

## CRETHINK - Co-creative RETHINKing for sustainable cities

### IO2: Toolbox on democratic co-creation methods for sustainable development

#### VEJLE BEST PRACTICE 1

##### Definition of good/best practice

A good/best practice is defined as an initiative (e.g. technique, method, process etc.) which has already proved effective in delivering a given result with the potential to be transferred to different contexts and geographic areas. Proved effective is where the best practice has successfully established methods to engage all stakeholders throughout the course of the development process.

#### 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Title of the practice	URBAN FORESTRY IN THE CITY OF VEJLE
Name of the institution/organisation responsible for the implementation / hosting of the initiative using co-creation methods	GRØNT FORUM, VEJLE MUNICIPALITY
Country / Region / Municipality involved	VEJLE MUNICIPALITY, REGION SOUTH DENMARK, DANAMARK
Geographical coverage	VEJLE CITY
Timescale: when did it take place and for how long	2018 -2019

#### 2. DESCRIPTION (no more than 1000 - 3000 characters)

Sustainable thematic area	ENVIROMENT
Objectives	<p>1.To develop a method and a strategy that efficiently integrate the benefits from urban forestry/forest garden in a long term developing and planning of a city through increased understanding and implementation of it.</p> <p>2. To teach people how to establish edible forest gardening by cultivating plants together in woodland like patterns that improve mutually beneficial relationships, creating a garden ecosystem that is more than the sum of its parts. In the forest garden you can grow fruits, nuts, vegetables, herbs, mushrooms, other useful plants, and you can keep domestic animals as chickens etc. in a way that mimics natural ecosystems.</p>

<p><b>Actions carried out</b></p>	<p>Project implementation plan: To address the objectives, the project included four work packages:</p> <p>1. Urban forestry courses (WP1) Urban policy makers, planners, managers, designers and developers from Vejle municipality, students from different universities, and other citizens need more knowledge about the urban forestry. The courses increased participation, motivation, and participant's engagement in the project and helped the participants gaining a better understanding of urban forestry. A group of voluntary members of "Urban forestry group" worked to spread the concept of urban forestry. We had the members of "the butterfly movement group in Vejle" working for more urban gardens for the butterflies and we involved planners and managers from Vejle Municipality willing to learn more about the urban forestry and the benefit of it. The Municipality of Vejle had been in charge of organizing the work package in partnership with Brandbjerg Folk Highschool (a local folk high school that teaches sustainability among other subjects) and Økolariet (Ecolarium) (A local science and sustainability learning center in Vejle).</p> <p>2. Use Peer - to -Peer learning (WP2) Peer-to-Peer learning was used in order to spread the knowledge of the forest garden as a designed agronomic system based on trees, shrubs and perennial plants. The Municipality of Vejle was in charge of organizing this work package together with members of the "Urban forestry group", Sommerfuglebevægelse (Butterfly movement) and Økolariet (Ecolarium).</p> <p>3. Establish at least one demo project (WP 3) The Vejle Municipality provided the project with an area in order to build an active and cooperative learning environment. The participants in the courses helped with the plans and the establishment of the area, together with other volunteers. The Municipality of Vejle had been in charge of organizing this work package together with members of the "Urban forestry group", Brandbjerg Folk High School and the consultant Christine Hempel Design and Planning.</p> <p>4. Describe a method and a strategy for integrating the urban forestry in the future urban planning (WP 4) A written Final Project Report has been elaborated. The report describes the process and the methodology, what it takes to integrate urban forestry in the city planning process based on the learnings from this process. The strategy also included a condensed version, which is a short video showing and sharing the learnings. (WP5): <a href="https://www.dreambroker.com/channel/kwl58wgm/ebhozjwi">https://www.dreambroker.com/channel/kwl58wgm/ebhozjwi</a></p> <p>5. Case study on the selected demonstration site (WP 5) The case study can be used to inspire other cities to implement the process.</p>
<p><b>Methodologies used</b></p>	<p>The objectives of the WP 4 were to develop a method and a strategy that efficiently integrate the benefits of urban forestry/forest garden in a long term developing and planning of a city through increased understanding and implementation of it. The Municipality of Vejle was in charge of organizing this work package.</p>

