

Municipalities as democratic facilitators of a green and just transition

A case catalogue showcasing how eight European municipalities unlocked the green potential of citizen action.

URBACT



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www.grafiskafdeling.dk
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Content

Preface and reading introduction	4
Working with Citizen Driven Climate Solutions	6
Unlocking the green potential of citizen action – COPE cases for inspiration	11
Unlocking the green potential of citizen action – cases that inspired COPE	39
Citizen engagement – a democratic necessity	47

Preface

Across Europe, municipalities and communities are pioneering creative, practical responses to today’s environmental and social challenges. This publication, identified and created by COPE partners, show-cases initiatives highlighting diverse approaches to sustainability, community engagement, and urban development across different European municipalities. It provides an array of practical interventions, key learnings, and collaborative models aimed at addressing environmental and social challenges.

Taken together, these case studies illustrate a broader trend: local action, rooted in citizen engagement and supported by flexible financing, can produce scalable models for sustainable, resilient cities. For policy-makers and local authorities, they provide a practical evidence base, demonstrating that sustainability and social well-being are achievable when communities are empowered to co-create solutions.

HOW TO READ THIS PUBLICATION

This publication presents the past 2½ years of the COPE partner’s work on developing and testing citizen driven climate solutions.

In section one, an article by Lead Partner introduces what the COPE project is building on and how this is done through cases in eight European cities.

The following sections consist of two case catalogues with case studies unlocking the green potential of citizen action. These are structured by the following themes: *Action Planning, Biodiversity, Branding, Community Centre, Education, Energy Efficiency, Food Waste, Heat Island, Mobility, Pocket Park, Urban Gardening, and Waste Management*. In the first case catalogue, the COPE cases are described to inspire how to develop place-based green actions in local neighborhoods in collaboration with local citizens and stakeholders. In the second case catalogue, cases that have inspired the methodology of COPE are unfolded.

Lastly, section four is an article by Lead Expert with reflections on the *COPE SCOPE* and the need for a democratic sustainability approach in citizen engagement.

Enjoy!

HIGHLIGHTS

Citizen co-creation is a resource multiplier. Projects that embedded participation from the outset, through local groups, school councils, or participatory budgeting, moved faster, cost less, and sustained outcomes longer. From Copenhagen’s waste communities to French schoolyard green-ing, direct involvement of residents, students, and associations proved essential for success.

Citizen participation as a driver of change. Education and awareness as catalysts: Programs like Eco-Schools in Portugal or food-waste awareness in Vilnius highlight how knowledge-shar-ing and visible tools shift everyday behaviors.

Small spaces, big gains. Square-metre pollinator plots, shade islands on residential streets, and re-imagined courtyards demonstrate that micro-interventions add up when neighbours are stewards.

Infrastructure + behaviour change = results. Where hardware (bins, vehicles, sensors) was paired with education and communications, performance improved markedly (e.g., biowaste separation, safer cycling habits).

Blended finance is becoming the norm. Municipal resources anchor delivery, complemented by regional/ national programmes and EU instruments; civil society, volunteer contributions and small private contributions often unlock momentum. This mix ensures both scalability and local ownership.

Working with Citizen Driven Climate Solutions

Working with Citizen Driven Climate Solutions

BY LINE SCHARLA LØJMAND, MAYA VESTERGAARD BIDSTRUP
AND ØYSTEIN LEONARSEN, CITY OF COPENHAGEN, LEAD
PARTNER URBACT APN NETWORK COPE

Building on the principles of a green and just transition, as defined in the European Green Deal to face climate change, the biodiversity and democratic crisis as described in the Baseline Study for the Coherent Place-based Climate Action (COPE)¹, change is needed at individual, structural, and societal levels to unlock the green potentials and transition.

For cities, the built environment is one of the largest energy consumers and CO2 emitters in the EU. But also, the general degeneration of the biosphere is a city challenge. The changes necessary are so enormous that we as individuals easily get caught in despair, hopelessness or frustration. Also, the urgent issues can be experienced as abstract and far from everyday life. This can lead to a feeling of powerlessness.

The COPE project is closely linked to policies on achieving a greener Europe and to bring citizens closer to urban policy development towards a net zero carbon economy. Because vulnerable communities and citizens often are the ones who are paying the price of climate change and see themselves as excluded, the overarching agenda is to invite the whole society, all communities, and social groups to join the journey of positive change.

Traditionally, at a structural level, different agendas from policymakers and governments demand that the citizens act. Local needs are not directly addressed by the central policy, and dialogue between the municipality and local actors is often complex or absent. This so-called top-down approach is ill suited in the process of engaging citizens to play an active role in urban development.

This calls for deep changes and new methods to succeed with the green transition. Change is needed both in our political institutions, the way we govern and plan our cities, and in civil society.

Issues that are recognizable in eight European cities of the COPE network; A Coruña (ES), Bistrita (RO), Copenhagen (DK), Kavala (EL), Korydallos (EL), Pombal (PT), Saint-Quentin (FR) and Vilnius (LT).

Therefore, the aim of COPE is to bring local authorities, citizens, and stakeholders together and empower communities to make positive changes throughout their everyday life.

To make changes at a societal level, COPE aims to be an interactive membrane between the structural and individual level and works with two aspects of the issues. Firstly, COPE aims to transform the role of the municipality from the decision-making authority to a more facilitating unit and meet the citizens on the street with a new narrative. Secondly, COPE works by engaging the local citizens in defining their local challenges and solutions and strengthening the empowerment of the citizens and their individual ownership.

In COPE we aim to find methods for working towards positive social tipping points in favor of the just green transition. And the URBACT program² is a very relevant framework to pursue this goal.

COHERENT PLACE-BASED CLIMATE ACTION

To unlock the green potentials of citizen action, COPE works with a place-based approach, recognizing citizens and local action groups as fundamental stakeholders through integrated actions to accelerate the green transition.

¹ Skot, S. (red.) (2023): Unlocking the Green Potentials of Citizen Action. Link: [www.urbact.eu/sites/default/files/2024-04/COPE_Baseline Study and Network Roadmap FINAL.pdf](http://www.urbact.eu/sites/default/files/2024-04/COPE_Baseline%20Study%20and%20Network%20Roadmap%20FINAL.pdf)

² URBACT funds and supports networks of cities in the EU, by building capacity of local stakeholders in the design and implementation of integrated and participatory policies, and by sharing knowledge and good city practices. <https://urbact.eu/sites/default/files/2023-12/URBACT%20IV%20presentation%20FR.pdf>

COPE's approach is the opposite of a "one size fits all" solution. It is about working with communities and engaging citizens to make changes in their local environments in favor of local climate and biodiversity challenges. COPE aims to step out of the top-down structure to work on the societal level, focusing on co-creating the built environment. This is represented by working locally, making small changes, changing our mindset, and spreading examples through local actions.

Therefore, with diverse approaches to sustainability, community engagement, and urban development across different municipalities, the COPE partners are working with different interventions, models, and activities in addressing environmental and social challenges.

A place-based approach

Different places have unique characteristics, needs, challenges, and possibilities. Applying a place-based approach means focusing on a defined geographic location, the local needs and attributes of the locality. Places are chosen based on a problem-oriented approach, and COPE aims with a local focus to keep local challenges and possibilities concrete, relatable, and understandable for the citizens.

An example of the place-based approach is seen in the neighborhood of Kanaria, Korydallos. An abandoned school represents a small-scale project. The building itself provides space for local activities supporting sustainable urban development.

In contrast, the mobility plan of Bistrița is a large-scale project. Bike racks are located in different places throughout the city to increase the number of passengers using bikes instead of cars.

