

## THEMATIC REPORT: E1 ON RAISING THE CAPACITY BUILDING IN MANAGING - ORGANIZING URBAN GARDENS

In occasion of the on-line meeting for the **Krakow TNM on November 23rd 2020** the actions implemented to raise partners' capacity building have been built to foster the exchange of experience on "successes" and "hardships" met along the Ru:rbán journey. The main aim was to let each partner have the opportunity to express learnings, advice, reflections to each other, as much as possible.

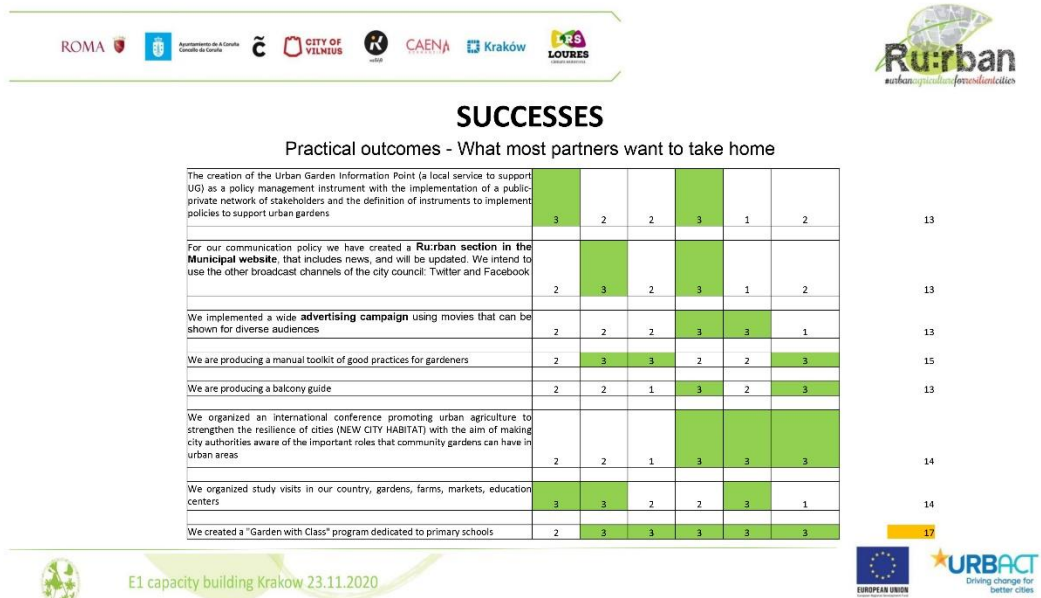
### Let's work – E1 session (part 1) - Successes

Before the meeting each partner was asked to express their preference among the major achievements reached by everyone, as reported in the FLLs. The successes were recollected and divided in two main areas, practical outcomes and strategic outcomes. Each partner was asked to express a score from 1 to 3. The results have been shared during the meeting. It is significative that the favourite successful practical outcome, where all cities converged considering it as the most valuable achievement, is the involvement of schools in gardening. All partners agree that in an era where kids' lives are more sedentary, gardens support and encourage healthful eating as a key component of children's physical wellbeing, which can aid their academic and social success too. Schools have a central role in raising awareness on urban gardening issues. Involving children means involving also their families and the same for the teachers. But most of all gardens provide an experiential, hands-on learning on environment particularly appreciated by teachers and families after the pandemic crisis.



"Garden with class", Krakow.

The favourite successful strategic outcomes instead are three, 1) the involvement of different city departments to collaborate on urban gardening issues 2) the continuing of the ULG beyond the project 3) the creation of opportunities for the network of members of various gardens to exchange their experiences, even simply for example, by making a meeting room available even during the winter.



Ppt slides with the scores



These choices express the understanding of how crucial and precious is the collaboration and coordination among different departments of the city authority, to obtain results and effective policies. Secondly, they express the importance given to

the ULG groups. The desire on one side to treasure all the hard work conducted so far with the project, so to make the ULG members a presence that will work also after the project has ended, and on the other side, to offer facilities such as an indoor “space” in alternative to the garden outdoor spaces to foster activities that consolidate the groups in all seasons. This demonstrates the vital role the ULG members have had in this project.

