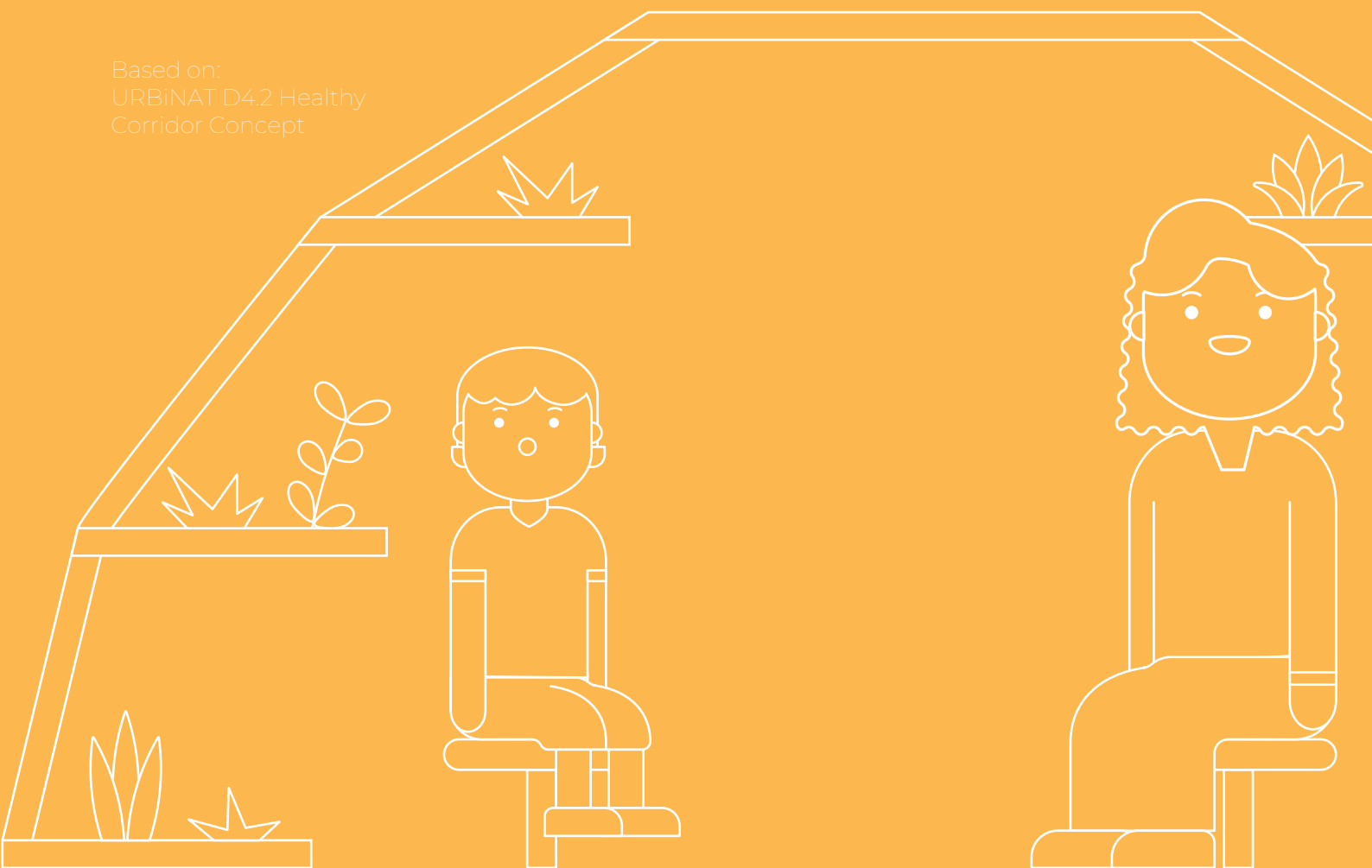
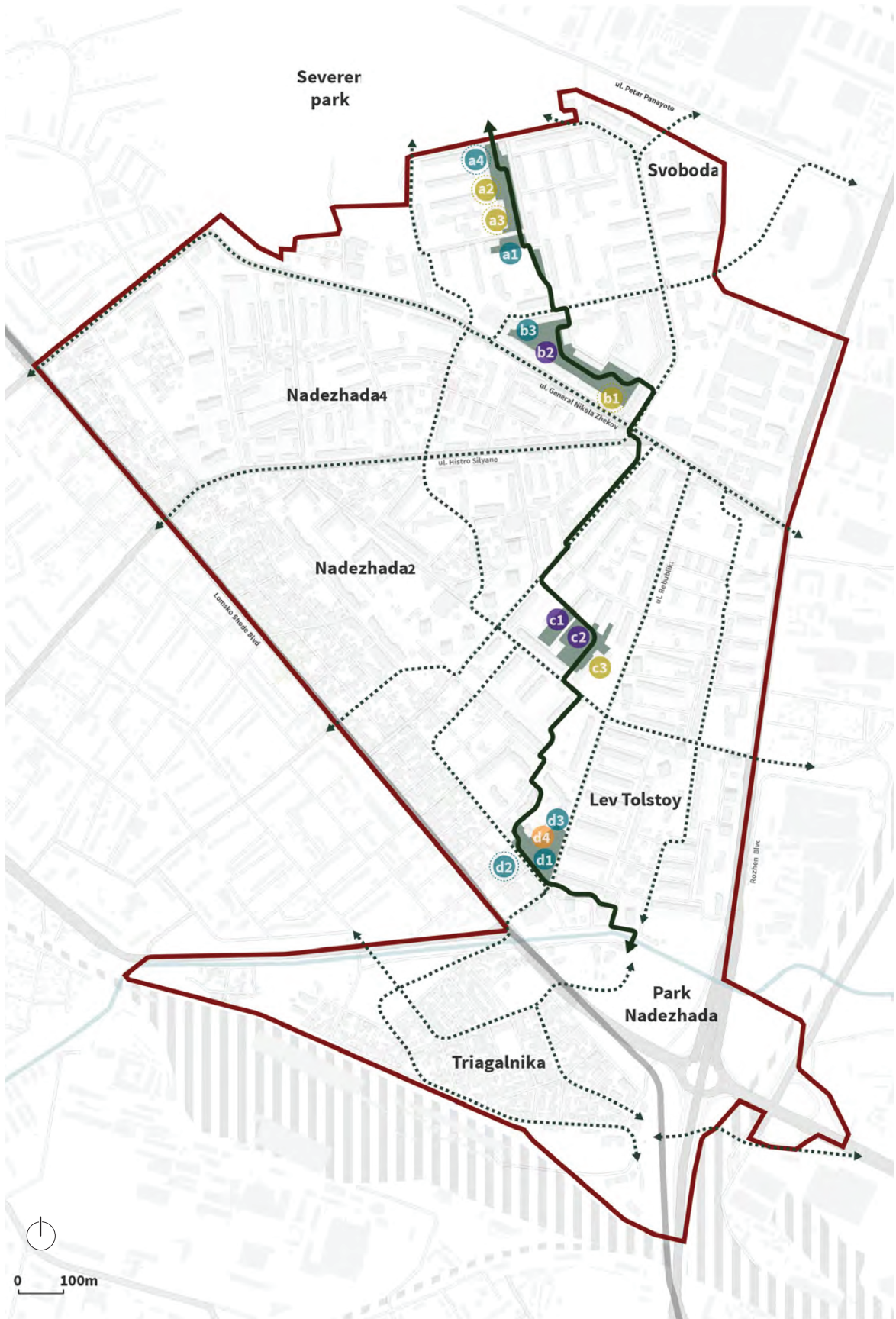