The power of local resources

An Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach is about recognizing the strengths of citizens and acknowledging that they can drive action themselves. Hereby, COPE wants to strengthen the empowerment of the citizens and their individual ownership of the locality. In collaboration with local authorities, ideas from citizens based on their resources, hopes, and ambitions are seen as local action for change. Adding the ABCD approach, local citizens are understood as having resources with capacity and power that can take action in fostering meaningful change.

An example of the ABCD approach is seen in Kavala. Here, local stakeholders have turned a site into a more accessible and welcoming city park to encourage community use. The revitalization of the park has been initiated, designed, and created by different local groups who also facilitate workshops and craft activities in the park. Furthermore, materials from the Municipality's warehouse have been reused in the park to raise awareness about circularity.

In Vilnius, the local community works with food waste reduction to make use of food as local resources. Community composting turn food scraps into compost, and public community fridges are for redistributing surplus food and reducing waste. Hereby, local resources are recycled. Furthermore, the project works with strengthening local skills and competences in environmental education by handling food.

A holistic way of interaction

Fundamentally, the COPE project works in a cross-disciplinary manner within local authorities to integrate the local context into policymaking. This is achieved through co-creation and by bringing decision-making closer to citizens and local stakeholders. Following a holistic approach is about working in an integrated manner with local issues based on city policy focus.

An example of a holistic process is seen in the neighborhood of Sønderbro, Copenhagen. A collaboration between the administration, residents and stakeholders is established to share a direction for the green transition. A local climate group consisting of residents and local stakeholders ensures that there is room for conversations about the area's development supported by sparring from the City of Copenhagen. Furthermore, a food community is created with different agendas and to engage multiple local user groups to foster community and climate actions.

Several stakeholders are located in the neighborhood of Sagrada Familia, A Coruña. Visible activities at the street level seek to raise awareness among the local stakeholders and together boost and revitalize the area.

Transparency in decision-making

To work with engaging citizens in place-based green action, new internal procedures in governance structures are required. Part of this emphasizes transparency in decision-making processes. Therefore, COPE is working with local working groups as part of installing trust and a sense of ownership. These groups are part of creating a democratic forum, discovering local assets, and slowing decision-making on behalf of the citizens. As part of working with citizen engagement, the COPE partners apply a methodology for exchange and learning, which promotes visibility and interaction by testing small scale actions.

An example of transparency in decision-making is seen in Pombal. A local working group has worked with place-based actions, closing the inner city to car traffic temporarily. As a tool for dialog between the municipality and the citizens, posters were placed near the actions to inform the locals about the happenings. Furthermore, passers-by could rate the ideas and give feedback through QR codes. This illustrates how to work with transparency in decision-making in public places.

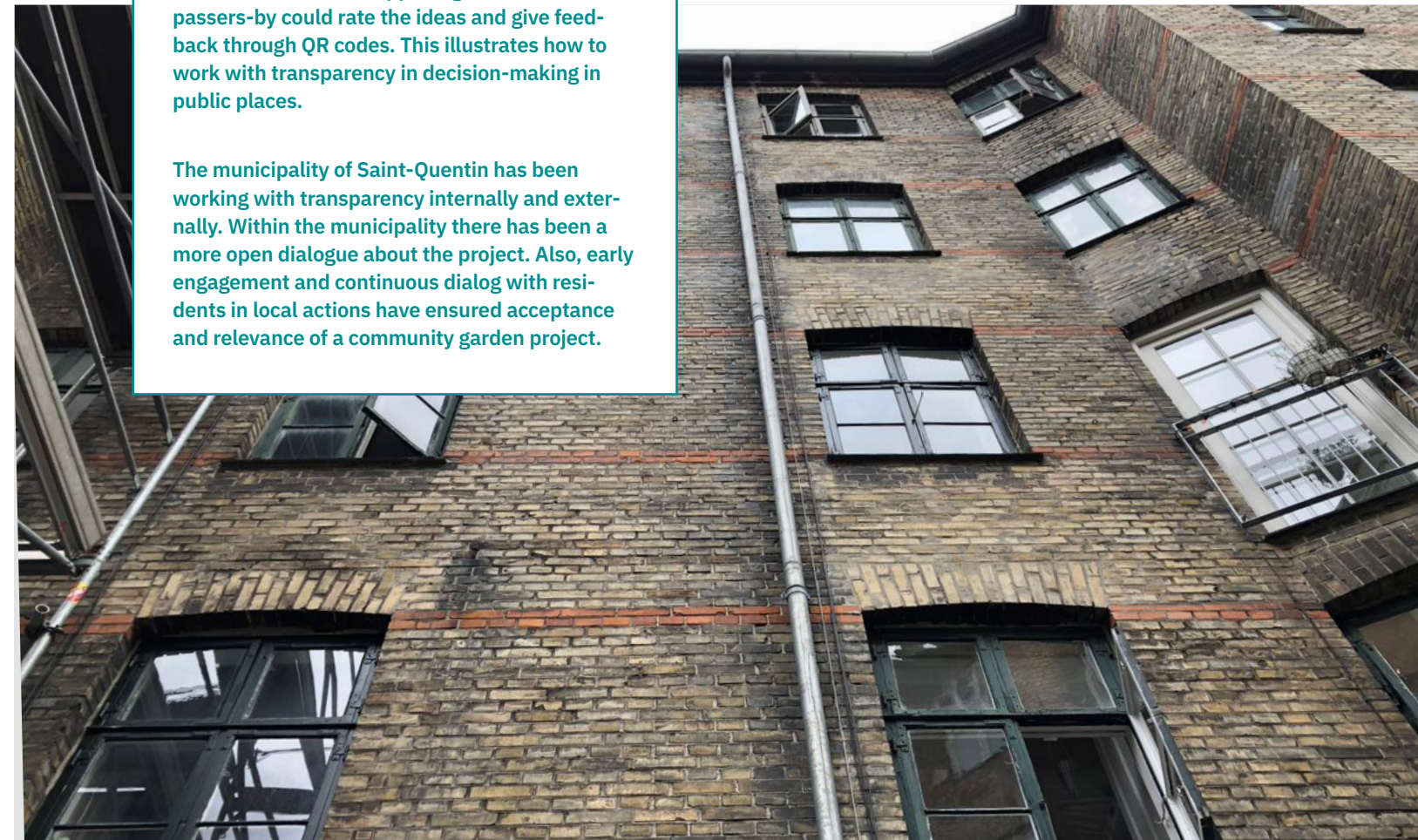
The municipality of Saint-Quentin has been working with transparency internally and externally. Within the municipality there has been a more open dialogue about the project. Also, early engagement and continuous dialog with residents in local actions have ensured acceptance and relevance of a community garden project.

WALK THE TALK – TALK THE WALK

Making the often very abstract and global agendas of Green and Just Transition tangible and concrete is an important outcome of COPE. The combination of strategic conversations, outlined in the different Integrated Action Plans³ and the testing actions⁴, the coherence and local co-production of solutions, has been strengthened. Through this holistic, integrated transparent process, the capacity for action is now at a higher level.

By not only empowering agencies within the municipality but also the local community, the communities can move further ahead, and the municipality can reproduce and/or scale the concrete actions and strategies among other communities in the municipality.

If you want to dive deeper into the different strategies, you can find inspiration in the partners' Integrated Action Plan, and the case catalogue provides you with easy-to-use ideas for local actions which can be found on our website, www.urbact.eu/networks/cope



³ Each partner city has co-created an Integrated Action Plan with the local stakeholders, organized in a local working group – the so-called Urbact Local Group. The Integrated Action Plan integrates both the strategy for the community and outlines concrete actions that the community will implement the coming years.

