

Title

Beyond a Construction Site

Short description

Beyond a Construction Site is a small local initiative proposed in 2010 by two separate NGOs, Bunker and KUD Obrat. The two organizations--noting the importance of urban, community green spaces in promoting solidarity, reducing health inequalities, and promoting adequate nutrition and sustainability--aimed to transform an old construction site into a shared community space. After determining the ownership of the plot (the Municipality of Ljubljana), the initiators issued printed and verbal invitations to anyone who was interested, and in particular to the residents of the Tabor neighborhood, to become part of the planning, design, and use of the site. Rules for management of the site were developed together with all the initial participants, in which following a signed membership agreement, involved community members agreed they would be responsible for their own vegetable plot. Members were given keys to the garden. Besides the urban farming, the site became host to several workshops and community events centered on sustainable urban agriculture and ecological means of consumption. In 2012, around 80 community members have taken care of 40 land plots on the former construction site.

Topic

Living - Green Spaces

Characteristics (type, level)

Neighborhood - Intervention

Country/Countries of implementation

Slovenia

Aims and Objectives

In collaboration with neighborhood residents and other interested people, Bunker and KUD Obrat and the residents of the Tabor neighborhood aimed to transform a long-fenced-off plot of land near Resljeva Street in Ljubljana into a community space intended for urban gardens, socializing, ecological projects, education, and culture. Ultimately, the goal of this intervention was to examine and show the potential of degraded urban areas and the possibility of their receiving new value through temporary use and community-based interventions.

Target Group

Neighborhood residents

Status

Implemented on a continuous basis

Start and Completion dates

Began in 2010

Lifestyle and Behavior Change

Giving the community members the autonomy to develop, maintain, and engage in their own governance of green space, allows for the individual to acquire a sense of self-efficacy and responsibility over the implementation of green practices in their neighborhoods.

Effects on:

Health and Wellbeing	The creation of a green space can encourage individuals to be active and go outside, increases the solidarity with the members of their own communities, and potentially increase the consumption of locally-sourced vegetables from the community gardening plots.
Vulnerable populations	The sense of solidarity created through a shared development of this common green space can help create inclusivity for marginalized community members, as well as can help reduce food insecurity through the community farm plots.
Environment	Green spaces can help reduce CO2 emissions as well as reduce the fuel expenditure of transporting vegetables into the community if they are grown locally.

Initiated and/or implemented by

The Beyond a Construction Site project is a small neighborhood campaign where in August 2010, members of two non-profit cultural organizations, Bunker and KUD Obrat, collectively transformed an abandoned building site into 25 vegetable allotments with the help of local residents.

Stakeholders and sectors involved

- Two non-profit NGOs: Bunker and KUD Obrat
- Local government
- Neighbors and community members

Financial support

Municipality of Ljubljana

Evidence-base

None available

Main activities

- A communication campaign encouraging residents to participate in the restoration of a construction pit, including informal verbal communications, and community flyers.
- Definition of three basic rules for the shared use and management of the site: each person would construct their own vegetable bed or, if they weren't able to do this alone, would help in constructing their bed; no chemicals were allowed to be used in gardening; and in addition to taking care of their own garden, each participant also had to assume part of the care for the common area.

- Workshop on ecological gardening

Evaluation

None available

Main results

Community members collectively transformed an abandoned building site into 25 vegetable allotments with the help of local residents.

In 2012 over 80 participants took care of 40 gardens. They also took part in various public and community events.

Key success factors and barriers

Encouraging community participation as well as support from the municipality can be both a barrier and a success factor of this intervention.

An important barrier to consider here may be zoning restrictions that are dependent on the municipality of implementation which could impede the development of a similar intervention

INHERIT Perspective

This program was chosen for inclusion because of its categorization as a triple win within the INHERIT guidelines. Beyond a Construction Site focuses on strengthening community cohesion without regard for economic or social status, improves food security, educates community members on sustainable urban farming practices, and has the potential to reduce air contamination through the provision of green spaces. Allowing for individual autonomy over the farming plots gives community members the self-efficacy to manage their health and that of their neighborhoods. The program can be easily implemented in any community whose zoning permissions allow it.

More information

<https://onkrajgradbisca.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/beyond-more-web.pdf>

<http://www.ljubljana.si/en/green-capital/get-involved/81726/detail.html>

http://yo-yo-yo.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/04_OBRAT_Onkraj_presentation.pdf

<https://onkrajgradbisca.wordpress.com/> (in Slovenian)

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