

Combining abilities, creating synergies, enhancing performances.

www.hybridparks.eu



# HYBRID PARKS



Final Report



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## Forewords



When I was appointed International Steering Group Chairman for Hybrid Parks in April 2012, I had already, through an earlier Chairmanship of the European Gardens Heritage Network (EGHN) begun to realise what makes gardens and parks in the European continent special. They are man-made and consist of structural and organic elements. Gardens and parks change with the seasons and each season provides a different sense of time.

A garden or park is rarely developed in isolation but has a relationship with its surroundings and can create substantial benefits for the local population. You never stand on the edge of a garden and look in, parks and gardens draw you into their midst; contributing to the cultural identity, health and wellbeing and sustainable regional development.

The key objective of the Hybrid Parks project was to demonstrate that parks and gardens can be an element of sustainable local and regional development and policies promoting the development of parks and gardens make positive contributions to mitigating climate changes and are an important tool in improving economic, social and environmental planning.

These objectives evolved from the previous project and I was proud to have been involved. The sixteen partners in ten countries have established throughout the project how parks and gardens can create synergies, opportunities and contribute or enhance cultural and environmental understanding, particularly in relation to crucial matters such as climate change, and all in a time of budget restraint.

The Hybrid Parks project, in my view, has been a huge success with all the partners demonstrating innovation and commitment to achieving best practice and charting a way forward for the essential integration of parks into sustainable futures and climate change policy.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Alan S. Thornley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Alan Thornley  
Chairman  
International Steering Group  
Civitas Planning

The huge number of resources, good practice examples and innovations for parks and gardens across Europe that we identified during the project is a proof that the “Hybrid Parks Idea” worked well.

Partners used all opportunities to exchange on experiences and on new ideas. All partners have been able to use Hybrid Parks for gaining new knowledge, to improve skills, to develop new projects and to convince their politicians to support parks and gardens whenever possible.

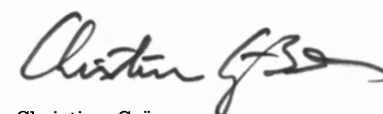
The result is, as far as we know, a unique collection and portrayal of green infrastructure projects and a knowledge transfer that would have not been possible without European funding. Also important was the very intense commitment of all project partners and of all external experts, garden owners, supporters and organisation who contributed to Hybrid Parks. Without that, the project would not have been so successful.

We hope that the success will continue in the regions thanks to new policies and measures that are inspired by the project and will help to realize more hybrid parks in the near future. Schloss Dyck as the Lead Partner in the project has very precise ideas for future activities: we are planning a new format for a garden festival, we will enhance our visitor centre and entrance area and our English landscape garden will gain a new kitchen garden and an English glasshouse that can be used for educational activities.

Hybrid Parks as such was never intended to continue after the subsidized period. It was inspired and set up by EGHN, the European Garden Heritage Network ([www.eghn.eu](http://www.eghn.eu)), and involved new partners and themes. Hybrid Parks has and will inspire EGHN and its partners. And we hope that the number of EGHN partners will continue to grow. EGHN will continue as a network to foster the exchange of ideas and knowledge and is ready and prepared as the unique European wide garden platform to develop new project ideas and to work out new applications.



Jens Spanjer  
Project Manager  
Schloss Dyck Foundation



Christian Grüssen  
Project Coordinator  
Plan+





# INTERREG IVC



## Helping regions share solutions

INTERREG IVC is a programme dedicated to helping regions of Europe work together, sharing their experiences to find solutions to common problems. Regional and local authorities have a vital role to play in the achievements of the EU's strategies for growth, jobs and sustainable development.

That's why the INTERREG IVC programme focused on these themes. It is implemented under the European Community's territorial co-operation objective and financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The Operational Programme was approved in September 2007 and the period for INTERREG IVC lasted from 2007-2013 (with projects running until the end of 2014).

EUR 302 million has been available for project funding under two priorities: "Innovation and the Knowledge Economy" and "Environment and Risk Prevention". The programme aims to contribute to the economic modernisation and competitiveness of Europe. Thus, INTERREG IVC is linked to the objectives of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas.

The overall objective of the INTERREG IVC Programme is to improve the effectiveness of regional policies and instruments. All projects build on the exchange of experiences among partners who are ideally responsible for the development of their local and regional policies.



## From European cooperation to local actions

Typical tools for exchange of experience in a funded project – such as Hybrid Parks – are networking activities, containing thematic workshops, seminars, conferences, surveys, and study visits. Project partners cooperate to identify and to transfer good practices. Possible project outcomes include for example case study collections, policy recommendations, strategic guidelines or action plans.

But, more than that, a wealth of knowledge and potential solutions are also on hand for regional policy-makers and for regional implementation. Such small scale implementation measures, e.g. meetings with stakeholders, local events and publications, feasibility studies, thematic workshops with local managers, inhabitants or children, have been important for the 16 partners within the Hybrid Parks project.

These activities have been vital to share experiences and to prepare the transfer of solutions and good practice on the regional and local level. Here the partners of Hybrid Parks addressed those persons who are responsible for a single park or garden or for the urban green as a whole and other stakeholders as well as networks, organisations and the general public. This also helped to get the support needed for longer term activities, including the "developments plans" requested by INTERREG IVC from all projects approved within the last application phase, such as Hybrid Parks.



Occasionally there are some criticisms of the programme – mostly by those who have never been involved in INTERREG projects – as the programme does not provide funds for “real investments”. The Hybrid Park partners however are convinced that the knowledge gain and improved skills achieved by working in an INTERREG IVC project is real investments in people – with a substantial value. Cooperation in a project without the pressure of immediate decisions on investments and implementation, frees the minds, gives valuable inspirations and enables preparing better policies, future investments and implementation strategies.

### What next?

Hybrid Parks as such was never intended to continue after the funding period. It was inspired and set up by EGHN, the European Garden Heritage Network, and involved new partners. It has and will inspire EGHN and its increasing number of international partners.

Hybrid Parks has started measures on the local and regional level as well as initiatives for future cooperation within the partnership and between groups of partners. The partnership also identified some challenges and thus objectives for new projects requiring financial support, e.g. by the EU.

Will there be future opportunities? Interregional cooperation will continue under the name INTERREG EUROPE from 2014–2020. While not all details have been finally agreed (in October 2014) and thus no applications for projects can be submitted before 2015, two major points will be relevant for interregional cooperation in the next programme as ERDF has defined the two major goals “Jobs & Growth” and “European Territorial Cooperation (ETC)”. ETC will also have its own regulation to better reflect the specific multi-country nature of cooperation. Secondly, interregional cooperation will continue to exist in order to “reinforce the effectiveness of the cohesion policy”.

The partners of the Hybrid Parks project are committed to explore options for a new project application under INTERREG EUROPE or – at



least for sub-groups – any other relevant funding opportunity. They are convinced that the recent cooperation made possible by INTERREG IVC has helped a lot to enhance their social, environmental and economic policies and activities related to green areas, urban green, parks and gardens and that hybrid parks will have a major role to play in the future sustainable urban and regional development of their territories and in many other fields of activities. EGHN is ready to act as a joint platform to develop new project ideas and to work out new applications and will invite for a first meeting early in 2015.

For the time being we have to say “thank you” to all our partners in the project, to all external experts, garden owners, supporters, and organisations who contributed to its successful implementation, to the EU for setting up the INTERREG IVC programme and to all officials at the JTS in Lille for their consultations, advice and excellent cooperation. ■



# Project aims and project design



## Rationale

Parks, both historic and modern, are intensively managed, high quality environments. Across Europe parks serve a great variety of economic, social and environmental needs.

**Economic makings:** Liveable cities and regions without attractive parks and gardens are hard to imagine. The mix of historic parks and contemporary sites in a region is very striking and allows fulfilling the needs and requests of citizens and companies alike. Without investments made in green spaces and public realm real estate values drop and urban revitalization processes are likely to fail. Design, construction and maintenance of these green varieties ensure jobs for many groups of professionals and offer good opportunities for measures of reintegration into working life. Many people frequently travel to visit parks and gardens; others enjoy going there for events. They all spend money in restaurants, tea-rooms, shops etc.; those who stay longer also pay for accommodation. The number of organised garden tours is increasing. Parks and gardens are important tourism assets. Economy, heritage and culture nurture each other.

**Social and cultural makings:** Well managed, attractive and convenient public parks are essential for urban life. They are much enjoyed by different user groups. Furthermore, those who do not own a garden, but want to grow fruits and vegetables, rely on public ground such as

allotment gardens or urban gardening. In residential areas socially inclusive neighbourhood projects benefit from the different social and ethnic backgrounds, individual skills and age differences of the participants. A good design helps to achieve a wider acceptance and use. Universities, hospitals and other organisations increasingly use the unique resources that purposely created and supervised gardens offer for many therapeutic treatments. Historic parks, traditionally attracting lovers of garden art, and urban parks are desired locations for cultural events such as concerts, exhibitions or light shows.

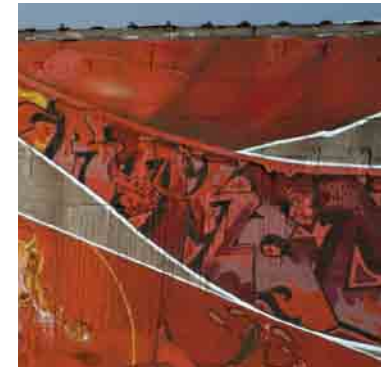
**Environmental makings:** For many urban residents public green often provides the sole opportunity to relax outdoors, to do sports or to enjoy nature, plants and animals. In particular within the noisy and overheated inner city areas, parks are oases of calm, chilliness and recreation. As elements within green corridors parks contribute to air exchange and thus to the enhancement of the air quality and to the quality of life. With climate change the importance of these functions will further increase. More and more botanical gardens actively support, in addition to their academic work and outside their own premises, environmental education and vocational training, the cultivation and distribution of old varieties of useful plants or biotope management. Landscape design making use of biomass plants is another actual theme.

## Objective

It was and still is the project's key objective that parks can fully be used for sustainable local and regional development and for policies to mitigate climate change by improving and combining capacities, by creating synergies and by enhancing performance and benefits.

The project identified best practice to safeguard these qualities, to diminish risks and to reinforce parks for achieving additional economic, social and environmental benefits. This can ensure that in many parks different functions work „hand in hand“. This can be compared with a hybrid car, where two engines and sources of energy are linked to use their individual advantages, to support each other and to enhance performance and sustainability. Analogously, the idea of "Hybrid Parks" came into being.





Hybrid tactics are needed to foster the use and benefits of parks in a wider policy context such as sustainable economic development, urban renewal, social integration and protection of cultural heritage, landscapes and environment.

## Structure

The project's activities in the last three years covered the three pillars of sustainability by individual and interrelated activities, based on experiences and resources of the partnership and the objectives of "Hybrid Parks". Policies and measures using parks to achieve economic, environmental or social objectives were investigated in two workshops each. Additional cross-cutting or „hybrid“ workshops investigated how to combine these approaches to increase the contribution and synergies of parks to sustainable development policies and mitigation of climate change. Three study tours and four open conferences, inviting other professionals and decision makers, further supported exchange and transfer.

Research on the economic values of parks and gardens, on the consideration of climate change in the design of parks, open spaces and private gardens and on social inclusion and civil dialogue in the renewal of neighbourhood parks added to the knowledge gain.

All this improved the international knowledge base, policies and regional development plans, championed by skilful regional support teams with enhanced access to up-to-date information, best practice examples and experienced and supportive associates.

## Partnership

The Schloss Dyck Foundation, Centre for Garden Art and Landscape Design, was approached by some local and regional bodies to lead the development of a joint INTERREG IVC project, based on the experience as lead partner in the INTERREG IIIB NWE project European Garden Heritage Network – EGHN and its sustained management. Hybrid Parks was inspired by EGHN, but involved new subjects and partners.

The Hybrid Parks partnership with 16 partners from 10 European countries includes some of those cities and regions in Europe that energetically support the enhancement of parks and use their resources in a wider policy context such as economic development, rural diversification, protection of cultural heritage, landscapes and environment as well as urban renewal or quality of life. The partnership also includes some "newcomers" that have started similar policies and projects recently. This mix has been a perfect stimulant for all activities, discussions and transfers during the project and continues to support some joint activities after the end of the funding scheme. ■

# 16 partners from 10 countries



Schloss Dyck Foundation. Centre for Garden Art & Landscape Design

State Chancellery of North Rhine-Westphalia

Rhineland Regional Council (LVR)

The Regional Association of Westphalia-Lippe (LWL)

Municipality of Linköping

Municipality of Lund

Paola Local Council

Silesian Botanical Garden

University of Turku

Region of South Aegean

Regione Umbria - Direzione regionale Risorsa Umbria

Regione Emilia-Romagna - Direzione Generale Programmazione territoriale e negoziata, intense

Garden Platform Lower Austria

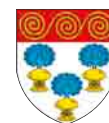
Environmental Protection Association Citizen and Environment,  
Department Nature in the Garden

Association of Parks and Gardens in Brittany

Cheshire West and Chester Council



Staatskanzlei  
des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen



Regione Umbria







## Thematic workshops, study tours and conferences



The partnership organised and hosted a number of conferences, workshops and study tours to exchange on good practice, to foster knowledge exchange and to support the enhancement of policies and future actions. While not neglecting the broader approach of sustainable regional development, each event had an emphasis on economic, environmental or social aspects of Hybrid Parks.

### Economic focus:

#### **1st Open Conference, 23rd November 2012, Assisi (Italy)**

Hosted by Umbria Region this conference focussed on the professional exchange of knowledge and experience and on the interdisciplinary transfer of best practices.

The presentations and discussions showed the great variety of strategies implemented by institutions, economic entities, the public sector and private owners to find models of sustainable management both at the economic and the environmental level. The variety of these solutions depends on many different factors: type of asset (natural reserve, park or garden), ownership (public or private), predominant function (recreational, productive, educational, etc.) and availability of regulatory instruments.