NEW NBS SOFIA

Based on:
URBiNAT D4.2 Healthy
Corridor Concept





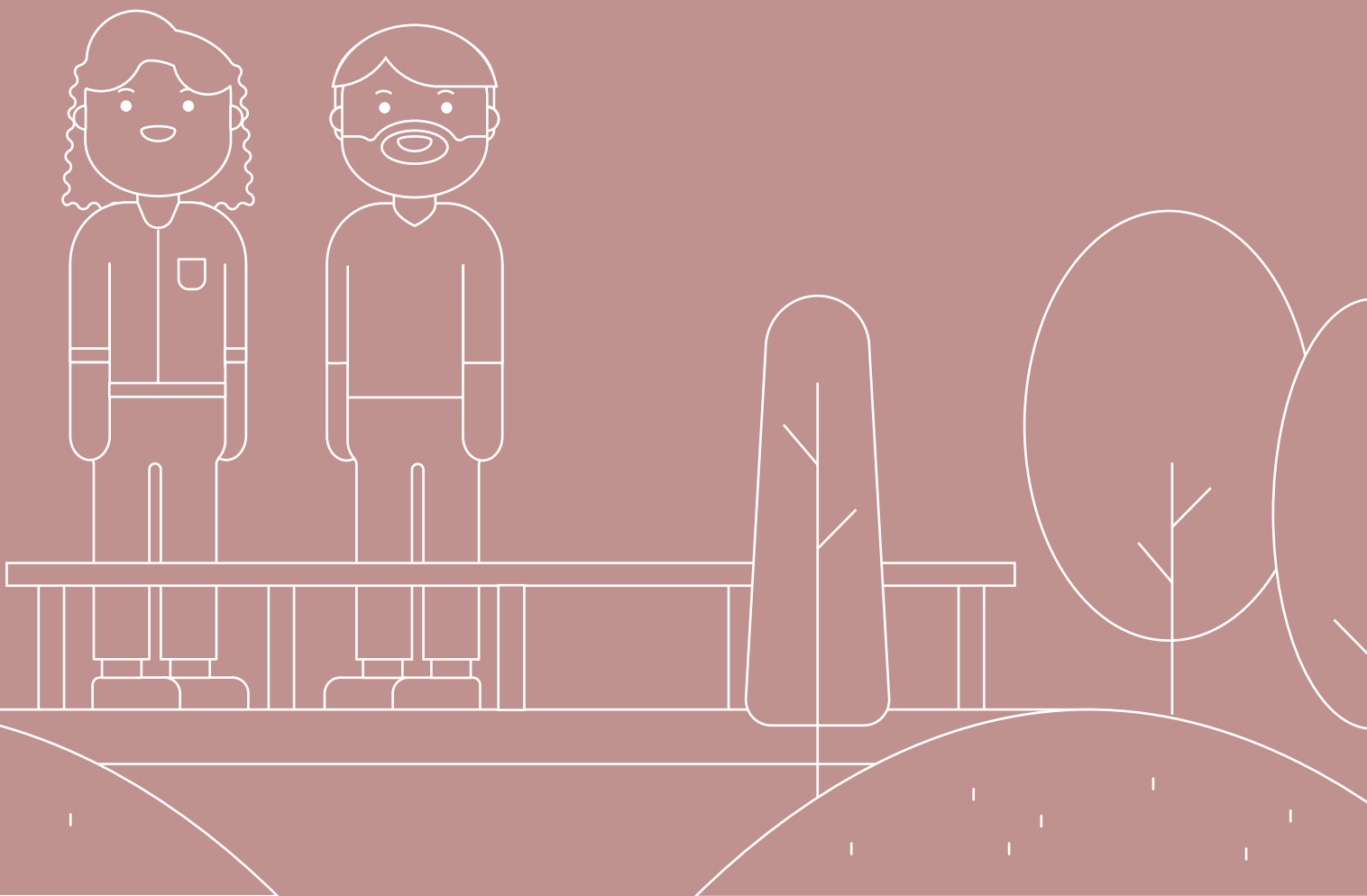
Healthy Corridor urban plan.

Public Space

The category “public space” comprises all co-selected and co-designed solutions fitting in the territorial context of the areas of intervention and aiming at the improved quality of the public space in terms of accessibility and mobility, liveability and diversity of activities, and greenery and vegetation.

It is expected that some of these “material solutions”, implemented as investment projects in the proposed intervention areas, will be in direct relation with the immaterial solutions, and will contribute to an expected synergetic impact.

This section represents the decisions taken on the development of NBS, according to the analyses of the NBS developed by the task force, the municipality and the inhabitants.

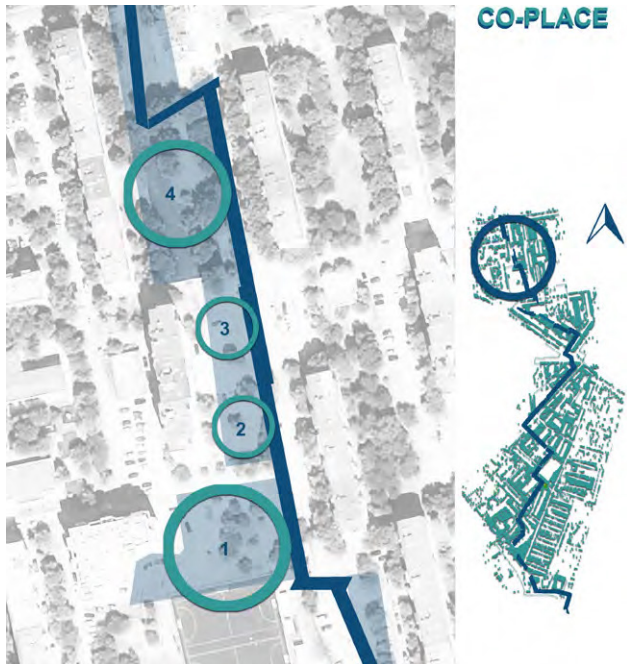




Eco-parking for different kind of vehicles

Zone CO-PLACE, subzone 1

- To address tensions and opposition among residents on the prohibition of the parking zones along some streets.
- To protect parked bicycles and other micro-vehicles from theft or vandalism.
- To maintain the eco parking



Description

Environmentally friendly parking for cars, bicycles and other vehicles will provide the much-needed parking spaces and free up area for development and accessibility of the Healthy Corridor while avoiding future conflicts between different users. In the process of the Corridor co-creation, places for recreation and social contacts could be added to this area.

Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Freeing up the inter-bloc spaces from parked cars and allow for non-parking space along some streets around the intervention areas and the Corridor;
- Creating space that supports the functioning of the existing sport playground;
- Separating the parking zone from the zones for playing and leisure and reduce the conflict between the users.

CHALLENGES

- To provide a parking that will be used by all residents

Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

The problem with car parking was identified through Expert observations, BM, walkthrough, and culture mapping. It was also pointed as a problem by the participants in the Interviews, focus groups and workshops. Cars are parked on green areas, sidewalks, and streets in violation of the traffic rules. They limit the freeway of the pedestrians, destroy pavements, contribute to air pollution, and worsen the micro-climate characteristics. Public parking for bicycles and scooters within the URBiNAT study area is not available.

CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

Parking was persistently mentioned as a problem during the workshops in the Co-selection & Co-design process. Participants expressed their concern about the lack of enough parking spaces, the loss of green spaces and the replacement of already established functions by unregulated parking. Citizens proposed diverse solutions – from introduction of short-term paid parking zones to construction of underground and above-ground multi-story car parks. People consider that expensive technological solution will make parking inaccessible for most of them. That is why the proposal focuses on a solution based on natural materials, implemented on the ground level, and providing opportunities for parking of several types of vehicles.

Best Practices and References

<http://new.acera-bg.com/parking-element/>
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/57702438956147082/>,
<https://www.bigstockphoto.com/image-283365145/stock-photo-bicycle-parking-in-the-park-bikes-in-the-parking-lot-for-bicycles%2C-the-view-from-the-side>

Place for leisure with a flower garden and a picnic and social zone

zone CO-PLACE, subzone 4

Description

The idea is to diversify this inter-bloc space and create opportunities for social contacts and joint community activities for both children and adults. It is also envisaged that the pavement of the Corridor in this part will be made of luminescent coating to make the environment suitable for use as many hours a day as possible, but also to avoid light pollution and unpleasant feelings among the residents of the surrounding blocks.

Located at a close proximity to the Severen park, the Co-place area will host activities for the residents to create a flower garden, a zone for picnic and social interaction where they can put a hammock or to hold a NBS – photovoice, world café, etc.

The proposal will be further developed in the process of joint co-creation of the Corridor.

Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Enrich the recently renovated space with different activities and create a zone for social communication and leisure;
- Create more possibilities to spend time outside especially in Covid-19 situation;
- Make an urban area look like a park and create a natural link with the entrance of the existing park.

CHALLENGES

- To avoid conflict between the users of this space and people that live in the buildings around the area;
- To encourage people to use this place with respect for nature and make a society aware of its responsibility for guarding and keeping it clean.
- To keep the place clean
- To involve adults in the games and dynamic activities

Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

The interaction with citizens during cultural mapping, walkthrough, and photovoice, revealed



CO-PLACE



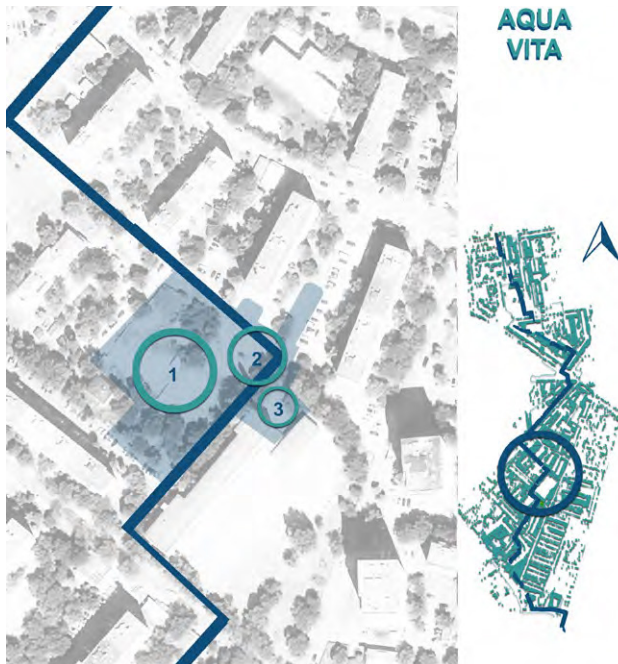
the importance of the place and the practise which already proved its sustainability – the maintenance of the space in front of the blocks entrances. Moreover, people shared the expectation of a better-maintained public space. Special attention was drawn on the small and large flower gardens. This diagnosis was further confirmed in the course of the conducted territorial analysis and expert observations.

CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

The walkthrough, photovoice, behavioural mapping and community workshops confirmed the hypothesis that young people seek and use spaces that differ from these preferred by the elderly inhabitants. Youngers and teenagers are attracted by the urban environments and practices typical for the Sofia central parks and places. Therefore, the proposed NBS enables different groups of citizens to design spaces according to their specific needs.

Best Practices and References

<https://mydesiredhome.com/27-fantastic-diy-ideas-to-transform-a-tree-trunk-into-a-beautiful-garden-decoration/>



Neighbourhood meeting place – a neighbourhood open space for socializing, sitting and meeting

Zone AQUA VITA, subzone 2

CHALLENGES

- Use of the furniture without restrictions for residents and external users
- Maintenance, especially the furniture and surrounding area in public spaces and around public buildings
- Protection from vandalism

Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

Through territorial analysis and expert observation, walkthrough and cultural mapping was found that neighbours' meeting places are common phenomenon in the neighbourhoods Nadezhda district. They vary from a bench in front of the entrance, through a gazebo, and to multifunctional places. Over the years, citizens have implemented different approaches to transforming them by adding, changing, adapting, expanding or inviting new functions. Most of the results are groups of hand-made tables, chairs or benches, alone or in combination of interior furniture reused outdoors. Such furniture is found in closed or semi-closed pavilions or shelters. There is no evidence that these interventions were the result of a community decision.

CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

During the community Workshops, face-to-face interviews, and the focus-groups, the need for equipped places with furniture to sit, rest and meet was repeatedly mentioned. Citizens expect more places of that kind in the parks, the green areas, and in front of the public buildings. Some workshop participants commented on the aesthetics of the available public urban furniture and the one created and maintained by the citizens in front of the blocks' entrances. The estimations differ significantly and sometimes are contradictory.

Best Practices and References

<https://thespot.bgbeactive.org/the-spot-2018/>

Description

The detailed design(s) of the Neighbours' meeting places or social sitting spaces will be elaborated together with local communities. However, most probably they will incorporate a variation of a bench, lounge chair and/or chairs, table, space for plants and other furniture that is perceived as important by the locals. Aforementioned elements will be developed from natural materials by architects and urbanist with rich hands-on experience, together with local communities.

Materials that will be used are: high quality wood and metals, stones, eventually concrete, plants and various tools.

Urban design elements that will be designed and installed have to be approved by certified architects and constructors.

Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Creating new and renovating the existing places for communication, exchange and recreation
- Creating equal rights of use through activating new participants among the inhabitants
- Increasing the built environment aesthetics
- Supporting the revival of 6 decades' tradition

Bridge over the Suhodolska River

Zone GREEN ASSEMBLY, (not numbered in the schemes)

Description

A bridge with a wooden structure is a natural solution for overcoming the canal of the Suhodolska River and connecting the Tolstoy neighbourhood and Nadezhda Park. The new bridge must allow a comfortable passage in both directions. The bridge should have a suitable pavement allowing for prams and wheelchairs, scooters, and bicycles to move without risk in all seasons. The current bridge is narrow with metal decking, which implies an increased risk of slipping on wet, rainy and foggy days. During the recovery from the Covid 19 pandemic, it is important to improve access to parks and other public green spaces. Providing a safe bridge and enough space for crossing directions at a safe distance is also a reasonable health protection measure.

Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Increased safety when crossing regardless of weather conditions
- Simultaneous and safe crossing of several people and cyclists in both directions

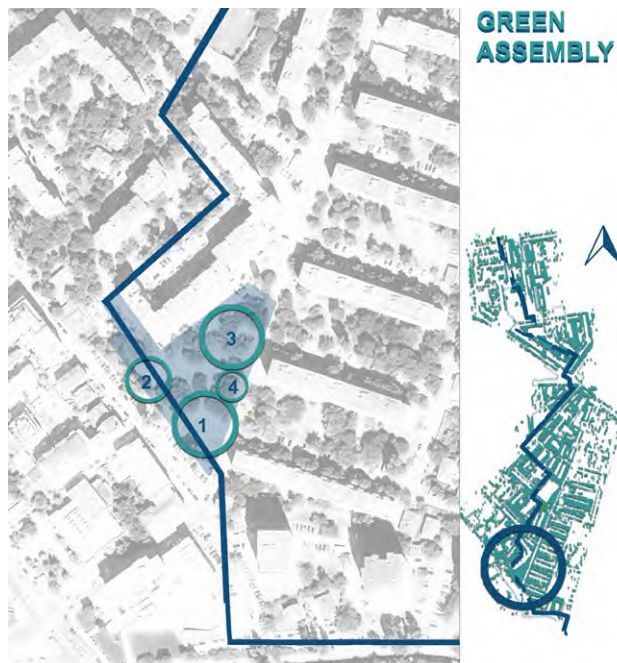
CHALLENGES

- Difficult communication with authorities in charge of critical infrastructure
- Risk to the facility longevity due to the need for wooden structure permanent maintenance and seasonal care

Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

A lot of people crossing over the river were observed in the course of the expert observation and behavioural mapping. Most often stopping and waiting the one-way crossing is needed due to the narrowness of the bridge – about a meter width. Despite this, it is a preferred entrance for Nadezhda Park by people living in Tolstoy and Nadezhda 2 neighbourhoods as the other entrances to the park are too far from the residential area.



CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

During the Co-selection and Co-design workshops the citizens shared the perception of discomfort in situations when many people gather on one or both sides of the bridge as sometimes waiting takes longer. They also share concerns about the people accompanied by their dogs. In connection with these daily difficulties and the discomfort associated with them, citizens expect improvements of access to the park over the Suhodolska River. This new NBS includes a wider bridge with non-slip decking build by nature-based materials.

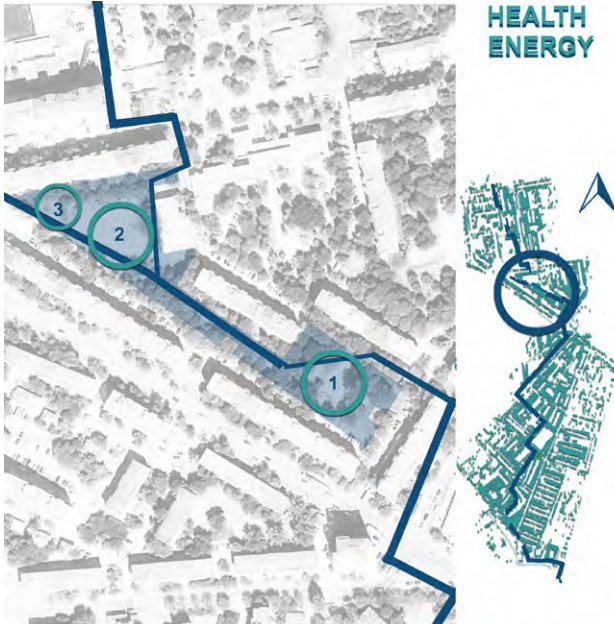
Best Practices and References

Bostanlı Footbridge & Sunset Lounge / Studio Evren Başbuğ, <https://www.archdaily.com/866903/bostanli-footbridge-and-sunset-lounge-steb>



Bring water back in public space (water fountains)

Zone HEALTH ENERGY, Subzone 1



Description

Water fountains in South-Eastern and Southern Europe are a tradition that facilitates climate change adaptation as they provide fresh drinking water in periods of high temperatures and improve microclimate. Despite overcoming seasonal stress, water is essential and valuable for human health.

Drinking water fountains in Bulgarian public spaces are a tradition that has been lost in the recent 30 decades. Through the endorsement of bottled water, trust in the drinking tap water qualities was undermined thus changing preferences and lifestyles of many Bulgarian citizens. Today, when the good quality of tap water is guaranteed, and at the same time the daily consumption of bottled water generates large amounts of non-degradable plastic waste, it is important to bring back drinking water fountains in public place. They can be equipped with water-saving technologies and can be integrated into systems for grey water discharge.

Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Provide access to clean drinking water in public spaces
- Help to adapt to rising temperatures on hot days
- Have positive impact on human health and

the built environment

- Reduce the use of bottled water, and hence the generated waste
- As attractive elements in public space, they encourage interaction between people

CHALLENGES

- To Implement a proper management and maintenance model
- To prevent uncontrolled and unnecessary water consumption
- Misuse of public resources
- To protect them and the technological innovations implemented against vandalism

Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

During the expert observation, it was discovered that only one fountain operates in the yard of the Sveti duh Church and three more in the contact area: one in North Park and at two at the metro stations. There are no fountains in the schoolyards, the wide inter-block spaces, the sports and children's playgrounds. During the Behavioural mapping, a young people's game with water bombs observed in the yard of 141 school, proved that water could serve multiple purposes – from being essential for climate change adaptation to serving as means for recreation and fun.

CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

During the workshops in Svoboda neighbourhood, the middle-aged and elderly inhabitants recalled and claimed the restoration of the existing fountains in the inter-block spaces. People demonstrated their awareness of the existing mineral water drilling in Zone Aquq Vita. They shared their expectation that this public resource should be close to the citizens in the form of a swimming pool, a fountain for recreation or just a fountain symbolizing the presence and the future utilization of the thermal water.

Best Practices and References

Interactive map with the functioning fountains in Sofia (in Bulgarian): <https://zerowastesofia.com/watermap/>

Living lab – URBiNAT pavillion

Zone GREEN ASSEMBLY, subzone 2

Description

Located at the very beginning of the Corridor, the pavilion will provide indoor space that can serve multiple functions: a project's information point; a workshop space; a forum where stakeholders will be able to express their interest and willingness to participate; one of the main venues for the implementation of the participatory NBSs.

Previously used for other purposes, the pavilion will be externally branded and adapted for the purposes of URBiNAT in line with the concept of Recycle and Reuse. There is a possibility to integrate vertical greenery on the façades or on the railings of the roof terrace.

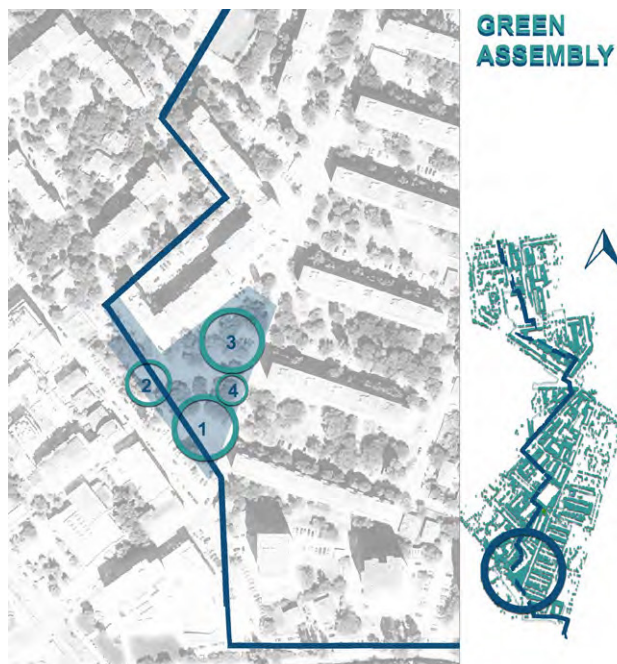
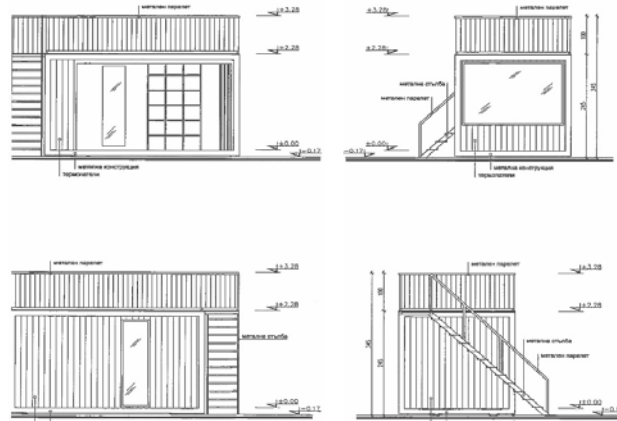
Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Allows flexibility of uses and complements the rest of the outdoor facilities by adding indoor space
- Helps raising citizens' awareness about the project, the role of nature in the urban environment and its importance for human health
- Provides space for interactions among stakeholders and residents and acts as an arena for implementation of the NBSs that enhance participation and inclusion
- Acts as a forum for sharing project progress and announcing upcoming events
- Provides an opportunity for future revenue streams from the workshop cafe that can be channelled back into maintaining the structure and the intervention zone

CHALLENGES

- Maintaining up-to-date information about the project, both in digital and analogue format
- Creating a work schedule suitable for the rhythm of the residents
- To provide proper upkeep and maintenance to the structure;
- To involve local grassroots community organisations in the running of the pavilion on a non-for-profit basis.



Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

Finding the appropriate location for the URBiNAT pavilion was the key factor to make the URBiNAT Living lab visible and sustainable. The existing local cultural centres are located at the periphery of the Healthy Corridor area and they, along with the other cultural institutes have limited and controlled access and are full of scheduled regular events and activities. Through the territorial analysis, the evaluation of the municipal plots, and the expert observation, a suitable communicative location for the Living Lab contact point was identified.

CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

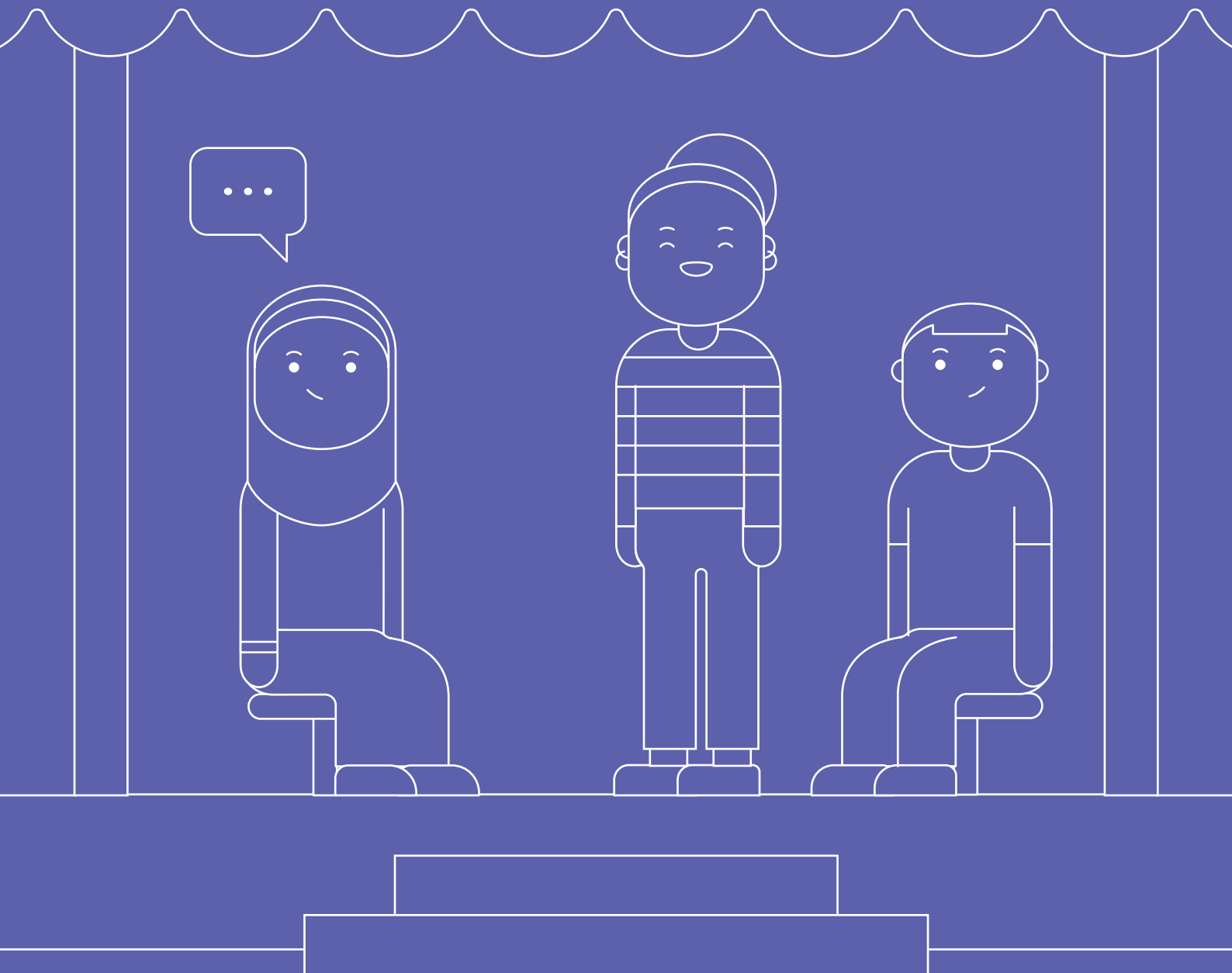
The conduct of the Co-selection and Co-design Workshops and other methods for involving citizens and other stakeholders in project activities showed that systematic but periodic dissemination and actions are not enough to attract the locals in a sustainable way. Therefore, establishing a permanent location to act as URBiNAT project contact point is key to the success of the project.