### **Bottom-up contra top-down management styles**

Using the bottom-up management, we empowered local volunteers and stakeholders to convey the forest garden concept in a way that mirrors their own context and challenges. The inclusive nature of the bottom-up approach benefits project management. The open communication and shared solutions among all the participants ensured that the projects remained ongoing and goals were achieved in a timely fashion. As unforeseen events can pop up during the project, targets can be shifted through the open line of communication between the project manager, the contributing partners and voluntary citizens. Collaboration fostered through the bottom-up approach gave the project the transparency needed to maintain successful processes.

### **Host a course for the policy makers, managers, designers and developers from the municipality**

By educating citizens and city planners, designers and developers and demonstrating the benefits of forest garden, the project aimed to establish the theoretical foundation for how to integrate the forest garden in the urban planning.

Leaders from the municipality, technical staff from multiple departments stayed for the first time together with members of the “Forester garden group”, discussed how to approach Nature based solution us urban forestry and forest garden in the development and planning of a city, and provide basic concepts for how to implement it.

The participants had the opportunity to visit the Forest garden established at Brandbjerg Folk High School where the course was hosted.

### **Use Peer – to – Peer learning**

Peer learning involved the sharing of knowledge, ideas and experience between the participants. Peer to Peer was used as a method to build up the course, the demonstration project but also other activities.

The members of the “Forest garden group” learned a great deal by explaining their ideas and knowledge to the other participants. They also developed skills in organizing and planning learning activities, working collaboratively with other stakeholders, giving and receiving feedback and evaluating their own learning. They participated in establishing the demo project at the New Rosborg area, where they shared knowledge and worked together with the technical staff from the municipality. They improved and contributed to the design of the area, made sketches and lists with the plants for the site.

### **Implement small, pilot projects and quantify the benefits**

The Vejle Municipality provided the project with an area in the New Rosborg district for the demonstration project. New Rosborg is a part of the Co-creation strategy described in Vejles Resilience Strategy. The city of Vejle is, due to its geography and climate change, prone to flooding from storm water, rising sea level and high groundwater levels. To prevent flooding in the city it is necessary to find new solutions, and that’s why it was interesting to make a demonstration project about forest garden, in order to see the benefits: can the forest garden managed to influence the urban water cycle, potential shocks as heat, carbon, and pollution cycles. Today, the city of Vejle is managing the flooding problem by trying to delay the water upstream, but multiple solutions are necessary.

New Rosborg district is also an interesting developing area because it is used to develop and test innovative solutions, share lessons learnt, and scale up best practices across Vejle. New Rosborg covers an area of 80 hectares and is expected to be completed by 2040-2050.

The resilience value of the New Rosborg project is the contribution to methodology for developing green fields and derelict land around cities, helping to solve global challenges arising from increasing urbanization.

The steps in establishing the pilot project are as following:

1. Find a proper area and make an agreement between the stakeholders, voluntaries and the municipality
2. Design the site together with city planners
3. Involve the volunteers and other stakeholders in order to achieve ownership to the project
4. Establish the project as a result of co-creation
5. Share the best practice knowledge

#### Create an organization that will ensure equal cooperation about the project's activities

The "Urban forestry group" was open for more members, especially for the participants at the course. The aim of the group is to create an organization that can continue after the completion of the project, maintaining the network and the activities regarding the convey of the forest garden.

Tools used or created

Using the bottom -up management local citizens and stakeholders become ambassadors in promoting the forest garden concept. One important aspect for the project was to involve actively citizens and empower them to use their skills and follow their passions. The open communication and shared solutions among all the participants ensured that projects remain fluid and goals are achieved on time.