The session in the morning was devoted to a comparison of different approaches proposed or adopted by local and national institutions, the private sector or foundations, with a view to protecting, managing and

planning the complexity of the European parks and gardens' heritage in order to produce a new model of local and general development. In this regard, a session was dedicated to the virtuous public-private partnerships aimed at promoting a sustainable use of interstitial urban spaces and peri-urban agriculture areas. The presentations given highlighted "Awareness as a driving force for development", "Networking between the Gardens of Lower Austria", "The worth of a network: Grandi Giardini Italiani", "The network RuGiaD'A of gardens and the therapeutic park for accessible tourism", "Matching culture and environment as a virtuous approach - illumina and the Schloss Dyck Foundation", "The experience of Riserva Naturale Abbazia di Fiastra", "Music and landscape as a driving force for a cultural enterprise - Giardini La Mortella" and "The centenary of the law 688/1912 "Villas, Parks and Gardens" and the 40 years of the Italian Charta of Historic Gardens".

The afternoon focused on a round-table-discussion with external experts to identify the strengths, weaknesses and success factors of the different approaches such as realization and management models (differences between the public and the private sector), involvement of social capital, economy generated interaction with other sectors (tourism, culture, education, social ...). The experts also checked the transferability and need of future adaptation and improvement.

During the conference, a poster exhibition (collected through an open call for papers) showed examples of realised best practices concerning the enhancement and the management of parks and gardens based on the three main themes of the project: Raising awareness of environmental issues; User enlargement and social relapses; Economic development and tourism.

The book "The junction and the biodiversity" was presented as a guideline for the recovery and development of marginal areas as new parks. Furthermore, the results of a survey made within the Project "Promozione della Rete Regionale per la valorizzazione di Ville, Parchi e Giardini nel paesaggio rurale" were made available in the dossier "Parchi e Giardini in Umbria, un segno distintivo nel paesaggio".

The entire conference has been recorded and was published on a DVD,



which was distributed in the professional magazine for architecture and landscape architecture "Topscape".

**Workshop "Economic Aspects 2", 14th – 15th June 2013, Pori (Finland)**

Central to the workshop was the Finnish concept of "National Urban Parks – NUP", an innovative approach to avoid negative effects of densification related to the idea of compact cities with their infill buildings. This policy causes the risk that valuable entireties formed together by urban nature, parkland, water areas and built environment, can be shattered. The Finnish NUP Concept serves as a tool to create more compact towns while preserving natural and cultural heritage. There is a (growing) network of six NUP in Finland now.

The workshop started with presentations about the overall concept of National Urban Parks and on the NUP in Pori that includes islands, forests and the city centre and its continuation with the Kokemäenjoki River delta. The hybrid functions of the NUP area are obvious as the management is jointly done by the city planning office, the environmental agency, the park office, the educational agency, the communications unit, the cultural office and the recreational agency.

Then other NUP were presented: the long genesis of the Turku NUP that aims at strengthening the core of the urban green network and its distinctive cultural and natural urban landscape, the Porvoo NUP (on cultural heritage management in community processes), the Hämeenlinna NUP with its management, utilization and management plan, the Hanko NUP with its dialogue between the coastal nature and heritage and finally the "The Royal National Urban Park" in Stockholm that, as the first NUP, is an interesting study object in terms of problems and possibilities in modern city planning, sustainable development and public health with the green environment supporting physical activity.

Study visits on the second day contained Pori's inner-city green with the Polsanluoto "miniature delta", the industrial heritage site Noormarkku (Ahlstrom Corporation) with Villa Mairea, designed by Alvar Aalto, and Reposaaari village, known for its extraordinary flora invading with the sand used as sailing ballast.



**Workshop "Economic Aspects 1", 15th – 16th October 2012, Jüchen (Germany)**

The benefits of high quality public green areas for urban and regional regeneration and development as well as the vital contributions of municipalities, NGOs and other groups in these policy contexts are undisputed.

How a federal state (North Rhine-Westphalia) and a regional authority (Regional Association Ruhr – RVR) can support such activities and provisions and how they support the use of parks and gardens for policies of sustainable development was shown in the first presentations with a focus on liveable cities in times of economic, demographic and climatic change and with a focus on the Emscher Landscape Park and the Ruhr as European Capital of Culture 2010.

But the precise analysis of the effects of green infrastructure investments on economic growth – such as the development and marketing of new business or housing sites – or on the improvement of a local or regional image is difficult. However, a lecture on actual research work showed that some considerable models and examples exist for the land value increasing effects by open spaces in European cities.

How a park itself can be an economic factor, generating income and creating new activities and jobs was shown by a presentation and by a guided tour at Schloss Dyck, the workshop's venue. Finally on

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presentations by partners from Poland, Malta, the UK and Germany revealed that the economic effects of investments in parks and gardens can often be combined with social and environmental benefits.

The study trip on the second day focussed to the Ruhr region: Phoenix See in Dortmund revealed the transformation of a steel factory site into a landscape with a lake, hills, and leisure facilities flanked by high quality housing and business areas. After a stop at one of the many inner city allotment gardens, the day ended with a visit to the famous Landscape Park Duisburg-Nord where relics of the former high furnaces and other industrial remains establish a kind of modern follies giving space for many leisure activities and adventures.

### **Study Tour “Economy”**

This first study tour of the project was adjoined to the 2nd Open Conference in Cheshire (see below).

### **Environmental focus:**

#### **3rd Open Conference, 26th – 28th June 2014, Rhodes (Greece),**

During the last decades the economic development of Rhodes centred on tourism with the mild climate, the sea and the beaches and some of the exceptional heritage sites as main assets. The interest of the tourists and many inhabitants alike did not encompass the rich biodiversity, natural landscapes, parks and gardens on the island. As a positive effect, natural spots of high quality, flora and fauna remained almost untouched. On the other hand, many public parks, gardens and open spaces were neglected. Today, there is an increasing interest to develop those sites, by the politicians and other officials, by tourism experts and by the local population. Those who manage parks, areas of natural beauty or rich biodiversity are keen to employ sustainable development schemes increasing the social contributions and economic benefits of their sites too.

During the first day of the conference presentations given by external experts and by partners showed the wide range of assets for sustainable development policies, for the enhancement of the environment and for hybrid parks. Presentations by: “The Regional Nursery of South Aegean

and the Botanical Garden of Rhodes: Sustainable development”, “The role of parks in the South Aegean Region”, “Wild growing and endemic flora – potentialities of exploitation”, “How cities could use parks and green spaces for climate change management”, “The Valley of Butterflies”, “The development plan for the Municipal Flower Garden of Rimini Square”, “Sustainable exploitation of wild growing plants: The strategy of the Balkan Botanic Garden of Kroussia”, “The contribution of parks to environmental awareness”.

Partners talked about “The European Vocational Competition for Young Gardeners”, “Ecological maintenance of public and touristic used parks” and “The European Garden Association”. Finally the outcomes of the study to investigate economic values were presented for Northwich Woodlands, but also as a methodology and tool to be used elsewhere.

During the next two days many of the presented sites were visited. After a stop at the Municipal Flower Garden of Rimini Square, the tour continued at the medieval moat and on the fortifications around the medieval town of Rhodes. Then the garden of the Marc de Montalembert Foundation, a modern reconstruction of a historic garden combining Medieval, Ottoman and Arabic and a strong Mediterranean character was visited. By coach the group arrived at the Regional Nursery of the South Aegean where the Botanical Garden of Rhodes is under construction. The group followed the Path of Biodiversity and tasted local products, two of the educational activities here. Next was Kallithea Springs and Garden, known from ancient times for its healthy sources.

The next day started with a workshop at Rodini Park that stretches along a green and shady bed of a stream not far away from the city centre. Participants discussed how the accessibility and use of this park with its unique features and qualities might be improved.

After a stop at the Museum of Natural History of the Bee, a private investment of increasing environmental, economic and tourism relevance, the trip continued to the Valley of Butterflies. The valley is a

unique biotope because it is the only natural forest of oriental sweetgum trees and a resting point for the Jersey tiger, a nocturnal moth. The conflict between the vulnerability of the site and the increasing visitor interest was solved by investments in path, railings and awareness and control activities alike.

**Workshop “Environmental Aspects 2”, 23rd – 25th July 2014, Mikolów (Poland)**

The workshop started at the new geological park GEOSfera in a former quarry with its typical flora and fauna. Exploitation of limestone revealed the numerous fossils and roughness of the bottom, showing the turbulent history of the place, dating back 260 million years. GEOSfera also attracts garden lovers, e.g. by a sensory garden.

The group then visited the new section of the Silesian Botanical Garden with the buildings of the Centre of Ecological Education of Children and the new plant collections. Here the partnership planted three trees with distinguishing social, environmental and economic relevance.

At the main site of the Silesian Botanical Garden, a former missile station, other ecological and environmental education facilities were visited. The workshop continued with a guest expert presenting the European Earth Centre Foundation. In the courtyard, impressive large scale photos from the project “Arbores Vitae (Trees of Life)” taken at Bialowie a Primeval Forest, were shown.

After a visit to Ogrody Pokazowe Kapias, a plant nursery with a huge variety of show gardens, the second day was continued in Pszczyna, where the combination of the castle park with a wisent enclosure was visited. The wild living wisent was also the focus at the Centre of Wisent Breeding and Forest Education.

Presentations by partners about the benefits of regional and European networking for the revitalisation of parks, about subsidies for planting old tree varieties and about the study on the “consideration of climate change in the design of parks and open spaces” commissioned by Hybrid Parks opened the last day of the workshop. Then the Silesia Park and



Silesian Botanical Garden in Radzionków were introduced. These two sites, as well as the historic park in Wierklaniec, were visited in the afternoon. The history of the huge Silesia Park started in the 1950s on a former coal mining site, which makes it a unique example of park of that time. Finally, on the grounds of the Silesian Botanical Garden in Radzionków, the group explored the successful transfer of biotopes from Katowice airport to this side.

**Workshop “Environmental Aspects 1”, 17th – 18th April 2013, Paola (Malta)**

Presentations given by members of the government and of NGOs, by mayors and external experts referred to the challenges in regard to energy and water, with the current economic scenario and the effects of climate changes, and to the need of dealing with sustainability and rehabilitation, new landscaping and garden design and citizens’ needs. Examples included the REPAIR Action Plan with its heritage trail and the regeneration of parks and the AT FORT project looking at fortifications as cultural asset and resourceful open space. Other presentation covered new plans to conserve public and private gardens and the work of voluntary organisations in managing and restoring sites, such as fortifications and cemeteries.

Presentations by partners encompassed the investments made in Mikolów in the enhancement of the environment, in particular public sites and the Botanical Garden, Finnish policies to protect biodiversity and cultural



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heritage, and the conversion of a landfill into a park. Participants heard about activities by the Landschaftsverband Rheinland to create show gardens and to use them as educational facilities for private garden owners. The final lecture was about adaptive systems in changing environments and about the network of botanical gardens in Poland.

Study visits started with Floriana Gardens, Valletta Gardens and Argotti Botanical Garden. On-site discussion focussed on the origins of gardens with reference to conservation and the impact of climate. In the Hastings Garden and the Barracca Garden the evolution of the British garden during the Victorian period was explored. Further visits included the Garden of Serenity, with information about the origin and redevelopment of this Chinese Garden, Howard Gardens and the newly designed Foss Mdina in Mdina, the President's Palace with its private garden and the recently re-opened Kitchen Garden. Finally the group visited the nursery of the Environmental Landscape Consortium which in public-private-partnership introduces hardier and indigenous plants into the design of public areas.

### **Study Tour, 30th September – 2nd October 2013: Lower Austria**

The theme of this study tour was "A Destination for Garden Tourism – Ecological gardening from public to private gardens".

During the three days, project partners and external experts visited some of the good practice examples of projects developed and/or supported by the two Hybrid Parks partners from Austria "Nature in the Garden"

and "Garden Platform Lower Austria". In addition to the very informative guided tours, there were some presentations and time for discussions and exchange of experiences.

It became very clear that parks and gardens could incorporate much more natural elements while at the same time gaining attractiveness and generating additional income. The network in Lower Austria has established a joint programme and quality brand that combines environmental education with modern garden design (for private and public owners), lifestyle, regional products, food and health care. Convincingly combined with well-preserved local tradition, built heritage and modern architecture a unique tourism destination could be established. It was discussed if such a thoughtful and targeted regional cooperation and development was one option to generate a (regional and thematic) hybrid park.

Visits included "Die Garten Tulln", which is the garden show of Lower Austria started in 2008. It has been designed and is maintained with all its 60 show gardens according to the ecological standards set up by "Nature in the Garden". There are educational activities and many events addressing a wider audience, as well as a therapy garden. The park follows a strict sustainable approach and promotes the use of this concept in other parks and garden, both public and private.

The heritage of Lower Austria, including the garden tradition, can be experienced in the open air museum "Niedersulz". The journey into time starts by entering through a very modern visitor centre. The collection of old varieties of vegetables and fruit and information about their advantages and use is central to the activities of "Arche Noah". A visit to their garden in Schiltern was on the agenda as well as visits to some private gardens working together in the regional network "Die Gärten Niederösterreichs (The Gardens of Lower Austria)". This included the gardens at the group's hotel "Steinschalerhof" where the garden's produce (including wild herbs, flowers and unusual fruits) are used to create inventive and healthy food for the restaurant.

The study tour ended at Schloss Hof, one of the imperial residences in Austria. Its revitalisation started in 2003, when the buildings were in bad



condition and main elements of the park and gardens were lost. Today much progress has been made and much of the former splendour returned, but restoration on the huge garden will continue for some more years.

### Social focus:

#### **2nd Open Conference, 13th - 15th May 2013, Cheshire West & Chester (UK),**

From stately homes and secret gardens to the quintessentially English and exotic oriental – Cheshire is home to some of England's finest gardens. The regional network "Cheshire's Gardens of Distinction" celebrates the richness and diversity of the area's horticultural heritage and green spaces.