Culture

The category “culture” organizes all co-designed solutions related to culture in the URBiNAT study area region and will contribute to improve the cultural communication and boost the number and quality of cultural events in terms of music, theatre, cultural and natural heritage, among others.

Analyses and decision on the development of the New NBS

This section represents the decisions taken on the development of NBS, according to the analyses of the NBS developed by the task force, the municipality and the citizen



Green amphitheatre

Zone GREEN ASSEMBLY, subarea 1

Description

As a main focal point of the intervention zone GREEN ASSEMBLY, the green amphitheater will serve as a flexible outdoor space that will function as an informal social area, an event venue for performances and concerts, dance and music events, exhibitions, literary readings as well as a gathering spot for the citizens of Nadezhda. The amphitheater will act as a landmark and provide a distinctive character to the intervention zone, increasing its attractiveness for new users.

The Green Amphitheater is a well-integrated in the urban landscape shared open space. The creation of such a place indicates the intention to hold larger community events and initiatives, including the URBiNAT participatory NBSs discussing issues important to communities and citizens through the Forum Theater, Word Café, focus groups in Situ, community workshops will help the Green Amphitheater to establish itself as the Corridor landmark.

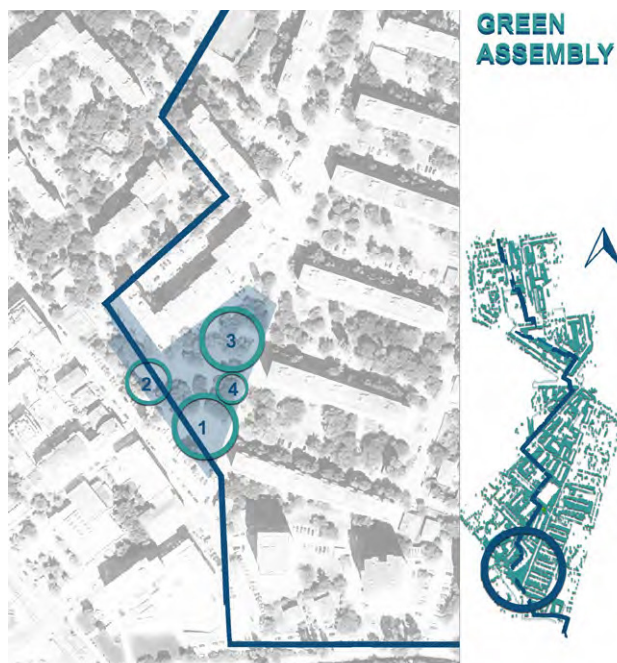
Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Brings together communities
- Provides space for sharing common problems and making decisions together
- Enhances integration between culture and urban environment
- Provides new community space to play
- Creates a local landmark suitable for different users;
- Provides a much needed comfortable outdoor event venue to Nadezhda;
- Employs natural materials to increase local citizens' awareness of alternative construction techniques and their positive impact on the environment.

CHALLENGES

- To keep the place safe and to ensure its protection against potential vandalism
- To proper maintenance
- To ensure that it serves both informal social purposes and formal events by setting up a model for its future operation in accordance with the needs of the local community
- To find a business model for the post-URBiNAT future



Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

The Local Diagnostic outlined that the only place recognized for organized outdoor events is the North Park. These are usually events addressed to all residents of the Nadezhda district – significantly larger in area and in number of population than the URBiNAT study area. In this sense, these events cannot be called community. The green amphitheatre comes to fill the gap of small public space for events and informal cultural activities.

CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

Modelled as a green amphitheatre, such open space is not in itself an innovation. Still, its future functions it can perform and community events to be sheltered can bring innovation to community interactions and relations. During the workshops, interviews, and focus groups, it was found that there are inhabitants who are ready and willing to participate and provide dance classes or other educational or cultural activities for free.



Dancing classes

Zone GREEN ASSEMBLY, subzone 1

Zone HEALTH ENERGY, subzone 2



Description

Dancing in public space is a well-known tradition in Sofia and in the country. Along with the Bulgarian folk dancing in the squares on holidays, one can add classical and sport dances on special platforms or separate places in parks and gardens, or of street dance art. Apart from the active lifestyle, the benefits of dancing are numerous, especially when dancing takes place in open space and in close connection to nature.

In the context of the challenges facing Covid 19 around the world, it is important to look for opportunities for more collective activities outdoors. The continental climate in Sofia allows dance classes to take place in open public places almost 9 months – from early spring until late autumn.

In spatial terms, this NBS can be described as a space or platform with dance flooring. It can be combined and practiced in the Green Amphitheatre, in the restored sports playground in Zone Health Energy, subzone 2, in North Park and Nadezhda Park. Apart from being used as a forum of culture and education, the NBS can also be implemented as a social and solidarity economy solution.

Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Encouraging activities in the urban environment for groups that are not traditionally active – e. g. women.
- Bringing different dances closer to a wider range of people
- Building a dance culture among young people

CHALLENGES

- Activities depend on weather conditions
- Involvement of residents in such an initiative
- Finding a suitable business model, so dancing classes to be accessible to disadvantaged groups
- Concern among participants about outdoor training

Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

During the expert observation, behavioural mapping, face-to-face interviews and focus-groups it was found that various dance lessons are held in all cultural institutes and some of the schools. In combination with the tradition of dancing outdoors, this NBS has a strong potential to be realized successfully.

CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

During the workshops, one of the participants shared his willingness to give outdoor dance lessons.

Best Practices and References

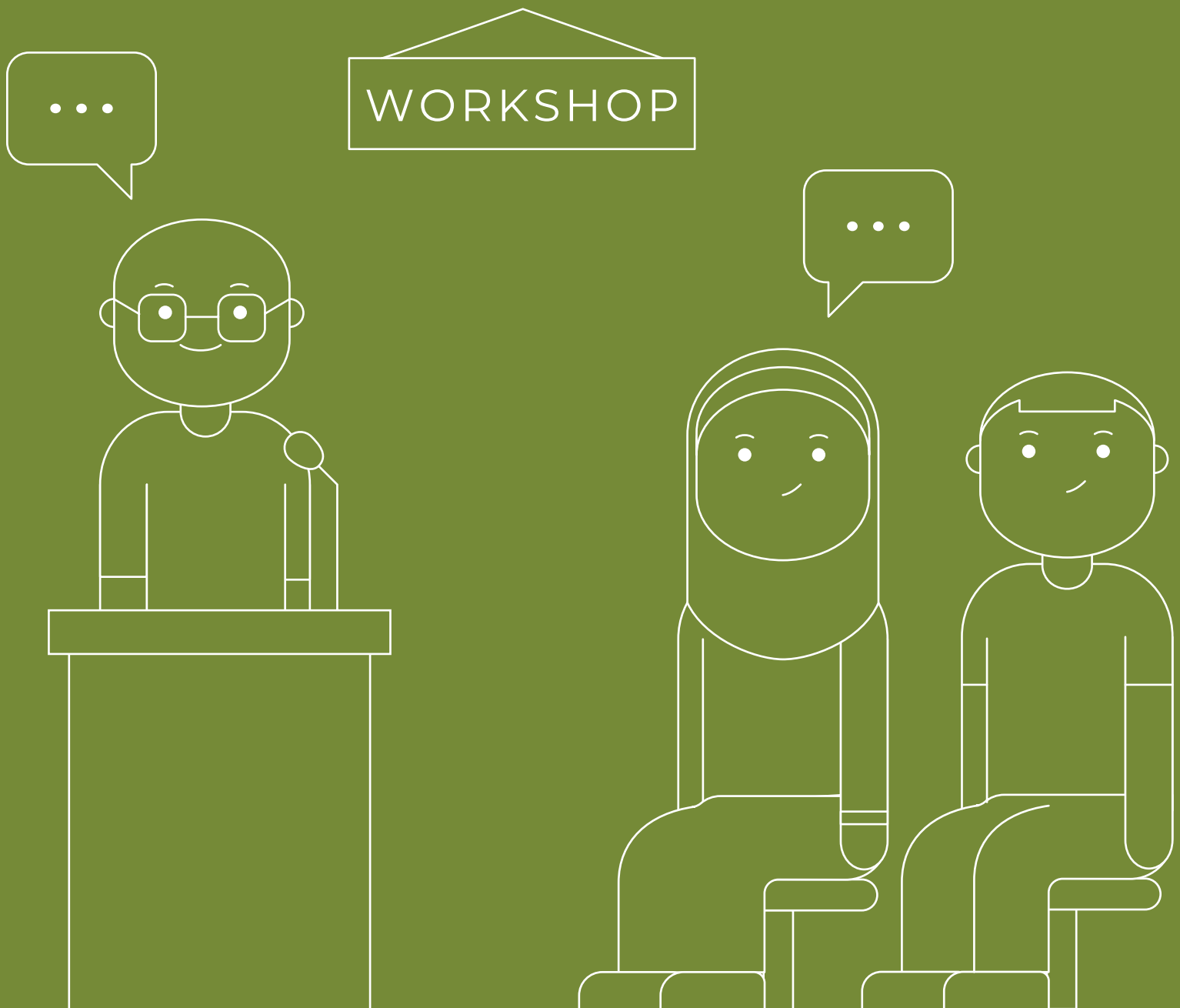
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYtJq5XNjaU>