⁴ As part of the co-creation of the action plan, the local working group has tested prototypes of actions. These testing actions have mobilized new actors, opened the local conversation, and tested the integrity and quality of actions in the final plan.



Unlocking the green potential of citizen action

COPE cases for inspiration.

The following eight case descriptions are testing actions from the Integrated Action Planning network COPE, where eight municipalities were developing place-based green actions in local neighborhoods in collaboration with local citizens and stakeholders, moving from being decision-makers to becoming facilitators.

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ACTION PLANNING

Community Workshop on Building Renovation and Local Visioning

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

The action required coordination among diverse stakeholders and effective facilitation of a participatory process. Complexity arose from balancing different community perspectives, managing expectations, and translating local input into actionable design insights.

MODERATE

TARGET GROUP:

Local youth and aspiring entrepreneurs, residents of the Kanaria neighborhood, and stakeholders interested in urban regeneration.

SHORT DESCRIPTION:

The Municipality of Korydallos held an interactive workshop engaging residents, youth, and entrepreneurs in co-designing the Kanaria Entrepreneurial Hub. Participants assessed proposed actions, added ideas, noted challenges, and shared their vision for the area.

GOAL:

To test whether a participatory workshop could effectively gather feedback, enhance the design with community-driven proposals, and ensure alignment with local needs and aspirations.

OUTCOME/KEY LEARNINGS:

Participants contributed via open discussions and questionnaires. Their input strengthened the action plan's relevance and feasibility, confirming inclusive co-design as an effective tool for urban planning.

WHAT MADE IT WORK:

Clear communication, inclusive facilitation, and trust built through the collaborative process enabled open dialogue and constructive input.

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT / TRANSFER:

Short, focused participatory workshops can effectively collect community feedback and strengthen the legitimacy and quality of urban regeneration projects.



Korydallos
Greece



Foto: Municipality of Korydallos

Scale: Local – Kanaria Neighborhood
Stakeholders: Municipality of Korydallos, local associations, civil society
Partners: Local youth, residents, entrepreneurs
Beneficiaries: Community of Korydallos and future users of the hub
Duration: 1 day (25 September 2024)
Budget/Funding: COPE project
Timeline: September 2024
Staffing: Municipal staff, facilitators, ULG contributors

www.korydallos.gr

SEE MORE ABOUT
KORYDALLOS' WORK HERE:





1m² Biodiversity Garden Project

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Technically simple, but coordination across six sites, residents, partners, and the municipality added complexity.

MODERATE

TARGET GROUP:

Citizens of all ages, including families, seniors, and youth.

SHORT DESCRIPTION:

Implemented in six Vilnius neighborhoods in summer 2024, the 1m² Biodiversity Garden Project showed how tiny green patches can support urban biodiversity. Each plot featured insect-friendly perennials and was maintained by nearby residents. With support from NGOs and the municipality, the project combined community action and environmental education to highlight ecological value in everyday spaces.

GOAL:

To promote urban biodiversity, foster strong local communities, raise awareness of ecological value in micro-spaces, and engage citizens in hands-on environmental stewardship.

OUTCOME/KEY LEARNINGS:

- Small green spaces strengthen biodiversity and community pride
- Resident involvement ensures continuity
- Signage boosts ecological awareness
- Municipal support and partnerships are essential

WHAT MADE IT WORK:

- Strong community ownership
- Active resident maintenance
- Clear coordination by NGO “Idėjų Lysvė” + municipal support
- Simple design and accessible materials
- Visible results kept people engaged

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT / TRANSFER:

- Small, low-cost patches easily activate communities
- Use visible micro-gardens in public/residential areas
- Engage local volunteers
- Add educational signage to connect people with urban nature



Foto: L. Petruske

Scale: 6 plots
Stakeholders: Residents, Municipality, NGO “Idėjų Lysvė”
Partners: NGO’s: Beepart, SODAS 2123
Beneficiaries: Local residents, pollinators, wider community
Budget: ~€1,000 (municipal micro-grant + in-kind support)
Timeline: Spring planning/ Summer installation/ Ongoing care
Staffing: 1 coordinator + 6 volunteer teams

www.vilnius.lt/naujienos/su-klimato-kaita-susijusias-problemas-padedaspresti-ir-bendruomenes

SEE MORE ABOUT
VILNIUS’ WORK HERE:





BRANDING

Building a New Neighbourhood Narrative through Co-Creation

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Required coordination between residents and local stakeholders, involving shared decision-making and behavioural change, adding complexity beyond a simple single-actor initiative.

MODERATE

TARGET GROUP:

The primary audience is the public, visitors, and external stakeholders, whose perception of the neighbourhood is expected to improve through the new shared narrative.

SHORT DESCRIPTION:

A co-created campaign was initiated with residents and local organisations to shape Sagrada Familia's narrative through participatory workshops, defining community values, messages, and symbols. The shared story strengthened pride, participation, and the neighbourhood's external image.

GOAL:

To improve external perception of Sagrada Familia by co-creating a shared narrative with residents and local organisations, strengthening pride, participation, and a positive image of the area.

OUTCOME/KEY LEARNINGS:

- Stronger neighbourhood identity and pride
- Lessons on community engagement and co-creation

WHAT MADE IT WORK:

- Co-creation: Residents and local groups define the neighbourhood's identity and values
- Trust and dialogue: Community input ensures relevance
- External visibility: Authentic messaging enhances the area's image to outsiders

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT / TRANSFER:

- Participatory workshops: Engage residents in defining community values and stories
- Branding and communication: Create authentic visuals and messages to ensure consistent external perception



A Coruña
Spain



Scale: Neighbourhood / local community

Stakeholders: Residents, neighbourhood organisations, municipality

Beneficiaries: Residents, community groups, local businesses; wider public benefits from improved perception

Staffing: Municipal team, local working group, external design and communication support

<https://www.coruna.gal/medioambiente/es?argIdioma=es>

SEE MORE ABOUT
A CORUÑA'S WORK HERE:



Foto: Municipality of A Coruña



BRANDING

THE NEST

– Engaging Youth in Naming and Designing the Identity of the Kanaria Entrepreneurial Hub

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

The action required collaboration between the municipality, educators, and students, blending participatory design, communication, and digital tools. The main challenge was aligning school and municipal timelines while keeping youth engagement and creativity authentic.

MODERATE

TARGET GROUP:

Students from the Vocational High School of Korydallos, specializing in design, communication, and entrepreneurship skills.

SHORT DESCRIPTION:

Students co-created the name and visual identity of the new Kanaria Entrepreneurial Hub, which will turn the former neighborhood school into a youth innovation space. The process included creative workshops, teacher mentoring, and proposal presentations.

GOAL:

To foster youth participation, digital inclusion, and creative ownership in the city's regeneration process, ensuring that the hub's identity reflects local values and the aspirations of young people.

OUTCOME/KEY LEARNINGS:

The selected concept, "THE NEST – Kanaria Entrepreneurial Hub", symbolizes a nurturing space for ideas and collaboration. The action demonstrated how creative education can feed into urban innovation.

WHAT MADE IT WORK:

Strong collaboration between the municipality and the school, clear facilitation, and the freedom given to students to express their creativity and sense of belonging.

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT / TRANSFER:

Cities can replicate this low-cost, high-impact model by engaging students or young creatives in place-branding and urban design processes, linking education with local regeneration.



Korydallos
Greece



Foto: Municipality of Korydallos

Scale: Local – Kanaria Neighborhood
Stakeholders: Municipality of Korydallos, 1st Vocational High School
Beneficiaries: Students, local youth, Kanaria residents
Duration: November 2023 – May 2024
Budget/Funding: COPE project
Staffing: Municipal team, school teachers, 30 students

www.korydallos.gr

SEE MORE ABOUT
KORYDALLOS' WORK HERE:





BRANDING

BLOOMING POMBAL

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

The initiative has a low level of complexity as it mainly relies on an effective communication campaign to engage citizens, without requiring significant resources or complex coordination.