The focus of the second Hybrid Parks Conference, combined with the project's first Study Tour was specifically around the social aspects of opening up parks and gardens to new audiences but includes reports on economic and environmental activities and experiences. Thus the conference perfectly demonstrated links and synergies found within the three pillars of sustainability (social, economic and environmental) using the experiences and good practices in Cheshire as the platform for discussion.

The first guest expert gave an overview of the shows organised by Royal Horticultural Society, including near-by Tatton Park, the importance of the RHS for the education, social inclusion, horticultural heritage and impact on visitor economy. The UK perspective of green infrastructure was the theme of the next presentation "Embedding an understanding of a Green Infrastructure approach and developing the potential for it at a national, regional and local scale", followed by information on the Weaver Valley Total Environment Pilot Project that develops an approach to the delivery of the Hybrid Parks concept in Cheshire West using green spaces to add value and widen benefits. Then a tour of the gardens at Quarry Bank Mill showed this 18th century estate as a fantastic example of forward thinking from owner Samuel Greg. Then a presentation on the Eden Project provided an overview of the success from economic benefits, community engagement and education. This inspired the group for a joint brainstorming and exercise on opening up a garden to new audiences.



The next morning Cholmondeley Castle was visited as a best practice example of a successful approach to turning an estate and gardens around to an extremely profitable garden from events to planting. The tour continued to Northwich Woodlands, which was discovered on foot, on two wheels, on three wheels and on water with Cheshire West & Chester Council's Green Spaces team. This extensive area of open space on the urban fringe of Northwich provides a Hybrid Parks living legacy for the 21st Century born out of the industrial revolution of the 19th Century. The activities included a trip on the historic Anderton Boat Lift, a remarkable feat of Victorian engineering.

Next day started with a visit to and information about Grosvenor Park, Chester's premier urban green space. A 'hybrid' restoration makes this Victorian urban park fit for the 21st century with heritage at the heart of the project but with multi-faceted objectives. Ness Gardens was the final place of interest during the conference and its study tour. As an introduction, the value of Ness Botanical Gardens for health, wellbeing, education (with Liverpool University) and commercial benefits was presented. This topic was continued by a presentation on the Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme Cheshire and the Merseyside Public Health Network jointly working towards a "Natural Health Service" based on a total environment perspective. The final presentation was a personal perspective on the development of a multi-functional role for parks also looking forward towards a sustainable future for green spaces.

## 16 – Thematic workshops, study tours and conferences



### **Workshop “Social Aspects 2”, 7th – 8th November 2013, Ferrara (Italy)**

This workshop focussed on urban agriculture and its benefits from a socio-cultural point of view. It was hosted in Ferrara, a UNESCO’s World Heritage City that represents a rare example of conservation of rural areas designed in the Middle Age within historic city walls.

Guided by the theme AGOR-AGRO participants explored how gardens, vegetable gardens and parks outline urban and peri-urban landscapes and improve the quality of life. Presentations showed the wide range of “gardening” in urban areas in Italy and research results on its socio-cultural aspects such as “agriculture for leisure” or the key role of urban horticulture to fight social exclusion and to promote lifelong learning and intergenerational exchanges.

A short lecture about the idea of hybrid parks and the allegory of good government and some scenes from the film “God save the green” opened the stage for information about plans in Umbria for an urban garden project and for a therapy garden combining nature, landscape and arts, about contemporary urban gardening projects in Sweden, about the “Green Book” for urban green in Dortmund (Germany), about the work on a garden route in Brittany and about the ecological calendar used at the Silesian Botanical Garden for educational activities.

Study visits included Parco Pareschi, a 15th century garden converted

into allotments, Parco Massari, the biggest public garden within the city walls, and Parco Urbano located at the river Po to create a place of transition between the urban area and the agricultural landscape. At Parco delle Mura, encircling the centre for 9 kilometres, a bike and pedestrian lane has been realized. Terraviva Bio was visited as a distinctive example of two biodynamic farms using a 4 hectares public area and inviting the public to visit, to learn or to have a break.

In the countryside Delizia Estense del Verginese was visited. The recently restored garden exposed how difficult it is to maintain the original concept of flowers and fruit trees. The workshop ended with at Bosco della Mesola, the fully protected remains of a woodland complex, which originated around the year 1000.

### **Workshop “Social Aspects 1”, 13th – 14th June 2012, Lund (Sweden)**

The City Park in Lund was the main venue and also one of the subjects discussed within this first workshop focussing on the social dimension of parks and gardens.

The park’s history, actual situation and development strategies have been central to the first lectures. Founded in 1911, the City Park was always well used. But present-day visitors and urban development require a major redevelopment. The partners discussed how conflicting user demands, but also different objectives set by heritage conservation (the park includes remains of the ancient city wall), nature protection

(the park is a NATURA 2000 site) and modern park design have influenced the new Masterplan for the park. The group also visited the new structures realised within the first phase of the implementation of the Masterplan.

The focus of the presentations given by partners was on changing user demands and therapy gardens too: "What is social about parks and gardens? Maslow's hierarchy of needs"; "The Mersey Forest as an example for changing user demands"; "Responses to changing user demands in city parks, community gardens and therapy gardens"; "Cheadle Royal Hospital: A garden for Alzheimer patients"; "Nature in the garden – idea and overview of therapeutic gardens in Lower Austria"; "A therapeutic park on Mont Subasio".

The study tour on the next day started with a presentation on healing (or therapeutic) gardens. The healing garden at Alnarp University was explored then and the advantages and limitations of therapies making use of the unique healing qualities of gardens were discussed in much detail on site.

Central to the visit in Malmö was the guided tour through the new Castle Garden. This early urban gardening project was set up by citizens at the periphery of an urban park close to the city's centre. Vegetables and flowers are grown here to be used in the garden's restaurant or to be sold in the plant shop. Modern, designed gardens add to the quality of the place that also offers working and training opportunities to many people who have difficulties to find jobs elsewhere.

#### **Study Tour, 21st – 23rd May 2014: Linköping (Sweden)**

The program of the study tour in Linköping focused on the big green parks and major projects characterizing the city and its activities for social inclusion and healthy environments. It started with a visit to the "Old Linköping" where large parts of the old and original urban setting with wooden houses and gardens are preserved. This open air museum is attracting both citizens and visitors from outside. In the evening the partners went by boat along the Kinda Canal which is one of the important blue-green lanes in the region. A presentation by the city's

ecologist showed how the city works actively for biodiversity on water routes and along the canal.

On the second day the participants were welcomed by the city's mayor in one of the city's oldest houses. She gave an introduction on the project in the social housing district Skäggetorp. On site some of the enhancement areas in the green areas of this district were visited. This included community gardening and venues for sports, cultural events and communication that were started or enhanced during the project period. We also did practical exercises with Linköping University's outdoor education expert to experience importance and resources of the outdoor environment for learning and interaction – as it has been practiced throughout the entire project with the people living here.

Next was the city's pride Horticultural Society, the city park. The park is a large forum where several activities are intermingled, such as restaurant & cafe, craft, nursery, sports, outdoor education and play for children. Above all, the park is a great green meeting place and recreation spot for residents of Linköping. The City Park is one of the best examples in Sweden for a very active and sympathetic use of city parks. Storytelling and the narrative significance of places were the themes of a talk during dinner.

Day 3 began with a visit to Vreta Clusters where green entrepreneurship meets academia and industry. It is an entrepreneurial mind set with innovations in environmental technology and an ambition to be a creative meeting place for all who work on environmental issues in various industries. The partnership were also informed about the latest technology in cognitive science and possible applications for parks. We had an exchange with a representative from the INTERREG IVB project "Cult Tour", focussing on parks and tourism. The future role of public green was one element in the presentation about "Bo2016", the building exhibition in Linköping in the year 2016.

The study tour ended at the Berg Locks which is one of the largest locks in Sweden and thus an attraction and a green beautiful place for recreation and tourism.





## 18 – Thematic workshops, study tours and conferences



### **Hybrid Workshop, 23rd – 25th April 2014: Brittany (France)**

During the project some Hybrid Workshops joined the partnership for analysing events, presentations and reports and for identifying good practice and measures towards hybrid parks and sustainable development. For this specific Hybrid Workshop in Brittany eight gardens were selected for visits, discussions with the owners and analysis by all participants with regard to the economic, social and environmental topics covered by Hybrid Parks.

The 13 garden rooms in the Mannerist style garden of La Ballue follow each other like a labyrinth, passing through contrasting, surprising scenes. Contemporary compositions and sculptures create an extraordinary place. The manor offers a tearoom with a shop and some guest rooms.

At La Bourbansais, a zoological garden and presentations of the use of raptors and packs of hounds for the hunt, contribute much to the budget needed to maintain the palace and the French gardens and to create new attractions, such as the kitchen garden, restored in 2012.

Designed by the owner since 1997, the gardens of Pelinec include more than 20.000 plants with about 2.500 different varieties. The good soil and the microclimate of the Pelinec estuary have been main reasons for the owner to start his new garden, which is open to the public on weekends, here.

The gardens at Kerdalo date back to 1965 and were created by the horticultural imagination and artistic talent of the painter Peter Wolkonsky. The plantings have been expanded to create an 18 hectares garden as a self-contained natural and manmade botanical and romantic universe.

In the heart of Trégor and high above the banks of the Trieux, the park of the Château de la Roche Jagu extends over 74 hectares. As a contemporary park it is inspired by medieval design. The public estate hosts exhibitions, events and workshops on a range of topics from nature to history.

Created by a passionate botanist in 1897, the Georges Delaselle Garden is now owned by the Conservatoire du littoral, the French coastal protection organisation. Thousands of plants from all over the world have been combined to create various garden spaces.

Grand Launay is a private, modern garden around an old manor house with perfectly shaped topiary and beautiful hedging. Most fascinating is the “garden of temptation” where boxwood snakes climb the trees. Occasionally, the garden also hosts art installations by famous artists, such as Daniel Buren.

Le château de Coscro is a country house built in the 17th century. The property includes a big terrace garden bordered by two pavilions linked by a moat and paths giving some views of nature. The recent restoration of the garden has been made after archaeological and ethno-botanical research.

The analysis showed that there is a wide range of activities for the “hybridisation” of parks and gardens, public and private, modern and historic. But such improvements, no matter if they have an economic, environmental, social/educational or cultural motivation, need careful planning taking into consideration not only investments and annual costs, location and accessibility, but also the resources, the value and the vulnerability of the place.

Most presentations given during the events can be found on [www.hybridparks.eu/publications/presentations](http://www.hybridparks.eu/publications/presentations) ■





## Three essays by partners



### Measuring synergy within gardens and parks: Using graphic matrices to evaluate the coherence of environmental, economic and social activities.

**Essay by: Pawel Kojs (Silesian Botanical Garden, Poland)**

Gardens and parks should be long-lasting institutions that coherently develop synergy between environmental, economic and social functions. Evaluating coherence (consistency) between diverse aspects of dynamic institutions within a changing environment is not easy. This proposal was developed on the basis of experience gathered in the Hybrid Parks project. The analysis assumes that in well-functioning gardens, parks and arboreta different activities interact with each other creating synergy (or not). These interactions, if present, can be weak, medium or strong. If the interactions are not properly developed then the tension between different activities can weaken the organizational structure and lower its effectiveness.

In this analysis of gardens in the EU, three important management aspects of gardens' activities were taken into consideration: environment (En), economic (Ec) and social (So) (Fig. 1.).

*Fig. 1. Three aspects of gardens' activities: environment (En), economic (Ec) and social (So) with a graphical representation.*

To show interactions between those three groups of activities, an analytical tool was developed on the basis of two matrices. The first matrix

(2x3) has  $8 \times 8 \times 8 = 512$  unique combinations and helps to classify the garden into one of 512 groups.

*Fig. 2. In the matrix 512 two values of different features are considered: 1 – the feature is present; 0 – the feature is absent in a given aspect. In each row we have 8 unique combination which give 512 unique sets for all three aspects.*

The second matrix (4x3) has  $64 \times 64 \times 64 = 262.144$  unique combination. In this matrix each aspect is divided into 4 parts: a non-existent feature (0); weak or maladaptive (1); medium or adaptive (2); and strong or over-adaptive (3) (Fig. 3.). With the help of this tool it is possible to draw a dynamic picture of the garden showing the plausible changes of interactions between all three fields.

*Fig. 3. The 512 matrix is a basic analytical tool for a general evaluation of the institution. But it is not precise enough to describe institutional processes and subtle relations between different aspects of activities and features of parks and gardens. From the 512 matrix we can create 19683 unique combination in the 262 144 matrix but only three (shown on the figure) will represent full coherence (see also fig. 7.).*

In each aspect of the activity of a garden or a park we can distinguish constitutive features relating to these three aspects: environment – environmental features, for economic – economic features and for social aspect – social features (fig. 4.).

*Fig. 4. Constitutive features within the given aspect of activity: environment – environmental features, for economic – economic features and for social aspect – social features.*

These features can be measured and treated as objective features. In addition, in each aspect we can extract pairs of features: for environment – economic and social features, for economic – environmental and social features and for social aspect – environmental and economic features. These features represent the feelings and opinions of different categories

of users of parks and gardens (financing institutions, management, employees, co-workers, professionals, visitors, etc.) They are subjective and describe relations and processes rather than infrastructure.

*Fig. 5. In each aspect there are two pairs: for environment – economic and social features, for economic – environmental and social features and for social aspect – environmental and economic features.*

In this analytical tool both categories are important but interconnectedness and thus synergy emerges from relations and is described by subjective features.

Each of three features can occupy one cell in a column representing the given aspect of a garden's activity but different features can occupy the same cell in one column.

**1. Constitutive environmental features (EN-en)** – first column – the value of Nature in the garden, potential of the place, the quality of landscape, the value of biodiversity, the quality of collections, the professionalism of the staff, etc.