Education

The category “education” organizes all the solutions co-designed with citizens that are related with recreational and educational activities and will contribute to improve a set of recreational and pedagogical activities that promote the relationship with space and the sense of belonging at the community level in conjunction with the region’s school community.

Analyses and decision on the development of the New NBS

This section represents the decisions taken on the development of NBS, according to the analyses of the NBS developed by the task force, the municipality and the citizens





Open green classroom – school greenhouse

Zone AQUA VITA, subzone 3

- Providing information about the thermal water qualities and its impact on human health
- Creating students' community place for knowledge exchange and communication;
- Bringing back the tradition of running a greenhouse at the same place in the schoolyard
- Providing a demonstration greenhouse project, utilizing thermal water for heating and watering

CHALLENGES

- To solve technological problems in connecting the greenhouse with the thermal water drilling device
- To create a comfortable and appropriate innovative construction of the greenhouse
- Create a working mechanism for activating the students to participate in the co-creation and maintenance

Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

Through territorial analysis, expert observation, face-to-face interviews, and focus groups, it was identified that education is "closed" in the school buildings. The schoolyards are partially used for physical education and sports classes, and for this purpose, their outdoor surface is impermeable, and the soils are sealed. The need for environmental and health education was emphasized during the meetings and interactions of the working group that involved representatives of the educational institutions in the URBiNAT study area.

CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

The Food Production and Leisure Pavilion from the Sofia Mini Catalogue were recognized as a desired solutions during the opening event and the four local workshops. The opportunity to combine the attractive structure of the pavilion and the educational component was recognized by the school management of 15th high school. As a result of intensive work between the Sofia Taskforce, the management body of 15th school and IAAC, this new NBS was developed.

Description

The school greenhouse is an interesting space for learning and recreation by the combination of the three NBSs – leisure pavilion, tasty garden, and utilization of the existing mineral water. The main aim of this complex NBS is to make pupils acquainted with plant growing and the qualities of the mineral water. The pavilion will provide place for spending free time and organizing different school activities. It will be integrated with the open space thus providing opportunity to organizing open space classroom in a natural environment. The innovative construction of the greenhouse will be created by IAAC.

Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Increasing students' awareness of nature and botany

Tasty garden of learning – Kindergarten N 90 in Nadezhda 4

Description

The Tasty Garden of Learning is a green “growing classroom” situated in the yard of the kindergarten where children, teachers and parents unite their efforts and vision to grow together herbs, vegetables and fruits and receive valuable lessons and inspiration directly from their own experience with Nature. It is also a multi-dimensional educational tool with a potential to unite school subjects to real life and provide inclusive educational activities easily and in inspiring way. In a very natural way the Garden of Learning brings together all participants in the educational process in a life-enriching relationship and leads them to a deep creative process of learning by experiencing that supports the development of the physical, intellectual, emotional and social intelligence of the children, and also unites and supports the sustainable development of their local communities.

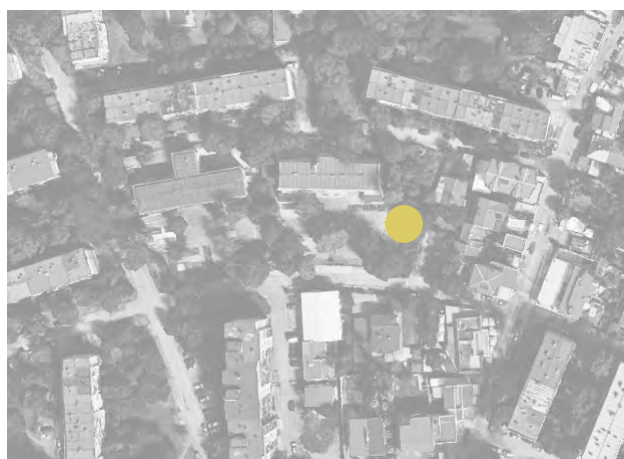
Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Positive integration and shared responsibility of the parents and the local community in the educational process of children in their early years;
- Upgrading of the educational system through innovative methods for inclusive and experiential learning that helps children to develop multiple intelligences and build basic competences such as creativity, flexibility, team working and risk management
- Developing lasting skills and attitudes for healthy living in harmony with oneself, other people and Nature as a whole

CHALLENGES

- The need for constant care of the garden – watering, weeding and plant care, lawn mowing
- The challenges of pests and climate disasters
- Summer vacation is the time when the garden is most in need of watering, and staff and volunteers are the least
- Maintenance of wooden planter boxes



Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

During the co-selection and the co-design workshops the staff from the kindergartens expressed interest to develop vegetable and herb gardens and to integrate them with different educational activities. Many people recognized urban agriculture as an option to effectively utilize the space in the kindergartens. It has been realized that such practices may have a positive impact on community and social cohesion, and could influence human health and well-being by encouraging physical activity, enhancing healthy lifestyles and encouraging children and families to spend more time outdoors together in direct contact with Nature.

CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

In July 2020, a presentation on the implementation steps was delivered for all headmasters and staff from Nadezhda district. The staff of the Kindergarten N90 directly contacted Sofia Taskforce and shared their vision to upgrade the existing small herb garden in one corner of the spacious non shadowed yard.

Best Practices and References

<http://gradinka.zaedno.net/elhica-eng>

The existing herb garden in Kindergarten N90 in Nadezhda 4



“Make a game yourself” – a place for expression of master skills; family outdoor games for children and adults

Zone CO-PLACE, subzones 2 & 3: Two-part place for open-air family games



Description

A new kind of space for outdoor activities that will foster the transition from the sedentary lifestyle of children and adults, and overcome the consequences around Covid-19 restrictions and measures. The space will be equipped with an information board with suggestions for various family games that people can make out of the materials at hand. Children and adults will be able to develop and demonstrate their skills in making various games and/or other items out of recycled materials. Campaign events for collection and recovery of recyclable items will be held there. The Subzone 1 – “Make a game yourself” will be designed as a place for expression of master skills, while Subzone 2 – as a place for family outdoor games for children and adults. The proposal will be further developed in the process of joint co-creation of the Corridor.

Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Expand the diversity of options for entertainment for the residents and encourage the intergenerational interactions;
- Make suitable conditions for knowledge exchange and development of people’s skills in handy works.
- Transform an empty zone used for parking in a place where people can play and learn interesting things together.

CHALLENGES

- Attract people to participate in co-design and co-creation of these zones;
- Convince the residents not to park in the area with imposed restrictions.

Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

The expert observation and the conducted interviews, brought to the conclusion that the adult’s activity and the active, creative interactions between children and adults are limited partially due to the limited space providing the opportunity for adults and children to play together. To some extent adults perceive the self-imposed main responsibility to safeguard children, which do not necessarily include the active involvement in everyday games. In general, there are no conditions for creative activities in neighbourhoods open space.

CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

During the Co-selection & Co-design workshops, the need for small nonstandard playgrounds and multifunctional places for interaction was identified.

Best Practices and References

<http://online.fliphtml5.com/vwkc/jpsw/#p=52>
<http://dev.bgbeactive.org/>

Forum theatre

Zone GREEN ASSEMBLY, subzone 1

Zone CO-PLACE, subzone 1

Description

A participatory method based on theatre techniques, games and exercises, involving the community in analyzing and discussing problems, provoking awareness and citizen participation. Particularly relevant in the co-implementation of the Green Corridor and its activation. Valuable for finding collective arrangements of co-maintenance and co-production.

Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Brings together individual and social dimensions, enhancing cohesion, commonality, and sense of identity;
- Using the performing arts techniques that allow addressing complex and symbolic dimensions of urban development and rehabilitation,
- Optimizing public discussion on collective issues and catalysing action on alternative local actions and interventions according to the available resources.

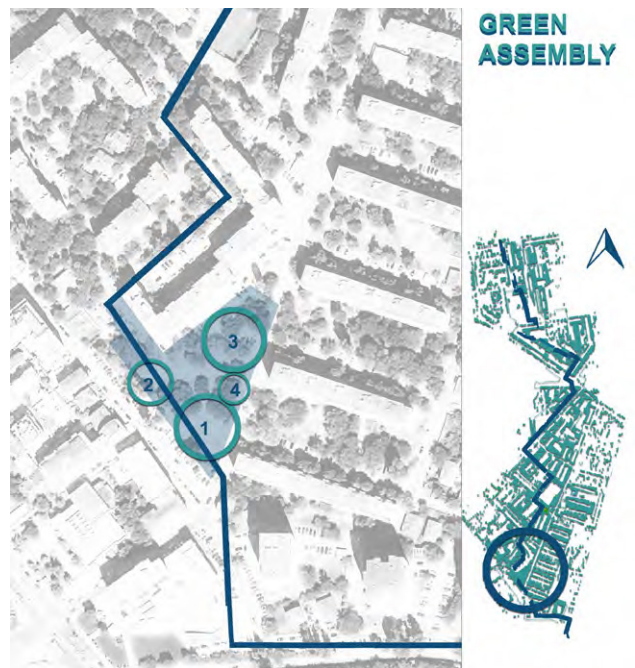
CHALLENGES

- To address and involve diverse groups of inhabitants;
- To establish a sustainable practice in communicating and discussing different problems;
- Create a working mechanism to activate larger groups of inhabitants and sustain thrust and commitment among them;
- Needs a flexible space to serve as a scene, which should allow hosting from few to many participants and audiences.

Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

During the focus groups and interviews, it was identified that forum theatre has a great potential for awareness rising, non-formal education, and promotion of healthy lifestyles and activities that would transform the urban environment.



CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

The Forum Theatre from the Sofia Mini Catalogue was recognized as a desired solution for the public space during the opening event of the Co-design process and the eight local workshops. The opportunities to combine another NBSs and use them as a scene were recognized by citizens and professionals employed at the cultural institutions located in the URBiNAT study area. Several citizens with expertise in participation in Forum theatre events expressed their interest to participate in the organization of such events during the activation of the Healthy Corridor. A proposal for organizing an event focused on waste management in the inter-block spaces was raised.

Best Practices and References

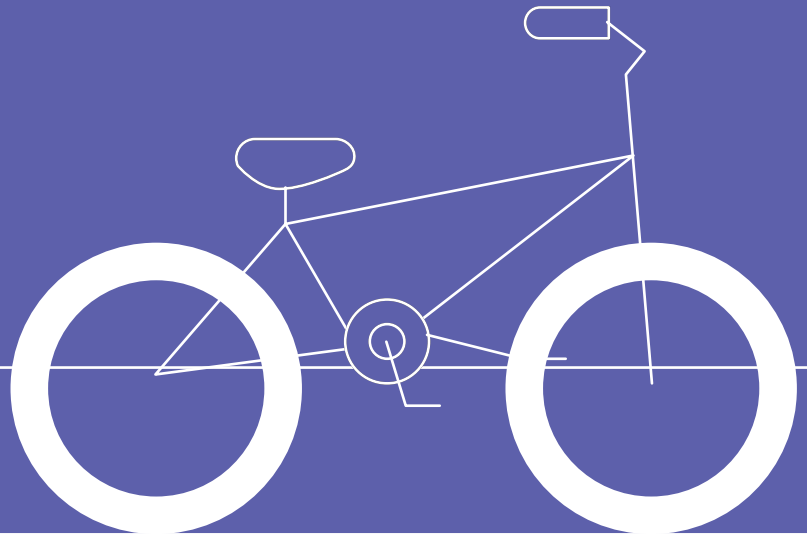
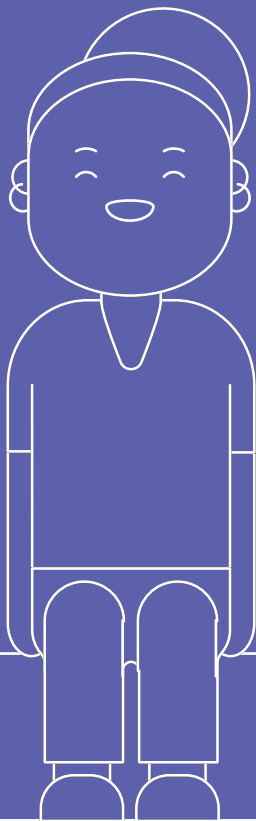
'Forum Theatre' is one of the techniques and tools used by the 'Ideas Factory Sofia' – local NGO that actively explores how to catalyze a positive change in attitudes in Bulgarian society towards inclusion in decision-making, social entrepreneurship, civic education and innovative solutions to critical issues. Forum Theatre, Source: <https://ideasfactorybg.org>

Sports and Recreation

The category “sport and recreation” combines all the solutions co-designed with citizens that are related with recreational and educational activities. These NBSs, used individually or in groups, will contribute to active movement and healthy lifestyles.

Analyses and decision on the development of the New NBS

This section represents the decisions taken on the development of NBS, according to the analyses of the NBS developed by the task force, the municipality and the citizens.



Innovative project of public swimming pool with mineral water

Zone AQUA VITA, subzone 1

Description

The thermal mineral water swimming pool relies on the use of a local geothermal resource – mineral water, to provide healthy environment for physical education and training as well as recreational activities of school children. It also aims at the revival of the millennia-long regional cultural tradition of living in close contact with mineral water.

The nature-based concept for the geothermal swimming pool aims at the development and practical implementation of complex socio-cultural and technological innovation.

Within the URBiNAT project framework, an innovative project for a public mineral water swimming pool based on the desires of the citizens and with their active participation will be delivered. The aim of the project will be to propose a new functional and business model for cooperation between citizens, municipality and business.

Nowadays part of the territory that will be occupied by the swimming pool is not well-maintained. During the project elaboration this area will be promoted and used for exhibitions and information of the qualities and composition of the mineral water and its benefits for human health. It could be also used for demonstrating the swimming pool project progress and for organization of public discussions.

Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Provision of a new accessible educational, recreational and sports facility for the communities
- Base on cost-efficient solutions (water as main resource and for heating)
- High ecological benefits
- Contributes to human health, wellness, and wellbeing
- Possibility to integrate swimming into school physical education
- Straighten the relationship and communication between different stakeholders concerning the urban environment and its use by opening a dialogue on the utilization of the thermal water as a public good;



CHALLENGES

- To create and implement a proper swimming pool maintenance business model
- To attract investors for implementation of the project
- To protect community right for fair access to the swimming pool

Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

The swimming pool was provided in the Nadezhda 2 original detailed development plan, and was confirmed by the updated plan. The residents of Nadezhda 2 and the nearby neighbourhoods supported this idea, expressed positive attitude towards the pool, and shared expectations for its realization during all community meetings, interviews, and focus groups. For some of the participants, these expectations last more than 40 years.

CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

During the Co-selection & Co-design process, the swimming pool was most preferred NBS and was marked as needed by the pupils and the active citizens in the area. NBS received support also from parents, teachers, residents, and Nadezhda district administration.

Best Practices and References

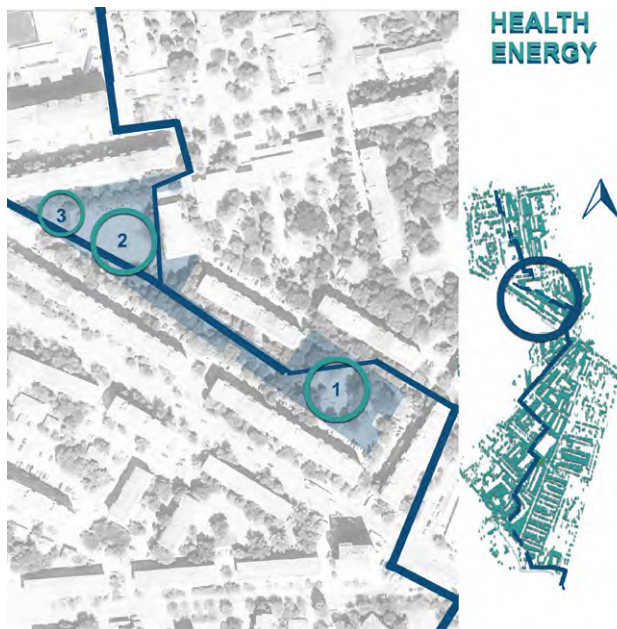
A functioning swimming pool complex in school No 56, Lyulin District, Sofia, which provides services for the local community – from babies and schoolchildren to adults. Its successful functioning is indicative for estimated needs and the relevance of the concept.