### Let's work – E1 session (part 2) - Hardships

During the meeting a shared reflection on hardships was proposed to actively involve each participant. The recollected hardships expressed in the FLLs have been divided in three spheres concerning: human relations, physical sphere, strategy.

Four discussion rounds were prepared in such a way that for every round the cities that had expressed a specific hardship would receive advice from the other cities.




## PROBLEM SOLVING & SOLUTION SHARING


### HARDSHIPS

Human relations sphere (ROUND 1)



- The conflict **individuality vs group**/vegetable garden.
- The gardeners and users are always women, we wonder how we can attract **men**.
- The difficulty of implementation of the gardens is due to the **coordination** from the municipality to the associations and from the associations to the gardeners.



CALL FOR: CAEN – VILNIUS – THESSALONIKI – A CORUNA



E1 capacity building Krakow 23.11.2020



### Round 1

*Issue men* – in France we are balanced. Usually in kitchen workshops there are more women but then men are involved for work that requires physical efforts, they seem to like best (Caen).

*Issue individual vs community* – we have a tradition with individual gardens, so people choose if they want to join one or the other since we have a double choice. It is true that it is difficult to keep a common vision in a community (Caen). We also have this conflict. We put a common area and fostered common activities but had problems. Our advice is to promote events such as dinners, projections, celebrations

where all the participants are active and engaged. In other words, to cultivate a culture of common activities to enhance the recreational sense of gardens. A collaborative behaviour is a lesson for all, municipalities and gardeners. In certain situations when the community cannot cope the municipality should come in and give a hand (Thessaloniki).

*Issue coordination* – it is important to keep the link between city administration and gardens so the advice is to go on field as much as possible (Caen). The key for us is to multiply Gardenizers. We need more ourselves even though at the moment it is not clear how we will do it (Vilnius). We instead feel we will change the role of the administration and the key message is that the city will not do everything. This implies garden communities will have to take more initiatives to find funds and be more aware and active. We think that a place for gathering is important for the community life. For example, a table and shade where to meet and a multifunctional room too (A Coruna).



### PROBLEM SOLVING & SOLUTION SHARING

#### HARDSHIPS

Physical realm sphere **(ROUND 2)**

- The municipality does not own **land**, because the whole land is either state owned or privately owned. However, the municipality is in charge of green spaces within the city.
- We have a **lack of space** for Urban Gardens around the City center.
- Difficulty on change the **old local agricultural practices** to organic farming.



CALL FOR: KRAKOW - CAEN – THESSALONIKI



E1 capacity building Krakow 23.11.2020



### Round 2

*Issue land scarcity* – if the city has scarcity of land, an option could be to consider private areas owned by churches, schools, etc. or transform allotment gardens into community gardens (Krakow). An opportunity can be to reserve areas within social housing. For example, we are responsible of the management of some green social housing areas and we can organize gardens there. Another option are temporary gardens. There can be areas that take time for the foreseen building phase, these areas can become temporarily urban gardens that might last long. If the municipality is involved the private building company might be more favourably interested (Caen).



The Regulations can help if for example they refer to the possibility to utilize small spaces for temporary plots before the construction phase. A strategy in the city is needed because land with no use is a potential. A further potential are roofs, balconies, etc. All the areas in the city centre are always more attractive (Thessaloniki).

*Issue organic farming* – unfortunately farmers use pesticides all around the countryside near our city. For local organic farming it is not easy to find land (Caen). Workshops and courses to educate; foster cultivation alternatives like growing food in balconies, windows. When people start the experience to grow, they appreciate more the success and value organic issues (Krakow).





### PROBLEM SOLVING & SOLUTION SHARING

#### HARDSHIPS (ROUND 3)

Strategy sphere:

- The low involvement of highly decision-making **city officials**.
- The biggest challenge is to design a project with **no equivalent** locally. We need to experiment, assess, take a step back and move forward at all times. It is also the case for our project leader which is a brand-new association with **no experience** so far.
- Urban gardening as a practice has been abandoned for many years and there is **no tradition** of urban agriculture in the collective memory of the city.