**2. Economic side-features in the environmental aspect (EN-ec)** – first column – what people think about financial foundations of the garden (its environmental values), is it sufficiently financed? Is the money properly spent for this feature? Are people well paid? Do ticket prices meet expectations?

**3. Social side-features in the environmental aspect (EN-so)** – first column – what people think about the impact of the garden's social activities into its environment? Is the garden well prepared for visitors (paths, benches, restaurants, toilets, parking places, etc.) with the respect of the Nature in the garden? Is it welcoming to visitors (atmosphere, visitors' centre, staff social qualifications) giving them a well prepared environmental information? Is the money properly spent for this aspect of activity taking into consideration the need for the protection of the botanical collections, trees, landscape, etc.?

**1. Constitutive economic features (EC-ec)** – second column – the budget of the park or garden compared to garden's area, activities, intensity of collections, etc.

**2. Environmental side-features in the economic aspect (EC-en)** – second column – What do administrative staff think about the quality of the garden and its environmental activities? What are the relations between administrative staff and gardeners or environmentalists? Is the quality of the collections adequate in relation to the money spent on them?

**3. Social side-features in the economic aspect (EC-so)** – second column – What do administrative staff think about the social activities in the garden or the park. What are the relations between social workers or educators and administrative staff? Does the quality of the social activities merit the money spent on them?

**1. Constitutive social features (SO-so)** – third column – the quality of the social and educational infrastructure. Are people well paid for their services? Are the prices of social activities (e.g. workshops) appropriate for the standard of provision and do they meet visitors expectations?

**2. Environmental side-features in the social aspect (SO-en)** – third column – What do the staff connected with social aspect think about the quality of the garden and about its potential for the social activities? What are the relations between administrative staff and gardeners or environmentalists? Does the quality of the collections merit the money spent on them?

**3. Economic side-features in the social aspect (SO-ec)** – third column – What do the staff connected with social issues think about the financial support of social activities in the garden or the park? What are the relations between administrative staff and social workers or educators (social workers and educators' opinion). Does the quality of the social activities merit the money spent on them? (external opinion)

*Fig. 6. For analysis, letters and numbers or other symbols can be used instead of graphical sets.*

Fig. 1

## aspects

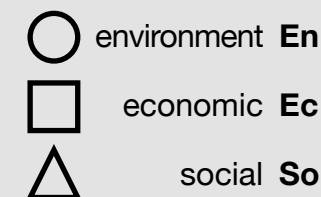
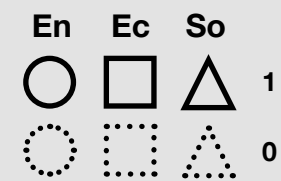




Fig. 2



In the simpler matrix with 512 combinations there are two possible states denoting whether or not the feature in a given garden is present. Generally in parks and gardens all constitutive and side features are present but they can differ in strength. In that case the analytical tool can be simplified and it has 19.683 combination. Features can be allocated values of “1”, “2” or “3”.

Fig. 7. Simplified matrix with 19.683 combination. A dispersion of features as an example of incoherence of the institution.

Example (Fig. 7): **“En”** column – A high value of constitutive features of environmental aspect (rich nature, beautiful landscape), followed by medium approval of financial and administrative support (people think that it is inadequate but acceptable) and low opinions about social activities in the park (environmentalists think that those activities are very weak). **“Ec”** column – The truth is that this park has a very low budget and only symbolic administration. Nevertheless, as much money as possible is allocated to social activities and the rest goes to environmental activities. Administrators who are responsible for allocating budgets, value side features according the support these features receive. **“So”** column – A high value of constitutive features of the social aspect (restaurants, toilets, park space, workshops, educational programs, etc.), followed by medium approval on financial and administrative support (people think that it is inadequate but acceptable) and low opinions about environmental activities in the park (social workers (social animators) and educators think that those activities are very weak).

Comment: there is a visible conflict between two groups of people working in this garden connected with Environmental aspect and Social aspect. People connected with those activities tend to underestimate the value and the role of their colleagues with different responsibilities in the garden. The tension is extreme and can cause a dysfunction across the whole institution.

Proposed solution: the synergy for this garden can be found on the second level. But it needs a diligent work of the management of the garden. The reason for the conflict looks to be personal rather than financial.

People should know about the efforts of their colleagues but also they should address their remarks openly to give the other side of the conflict a chance to formulate a proper response. Meetings and discussions can help, mediation can also be used but if the conflict is too deep sometimes it is better to suspend or dismiss a worker who is responsible for the situation.

Looking at the garden we can see that it has a well-developed environmental (Ecec3) and social (Soso3) infrastructure. Perhaps with the small budget (Ecec1) this infrastructure consumes most of the garden’s resources and causes some additional personnel problems (Enso1 and Soen1). Sometimes it is better to reduce a part of the infrastructure (e.g. to the Ecec2 and to the Soso2) to enhance synergy.

**Summary – Coherence as a value.**

Taking into account any of those three aspects of activity of parks and gardens we can find out that in most cases those aspects are developed unequally. In most gardens we can find a dominant ‘showcase’ activity (e.g. collections, environmental education, recreation, etc.). This does not necessarily present a problem. Diversity defines different types of gardens. Nevertheless, within a particular type of institution, the relation between those activities can be evaluated as ‘meeting expectations’, ‘facilitating’ or ‘excessive’ in creating coherent synergy. The main activity should be supported by other activities in a way that will create synergy.

However, for professionals not only visible aspects of the garden matter, but also less visible procedures, interactions, cooperation, flows of money, access to skilful professionals staff and materials, etc. All these aspects influence the stability and sustainability of the institution. And both gardens and parks are institutions requiring stability and sound foundations. To evaluate and monitor these features the graphic matrix provides an instrument with which to analyse a garden as a dynamic process and the reasons why it coherently fulfils desired values or becomes incoherent and dysfunctional.

A more detailed presentation can be found on [www.hybridparks.eu](http://www.hybridparks.eu) ■





Fig. 3

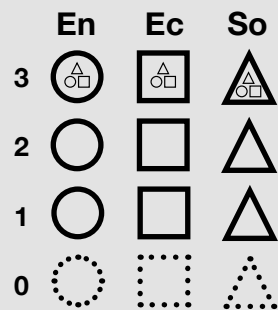


Fig. 4

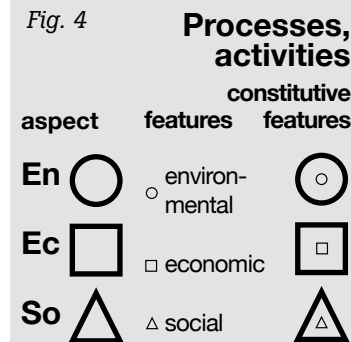


Fig. 3

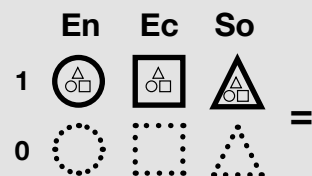


Fig. 3

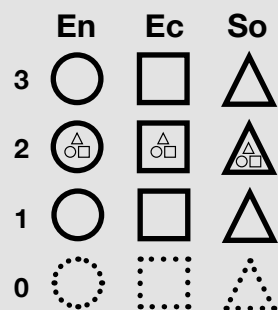


Fig. 5

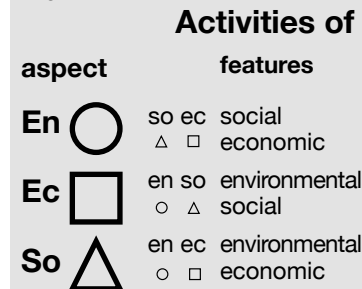


Fig. 5

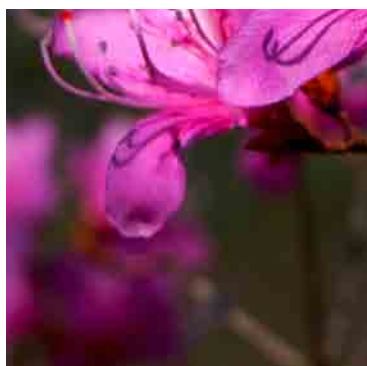
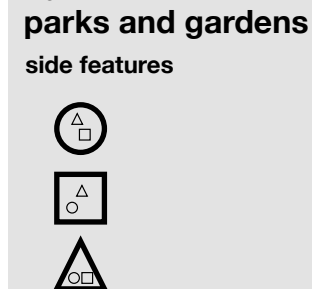


Fig. 3

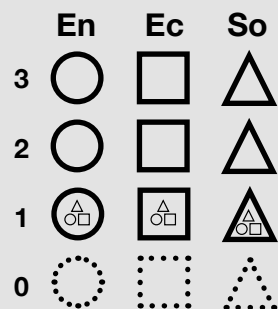


Fig. 6

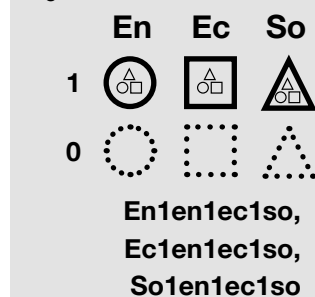
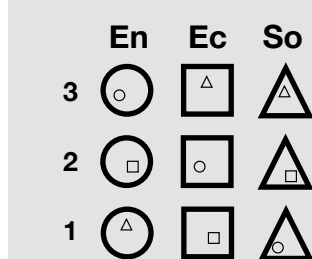


Fig. 7





## Regional Implementation in Umbria

**Essay by: Paolo Papa, Mariella Carbone (Umbria Region),  
Leonardo Giofrè, Angela Magionami (Consultants)**

### Introduction

Umbria, a region in central Italy, is a territory of nearly 8500 km<sup>2</sup> that is prevalently hilly and mountainous; strongly characterized by natural and rural landscapes. Cultivated land and pastures occupy 47 % of the regional territory, and wooded areas occupy about a third.

Until the middle of the last century, the predominant business activity in Umbria was agricultural, employing 56 % of the economically active population. While agriculture remained a rather vital sector over the following sixty years, the percentage employed fell to under 5 % due to the depopulation of the countryside. In recent years, however, this trend has begun to change.

The traditional “green” characteristic of the region endures, referring both to its natural and agricultural environment in which businesses play a clear territorial and environmental role, particularly in the marginal areas.

Several transformations are under way, mainly in terms of out migration, the abandonment of rural areas and progressive urban growth. Therefore the loss of rural land through built development is breaking up the

traditional landscape and ecological patterns. This is a key risk for the future of the regional landscape.

These continuous transformations have determined the necessity to carefully address the issue of those marginal, residual and interstitial, ambiguous and undefined areas, which are often the result of inattentive, near-sighted territorial management. These assume a relevance that is significant enough to require specific recovery, development and management policies to improve the situation and the environmental, social and economic resources associated.

It is this need that has brought the Region of Umbria over the past few years to commit to numerous preparatory studies and analyses and planning and programming tools, as well as become involved with various European projects. Examples come from the interregional projects L.O.T.O. (Landscape Opportunities for Territorial Organisation) and PAYS. DOC “Good Practices for the Landscape” that have had the objectives of identifying Mediterranean landscapes, enhancing local experiences and determining the tools for the proper management of landscape transformations. Just as the project PAYS.MED.URBAN has done, thus compounding the results and experiences with PAYS.DOC and turning its attention to questions of peri-urban landscapes and suburbs.

It is also thanks to this work that the region has been able to implement plans and programs through orientation, guidelines, resources and

instruments of development and management for these landscapes in transformation. These research activities have given considerable scope to participation as an essential means for revealing the local dimension and perceptual aspects of those marginal situations, based on a coherent plan with the European Landscape Convention.

### **Regional Implementation**

With the Hybrid Parks project, Region Umbria and its other partners have launched an intense exchange program that has led to a wider focus of the project: on the one hand, the focus on “parks and gardens” has been extended to all “green areas”; and on the other, the focus is to compare projects, practices and administration with particular local characteristics.

The observation of cross-regional contexts and the contributors involved allows Umbria to pinpoint the potential impact of the principal activities related to the economic, environmental and social pillars of the project, predominantly in the peri-urban areas.

In consideration of the historical and cultural identity of the region and of the numerous autonomous and spontaneous initiatives underway, the Region Umbria has implemented the project by launching actions and policies tied to the themes of urban and peri-urban horticulture in attempts to positively affect the territory and to promote local development.

In particular, these policies regard the promotion, improvement and dissemination of knowledge and practices related to agriculture in peri-urban and urban vegetable gardens, and have been formalised in the Memorandum of Understanding according to the provisions of the Regional Committee Resolution DGR n. 1453 of 16.12.2013 which was signed February 7, 2014 by the Region Umbria and the regional office of the National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI).

This protocol is intended to develop a synergistic path of sharing and cooperation by combining the versions on which both sides have worked in recent years, with the adhesion of several towns in Umbria such as Perugia, Foligno, Bevagna, Amelia, Trevi, Marsciano, Sant’Anatolia di Narco and Spello.



The common goal is to spread ‘green culture’ and agriculture amongst the citizens, to limit land degradation (especially agricultural) and improve quality of life and the environment.

In particular, the intention is to encourage a new way of thinking about traditional agriculture and thereby strengthen the ecological and landscape role, even in urban and peri-urban areas adjacent to the historic centres so as to encourage various forms of cultivation that can be seen as individual and collective responses to the economic, environmental and social issues.

For this purpose, through the commitment of project and regional resources, the institutional work of the staff has been enriched by the contribution of professionals specialised in the themes of the project, and the following practices have been established:

- analysis of good practices concerning the theme of peri-urban agriculture and urban gardens;
- identification and analysis of abandoned open spaces and public urban and peri-urban areas in the municipalities that have adhered to the national project “Urban Vegetable Gardens”;
- organization of participatory planning workshops that are useful for mobilizing citizens and establishing a network of information and awareness amongst social and economic organisations, associations, public entities and individuals;



## 26 – Essay: Regional implementation in Umbria



- drafting of guidelines for the proper planning, design and development of these areas, with particular reference to horticulture and peri-urban agriculture;
- drafting of regulations for the allocation and forms of alternative management to current practices, to be presented to the municipalities involved in the project for adoption in their planning tools.

