth and duration of the integration of marginalised social groups into urban society. It might lead to creating a new form of participative and more inclusive social service provision. Or it might end up introducing new concepts of ownership – a commons where everything is accessible to all, or a 'use it or lose it' understanding that means neglected land can be used by anyone willing to work on it. UPA might even facilitate the development of a circular economy in which the previously marginalised groups become the centre of economic processes; or it might experiment with different understandings of benefits for the long-term unemployed (giving them access to an urban garden in parallel to monetary benefits).

Innovation is introduced by external players and ownership over it is gradually institutionalised, or adopted by relevant players in the system.

Behavioural changes of relevant players are sustained and different changes were incorporated in standard operations.

1

2

Adopt

Adapt

Expand

Respond

4

3

The boundaries are being pushed. The seed of change grows and expands into new directions.

Other supporting functions and rules begin to change in response to the innovation.

Takeaways

On urban gardening

○ People of all social groups, ages and ethnicities can understand the language of gardening: planting, growing, watering, caring for the soil and harvesting are tasks every gardener has to do.

○ Urban gardens can work as a sort of future lab and contribute to creating the fresh minds which are needed to create urban communities that cross economic, educational and cultural divides.

On social inclusion and participation

○ Social inclusion does not just benefit vulnerable/marginalised groups but has a huge effect on society as a whole.

○ When planning is participatory, a community is given an opportunity to influence not only the decision-making process, but also the goals and outcomes of a project. Such a process allows different interest and social groups – including marginal and vulnerable ones – to voice their needs and wishes. It empowers a community (as well as its groups and members) to make decisions affecting the public good and to take responsibility for the sustainability of the outcomes.

○ The implementation of policies tends to be more effective when new programmes and projects are oriented towards the inclusion of multiple stakeholders and reflect their needs and views.

On social potential of urban gardening

○ Urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) is not just the setting up of a neighbourhood garden in an urban environment, but a complete concept that must meet social needs, create social relationships and form new collaborations.

○ The innovative element stems from the solutions that tackle the challenges and bridge the existing gaps in provision of social services and market function in different and unique ways. As an innovative approach, it does not have an end or an ideal form – it is ever-evolving, always keeping in mind the needs of its users and, thus, each UPA should be different and unique.

On steps of innovating

- In the case of participatory urban gardening, we propose initial analyses of three areas: analysing the social circumstances of our target groups, understanding relationships between stakeholders in their neighbourhoods and communities (NGOs, public institutions, civic initiatives and business), and exploring the spatial dimensions of the area to be used for urban gardening.

- Ideation is the most creative, yet demanding and time-intensive, phase of a project. It is the result of continuous thinking, brainstorming, expanding, selecting and refining. It is the bridge between problems and solutions.

- It is better, cheaper and easier to implement an idea early in the process and gradually improve the service – based on user feedback – until you find the optimal solution. Instead of planning the final format of an urban garden, implementing it and hoping it works, you should consider several smaller and gradual steps before that.

- An intervention with no monitoring of progress is just an activity. Monitoring thus ensures effective implementation and the achievement of the final goals of a project.

- You need to scale to bring positive changes to more people. Every UPA should have the ambition of spreading to new users and new locations.

- Urban gardening emerges in the gaps of the existing system, grows there and has the potential to create a new, better system. Given its multiple facets – local food production, community-based social work, exchanges between people of different cultures, ages and backgrounds, resource-saving lifestyles, cooperative multi-stakeholder processes – UPA can be an accelerator, one that has a broad impact on sustainable urban development.

Types of urban gardens

Urban Food Gardening

Allotment Gardens

Subdivided garden whose plots are rented under a tenancy agreement, highly formalized, often managed by an organization or association.

Family Gardens

Non-commercial, food producing undertakings for the household provision with produce, no institutions or organisations involved.

Educational Gardens

Teaching tool addressing food production, processing and consumption, high potential for raising public awareness and spreading gardening ideas.

Community Gardens

Based on bottom-up initiatives and tended collectively, their purpose is food production as well as social functions for the community.

Therapeutic Gardens

Located at physical and mental health care institutions, sub-types are contemplative gardens and production-oriented, active gardens.

Squatter Gardens

Food production on idle land, due to their informal, extra-legal character, they are not registered nor subject to public policies.

Urban Farming

Leisure farms

Offering recreational opportunities linked to farming activities.

Social farms

Farms intended to address social problems and aimed at promoting disadvantaged people's rehabilitation and integration of people at risk of exclusion.

Educational farms

Pedagogical function is dominant, e.g. in the form of learning programs or short-term stays for schools; recreational component is optional.

Therapeutic farms

Therapeutic use of farming related activities promotes physical and mental health and well-being, e.g. hippotherapy, occupational therapy.

Local Food + Farms

Oriented to local markets and direct relationship to consumers (cooperative, CSA), the + indicates non-food production (cosmetics, fibre).

Environmental Farms

Farms with high natural and environmental value and/or contribution to biodiversity or agro-diversity conservation, as part of flood or fire prevention plans or green infrastructure, networks, green belts, Natura2000, etc.

Cultural Heritage Farms

Intentionally contribute to preserving the tangible and intangible cultural heritage through maintenance of traditional materials, buildings, crop and breed varieties and cultivation techniques.

Experimental Farms

Tests new agricultural technologies, production methods, varieties and breeds or models of social and economic interactions with their urban environment.

Urban Agriculture Canvas

Key Resources

What Key Resources do your Value Propositions require?

Key Activities

What Key Activities does your Value Propositions require?

Type of Urban Ga

What type of urban g case (key resources, s beneficiaries)?

Partners

Who are your Key Partners?
Who are your key suppliers?
Which Key Resources are you acquairing from partners?
Which Key Activities do partners perform?

Channels

Through which Chan beneficiaries want to
How are you reaching
Which channels work

Costs

Which are the most important costs inherent to your project?
Which Key Resources are most expensive?
Which Key Activities are most expensive?

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garden wold fit your
social issue,

Social Issue

What is the social problem you are trying to solve?
What are the causes of the problem?
Who are the key stakeholders (beneficaries, third parties, communities) related to this social problem?

Value Proposition

What value do you deliver to the beneficiaries?
Which one of your beneficiary problems are you helping to solve?
Which beneficiary needs are you satisfying?

Beneficiaries

nels do your
be reached?
g them now?
best?

Who are the key stakeholders (beneficaries, third parties, communities) related to this social problem?