CALL FOR: A CORUNA – VILNIUS - LOURES



E1 capacity building Krakow 23.11.2020



### Round 3

*Issue no tradition* – it is important to give many occasions to the citizens. Incentivize and amplify are our targets even though we have a tradition in cultivating. People though are reluctant so to encourage them we need to propose plots and offer funds, like 1,200 euro to start. We think financial support is crucial (Vilnius).

*Issue city officials* – to involve politicians is very important. In our case their involvement added to the desire of citizens to cultivate has given results. What we needed was a strategy to force inclusion issues, and this was a key factor since both citizens and politicians wanted a solution. The challenge is to have plenty gardens. Ru:rbán helped! (Loures)

## PROBLEM SOLVING & SOLUTION SHARING

### HARDSHIPS (ROUND 4)

Strategy sphere:

- Not all **schools** are interested in urban gardens due to the teachers' work overload. There is also a lack of financing for the creation of the school gardens.
- The gardeners and users of the plots are **individual citizens**, not associations.
- Regulations and gardening manual not sufficient for new and expand existing urban gardens. **Financial support** is needed as well as **engagement of various stakeholders and service providers** (water company, park maintenance company etc.) Local communities and NGOs lack resources to establish gardens on their own.



CALL FOR: LOURES - CAEN – KRAKOW – THESSALONIKI



E1 capacity building Krakow 23.11.2020



### Round 4

*Issue financial support* – we have problems for this but we give basic elements such as water containers, operation tools, etc. Then the communities must organize themselves (Loures). Financial support is easy for small numbers but we should consider they will grow so it can become a problem (Krakow).

*Issue schools* – the problem is for the summer. It is important to engage parents and families. It was hard in the beginning to involve people but after the results of other schools more are willing to start (Krakow). In our case it is a challenge to involve schools and engage teachers because environmental courses are not part of school programs. The major problem is in fact the summer holidays. We think it is crucial to engage first of all the school directors. Probably new opportunities will arise because of the search of outdoor classrooms after the pandemic (Thessaloniki). Rather than have an edible garden in the school we have some gardens that work with schools. So the gardens are taken care of all year round. Very appreciated are summer camps in the gardens (Caen).

## CONCLUSIONS

It must be taken into consideration that it was an online meeting and nevertheless all Partners have been very proactive and participated with enthusiasm. This has been a very positive aspect of the meeting.

The interventions of each Partner have brought to evidence how much experience, attention and understanding has been gained during the project. The advice and comments given to each other were deep and proved how much the issue is cared for.

As mentioned before, schools and the education of future generations has proved to be a major concern. Among the focused issues it is worth underling also how important it is to cultivate a culture of common activities to enhance the recreational sense of gardens. This can be promoted organizing events such as dinners, projections, celebrations where all the participants are engaged. Other initiatives such as training and workshops are important for the communities too, facilitating the work for a common goal for example in cultivating in an organic and sustainable way respectful of natural resources and biodiversity. Also a “place” where the community can meet should always be foreseen, either it being around a pic-nic table, under the shade of a tree or in an indoor room.

Another important issue is that in order to keep a fruitful dialog between gardens and public administration, the public authority should foresee to be present now and then “on field”. The physical presence fosters relationships and deeper understanding.

It is also important not to centralize to many decisions on part of the municipality and let the communities organize themselves. At the same time a balance must be found in order to be present and of support to the communities in a realistic way the municipalities can afford. Not only in terms of financial support but for example giving a place where the community can meet, water access, training or other facilities feasible for the city.

Political support is vital for the administrators, urban gardens should be considered as part of a wider strategic policy that can concern food policies and/or other specific issues of the city that can be addressed involving gardening activities (such as integration issues). For sure the pandemic has changed the point of view of more citizens and administrators. All Partners know their work on urban gardening is a key element of a wider frame that are urban food policies, “levers to make cities evolve towards autonomy, local food and fight against climate change and the modification of agricultural practices into agro-ecology”.

Furthermore, urban gardens can be a temporary activity in nonutilized or underutilized urban land. Temporary gardens have an impact on the functioning and reception of urban spaces: they have a potential for improving the visual quality of the urban landscape; they can enrich a developing district with activities and foster social cohesion in areas where public space is not available.