These activities were presented and discussed by the Technical Committee provided for in the Memorandum of Understanding, and the committee was composed of the relevant departments of the Region Umbria, the University of Perugia and ANCI, which began consultation and debate in the spring of 2014.

At the same time, several financial measures were made available through the new European Program for Agricultural Funds (PSR 2014-2020) with the aim of supporting measures for sustainable development and strengthening the potential of the rural areas in the region.

The proposal of these measures is intended to provide direct and concrete answers to the needs of the local communities, offer specific services, preserve and enhance existing resources and promote the responsible use of natural and cultural heritage. All of which with the purpose of integrating other productive sectors: a „plural“ approach consistent with the Common Agricultural Policy.

One of the sub-measures concerns the theme of „Investment support in the creation, improvement or expansion of basic local services for the rural population, including leisure, culture and related infrastructures“ to be financed by EAFRD (European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development) with 12 million euros.

This sub-measure benefits both the local population and tourism, and the renewal of open urban spaces in proximity to inhabited centres, all as a means of returning the old places of encounter and exchange to the community.

The scheduled interventions will be in line with the concept of „Hybrid Parks“ as they do not only concern the redevelopment and enhancement of green areas and neglected spaces within the urban fabric and the landscape context of historic centres, but also foresee the implementation of social and community gardens, including for productive, recreational, educational, demonstrative and therapeutic purposes.

Another sub-measure to be financed with 18 million euros is defined as „Support for studies/investments for the maintenance, restoration and renewal of the cultural and natural heritage of the villages, the rural landscape and sites of a high naturalistic value, including socio-economic aspects of such activities and actions to raise awareness of issues regarding the environment“. The protection, rehabilitation and enhancement of rural and protected nature areas have the intent of helping to counteract socio-economic decline and abandonment. It makes provisions for measures aimed at the recovery and functional renewal of the architectural, environmental and landscape heritage, as well as for educational purposes, demonstration and tourism of an integrated nature, even on an experimental basis.

The aim is to search for patterns of development and the sustainable management of regional resources so as to protect and restore old signs and historical elements of the landscapes, reduce situations of degradation and reinforce the social and settlement fabric of residual and marginalised territories.

By implementing these measures, Umbria Region seeks to structure a long-term recovery policy for the reorganisation and redevelopment of peri-urban open spaces from a formal and functional point of view. The idea includes the differentiation and development of the types of agricultural activities.

Agriculture, therefore, maintains its traditional aggregative function at a political and institutional level and permitting the configuration of hybrid spaces of development and support for the economic, social and environmental policies of the region. ■



## National Urban Parks in Finland

**Essay by: Maunu Häyrynen (University of Turku)**

Green zones or wedges are far from new invention. We are familiar with the famous examples of Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace in Boston, Otto Wagner's Forest and Meadow Zone in Vienna or the green area network in the Greater London Plan by Sir Leslie Patrick Abercrombie. Also Finland got its first urban green zone a hundred years ago, when Bertel Jung envisaged his Central Park of Helsinki. However, these paradigmatic examples belong to a less complicated era of Functionalist town planning. After their heyday up to the 1970s, existing green zones are nowadays facing growing pressures of unsympathetic development, encroachment, short-sighted management and outright neglect.

There are signs of a comeback of green zones and networks in urban planning, this time under the auspices of multi-functionality and climate change adaptation. For instance, green-blue networks and infrastructures may be justified by counteracting heat islands and coping with increasing runoff. There is a constant need to sustain urban ecology in growing cities and a renewed interest in reintroducing to them "rural" green activities such as urban farming. On the other hand, densification of urban fabric is argued by climate change mitigation goals even at the cost of green areas and networks.

Historic preservation has taken a gradual turn towards a more holistic, landscape-based approach, as seen in the European Landscape Convention or in the UNESCO and ICOMOS discussions on historic urban landscape or the World Rural Landscape Initiative. In the urban context this would mean that historic sites and areas would be treated, rather than a specific land use category, an integral part of urban landscape together with ecological and community aspects. Here the challenge is achieving genuine dialogue between different fields of expertise and bringing them into contact with local knowledge and experience.

There is in general no turning back to the powerful centralised planning systems of the past, but there are famous exceptions, such as the first National Urban Park in the world, Stockholm's Ekoparken ("Ecopark") established in 1995 by no less than a government act. The park was formed by a continuous zone reaching from the city centre to the countryside, bordering on the Stockholm Archipelago and comprising several outstanding historic landscapes such as the Royal Park of Haga. The fact remains that the success of Ekoparken has not been repeated elsewhere in Sweden, suggesting a too high institutional threshold for everyday planning and conservation use.

In Finland the concept of National Urban Park was introduced in the Land Use and Building Act of 1999. The act was otherwise bad news to historic city parks and gardens. It removed the nominal protection

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the preceding act had provided for green areas and defined town planning exclusively a responsibility of the municipalities, state authorities only remaining as guardians of the legal process. Ever since, the municipalities have been testing the limits of the Act, drawn in many cases by court decisions. While the outcomes concerning building protection have varied, the courts have often had a bleak view on historic landscapes.

National Urban Parks offer an alternative planning route. Cities fulfilling a set of four criteria may apply for the status of National Urban Parks from the Ministry of the Environment. If accepted, the perimeter and the detailed management plan need to be confirmed by the Ministry, as well as all major changes afterwards. The park area together with its management goals must be taken into account in town plans and they are regularly monitored by the Ministry. In a way this would seem a remainder of the old planning system, however based on the initiative and commitment of the cities.

For the preservation of Finnish historic parks and gardens National Urban Parks have been beneficial. Artistically or aesthetically important parks and green spaces feature prominently among their foundation criteria together with built heritage and natural values. Historic parks and gardens thus form a backbone of every existing or planned National Urban Park. Reflecting the relatively short history of Finnish garden culture, even the oldest historic park in National Urban Parks

only dates back from the late 18th century (the Perspective in Heinola), while the latest ones relate to post-war Modernist landscape architecture, as is the case with the sports grounds of Turku.

For the parks and gardens included in National Urban Parks, the level of protection is presumably higher than for those lacking the status. There is no actual legal difference between the two categories, but any major changes in regard to the central values of National Urban Parks must be negotiated between the city representatives and the Ministry of the Environment. The Parks also represent image value to the cities, which indeed is one of the key motives for their foundation. The local media generally embrace the idea, for which reason they tend to react strongly to anything that might look like their deterioration. This makes the city councils slightly more reluctant to cut back their maintenance or promote unseemly development.

The National Urban Park status does not exclude development, from which may follow land use conflicts. They can roughly be divided into two types, fringe development and centre renewal. Fringe development is often attracted by the very existence of a National Urban Parks, contributing to the rise of real estate prices in their vicinity. Apartments with a view, surrounding the Parks, may eventually affect the overall landscape character, as has to an extent happened in the oldest Finnish National Urban Park in Hämeenlinna.

Renewal in city centres on the other hand may aim at activating areas inside the Parks, which could clash with other values such as historic integrity or the continuity of landscape. In Turku the building of a light-traffic bridge in a sensitive spot near the old Cathedral caused a public outcry, while in Pori plans for a multipurpose arena in the middle of the park islands next to the centre were drawn back after a debate. The debates usually take place at a local level, the Ministry preferring to act behind the scenes.

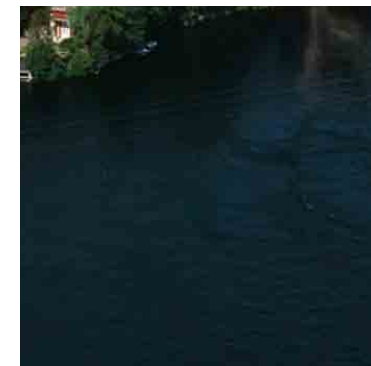
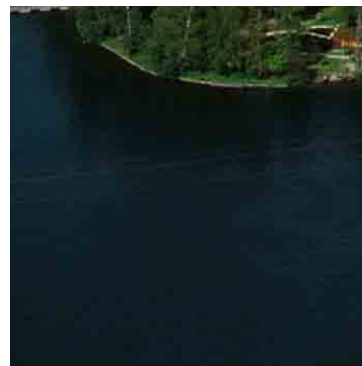
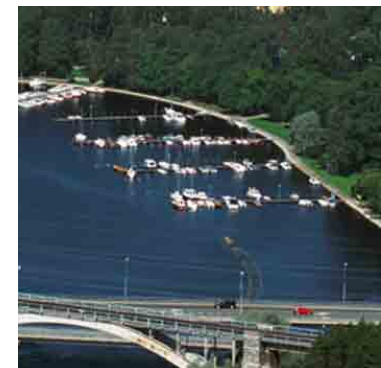
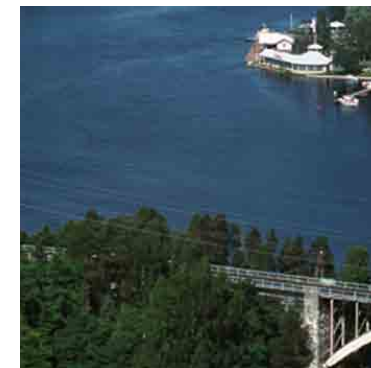
The number of National Urban Parks in Finland is small – now six – and will not become much bigger in the future. Thus the National Urban Park can hardly be considered a universal planning solution.



Another obstacle for this would be that the National Urban Park decisions are individually tailored to the cities and in the process adapted to different scales, needs and histories. The weighing of the criteria and the management policies vary from one city to another, which makes each National Urban Park more or less a case apart.

Only some of Finland's historically or artistically important parks and urban landscapes may be found in the present-day National Urban Parks. The most notable exception is the capital Helsinki, boasting several of the country's foremost historic parks and gardens but unwilling to restrict its elbowroom by committing itself to the control of the Ministry. Instead, the city has designated a "Helsinki Park" in its general plan, the exact status of which remains unclear. A number of smaller cities stay outside after having failed in their applications for one reason or another. From the preservation point of view, then, National Urban Parks provide a range of encouraging examples but not an overall solution here either.

In a country where garden heritage is weakly recognised, the Parks offer one of the very few options available for resourcing its study and maintenance. They also ensure media attention that sometimes helps with the protection efforts. They remind the politicians and planners about the historic landscape values of their cities and their commitment to their preservation, should these incidentally be forgotten. They also bring in benefits that associate with preservation of historic parks and gardens, thus offering a positive model. Most importantly, the concept of National Urban Park builds on an integrated landscape approach in a concrete way. Due to the diversity of its application, it functions as a living laboratory for alternative planning solutions and new management practices in which historic parks and gardens play a crucial role. ■



## Research and best practice reports



INTERREG IVC funding allowed Hybrid Parks to commission a total of six economic toolkits, environmental studies and social surveys on themes that were identified as common interest for future innovative measures and for the sustainability of policies in all regions.

Additionally the partnership published seven reports on best practice examples from the partner regions showing the wide use of parks and gardens for far-reaching social, environmental and economic/urban purposes.

### Indicative Economic Assessment for Green Infrastructures – A toolkit and a case study

Making the case for investment in parks and gardens is a critical step in ensuring that the wide range of benefits, such as those for health, tourism and employment, are sustained. With strong competing pressures on finance, developing tools to describe the economic value of parks and gardens can support all negotiations for investment.

Through Hybrid Parks the partners in Cheshire West & Chester were able to develop the Green Infrastructure Valuation Toolkit and to use it to derive monetary values for the social, economic and environmental benefits that Northwich Woodlands – as a case study – provides.

The case study showed 14 m growth of GVA, positive impact on property

value of 11 m and 36 m of wider economic benefit. Tourism provides the greatest GVA benefit. The health benefits are increasingly important as the focus on physical activity and the role of green spaces in supporting good mental health strengthens. The toolkit also shows that land and property value will increase as people choose to live in attractive settings. Having an extensive green space on the doorstep will be important in helping to attract new investment, houses, jobs and growth to Northwich itself.

The key issue is who pays for the benefits that are being provided? It does need to be a mix of private, public and community investment, ensuring equity of benefit, high quality design and long term management in order to realise the return on investment.

Transnational cooperation with Hybrid Park partners develops the toolkit further and enables a collective approach to promoting the economic as well as the intrinsic value of parks and gardens.

*(Study commissioned by Cheshire West & Chester Council and realised by the council's Total Environment Team)*

### Measuring Economic, Ecological and other Effects of Gardens and Parks

Gardens and parks exist in many different sizes, contexts and styles



leading from small front door gardens to landscape gardens and national parks. They are as diverse as their creators, as different as their geographical contexts and as manifold as their plants. They constitute an integral part of our cultural heritage and have become leisure attractions with huge numbers of visitors.

Our society has become more environmentally conscious with changed values and attitudes to nature and sustainability. Gardening and “grow your own” has gained a new lease of life. People nowadays make a social statement by cultivating a garden and by changing it according to latest gardening trends to be found in garden magazines and on garden shows. Increased urbanization has caused a distance between people and nature with the result that they are longing for green spaces. Big efforts have been put into “greening the city”. Many historic gardens in rural areas have been rejuvenated and have become attractions in their own right.

Although there is evidence that gardens and parks benefit our society in a variety of ways, it is important to show how such benefits could be measured and used by practitioners. Therefore, the study identified and explained indicators for the benefits of gardens and parks and presents techniques for the measurement of these benefits. While emphasis is placed on the economic contribution, ecological, sociocultural and community effects are also considered. The study presents a toolbox that helps managers to evaluate economic and other impacts of their sites and includes some final conclusions and recommendations.

