

CRETHINK

State of the art analysis and local context mapping

Partner: Društvo za razvijanje prostovoljnega dela Novo mesto (DRPDNM)

Country: Slovenia

National strategies and policies on co-creation and sustainability (Spatial legislation)

Slovenian Spatial Legislation (GZ) envisages public involvement only in the sense of submitting comments on already prepared spatial plans; the expression of opinions, giving the initiatives and active participation in proceedings are not foreseen by the law. Only formal groups (associations, institutes) that have acquired the status of public interest in the fields of environmental protection, nature and space at the competent ministries (eg the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning) are included in the procedure (but not from the beginning!). to give their reasoned opinion, but always only in response to already prepared plans by the state or municipality.

In recent years, however, there are more and more other local initiatives (formal and informal groups without status in the public interest) that want more active participation, so it will probably be necessary to develop strategies that will enable greater public participation of these groups.

Themes, approaches and main actors of co-creation for sustainability in practice

Based on the legislation, where only non-governmental organizations with the status of public interest in the field of nature, environment and space, which are the main actors, participate in the proceedings, the main topics of cooperation are therefore the protection of nature, environment and space. These NGOs are usually not involved in the preparatory part of the process (starting points), so their opinions are not included in the planning, consequently their role is possible only in terms of terminating the intended intervention in space. If they had the opportunity to be involved in the initial stages of the process, these processes might take longer, but the final result would be much more acceptable to a wider circle of people.

Co-creation: Best practice, challenges and needs

Some non-governmental organizations with the status of public interest in the field of nature, environment or space are working on projects in the direction of changing the legislation in the areas in which they operate in terms of greater integration of the public in decision-making processes. One such

example is Ipop (Institute for Spatial Policy in Ljubljana). Only a few NGOs are professional, that's why they rather work on smaller, shorter projects, consequently they do not have this kind of scope. Their scope is smaller projects of public involvement and at the same time cooperation with public administration, which mean smaller examples of good practice, through which the general public is made aware of individual topics and possibilities of action, and for local government greater relaxation in opening up to cooperation with the general public.

The local context

Co-creation in strategy and policy

On the local level (Municipality of Novo mesto) there are no policies, strategies or charters on co-creation and sustainability. Sustainable Urban Strategy (Trajnostna urbana strategija, document) does include sustainable development (Novo zeleno mesto) but it does not include any kind of co-creation.

Co-creation in practice

Co-creation plays more and more important part in practice; it is implemented through several projects but it seems it is encouraged more by civil society than municipality itself. But good practice and satisfaction of both sides will eventually lead to implementation of strategies or/and policies. Specially as civil society is ever more interested in co-creation processes on different areas of local life (sustainability, sustainable mobility, special planning, green public areas etc.).

Need for co-creation

The local environment (urban, rural and natural) we live in should be our common care. Civil society should be and is increasingly aware that we all, not just our municipality, should participate in decisions concerning our environment and lives. On the other hand, the municipality of Novo mesto is faced with growing interest by civil society and may not have strategies and policies on how to react and co-create with all incentives. Therefore, there is a need to apply some in the near future.

Areas for co-creation

Civil society is particularly engaged in themes of local environment where the need of cooperation with municipality is crucial; therefore, this should be the first area to implement policies for co-creation. In future this can be implemented in other areas which are of the interest of the civil society.

Experiences and methods

Civil society is working on the bottom-up level which means that it has information and detection of the problems directly from the inhabitants of the city and its surroundings. It also is less burdened with bureaucracy and therefore can be more creative in terms of finding more creative solutions. On the other hand, the municipality is working on the top-down level which means that sometimes it is not fully aware of the problems of the inhabitants. But the municipality employs a varied range of experts which have the knowledge on how to execute different projects and how to implement some ideas into policies and strategies. Different stakeholders bring different knowledge and therefore co-creation can bring better solutions for our local environment.

Prerequisites and obstacles for co-creation

The most important prerequisite and at the same time obstacle for co-creation is trust and good experience between different stakeholders. Civil society as well as the municipality should be able to understand that co-creation is on one hand more complicated and time consuming process but on the other hand can come to solutions which are more acceptable for a wider range of inhabitants and can have stronger and lasting effect in our environment.