LOW

TARGET GROUP:

Citizens living in the historical centre.

SHORT DESCRIPTION:

Blooming Pombal is a community initiative aimed at beautifying the historic centre by encouraging residents, shopkeepers, and institutions to decorate balconies and storefronts with flowers. The municipality provides flower boxes free of charge to registered participants, with distribution coinciding with the International Day of Happiness or the Health and Wellness Fair. The project promotes citizen engagement, strengthens local identity, and contributes to sustainability goals by improving urban aesthetics and fostering environmental awareness.

GOAL:

To enhance the visual appeal of the city and mobilize the community around the care of the public space.

OUTCOME/KEY LEARNINGS:

The initiative made the historic centre greener and more visually appealing. A notable outcome was that some shop owners placed flower boxes in front of their shops to prevent illegal parking, showing how aesthetic actions can also improve urban management.

WHAT MADE IT WORK:

The main success factor was the appeal of receiving free goods, which encouraged participation. Additionally, because flowers require ongoing care, the initiative fostered a sense of ownership and responsibility among citizens, contributing to the improvement and preservation of public spaces.

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT / TRANSFER:

- Adapting flower types and distribution strategies to local conditions, ensuring cultural relevance and community engagement
- Linking the intervention to international events to enhance visibility and strengthen impact



Pombal
Portugal



Foto: Município de Pombal

Scale: any that you wish
Beneficiaries: citizens
Duration: 1 month for application
Budget/Funding: 20€ per flower box and two flowers
Timeline: during spring
Staffing: 1 facilitator

www.odslocal.pt/boas-praticas/pombal-florido-3592

SEE MORE ABOUT
POMBAL'S WORK HERE:





EDUCATION

Environmental Education Activities

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Required coordination among multiple local actors and combining education with community engagement.

MODERATE

TARGET GROUP:

Local residents of Sagrada Familia, with a focus on school-children, families, and community organisations engaged in sustainability and environmental awareness.

SHORT DESCRIPTION:

Playful, hands-on environmental activities engaged the Sagrada Familia community and promoted sustainable habits, including:

- **Recycling workshops** in schools
- **Climate and energy sessions** with NGO Ecodesarrollo Gaia
- **Outdoor activities:** seed bombs, recycled pots, mini solar cookers, recycling games
- **Household guidance** on the five-container recycling system
- **Sustainable decoration workshops** for children at the library

GOAL:

To empower the neighbourhood to collaboratively develop the knowledge, skills, and motivation to adopt more sustainable daily practices.

OUTCOME/KEY LEARNINGS:

- Play-based learning: Hands-on activities engage children
- Public spaces: Outdoor activities boost participation and community
- Local partnerships: Collaboration between schools, NGOs, and the municipality amplifies impact

WHAT MADE IT WORK:

- Community involvement in co-creating activities
- Inclusivity: activities accessible to children, families, and community members
- Creative and fun approaches that motivate participation

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT / TRANSFER:

- Use public spaces creatively
- Collaboration between municipal services, local schools, and NGOs
- Tailor activities to meet community interests and requests



A Coruña
Spain



Foto: Municipality of A Coruña

Scale: Neighbourhood
Stakeholders: Two neighbourhood schools, the library, Ecodesarrollo Gaia NGO, and residents
Beneficiaries: Children, people taking part in the NGO's support programmes, and residents
Budget/Funding: Municipal budget
Timeline: 2025 – ongoing (final school and library activities scheduled for December 2025)

www.coruna.gal/medioambiente/es?argIdioma=es

SEE MORE ABOUT
A CORUÑA'S WORK HERE:





EDUCATION

Cultivation Community in Hørgården's Urban Garden

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Required a moderate budget and collaboration with the local social housing organisation, the City's Urban Renewal Office, and a food-cultivation NGO to provide knowledge and workshops. Between workshops, tasks included buying supplies and handling communication.

MODERATE

TARGET GROUP:

The main target groups are adults and children from the neighborhood, members of the urban garden association, and anyone else interested in learning about cultivation.

SHORT DESCRIPTION:

To support Hørgården's Urban Garden, a series of free workshops were held, focusing on gardening, cooking, composting, seed collection, reducing food waste, etc., thereby strengthening the green community surrounding the urban garden. Each session emphasized practical knowledge and concluded with eating the harvested crops together. At the end of the workshop series, the participants received digital material with tips from the course.

GOAL:

To create a vibrant community around Hørgården's Urban Garden, where vegetable cultivation goes hand in hand with good neighborliness.

OUTCOME/KEY LEARNINGS:

The initiative has successfully connected diverse groups and encouraged shared experiences. Additionally, the distribution of digital course material extends the learning impact, enabling participants to continue applying the knowledge gained beyond the workshops.

WHAT MADE IT WORK:

- Practical, hands-on workshops with immediate, visible results (harvested crops).
- Integration of social activities (shared meals) to strengthen relationships.

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT / TRANSFER:

- Combination of practical activities with social engagement to build community.
- Providing take-home or digital materials to extend learning beyond sessions.



Copenhagen
Denmark



Foto: Områdefornyelsen Sønderbro

Stakeholders: Local social housing organisation, Food cultivation NGO, Urban Renewal
Duration: Series of workshops (several weeks)
Staffing: Workshop facilitators

www.soenderbro.kk.dk

SEE MORE ABOUT
COPENHAGEN'S WORK HERE:





FOOD WASTE

COMMUNITY FRIDGE

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Involves multiple actors, coordination, modest funding, and behaviour change.

MODERATE

TARGET GROUP:

Antakalnis district eldership, Vilnius Municipality, Local citizens, NGOs, and Private actors.

SHORT DESCRIPTION:

The Community Fridge, opened in May 2024 in Sapiega Park, allows residents and food businesses to leave good-quality surplus food for others to take, reducing waste and supporting those in need. Maintained by volunteers and community members, it operates 24/7 and is the first initiative of its kind in Lithuania, supported by Vilnius Municipality. Volunteers join via the Facebook group “Bendruomenės šaldytuvas Sapiegy parke savoriai.”

GOAL:

To reduce food waste, enable food sharing for those in need, and promote sustainability.

OUTCOME/KEY LEARNINGS:

- Operating successfully for over a year with strict food safety and hygiene rules
- Volunteer support is essential
- Residents are curious and actively engage with the fridge
- High turnover of food shows strong community need
- The fridge has become a small social hub where people interact and share experiences
- People value both the support it provides and the prevention of food waste

WHAT MADE IT WORK:

- Support from the Municipality, NGO’s, and private catering sector
- Volunteers’ involvement

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT / TRANSFER:

- Involvement of private sector
- Extensive dissemination



Vilnius
Lithuania



Foto: R. Denisevicius

Scale: City district level

Stakeholders: Vilnius Municipality, NGO Miesto laboratorija

Partners: Local cafés, restaurants, and bakeries supporting the initiative (Miesto Laboratorija, San Diego Pub, TASTE MAP, Crustum)

Beneficiaries: Citizens

Duration: Since May 2024

Budget/Funding: ~€4,000 (Municipal Community Support Programme)

Staffing: Miesto laboratorija and volunteers

www.facebook.com/p/Bendruomen%C4%97s-%C5%A1aldytuvas-Sapiegy-parke-61559839494215/

SEE MORE ABOUT
VILNIUS’ WORK HERE:





BIKE RACKS FOR SCHOOLS

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Required a dedicated budget but was otherwise straightforward to implement. The action was coordinated by the municipality together with the management of 14 schools, including procurement and installation carried out by municipal departments.