*(Study commissioned by Gartenplattform Niederösterreich and realised by IMC University of Applied Sciences (Krösbacher, Okorokoff, Tischler, Kraushofer))*

### **Garden Shows and Festivals as a Business Model – Case studies and innovative approaches**

The study provides information to consider the development of some alternative form of garden shows by researching the current role of garden shows and festivals and their impact in several categories, such

as the variety of uses and potential for parks and gardens, the economic benefits, tourism but also inward investment and job creation.

After establishing an overview about existing shows, those shows that are the most compatible with the physical resources and the ideological base of the parks and gardens within Hybrid Parks were selected as case studies, including Philadelphia Flower Show, Giardina in Zurich, Keukenhof, two shows in Germany, Chaumont and “Floralie” in France and the RHS shows at Chelsea, Hampton Court and Tatton Park and some smaller shows.

Case studies provide key facts (such as location, venue, origins, theme, and ticket prices), visitor facts (including number and origin of visitors, age groups, professional visitors, reasons for attendance) and exhibitor facts (total number, main goals, ratings and market positioning). Each case study also delivers evaluation on location and facilities, exhibitions and show gardens, associated events, awards, marketing, sponsorship, terms and conditions and ends with a summary and conclusions.

Recommendations offer good prospects for new shows if opportunities are used to extend beyond the current norm of visitor profile. There may be an emphasis on the arts to attract younger generations; environmental issues could form an underlying base; regional food could also attract more visitors. Working with students on show gardens may add fresh ideas and attract new visitor groups. A broader base line could prove more economically beneficial as well as more sustainable.

*(Study commissioned by Schloss Dyck Foundation and realised by Ed Bennis)*

### **Rain Gardens in Private Gardens as an Element of Sustainable Water Management**

Looking at the effects of anthropogenic climate change, we can observe an increase of heavy rainfall, of extreme drought and of the effects of urban heat island – even in rural residential areas. The study shows the need for a shift of paradigm from getting rid of rainwater “as securely







and quickly as possible” to a sustainable management that keeps rainwater on site as long as possible. Sustainable rainwater management includes all actions to ensure the maximum return of precipitation into the natural water cycle and as close to the site of occurrence as possible. The sustainable use of rainwater helps to prevent damages caused by overloading the sewage systems.

For holistic concepts of sustainable rainwater management already small interventions in single gardens are important as their replications support the functions of the ecosystem. Rain gardens in private gardens are one of those successful small interventions. This study examines the opportunities of the installation of different types of rain gardens in private gardens, with Lower Austria as a pilot area.

Rain gardens are made up of native perennial plants with soil designed to absorb and to manage storm water runoff. Rain gardens increase biodiversity, resilience of gardens, aesthetic values, regional identity, recreational qualities and the understanding of natural processes.

As a determined handbook for garden owners the study delivers design proposals and plant lists in six chapters: “Understand site and context”; “Determine size and location”; “Design a space-based shaping”; “Plug the place, secure the topsoil, earth, and substrate”; “Planting” and “Observe and maintain”.

*(Study commissioned by Natur im Garten and realised by Christine Rottenbacher)*

### Consideration of Climate Change in the Design of Parks and Open Spaces

The report analyses studies, plans and projects carried out to provide relevant information about key aspects and solutions that have been pursued in relation to climate change and the design of parks and open spaces. Numerous practice-oriented examples are given, which illustrate not only concrete findings, but also strategies, scopes of action and interdependencies.

Urbanized, dense and highly engineered spaces with their complex structures are the areas where there is a particular need for strategies to mitigate those extremes which can be influenced (e.g. peak temperatures in urban heat islands) and to reduce the negative impacts of climate change (e.g. damage through flooding, storm and hail, health risks through heat stress).

The adaptation of green spaces to climate change and its impacts, and their spatial interconnection, enlargement and functional expansion is a task that must be tackled by society as a whole, and by using an integrated approach. Transformation of these spaces must always be incorporated into larger urban development strategies, and must entail a balance of interests between the relevant agencies as well as the involvement of civil society.

The study is structured into five chapters: “Overall Context” (including stakeholders, legal principles and guidelines, research projects, need for new policies), “City / Region as a Level of Intervention” (including open space development and water resource management as an issue of climate management), “The City Neighbourhood: The Main Level of Intervention for Enhancing Open Spaces” (including unsealing and greening of open spaces, water resource management, retention areas, climate change sensitive design of open spaces, urban agriculture and gardening, local marketing and private action for a green city, green courtyards, roofs and façades), “Financial Benefits of Open-Space Measures” and finally “Design Principles”.

*(Study commissioned by the State Chancellery of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia and realised by Lutz Meltzer)*

### Urban Renewal with Resident Involvement and User Influence

The district of Skäggetorp is a suburb of Linköping, with 8.500 inhabitants and an immigrant proportion of 44 %.

A strategic plan for Skäggetorp was adopted by the City Council in 2009.

At that time Skäggetorp's park consisted largely of areas that lacked a clear purpose, attractiveness, use and accessibility. The new activity park, completed in 2010, was a first step in the renewal process. The park needs to provide spontaneous meeting places and the opportunity for recreation and health-promoting activities. To break the low employment trend, activities that can be run by the residents are encouraged.

It is fundamental that the entire process takes place in collaboration with the residents. In the recent years members of the municipal staff as well as different associations and organisations, schools and the churches in Skäggetorp worked together to develop an attractive park that unites architecture and design with environmental awareness and horticulture.

The best method to reach the inhabitants and to foster their inclusion is to be out in the park and to get in contact by very open and spontaneous actions. When a group was active with a gardening project people stopped by and talked freely. Their comments about the park and their overall situation were collected. They were also asked what they would like to see happening to enhance people's interaction.

The survey also reports on additional activities to include inhabitants, led by Linköping University and based on their experiences on outdoor learning. Additionally the survey lists examples of other urban gardening projects.

*(Study commissioned by the City of Linköping and realised by CLGardens and University of Linköping)*

### Best practice reports:

#### **Parks and Gardens in Spatial Planning Policies (North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany)**

In North Rhine-Westphalia a number of combined innovative policy tools on the local and regional level give support for the use of the unique resources of parks, landscapes, culture and heritage within sustainable

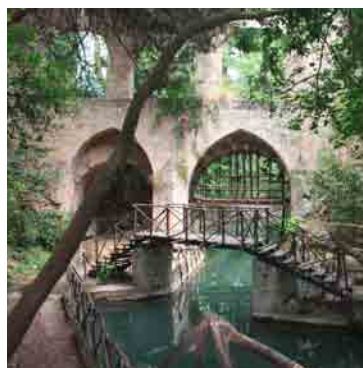


environmental, social and economic development policies. Public investments in the enhancement or creation of green sites, made possible by State Garden Shows and the REGIONALE for instance, have been vital in many municipalities to enhance urban structures, to redevelop derelict sites, to attract new business, to enhance housing areas, to revitalise urban centres etc. Equally important, these policies are based on competitions for innovative and convincing strategies and on new forms of dialogue and cooperation crossing administrative and professional borders.

#### **Cheshire's Gardens of Distinction (Cheshire West & Chester, UK)**

Cheshire's Gardens of Distinction (CGoD) project celebrates the richness and diversity of Cheshire's horticultural heritage and green spaces. Supported by European Funds, the regional-level intervention aims at increasing visitor spend in North West England by promoting 'Cheshire's Gardens of Distinction' thanks to the involvement of Marketing Cheshire, 'AdCap' by Cumbria Tourism and 'Modern History' by Marketing Manchester.

Locally this project still builds on the success of Cheshire's Year of Gardens' 08. The CGoD project continued to achieve significant impact for the regional tourism industry from local, national and international markets. But also economic, social and environmental impacts of the programme are demonstrated in the case study.



#### **Nature in the Garden (Lower Austria, Austria)**

When “Nature in the Garden” was considered as a campaign, the range of objectives and activities was extended from private gardens to public green spaces that should act as a showcase for the citizens, encouraging them to design and to maintain their private gardens in a more natural way.

Most important success factor was the 2008 Provincial Garden Show located at Tulln and Grafeneck. Here the public could explore and enjoy the mix of traditional garden skills with ecological values and high quality design. Today many municipalities and organisations use the publications by “Nature in the Garden” to raise the public awareness for seasonal and ecological priorities in managing public green spaces. Successful municipalities also apply for the award „Nature in the Garden City”.

#### **Silesian Botanical Garden (Mikolów, Poland)**

The mission of the Silesian Botanical Garden is active conservation of biodiversity by cultivation of rare and endangered species of plants, by transfer of these plants from cultivated areas to their proper habitats, by preservation of diminishing meadows and old varieties of fruit trees. The Silesian Botanical Garden offers ecological and environmental education and events addressing children, youth and adults.

But the objectives are even broader: the Silesian Botanical Garden develops as a meeting place for education and for communication on a

broad range of topics, in particular culture, philosophy, social issues and the environment. Finally, the garden is an open space for everyone who needs a break from the fast-paced and often artificial life in the cities.

#### **Vuosaari Landfill - raising public awareness on biodiversity (Helsinki, Finland)**

The Vuosaari Landfill site in Helsinki is a good example of contemporary landscape design for sites with transitional function, which can be defined as having a clear starting function (here: storage of construction land masses) and unclear final function. During the landscaping process top soil organic layers serving as a “seed bank” and providing the first step to sustaining biodiversity and succession of ecologically sustainable habitats were transferred to the site, in particular plant species that would be lost in construction projects.

The result is an attractive place with many functions – a Hybrid Park also raising the awareness for biodiversity by comfortable and versatile recreational use. The park brings nature within the reach of residents in an increasingly urban environment.

#### **The New Botanical Garden Rhodes (Rhodes, Greece)**

The Botanical Garden of Rhodes (BGoR) is situated inside the Plant Nursery of the South Aegean Region. According to the development plan, BGoR will be an educational site and an attraction for all seasons. To serve its educational commitments and to be financially viable, the business plan includes a plant propagating material bank, the collection and protection of plant genetic resource, knowledge and awareness raising activities concerning the Mediterranean flora and agriculture and educational activities for special groups (biology, agriculture, agronomy, farming, etc.).

As a hybrid park it creates a new green space within cycling distance from the city of Rhodes. As a new tourist resource it is expected to generate economic benefits and new jobs for the local community.

#### **A new district park in a residential area (Linköping, Sweden)**

Skäggetorp in Linköping is a typical housing district of the 1970s in risk



of a further physical decline and social problems. The majority of its 59 hectares of parkland is made up of open, grassy areas that have no particular function. A strategic plan for the renewal of Skäggetorp was adopted by Linköping's City Council in 2009.

The objectives include providing a newly designed district park with park "rooms" where residents, property owners, societies, schools and others can participate in making the local environment accessible, attractive and safe. Here the knowledge from community involvement in the traditional local city park and new ideas such as urban gardening were and will be used as tools for social inclusion, ecological and economical sustainability.

**All these documents can be downloaded as PDF from [www.hybridparks.eu/publications/](http://www.hybridparks.eu/publications/).**

The partnership also identified three additional good practices during its joint work. These are now – as the best practice examples above – published on the INTERREG IVC Good Practices Database:

#### **Malmö Slottsträdgården (Malmö Castle Garden):**

The garden, started by a non-profit organisation in 1997, is now run by the council and the popular café by the friends association. The garden consists of a large vegetable/cut-flower garden and eight themed gardens and hosts many cultural and horticultural events.

One of the success stories of the garden is the fact that people (irrespective of skills, biography, ethnic backgrounds) are welcome to pick up gardening skills. Many co-workers and volunteers who had problems on the job market continued with some form of horticultural education. This mix of social, environmental and economic profits with is open, high quality and aesthetic environment has been valued as a good practice example on the way to a hybrid park.

#### **European Garden Heritage Network - EGHN:**

The EGHN, since its start in 2003 as an INTERREG IIIB NWE project, has strengthened the profile of parks and gardens and has underlined their



importance for the society, urban design, tourism and sustainable development. Since 2008 the EGHN is continued as a self-sustained network.

The network currently consist of about 170 partner gardens in Germany, the UK, France, Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Italy, Denmark, Ireland, Portugal, Poland and Austria. Partners confirm increasing public interest thanks to the 13 EGHN regional garden routes, five European Themes, to the website and printed publications and to EGHN stalls on garden shows and tourism fairs. Conferences and workshops deepen the professional exchange.

#### **Pulheim Nordpark:**

The Nordpark transformed agricultural areas into meadows and orchards, making the structure appreciably, species-rich and ecologically valuable. The permanent vegetative cover secures a cool air production zone. Transitions between agricultural activity, extensive and intensive cultivation are possible, while additional uses also fit into the design. There are two types of fields: open fields (low-maintenance meadows) and parcelled plots (differentiated and intensive uses). Unique pieces of furniture are arranged as "scenes".

The park, funded by the state and the city of Pulheim, established an inclusive planning process of transformation targeting at sustainable and climate friendly development of the inner-city. ■

## Summarizing analysis



### ECONOMIC FOCUS

The project took a broad approach in search of the economic importance and the economic effects of parks, gardens and public green areas. It covered the contribution of parks to a range of goals and programs of sustainable urban and regional development, functional urban structures with high quality of life and the creation and enhancement of public green areas in the re-use of brownfield sites or in the revitalisation of deserted areas – thus in the spirit of the regional policy objectives of the INTERREG programs. In this case, the project also dealt intensively with the question of the quantitative detection of the effects of investment in green infrastructure.

Another focus was the importance of parks and gardens for regional leisure and tourism development, with different approaches taken in some partner regions in order to promote these in a sustainable manner. Finally, the possibilities and limitations of parks and gardens as economically viable enterprises with concrete examples were central to some lectures, visits, and studies of the project.