Involve and connect stakeholders:

The "Forest Garden group" started after a municipal invitation to collaboration and developing projects together with the citizens. It was important for Vejle Kommune to empower and encourage citizens' participation, by developing projects in the city of Vejle. The group was formed out of 8 citizens, with different experience in permaculture and green infrastructure. After the group mission was settled, an important step was to create connections with other stakeholders. The "Forest garden group" shared their knowledge with Christine Hempel – Illustrator and plan architect, with municipal planers and citizens. The project manager was the intermediary who facilitated the meetings of these groups.

Peer – to – Peer knowledge sharing:

Another important step in developing the project was the knowledge sharing aspect. The members of the "Forest Garden group" shared the knowledge about forest garden with other citizens, city planners and architects, in order to establish an active and cooperative learning environment and to recruit more participants.

The group representatives participated at two of the most important events in Vejle, "Wild with water" festival and "Nature's day". It took a proactive approach, where a contact list with the interested citizens was created, in order to expand the project participants. In both cases, the ambassadors of the forest garden, volunteered to present to the world the project they were developing with Vejle municipality. In this way, a sense of ownership was established.

Vejle municipality is proud of using the bottom - up approach while developing projects because as seen in this case the members of "Forest garden group" have

developed and learned about their skills, how to organize and plan activities, collaborate with other stakeholders, give and receive feedback and evaluating their own learning.

No tools had been created

### 3. IMPACT (no more than 1000 - 3000 characters)

Number of participants / co-creators and their background (e.g. professional, cultural, gender)	50 Volunteers from the Forest garden group with different backgrounds as described. City planners, designer, maintenance staff, other people working at the municipality, both women and men.
Difficulties founded	Very difficult in the beginning of the project to “sell” the concept of the forest garden to the municipality, especially because it came from a voluntary group and not from an established consulting company. It was hard to believe for the municipality, that the volunteers actually had professional skills. But this was very well proved at the end of the project.
Success factors	The “Urban forestry group”, was based on very engaged an professional volunteers, who aim to stay together, help each other and continue after the completion of the project, maintaining the network and the activities regarding the convey of the forest garden. Vejle municipality’s interest in involving citizens in developing the new area in New Rosborg.
Weak elements	The activities carried out by the volunteers can be weak if they don’t have a needed support. It was a very short project, so it is hard to measure the effects and the impact of the forest garden at the demo site. The urban forest is still in the beginning, at there are not many forest gardens established in the Danish cities, so involving the concept of a forest garden in the developing and planning of a new area in the city is not quite simple.
Transferability	The method can be scaled to other cities.
Achievements/Tangible outputs (please include a link, if any)	-

### 4. INNOVATION & OUTCOMES (no more than 1000 - 3000 characters)

Degree of Innovation (governance, recruitment process, fundraising, financing instruments, marketing, processes, service, etc.)	Stakeholders’ engagement was the key word for the project. The “Forest garden group” members volunteered to recruit other members, to promote the forest garden concept, to share their knowledge and competences and to create communities that will promote more nature in the cities. The focus was on social resilience and sustainability, together with an understanding that this is an opportunity to influence these areas by being a part of the created community. Participants became inspired and motivated to be part of the project.
What are the innovative points of the methodological approach used?	For the purposes of the project, we followed a Bottom-up management style, which is not the usual way of approaching a project in the municipality of Vejle.

Evidence on the impact and outcomes achieved

At the end of the project, a condensed version of the method and strategy was gathered in a video showing and sharing all of the lessons we learned through the process. The video can be used to inspire other cities to implement the process.  
Collaboration between stakeholders was the key of the projects success that can be seen in the video.  
The video can be seen in the link below:  
<https://www.dreambroker.com/channel/kwl58wgm/ebhozjwi>

## 5. FURTHER INFORMATION

Website	-
Social media	Grønt Forum's Facebook
Dissemination actions	-
Network (if any were set up)	The volunteers in the Forrest group still meet and develop new projects together.
Contact information of best practice: Name & Email address	Dana Laura Cernat dalce@vejle.dk