MODERATE

TARGET GROUP:

Pupils from Bistrița schools, age group 10-18. The wider target group includes all the citizens, as children go home and tell their parents how to change their habits.

SHORT DESCRIPTION:

Bike lanes were built recently in Bistrița to counteract the city's suffocation with cars. To encourage their use, the municipality installed 14 bike racks in schools. The initiative was developed through dialogue with local actors who believed that the bike racks would help promote green mobility and strengthen the use of the new bike lanes.

GOAL:

To advocate the use of bicycles.

OUTCOME/KEY LEARNINGS:

- Listening to the needs of the stakeholders helped identify an initiative that matched local needs.
- Framing sustainability in terms of comfort, cost-saving, and community well-being, not just environmental responsibility, increased the local support of the bike lanes.

WHAT MADE IT WORK:

- A dedicated budget
- Involvement of stakeholders, including teachers and local suppliers
- A coherent project team

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT / TRANSFER:

- Transferable to cities facing challenges in green mobility.
- Involve the local actors in the decision-making process.
- Anchoring the action in schools or institutions provides quick access to users and a strong platform for behavior change.



Foto: Bistrița Municipality

Scale: Entire city
Stakeholders: Municipality, 14 local schools
Beneficiaries: At least 500 children
Budget: 10.000 euro
Funding: Cope – URBACT IV
Timeline: Implementation September 2025, use for life
Staffing: 4 people

www.timponline.ro/cum-vor-fi-incurajati-elevii-din-bistrita-sa-vina-la-scoala-cu-bicicleta/

SEE MORE ABOUT
BISTRITĂ'S WORK HERE:





“What if this street was for pedestrians?”

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

The initiative involved identifying sites that could become social spaces and coordination with residents, shop owners, and several municipal units to instal urban furniture, flower boxes, and trees - making its implementation highly complex.

HIGH

TARGET GROUP:

All citizens crossing the historical centre, namely residents, shop owners, clients of the shops, tourists, and car drivers.

SHORT DESCRIPTION:

The Municipality of Pombal tested temporary pedestrianization of streets in the historic centre during European Mobility Week. The action involved creating social spaces with reused urban furniture, flowers, trees, and painted play areas, while limiting car access and promoting soft mobility on the entrances of the historical centre. Citizens were engaged through QR code surveys to evaluate their acceptance of permanent changes.

GOAL:

To create a public awareness campaign aimed at improving soft mobility and developing new urban spaces in the historic centre.

OUTCOME/KEY LEARNINGS:

Temporary actions proved effective for testing urban changes and gathering feedback. Combining mobility improvements with better public spaces boosted community acceptance, reduced illegal parking, and encouraged social interaction – offering valuable insights for future planning.

WHAT MADE IT WORK:

- Strong internal coordination between municipal services and resource optimization, reducing costs and accelerated implementation
- Integration with the European Mobility Week, enhancing visibility and legitimacy
- Clear messaging on public space and citizen engagement through posters and QR code surveys

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT / TRANSFER:

- Temporary street interventions to test pedestrianization
- Reuse of existing materials
- Integration of initiatives with international events for greater visibility



Scale: small

Stakeholders: shop owners, residents, NGOs

Partners: municipal services

Beneficiaries: all citizens

Duration: 1 month

www.cm-pombal.pt/

Foto: Município de Pombal

SEE MORE ABOUT
POMBAL'S WORK HERE:





Revitalization of Paflagonia's Street Park

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Small site, but required coordination across municipal services, the Neapolis Local Council, and the working group, as well as planning a public event. Only labour cost was required.

MODERATE

TARGET GROUP:

Neapolis residents, nearby schools, and daily park users.

SHORT DESCRIPTION:

A quick, low-cost upgrade of an abandoned neighbourhood park, using recycled materials from the municipal warehouse (benches, paths, small pallet amphitheatre), co-designed with the working group and neighbourhood council. Built spring 2024 and showcased later at a public event with workshops and resident interviews.

GOAL:

To reclaim a local public space while proving that co-design and circular reuse can deliver fast, visible results and build trust among citizens and the municipality.

OUTCOME/KEY LEARNINGS:

- The site is more usable and welcoming
- Repurposing old materials can help cut waste
- Involvement of citizens increased stewardship

WHAT MADE IT WORK:

Cooperation between the Municipal Authority, Neapolis Local Council, and the Green Maintenance Department, combined with a small, clear scope, materials on hand, and an open celebration that built visibility.

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT / TRANSFER:

- Start with one small project
- Reuse municipal stock
- Use simple, participatory procedures
- Establish clear KPIs



Foto: Municipality of Kavala

Stakeholders: Local social housing organisation, Food cultivation NGO, Urban Renewal
Duration: Series of workshops (several weeks)
Staffing: Workshop facilitators

www.kavala.gov.gr/?lang=en-gb

SEE MORE ABOUT
KAVALA'S WORK HERE:





Food Community at the Playground

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Required collaboration between the personnel of the local playground and the City's Urban Renewal Office. There was some workload in buying supplies and designing communication. It required a moderate budget.

MODERATE

TARGET GROUP:

The initiative targets children visiting the playground, as well as adults, particularly women, from the local area.

SHORT DESCRIPTION:

To support the Playground in Øselsgade, an urban garden was created with the purpose of enhancing children's understanding of food and involve them in growing produce for communal cooking at the playground. Adults were invited too, and they took responsibility for some of the planting boxes and became engaged in the playground's activities.

GOAL:

To ensure increased use of the site by creating new activities that foster safety and community around green cultivation and food-waste reduction, promote a sense of responsibility for the area, and encourage positive neighbour participation.

OUTCOME/KEY LEARNINGS:

The initiative has successfully connected different generations and encouraged shared experiences. The playground has observed that more individuals feel ownership of its outdoor areas and contribute to their positive use.

WHAT MADE IT WORK:

- Practical, hands-on workshops with immediate, visible results (harvested crops).
- Integration of social activities (shared meals) to strengthen relationships.

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT / TRANSFER:

Combination of practical activities with social engagement to build community.



Foto: Områdefornyelsen Sønderbro

Stakeholders: Local playground, local residents, Urban Renewal
Duration: The garden continues year after year.
Timeline: Most activities in the growing season (March-October)
Staffing: The personnel from the Playground

www.soenderbro.kk.dk

SEE MORE ABOUT
COPENHAGEN'S WORK HERE:





“Welcome to Heart Garden”

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

Although it is a small site, the initiative required coordination between several municipal departments, the neighbourhood council, a local working group, and residents.

MODERATE

TARGET GROUP:

Residents of the Benjamin Rouché neighbourhood, including families, children, teenagers, and elderly people.

SHORT DESCRIPTION:

Benjamin Rouché is a densely populated neighbourhood with limited green and communal spaces. The project aimed at creating an accessible and attractive outdoor area for residents. Methods included participatory workshops with citizens, collaborative planning with municipal services, and implementation of landscaping and green infrastructure improvements.

GOAL:

The main goal was to provide a welcoming, green, and multifunctional public space for the neighbourhood, enhancing social cohesion and environmental quality.