### Green areas in regional development

The International Building Exhibition Emscher Park (IBA) in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), from 1988 to 1998, can be viewed as a milestone in the enhancement of public green areas for revitalisation processes and

sustainable urban and regional development – from spacious green areas to landscape development, land art and new parks. Although green belts already controlled spatial development during the industrialisation of the Ruhr region (largely successfully), the IBA as the largest project to reduce the consequences of structural change by ecological improvement of individual, former industrial sites and of the entire Emscher zone, managed to create new quality of life, some lighthouse projects and economic development prospects for the region – particularly through innovative parks. On more than 450 square kilometres and with more than 400 individual projects, the IBA is continued and is continually updated with the ongoing projects of the Emscher Landscape Park and the renaturation of the Emscher River. These projects continue to be present in the next State Development Plan for NRW, with cultural landscape development in general as well as parks and gardens also mentioned.

Comparable concepts, albeit on a smaller scale, in the context of the Hybrid Parks project, include the reclamation of the Vuosaari landfill in Helsinki with a strong ecological focus, but with a leisure or recreational character too. Or Northwich Woodlands, an area of about 323 acres on which the effects of long-term salt mining were eliminated or transferred to a natural use. Today this landscape, resulting from industry, with its special vegetation and bird breeding grounds and also the relics of industrial development, such as the Anderton Boat Lift from 1875 which is working once again, is a diverse and much-visited recreational landscape. The Nordpark on the outskirts of Pulheim (near Cologne) is also taking a



new direction, in that it was deliberately designed and orchestrated as a transitional zone between urban space and agricultural land.

Even in relatively sparsely populated Finland, green areas and cultural landscapes are threatened because of the policy followed in many Finnish cities of the compact city or inner city development with the change of use of open spaces and the consequent loss of the transitional space between city and countryside. Since 2000, some (6 to date) municipalities have countered this with the model of the National Urban Parks (NUP). The Finnish Ministry for the Environment approves appropriate plans, which promote the development of cultural landscape and which must include green suburban-city networking. Additional funding is not in the foreground here, but rather the preservation and innovative enhancement of characteristic, regional cultural landscapes in the context of sustainable urban and regional development with the „NUP Seal“ as recognition and mark of quality.

Thus, the NUP are comparable to the program REGIONALE IN NRW; they develop a model for the regions which contains measures relating to urban planning, environment, economy, culture, education and knowledge. Eight REGIONALE regions were acknowledged by the state government to date and have adopted a broad framework for investment in parks and gardens and in the cultural landscape.

### Parks and gardens in urban development policies

The city parks in the two Swedish cities Linköping and Lund, have a history of more than 150 years or 100 years respectively. Citizens have used them intensively over the years and have been committed to their preservation (or founding as in Linköping). But changes in users' behaviour and, above all, the growth of the cities – the former location on the edge of the city centre has been transformed into a more central location – have made structural adjustments and innovations necessary in recent years. While this process has been implemented gradually over a period of 15 years in Linköping (including new entrances, new planting and garden items, a new restaurant, sports facilities), the City of Lund has started a radical makeover based on an ambitious master plan since

2010. The first results (a new restaurant, new entrance areas and aisles, sports areas) can be seen, but, due to funding problems, the plans can only be implemented slowly. Additionally, the status of some parts of the park as NATURA 2000 areas has led to implementation problems.

The freely accessible Grosvenor Park in the city centre of Chester, opened in 1867, has been experiencing some drastic improvements in the last few years. Not only were the necessary large-scale maintenance measures implemented and new park sections created, but the park got a café and meeting rooms as well as the necessary infrastructure to be used for educational purposes by schools. This also enhances its value as an amenity and tourist destination, which is promising because of its attractive location between the city centre and the waterfront as well as the Roman amphitheatre.

The State Garden Shows first held in North Rhine-Westphalia in 1984 were designed from the outset not only as horticultural showcases, but as sustainable recreation and park areas. Their implementation in 16 towns and cities to date should lead to the revitalisation of locations (e.g. old colliery sites) or to the improvement of urban structures (e.g. accessibility and urban links). Also Federal Garden Shows, when held at sites in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, have tried to take these principles into account. The enhancement of the park and gardens of Schloss Dyck was started with the State Garden Show of 2002 too.

Hybrid Parks has demonstrated the broad spectrum of how city sites can be developed with new parks and gardens and how usage can be stimulated: they range from parks developed on the sites of former steelworks and including their relics (as in the Landscape Park Duisburg-Nord or the Westpark Bochum), through the conversion of partially contaminated industrial land into high quality leisure, office, and residential locations (such as the Phoenix Lake in Dortmund) and the conversion of port and rail areas into residential locations (as in Malmö and in the future in Linköping), to therapy gardens (such as in Alnarp or in the future on Monte Subasio in Umbria) and Urban Gardening in the city, and the upgrading of residential areas as in Linköping-Skäggetorp, and ecological urban farms with educational concepts (such as in Ferrara).







Also possible are innovative gardens in old parks that successfully combine the concept of sharing and inclusion with aesthetic aspirations, as shown by the Slottsträdgården in Malmö.

Parks and gardens are frequently integrated into broader community programs, such as in the „Urban green in an integrated urban development strategy“ of the Ministry for Building, Housing, Urban Development and Transport in North Rhine-Westphalia, the REPAIR program in the City of Paola (Malta) for urban renewal and upgrading of public spaces or the GNP Green program 2014–2016 in Lund for the development and creation of new parks and protected natural areas.

Relatively new is the enhancement of public green areas for climate change objectives or to mitigate damages in case of bad weather events (e.g. heavy rain).

### Economic factor – Garden Tourism

Cheshire (or Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester since the reorganisation of sub-regions) is one of the most attractive regions in the UK for gardens and garden heritage. However, the tourist effects of this wealth could not be compared with other (especially Southern) regions of the country. A tourist concept, which had its climax at the same time as nearby Liverpool was implementing the Capital of Culture year 2008, relies on joint marketing as „Cheshire’s Gardens of Distinction“ and promotes exchanges between the managers of the (often private) parks and gardens as well as the development and implementation of joint activities and marketing concepts.

While the diversity and differences of the gardens are being emphasised in Cheshire, in Lower Austria they have opted for a unifying theme or a binding quality standard in their sustainable garden tourism campaign. According to the ecological principles fostered by the „Nature in the Garden“ action, farms and herb gardens, magnificent palace gardens and hidden cloister gardens, as well as modern garden projects, are presented as flowering destinations. Supported by the state government, the Hybrid Parks Partners „Nature in the Garden“ and „Gartenplattform Lower Austria“

take care of joint marketing, training of garden managers etc. and quite recently also of the sustainable design of public green spaces (e.g. roadside vegetation) through the municipalities in Lower Austria.

Relatively new is the more profuse, joint marketing of garden tourism in NRW as bookable offers for groups and individual travellers. Interesting here in particular is the use of an established quality brand (all participating parks and gardens meet the criteria of the European Garden Heritage Network EGHN) and the strong links with other cultural, historical or natural landscape attractions in the regions. It was only in this way that the new offer fit into the Tourism Master Plan of NRW with its clearly defined objectives and target group concepts and became eligible for European and state funds.

For years, in classic holiday regions, such as the two Hybrid Parks partner regions of Malta and Rhodes, historic towns and cultural heritage may have been of some tourist interest, in addition to the dominant tourist industry of sea and beaches. In Malta especially, they realised early on that more and more visitors also value well-maintained public green areas and parks. Accordingly many of the central parks were lavishly reconstructed and maintained – and this despite the extreme climatic conditions. The creation of new contemporary gardens, such as the Mdina Ditch (Finalist of European Garden Award 2013) along the walls of the World Heritage Site Mdina formed part of this ambitious program. In Rhodes, the resources of public green areas for urban development are only now being identified and currently new plans are being prepared.

### Parks and gardens as a business enterprise

Not only private gardens, but also public parks and gardens are increasingly faced with the task of at least partially co-funding running costs and investments with revenues from business operations. It is not always easy to reconcile an increase in visitor numbers with increased ticket prices. It is essential to have very good maintenance, good infrastructure and services (e.g. restaurant and shops) and occasional new design elements to ensure customer satisfaction; this promotes return

visitors and priceless word-of-mouth advertising. Events and rentals (especially when appealing premises are available for weddings or corporate events) are – with all investment risks and uncertainties – often additional sources of income.

Cholmondeley Castle Gardens with its events and business activities, La Bourbansais in Brittany with its zoo and hunting demonstrations or Schloss Dyck with its program of events, locations and gastronomic offers, are some of the examples that Hybrid Parks could identify as good practice. Moreover, the venue of the 2nd conference in May 2013, Quarry Bank Mill was representative of the success of the National Trust in England, which has ensured the safeguarding, maintenance and further development of cultural heritage and cultural landscapes with a combination of entrance fees, business establishments, membership fees, voluntary work and a specific British inheritance law without recourse to government grants for almost 120 years.

Cooperation in networks (the National Trust may also be referred to as such) can provide technical and economic advantages for all parties. This is shown, inter alia, at the regional level by „Cheshire’s Gardens of Distinction“ or the „Association des Parcs et Jardins en Bretagne“, and with a strong vocational level by the „Nature in the Garden“ network in Lower Austria and, at the European level, there is the „European Garden Heritage Network – EGHN“ (under the lead of the Schloss Dyck Foundation). The network initiated by municipalities and the region of Umbria, RUGiad’A has a significant ecological, cultural and tourist objective with its combination of parks and gardens and cultural landscapes.

Garden shows and garden fairs are regarded as another means to generate revenue with new offers. In the context of Hybrid Parks case studies conducted in several countries (by Prof. Ed Bennis) show that these events – (still) with the exception of highlights such as the Chelsea Flower Show and Chaumont – follow similar concepts, are to a large extent interchangeable, and appeal to the same target groups. Nevertheless, the study reveals starting points for innovative concepts, but these require a detailed analysis of the local potential and resources.



### Economic effects of investment in „green infrastructure“

Already at the workshop in November 2012, Prof. Grün from TU Dortmund was able to present his calculation model, with which he succeeded in proving a significant correlation in German and Swedish cities between, on the one hand, land values and the value of property, and on the other hand the presence and condition of public green areas. Accordingly, investment in high-quality green spaces is an important soft locational factor, both in the competition of cities and in programs to combat shrinking cities.

A study for Hybrid Parks, compiled by FH Krems, shows the possibilities and limitations of different methods and indicator systems for measuring the economic, ecological/environmental and socio-cultural effects of parks and gardens, and provides 14 key questions to be used as „first aid“ by managers of parks for planning such analyses or for continuous monitoring.

The Hybrid Parks Partner Cheshire West & Chester in turn has (further) developed a method for determining the economic value of parks that is available for use by partners and external organisations. While the tool can handle many variables, individual projects can obtain meaningful values and reliable results with a smaller number of values. A model calculation for Northwich Woodlands showed that a one-time investment



of 12.5 million euros and operating costs of 250,000 euros annually, face positive effects on regional gross added value to the amount of 14 million euros, on land and property values to the amount of 11 million euros and other economic effects (e.g. health care, enhanced biodiversity) to the amount of 36 million euros.

### ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS

The environmental values of parks and gardens can be considered as undoubted. They are recognized and appreciated by professionals and by the public alike.

Already a very small urban green square or even a single tree in the street has positive effects on the ecology and attractiveness of its local environment and on the well-being of the inhabitants. The improvement of air quality, the retention of rain water, the cooling effects and the reduction of sealed surfaces starts here.

These positive environmental effects are proliferated in each of the bigger sites, parks, gardens and designed landscapes.

### Parks and gardens preserve and promote biodiversity

In city parks as well as in other public parks, both historic and modern, there is a rich biodiversity, nowadays often exceeding the biodiversity

to be found on the countryside. As intensively managed, high quality environments they include an increasing variety of plants, often encompassing further native and local plants, that give homes to many insects and animals. Some parks (such as the City Park in Lund, Sweden or the Bagno in Steinfurt, Germany) incorporate registered Natura 2000 areas.

Additionally, some parks and gardens host and conserve national plant collections or embrace one or more champion trees – both significant visitor attractions alike.

In the tradition of walled gardens, kitchen gardens or orchards, parks and gardens invested in the restoration of old kitchen gardens (e.g. La Bourbansais in Brittany and the President's Garden in Malta) or in the development of new kitchen gardens or espalier orchards (e.g. Schloss Dyck and some show gardens managed by the Rhineland Regional Council LVR in Germany).

The Austrian network "Natur im Garten" (Nature in the Garden) is a good example that the combination of show gardens, advice and educational activities can promote and foster the many facets of ecological gardening and sustainable management of public spaces. Additionally, and in cooperation with "Gartenplattform Lower Austria", this also supports local tourism with a strong focus on the environment, healthy food and well-being.

For other gardens, such as Arche Noah in Schiltern (Austria) or Gaasbeek in Belgium (winner resp. finalist of the European Garden Award in 2014 resp. 2012), growing vegetables and fruits and preserving old varieties and cultivation forms (such as espaliers) are the main causes for their existence and activities. Both goes in parallel and contributes to the public interest in local and healthy food and in new uses for private gardens.

Botanical gardens have a long scientific and educational tradition and helped to raise the number of plant varieties that all parks and gardens can make use of today. The collection, preservation and propagation of endangered plants and seeds as well as research on climate change are missions of increasing importance. These and other newer development trends, such as biotope management, biotope transfer (e.g. at the Silesian Botanical



Garden, Poland) or recreational functions, will accomplish the traditional functions of botanical gardens and raise their environmental values.

### Enhanced landscape values

Natural succession on sites of former industrial or commercial use has created some landscapes that are rich of habitats and varieties. This variety is often also grounded on exotic plants that invaded those sites during their former use (e.g. on imported raw materials). Thanks to some careful interventions these sites have been further enriched, e.g. by creating some shady, dry or humid areas as well as lakes or woodlands, and made accessible to the public. Good practice examples from Hybrid Parks include the Vuosaari Landfill close to Helsinki and the village of Reposaaari in Finland, Northwich Woodlands close to Chester, the geological park GEOsfera in Jaworzno (Poland) and Landscape Park Duisburg-Nord in the Ruhr region.