Source: <https://aquasofia.com/#basein-56-su>



New interactive playground facilities employing natural materials

Zone HEALTH ENERGY, Subzone 1



Description

The existing playground is a popular spot for local families with children. Nevertheless, the current facilities can benefit tremendously from an upgrade that will focus on creative spatial solutions that would inspire children to develop environmental responsibility through interaction with natural materials.

Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Increase the children's awareness of nature-based solutions via a playful interactive approach;
- Improve the playground by challenging the current paradigm that relies on facilities constructed from plastic materials;

CHALLENGES

- To provide proper maintenance to the facilities;
- To demonstrate successfully the potential of natural materials in the construction of new playgrounds and to address any public safety concerns that might arise in the process;
- To create a model suitable for replication in other places through its modularity of design or streamlining the creation process

Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

During the walkthrough, cultural mapping, face-to-face interviews, and focus-groups it was observed that the playgrounds are an essential public element for the citizens. In most cases, playgrounds are more than places for children to play. They bring together representatives of broader community groups, such as adolescents and teenagers, adults, and the elderly. Nevertheless, the liveable sites used by different groups are usually arenas for conflicts.

CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

Playgrounds are among the most mentioned proposals during the co-selection and co-diagnosis. At the same time, the need for nature-based solutions for the facilities and the pavements was emphasised. Expectations for different design for the newly built playgrounds were identified. Parents expressed their wishes to have new playgrounds that promote innovation, allow creativity through games, and combine playing and learning. Some citizens suggest a more precise separation of user groups through organizing different subzones.

Best Practices and References

City park Dobrich; Danube garden, Silistra; South Park, Sofia; Musical outdoor playground, Geo Milev park, Sofia

Restoration of a multipurpose sports field

Zone HEALTH ENERGY, Subzone 2

Description

The multifunctional sports field at the place of the pre-existing sport courts will be the main element of the intervention zone Health Energy. The field is currently out of use and is plagued by public perceptions of danger and criminal activities. The reintegration of the sports field in the urban fabric will benefit mostly the young adults in the vicinity and will enrich the spectrum of local users of the space through providing communal activities related to healthy outdoor pursuits.

Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- Provides new opportunities for healthy outdoor social activities;
- Motivates citizens to develop a connection with the site through changing the image of the zone and the subjective perception of danger among the inhabitants;
- Enriches the spectrum of citizens' proactive involvement in local sports events;

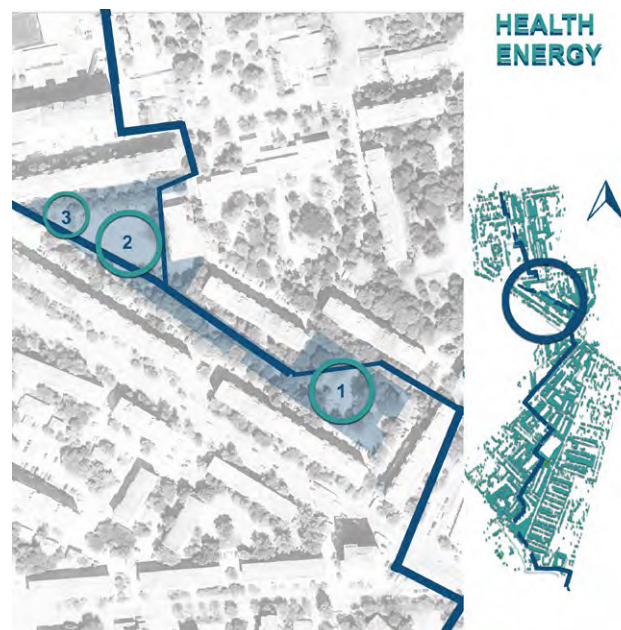
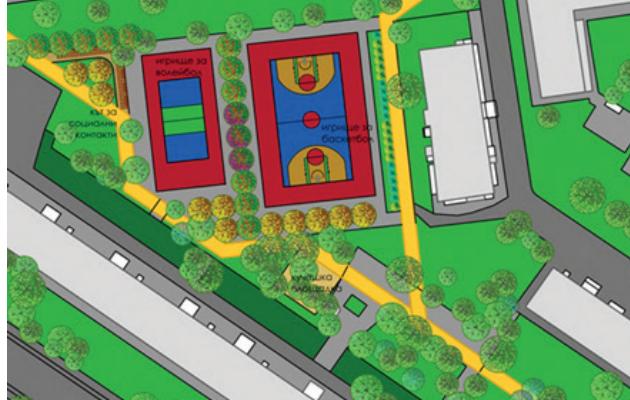
CHALLENGES

- Maintenance of equipment and flooring
- Protection against vandalism
- Conflict management
- Organization and management of the facilities
- Providing non limited access for all

Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

The unmaintained playground and the adjoining abandoned building were pointed out as an unpleasant and dangerous spots in the neighbourhood during the walkthrough, cultural mapping, face-to-face interviews, focus-groups and the workshops. All participants agreed on the need to take action to renovate both the abandoned playground and the building next to it.



CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

Participants in the Co-selection and Co-design Workshops in Svoboda shared their desire to see the playground restored and accessible for everyone. They outlined that the other sports facilities nearby, including the newly built ones, are only available for a fee. They also suggested a more flexible organization of multifunctional sport courts that would allow for practicing different sports. Adolescents and teenagers suggested a skate park and down-hill facility.

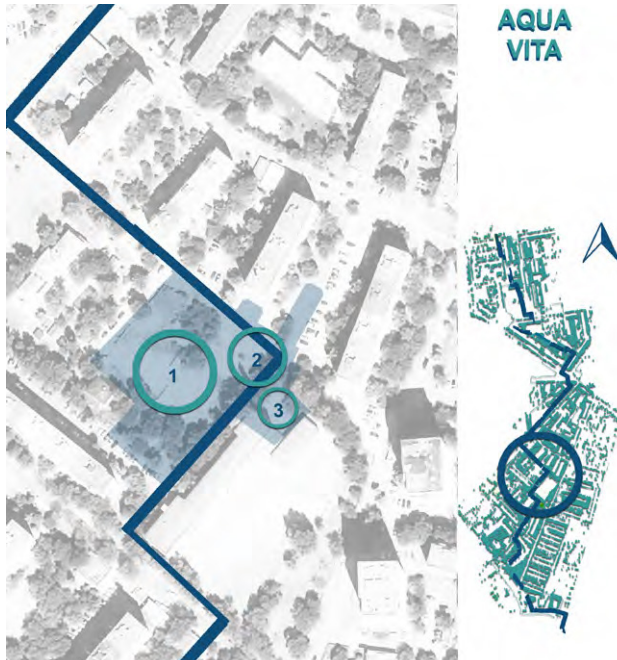
Best Practices and References

Danube garden, Silistra; Knyazhevska garden, Sofia



Outdoor gym / Sport activities, a neighborhood open space for social and sport activities

Zone AQUA VITA, subzone 2



Description

The neighbourhood open space is developed around a small square for implementation of social NBSs and cultural events. That kind of place aims to accommodate a diversity of leisure, recreation, sport and social activities. Natural and recycled materials will be used for the constructions of open-air fitness, sitting and meeting place, and space for outdoor games. These proposals were adopted during the workshops with the citizens who shared expectations about revival of the place and making it attractive and comfortable for people of different ages.

Positive aspects/challenges

POSITIVE

- More possibilities for sport outdoors thus promoting active and healthy lifestyles;
- A comfortable open-air social place for people from the neighbourhood;
- Renovation of an abandoned space that many people pass through but don't occupy.

CHALLENGES

- To protect the fitness equipment from vandalism and fire;
- To create a place that the residents will recognize as their own and will use and keep it.

Participation process to use the NBS

CO-DIAGNOSTIC

The citizens, who participated in face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and workshops often required from the municipal authority to build additional sports facilities. On one hand, need for such facilities is proved by the survey results reporting a large share of respondents performing heavy and medium-heavy activities, which do not happen outdoors. On the other hand, during the expert observation and the behavioural mapping, the use of outdoor gyms and open-air sports facilities in the school was observed.

CO-SELECTION & CO-DESIGN

Groups of young people are systematically using outdoor fitness equipment in the Park Gorska kultura. Some of these facilities are self-made by the groups mentioned. During the Behavioural mapping, some of these youngsters declared their readiness to participate in creating such facilities in public places. Involving their energy in the co-design process would positively affect community development and provoke more people to be active in co-creating urban open space.

Best Practices and References

Borisova garden – urban forest part