OUTCOME/KEY LEARNINGS:

- Strengthened community bonds through participatory workshops and collaborative decision-making
- Raised awareness among residents about urban greening, climate resilience, and local environmental stewardship
- Early engagement and continuous dialogue with residents ensure high acceptance and relevance of the project

WHAT MADE IT WORK:

- A structured participatory process that allowed residents to propose ideas and validate designs
- Flexibility in implementation to accommodate residents’ needs and local constraints

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT / TRANSFER:

- Participatory workshops to co-design public spaces with residents
- Combining renaturation with functional improvements (seating, pathways, lighting) to create multifunctional areas
- Involving schools and local associations to enhance engagement and educational impact



Foto: Municipality of Saint-Quentin

Scale: The community garden at the Neuville neighbourhood.
Stakeholders: The municipality, Neuville neighbourhood council, local group.
Partners: Neuville social centre, local associations, schools.
Budget/Funding: €10,000 – European funding.

www.saint-quentin.fr/1900-urbact-cope.htm

SEE MORE ABOUT SAINT-
QUENTIN'S WORK HERE:





Unlocking the green potential of citizen action

Cases that inspired COPE

The following case descriptions are actions identified by the Integrated Action Planning network COPE. These cases work with some of the main ingredients in the COPE SCOPE focusing on coherent and place-based green actions showcasing practises and experiences into the COPE planning.

URBACT



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POMBAL (PT)

Pollinator Spaces

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

LOW



SHORT DESCRIPTION

Pombal City Hall designated areas where grass cutting was suspended during the flowering season, with signs indicating “Weeds to Cut? It’s not carelessness! We’re preserving habitats, feeding bees and other pollinating insects. Nature says thank you!” By pausing mowing during flowering, the city turned ‘weeds’ into seasonal buffets, and helped biodiversity thrive.

WHAT MADE IT WORK

- Clear, friendly signage that reframes perception and expectations.
- Simple operational change outsized the ecological payoff.

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT/TRANSFER

- Low cost intervention, easy to implement.
- Publish a seasonal cutting calendar; communicate *why* and *where*.
- Pair with schools/NGOs for pollinator counts and public science.

Focus: Suspending the cutting of vegetation in certain areas during the flowering period to protect essential species and educate the public.

Mechanism: Communications + maintenance scheduling -

Funding: Municipal budget, low cost



BIODIVERSITY

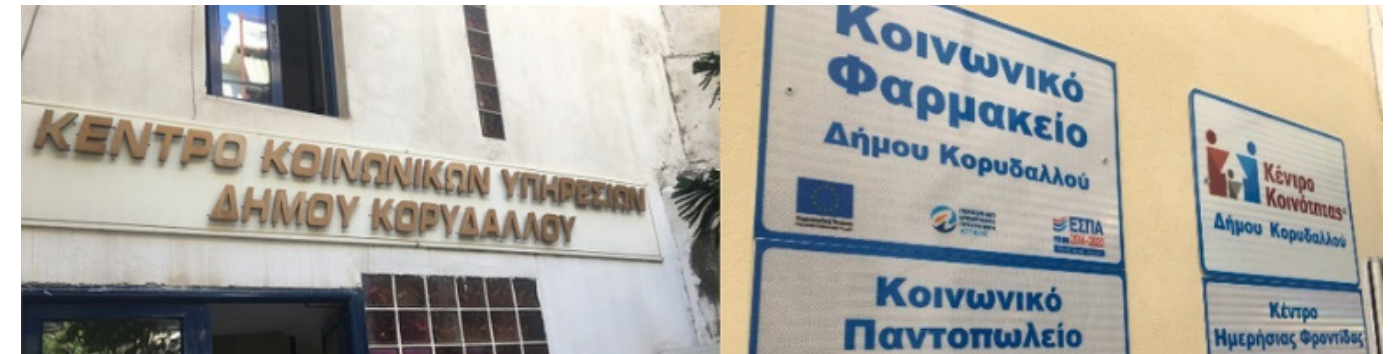


KORYDALLOS (GR)

Social Grocery, Meal Provision & Social Pharmacy

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

HIGH



SHORT DESCRIPTION

In Peace Square, Korydallos Municipality established a Social Grocery and Pharmacy to combat poverty and social exclusion. In an upgraded municipal building, the initiative offers daily meals, free medicines, and support services. With the support of municipality officers and volunteer contribution from hospitals, churches, local businesses and citizens, the project bolstered social support in Korydallos. Since 2012, it has grown into a lifeline for over 2,000 residents.

WHAT MADE IT WORK

- Central, accessible location and continuity since 2012.
- Good leveraging of existing municipal assets and multi-sector partnerships.

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT/TRANSFER

- Co-location of services residents use together (food + medicine + referrals).
- Recognised volunteer contribution and formalised volunteer onboarding; track in-kind contributions as match funding.
- Efficient use of municipal buildings and leveraging of local networks and resources.

Beneficiaries: 2,000+ vulnerable residents served

Set-up: Grocery (storage, fridges, meal prep) + Pharmacy (first floor)

Staffing: 7 staff; strong volunteer network

Partners: Municipality; Region; General Hospital of Nikaia; Church; local supermarkets; bakeries; NGOs; volunteers

Funding: Regional/national grant + municipal resources & in-kind support



COMMUNITY CENTRE



COPENHAGEN (DK)

Copenhagen Energy Focused Urban Renewal (CEFUR)

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

HIGH



SHORT DESCRIPTION

The city supports housing associations with the lowest energy ratings (E-G), owner-occupied blocks with poor energy ratings in undertaking comprehensive energy retrofits and in applying for financial assistance. Organisations get screenings, architectural and financial advice, and access to 25–33% co-funding for retrofits, including building-integrated solar.

WHAT MADE IT WORK

- Tailored hand-holding for small, under-resourced associations to future-proof housing stocks.
- Integration with existing municipal renovation grants to move from plan to action.

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT/TRANSFER

- Segment approach e.g. by building governance type (PO vs CO) and energy rating; tailor support.
- Pairing technical audits with a “funding concierge” service so projects pencil out.

Target: Non-professional owners’ associations; cooperative or owner-occupied blocks rated E–G
Offer: Energy screenings; process & architectural support; grant navigation
Funding: Municipality + EU (EIB/ELENA); properties can get 25–33% co-funding for renovation works



ENERGY EFFICIENCY



POMBAL (PT)

Shadow Islands

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

MODERATE



SHORT DESCRIPTION

Inspired by the ‘Miyawaki forest model’, Pombal planted native trees and installed bird shelters and nature-friendly furniture to create 40 “shade islands”. These green pockets function as natural air conditioning, reducing urban temperatures and increasing biodiversity.

WHAT MADE IT WORK

- A clear, repeatable module (planting + habitat + furniture) multiplied across sites.
- Community groups anchored installation and aftercare.
- Climate adaptation through community-led greening that makes cities more resilient and livable.

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT/TRANSFER

- Mapping exercise of heat-exposed residential streets, prioritising shade gaps near schools and areas where senior residents live/socialise.
- Combine Miyawaki-style clusters with micro-amenities (urban furniture such as benches, bird habitat).
- Animate the area with community engagement events + ownership/stewardship.

Scale: 12,075 participants; 3.86 ha shaded
Focus: Community-based action; Heat resilience; biodiversity; permeable surfaces
Partners: Amigos do Arunca; CERCIPOM; residents
Funding: Municipal budget



HEAT ISLAND



SAINT-QUENTIN (FR)

Setting the shade of tomorrow

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

MODERATE-HIGH



SHORT DESCRIPTION

Setting the shade of tomorrow transforms Marcel Pagnol School's playground into a cooler, greener oasis that boosts comfort and climate resilience. Through participatory budgeting, teachers and children co-designed their "future oasis" using playful consultations with stickers and plans. Supported by the local working group, the project includes demineralising, enriching soil, and planting trees fostering learning, sustainability, and awareness and civic engagement in a refreshing, child-friendly space.

WHAT MADE IT WORK

- Participatory design with children yields practical, creative solutions.
- Urban renaturation that combines climate adaptation and educational goals.
- Multi-stakeholder collaboration, including schools, municipal services, and local networks, is crucial for project success.

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT/TRANSFER

- Using classrooms as design studios; bringing landscape choices into the curriculum
- Phased approach: demineralise → enrich soil → plant → steward

Focus: Schoolyard renaturing; heat resilience; education

Method: Participatory budgeting; co-design with students and staff

Partners: Citizen Participation Service; local working group; Green Spaces; Road Services

Timeline: 2024–2025 - Funding: Municipal budget + EU grant



HEAT ISLAND



COPENHAGEN (DK)

Vibekevang Waste Communities

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

MODERATE



SHORT DESCRIPTION

In the Vibekevang neighborhood, overflowing bins and scattered containers were once part of daily life. To address this, residents, housing associations, and a city's climate officer collaborated to redesign waste sorting. Shared waste stations replaced scattered containers, improving both convenience and the appearance of the streets. The climate officer played a central role, consistently attending neighbourhood meetings and fostering dialogue, while waste consultants reached out to housing associations to ensure broad participation. The result was a significant reduction in residual waste and an improved urban landscape for 489 households across 70 properties.

WHAT MADE IT WORK

- Consistent on-the-ground facilitation by a climate officer at neighbourhood meetings.
- Intensive outreach to every owners' association to build consent and momentum.
- Simple but visible physical changes that made sorting convenient and streets more attractive.

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT/TRANSFER

- Engage the housing/owners' associations as the primary units of change.
- Pair design tweaks with street-level/citizen facilitation, to build trust face to face.
- Share stations wherever plots are fragmented; it reduces clutter and boosts compliance.

Scale: 489 households, ~70 different owners/associations

Focus: Optimised sorting via shared waste stations

Duration: ~1.5 years -

Partners: Housing associations/owners; local waste group; municipal climate officer; city waste consultants

Funding: Municipal budget + minor private works funded by owners.



WASTE MANAGEMENT



KORYDALLOS (GR)

Integrated Biowaste System

LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

HIGH



Focus: Separate biowaste collection + education campaign
Duration: 30 months (2021–2023)
Outputs: +1,057 t/yr in separate biowaste; target 42% separate collection
Partners: Municipality; national programme authority; service providers; schools/businesses
Funding: Regional/national programme with municipal co-finance

SHORT DESCRIPTION

In a dense city where organic waste represents circa 40% of the bin, Korydallos implemented a comprehensive system for collection, processing, and awareness-raising: bins and biowaste bins, dedicated vehicles, and a shredder for green waste, complemented by educational campaigns in schools and neighborhoods.

WHAT MADE IT WORK

- System thinking: equipment + logistics + behaviour change: Infrastructure is necessary but not sufficient; behavioural change requires education and community involvement.
- Educational focus: school programmes, practical guidance for food businesses.
- Compliance & standards: opportunity to align with national/EU circular economy requirements.

WHAT OTHERS CAN ADAPT/TRANSFER

- Holistic approach
- Budget for educational campaign/communications as a core component, not a nice-to-have.
- Map “high-yield” generators (food operators, markets) and phase targeted support.
- Develop a simple Good Practice Guide for food-related businesses, it’ll help with potential resistance

Citizen engagement

– a democratic necessity



WASTE MANAGEMENT

Citizen engagement – a democratic necessity

BY STINE SKOT,
LEAD EXPERT URBACT APN NETWORK COPE

A just and green transition of cities is key in achieving carbon neutrality in Europe by 2050. The purpose of the COPE (Coherent Place-based Climate Action) network is to unlock the green potentials of citizen action through a place-based approach, recognizing citizens and local action groups as fundamental stakeholders working to accelerate the green transition. By actively engaging communities that have traditionally been left out of climate action, COPE increases the scope and impact of municipal policies.

During the past 2½ years the COPE partners have worked on engaging citizens locally in neighbourhoods in their cities. With the COPE main focus on engaging the citizens in place based green actions the COPE partners experience that a lot of their work is related to and depending on internal change of procedures and habits in their governance structures and administration. On a network level COPE also experiences that the 8 European cities face similar opportunities and challenges, but at very different scales. This broad insight in different municipality contexts makes it clear how different ways of organizing the political level and how the differences in what mandate the public administrations either have or not have makes a huge difference in a project like this.

The interdependence between the different political levels also plays a role in the cities. The municipalities work in very different settings with different budgets and different responsibilities, and therefore they do not have the same opportunities and mandates. And higher levels of policymakers can influence the state of play, e.g., a national decision and agenda can have great impact or less impact depending on the national governance structures.

In COPE our aim is to transform the role of the municipality from the decision-making authority to a more facilitating unit.

In this new role the municipality brings citizens and stakeholders together to explore their neighborhood and together define and prioritize their local challenges and based on these priorities define and prioritize the possible solutions.

When working with the COPE agenda of engaging citizens in both defining problems and solutions, the interdependencies and structures can have a great impact on the level of political support which again affects the difference between success and failure. If the engagement process loses political support, it can end up hurting local democracy and citizens' trust and the project might bounce in a wrong direction.

WHY ARE WE WORKING WITH DELIBERATIVE AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES?

When we talk about a just green transition, we often point toward the need for reducing carbon emissions or other very specific or technical needs. But just to make it clear, COPE is about acting on the very specific and local crises of both climate and biodiversity and, with that, all the aspects of our lives that these crises have an impact upon, our everyday life, our economy, and our relations. This is why COPEs overarching topic is the engagement of citizens and local stakeholders.

“As policymakers, we must strive to make sure the enabling decisions are taken as close to us as citizen as possible. because the green transition is not a power grab from global elites, rather it is the opposite: a means of empowering communities to make positive and beneficial changes. and from a practical point of view, this is also how change will work best. if people see green policies as an edict from brussels, these policies will have no chance of succeeding. but when people are included and take ownership of the transition themselves - that is when the change can really happen.”¹ - evp Vestager, keynote speech

Democratic Sustainability

“We live in a world where the professional point of view is blind toward place. Therefore communities are not seen as a resource but an obstacle for specific thematic agendas developed from above. With COPE we want to turn this approach on its head. With COPE we create an arena for collaboration, co-creation positive dialogue and thereby construct the unexcepted meeting, where new and innovative ideas can emerge”

- Øystein Leonardsen, Lead Partner

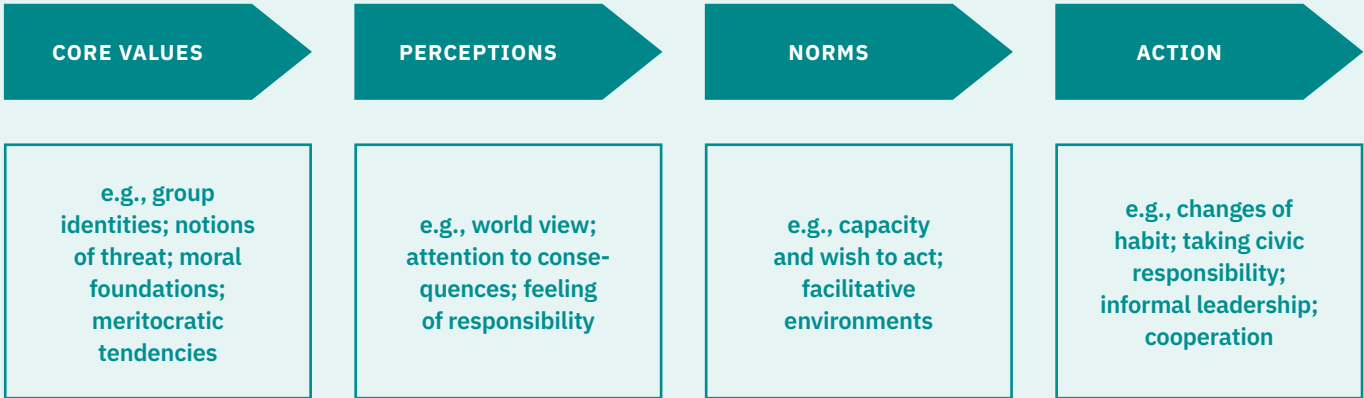
A good framework can help us address these questions and think about these methodologies in a more structured way. Therefore, I would like to introduce the recent analysis and model taken from a Danish context På Sporet af det tavse flertal translated freely into Identifying the silent majority².

HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE MODEL

The analysis builds on the Core-belief model developed and tested in several countries by the agency More in Common. The aim is to better understand how we can balance different interests and motivations and succeed in finding solutions building on compromises that all can recognize and accept. A tool for finding such a balance is an understanding of the core beliefs and values at stake in the society – or locally in the communities. Values and culture are critical in making changes. Figure 1 shows that action is based on values, core beliefs, and norms.

FIGURE 1

(Note that actions may reinforce core values, perceptions, and norms, making the reality of the model more cyclical)



Source: Clarke, Webster, & Corner (2020)

¹ Vestager, EVP (Copenhagen, 9 June 2023). Keynote Speech at the NordicSIF Conference “Greening Europe: Our Union in Transition”; Keynote Speech at the NordicSIF Conference (europa.eu)

² Demokratisk bæredygtighed and Kultur er en overset faktor i samfundsforandring | Demokratisk Bæredygtighed

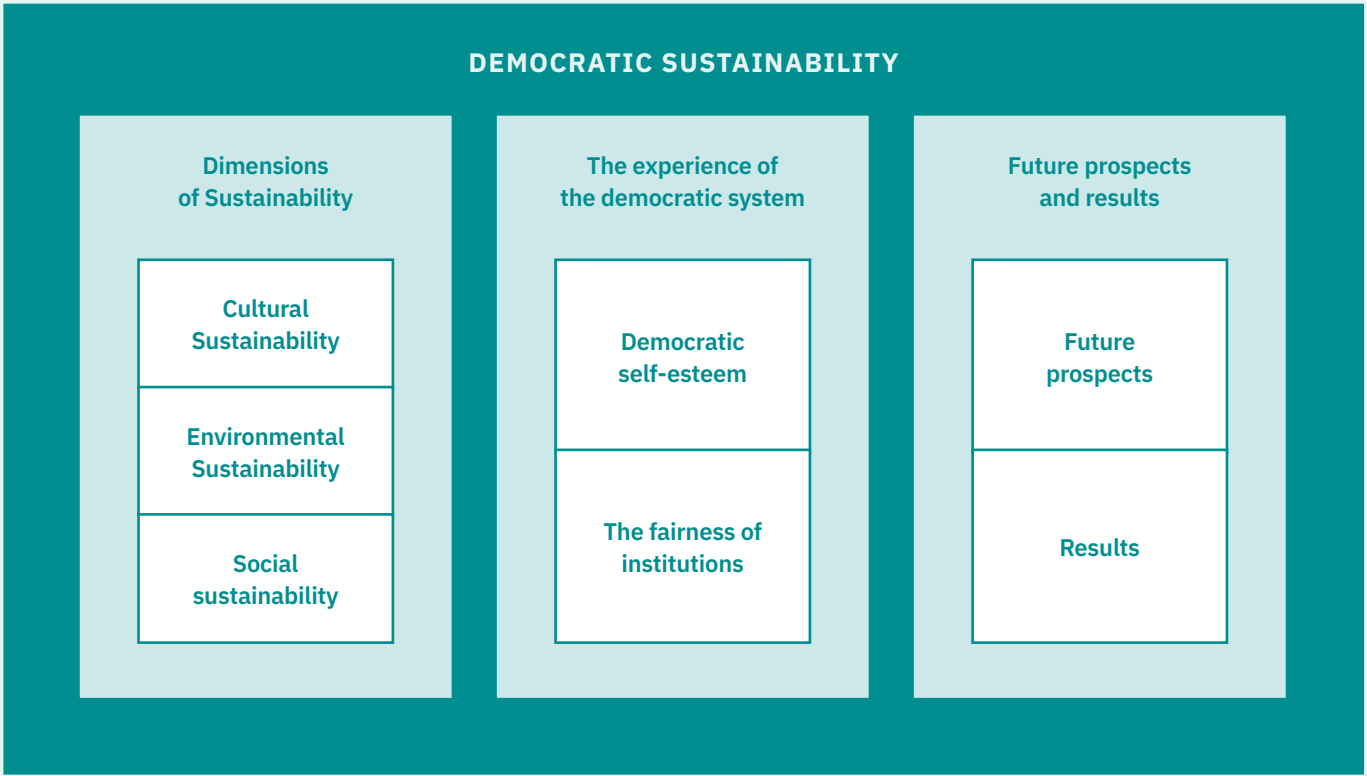
When believing that values, core beliefs and norms are defining our actions we see that we need to engage people through these categories.

Another structure to be aware of is what different factors is needed to support a society in balance. A way to talk about this could be to divide the society on 3 dimensions: The first describing the different types or categories of sustainability we need to keep balance – this could be social, environmental and cultural sustainability. The second could be our experience of the democratic system consisting of our individual democratic self-esteem and how we experience the fairness of our institutions. And the third could be our individual faith in the future and belief in our ability to solve problems and create good results.

The model indicates that new methods considering e.g., different values can influence the experience of democracy and belief in the future, which can affect the democratic self-esteem. The model can define the purpose of processes and the effects of processes. This also means that we as a municipality can create better products.

FIGURE 2

Democratic sustainability: 3 dimensions



Democratic Sustainability

The municipalities are the closest institutions to the individual citizens, and they therefore have a great impact on the experienced level of democracy. When the COPE partners succeed in being a trustworthy institution making an effort in balancing the different interests and being transparent and accountable and not least if they provide results that make their citizens believe in a good future, then they are on a good path for a sustainable democracy. In COPE we work with engaging more people in exploring solutions believing that, to some extent, it can increase the level of fairness, the experience of confidence in democracy and in own democratic self-esteem.

When we make this change, it is because we want to influence the middle dimension of figure 2 so that we have a better future in the last dimension.

When Kavala Municipality co-creates a park with the local citizens being a trustworthy, transparent, accountable and inclusive partner then they do not only develop a useless and unsafe spot in the community into a warm and useful parc. They also develop relations and trust, and they give the citizens a positive experience with the local authorities and through the participatory process, where they are heard, involved and taken seriously the municipality help build democratic self-esteem in their citizens. This self-esteem hopefully mean that the citizens are more likely to participate again and even to take on a local leadership engaging their neighbors too next time.

The same happens when Copenhagen, Vilnius and Saint-Quentin empower citizens through community gardens and community dinners, Korydallos co-creates brand and storytelling with students, A Coruña include local resources in greening and lifting the local streets and business opportunities and Bistrița co-creates ideas for promoting soft mobility with local stakeholders.

In this perspective the overarching goal that COPE feeds into with these local actions is the process of increasing institutional justice through building capacity in both our democratic institutions and the individual democratic self-esteem.

When you, dear reader, participate in democratic processes, you are contributing to the greater purpose. I hope you will dive into the COPE experiences and take on a local leadership to build responsible, engaged local communities in your neighborhood.

Find COPE here: [COPE | www.urbact.eu/networks/cope](https://www.urbact.eu/networks/cope)

**Thank you to all
who contributed to the
COPE activities.**

URBACT



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