In Umbria plans have been made to enhance and to re-design the landscape along main roads in the river valleys. Road parameters will be modified; trees and herbaceous plants will enhance (new) roundabouts and traffic islands; new passages will ease the local traffic. These interventions also support economic objectives as they shall slow down drivers and promote a short stop or longer stay in one of the beautiful cities and villages located only a few minutes away from the through traffic roads.

The main intention of the Nordpark in Pulheim (Germany), identified as a good practice example during the project, is to maintain and to enhance the qualities of this transitional site – at the fringes of Pulheim and the greater metropolitan area of Cologne and the open, agricultural landscape. The local population and visitors are invited to use the new infrastructures (paths, benches etc.) and to enjoy the new plantings. At the same time these enhanced qualities will protect the environmental values of this border area and will prevent it from being used as future construction sites.

All these and many others new landscapes and parks are important projects in revitalisation and ecological enhancement policies, often also adding to the quality of a wider green belt or green urban network – such as the Emscher Landscape Park in the core of the old-industrialised Ruhr



area in Germany, the National Urban Parks in and around some cities in Finland or activities in some cities in Emilia-Romagna to create a green network or belt based on landscape, traditional parks and new urban gardening or urban farming projects.

With information provided about ecology, plants, wildlife etc. in visitor centres, in brochures or during guided tours and seminars, most of these parks or designed landscapes have – in addition to their ecological value and idiosyncratic beauty – an important role to play in environmental education.

In summary, those who work in and for parks, gardens and landscapes are very inventive and successful in creating cultural environments by using nature and natural components, inherited skills and new knowledge and by mixing traditional structures with new interventions and designs. All this adds to the well-being of plants, animals, visitors and the environment.

### Mitigation of climate change

In addition to this indigenous or native commitment: what about climate change?

The Hybrid Parks project and the study “Consideration of Climate Change in the Design of Parks and Open Spaces” – commissioned by the State



Chancellery of North Rhine-Westphalia – have shown that the awareness of climate change and both the needs and the options to mitigate climate change are present in the deliberations and activities of green professionals, urban planners, politicians and citizens alike. Conversely, whenever these issues are explicitly mentioned, it is with large scale projects, such as green belts or rain retention areas or small scale city neighbourhood interventions (such as roadside green areas or green courtyards), but hardly in connection with those parks and gardens that are in the focus of the Hybrid Parks project.

For public parks and gardens climate change issues are mainly considered as a challenge for existing and future plantings. At some sites the possible growing of renewable energy is considered as both a design element for remote areas of lesser use and value and as a tool for reducing local energy costs (such as for heating) or as a source for generating additional income. Rain water retention and storage for dry periods is discussed for some parks and gardens as well.

Less considered are the impending needs of future visitors. Will a further increase of summer temperatures for instance require the modernisation of a park with new infrastructures and design elements? Will new parks, e.g. State Garden Shows in Germany that often capture unfurnished sites without any major green structures, find it more difficult to attract visitors during the first years as there will be no trees to give shade? Will there be a need to think about the cooling effects of water (such as in Arabic gardens) or about providing shade (and rain protection) with flexible textile architectures folding up on cloudy days? There are good examples for the inclusion of water profusion as both a climate and a design element, e.g. in the two urban squares City Dune in Copenhagen or Floor Works in Geneva (both finalists of the European Garden Award – EGA), for creating shade by steel structures (2010 EGA winner MFO-Park in Zurich) and for including solar energy and wind turbines as design elements in a contemporary park at Father Collins Park in Dublin (EGA finalist).

But these and similar approaches elsewhere are still regarded as avant-garde installations and designs. It may take a while until they or similar innovations will find their way into other public parks.

According to the objectives and intentions of Hybrid Parks the implementation of innovative environmental as well as social/cultural and economic activities and investments should be considered as long as they combine abilities, create synergies and enhance performances for the benefit of the visitors without disturbing or endangering the intrinsic qualities of a park or garden.

### SOCIAL FOCUS

#### **Parks deliver to the social and cultural needs of individuals and of the society**

Parks, gardens, and other public, urban spaces have taken their various appearances across different eras in accordance with the social needs and opportunities of the time. The social dimension is manifested in the wide range of offerings and in the ability for all to make use of a park and other public green spaces as much as they like. In addition to these individual needs to be fulfilled by green spaces, there are also wider social dimensions such as ensuring high-quality residential and public spaces and equal opportunities to learn and grow as individuals. Parks that should be mentioned in this context include those such as the city park in Linköping, Sweden, and the Barmer Anlagen in Wuppertal or Bürgerpark Bremen, both Germany, originally conceived and to a degree still maintained by the generosity of wealthy classes and civic engagement. Social commitment is also a motivation for many who volunteer as individuals, in groups of friends or in associations to take care of public green spaces or to preserve historic parks.

The cultural demands on parks and gardens are high too. The immediate demands and potentials for green spaces come from, among other things, the history and development of garden design, the need to protect cultural heritage (with its attendant legal and fiscal aspects), from making sustainable responsible use of a community's cultural heritage, offering educational opportunities designed to convey knowledge, respect, and enjoyment of horticulture and culture. The principles of archaeology and (historic streichen) preservation (that streichen) concern parks and gardens at different levels too. The tradition of using parks and gardens

as special places to encounter art and culture has also gained in importance in recent years.

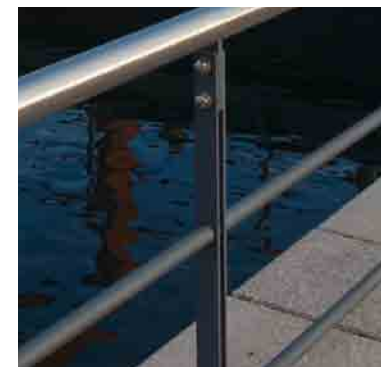
These diverse social and cultural potentials and requirements were never in question because the desired sustainable development of hybrid parks combines economic progress with concerns for social justice and cultural freedom along with the protection of the natural environment. The more these criteria are met, the more likely the public (as tax payers) will be ready to accept a designed open space.

### The need for a modernisation of public parks

It was therefore one of the project's goals to identify those new ideas and concepts that can meet current needs efficiently and sustainably, particularly because there has been and is an ever-increasing, rapid series of changes to what the public expects from green spaces. These changes are not always free of conflicts (such as between the desire for silence and relaxation versus the desire for music, events and sport). They can also have a negative influence on cultural values and lead to conflicts with heritage preservationists, especially when it becomes necessary to adapt and modernise a park.

The task of modernisation comes up particularly in green areas near city centres and residential areas, especially in the classic city parks that are favourite spots for nearly all population groups to take spontaneous breaks, both long and short, and are also used for a broad spectrum of activities from resting and cooling off to football matches and picnics.

Hybrid parks serve as a pattern for addressing these questions where both the needs of traditional park visitors and the requirements of new users can be incorporated. In city parks with a long tradition, such as in Lund and Linköping in Sweden and Chester in the north of England quieter areas have been horticulturally upgraded while providing improved facilities for communication, play and sport to create less conflict and provide new services such as restaurants and facilities for educational programmes and events. The historical origins and character of the parks were preserved and remain visible, while new services,







especially in sport, education, and culture, were designed with the long-term participation of the local population, clubs and other organisations in their planning, implementation and operation. This resulted in higher visitor numbers and a reduction in conflicts, with significant increases in the population's acceptance and satisfaction with the changes. Problems usually arise only in the context of larger events that can result in additional noise and waste problems and the (temporary) displacement of users seeking a place for peace and quiet.

In other locations, completely new parks (such as the Mdina Ditch in Malta) or the expansion and linking of urban open spaces (such as the National Urban Park in Pori in Finland) have also been successful in protecting and presenting cultural heritage whilst offering new opportunities for play and leisure.

In Umbria and Emilia-Romagna, there are plans to redesign historic facilities and to link city and countryside being driven by key social and cultural goals. The social potentials inherent in historic parks and gardens in a tourism-dominated environment such as Rhodes have been taken into consideration in plans to restore and enhance historic grounds on the island.

Culturally important and historical park grounds, e.g. around palaces or country houses located on the edges of cities or in the countryside, are facing new tasks and opportunities. Visitors to these parks, especially if

they have to pay for admission, request more than well maintained sites. They expect additional high-quality services such as catering, shops and events. Very often the attractive surroundings and a rather homogeneous visitor base can be considered as good development opportunities (e.g. for events), while a location away from urban centres, particular conservation needs and high maintenance costs are significant challenges.

Hybrid parks, in places such as the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia (such as Schloss Dyck and the Duisburg-Nord Landscape Park), in Brittany (such as La Roche Jagu and La Bourbansais) and Cheshire West & Chester (such as Cholmondeley and Quarry Bank Mill), show how events, pedagogical concepts that utilize the history and current qualities of the park or garden, and cooperation with local educational institutions, associations and organisations can strengthen the social functions of such facilities and provide new offerings that attract additional population groups, including locals, who might become regular visitors.

### New concepts for participation and public gardening

Projects that are characterised as 'participatory', 'integrative', 'cooperative' or 'ecological', even if they have different objectives when considered in detail, are a relatively new phenomenon in urban land use and social policies. They show the demand of a changing society to interact with the environment in a particular way. These allotments, community gardens and urban gardens are usually situated in the more immediate living environment, often on the otherwise unused bits of green space between residential blocks. Larger urban gardening or urban farming projects rely to some extent on existing parks and gardens or eventually become integrated into them. But they also involve new spaces, generally those areas that were previously hardly used, if at all, or ones that had fallen out of use, such as clearances, vacant lots, former industrial sites and former farm land.

Frequently the initiators and activists accomplish the planning and design process as well as the administration and management of such new gardens. In a group of like-minded people and supporters, they use the grounds according to their needs, objectives and way of living, e.g. to grow fruit and vegetables or to organise independent cultural events.

Already during the preparatory phase of the project, all project participants showed a strong interest in projects that would make greater use of and add value to urban green stretches in purely residential areas with the goal of creating “ownership” among the local residents. About this time, a project was started in Skäggetorp, a 1960s-70s residential district in Linköping with a large migrant population and a reputation as a ‘problem spot’; the goal was to create added value in the living environment by using a master plan developed by a leading Swedish landscape architect in cooperation with the public administration and the residents. This project is not only one of the best-practise studies of the project, but was also evaluated over a long period via a participatory survey. The findings are now available to project partners and other interested parties.

It became apparent that there is considerable interest across all generations, education and migration backgrounds to participate in the creation and maintenance of community gardens in residential areas. Simple local actions (such as first plantings or a small concert) rather than extensive thematic discussions and workshops help to get these ideas started, to stimulate participation and to generate long-term motivation. The gardens also stimulate conversation among groups that would otherwise have little contact with each other. There is no disagreement about responsibilities and no vandalism so far.

Hybrid Parks also stated that the active participation of some people, e.g. those involved in neighbourhood or urban gardening projects, must not result in a majority who cannot or do not want to participate, or who feel excluded from using the parks. Especially in the case of social projects in public spaces, with their participatory, inclusive, green or educational goals, there must be no real or psychological barriers of access, especially for senior citizens who often rely on near-by outdoor recreation.

This openness requires information regarding the objectives of these projects and events that are open with wide invitation. But this openness needs to include first and foremost clearly identifiable, welcoming entrance areas and interesting design concepts that do not negate the tradition of parks and gardens as designed urban, cultural and natural spaces. Even if the locations for such projects are often

chosen spontaneously and if projects sometimes lack the final agreement with municipalities, an attractive and sustainable concept for the use and design should be developed and implemented as quickly as possible with the participation/mediation of municipalities.

The discussions among the project partners as well as some of the hybrid park projects and best-practise examples visited, show that these new concepts are entirely compatible with attractive and open design principles. Exemplary partner projects include ‘Natur im Garten’ (Nature in the Garden) in Lower Austria or urban gardening projects being implemented, if only temporarily, at prominent locations in Helsingborg, Sweden. In near-by Malmö, there is also an outstanding example of a public and freely accessible garden that meets the needs of active users and occasional visitors alike. An initiative “occupied” a little-used section of the city park area in Malmö to create the Slottsträdgården in 1997. The park has since come under city management and now offers a blend of urban gardening with show gardens, a garden festival as well as a garden centre and a restaurant. This location has not only become one of the city’s major visitor attractions, but also a source of many jobs for young people with issues on the ‘normal’ jobs market.

Gardens designed for healing and therapeutic purposes might be acceptable exceptions to the requirement for openness and broad access, because such therapies require isolated, protected space (i.e. away from the eyes of those passing by). The interest in such facilities is growing. Also inspired and confirmed by the excellent example at Alnarp University in Lund, the project partners have begun drafting and implementing comparable projects in Umbria and for a clinic managed by the Rhineland Regional Council (LVR).

Today’s parks and gardens, very much like their predecessors, reflect the condition and needs of the society. In a society of high diversity and quickly changing attitudes and requests, hybrid parks will be in a good position to serve these requests while at the same time to preserve inherent traditions and values that still are the fundament of any society. ■



# The Final Conference



## Final Conference, 15th - 16th September 2014, Cologne (Germany)

At the Final Conference international speakers presented the unique resources of parks, the advantages of cooperation and the need and opportunities to achieve additional economic, social and environmental benefits thanks to hybrid parks.

According to the three strands of sustainability these presentations covered economic, environmental and social issues. Presentations were given by duos formed by a representative of the partnership, summarizing the project's activities and outcomes, and by an external expert each. Input by the external experts included reports on their own experiences and projects and on other good practice examples as well as recommendations for future activities in parks and gardens and for cooperative projects.

However, and different from the standard triangle of sustainability, the conference included "culture" as a fourth strand. This was done in order to emphasize the cultural dimension, which is usually integrated into the social facet of sustainability. But gardens are an essential element of the European heritage and culture and there are strong relations between gardens and other arts. Accordingly the two presentations on cultural aspects are summarized in more detail below.

Finally two lectures (jointly presented by **Jens Spanjer** and **Christian Grüssen**) analysed the project's findings (see page ##) and examined if there can be a Hybrid Parks Model that is applicable to a majority of parks and gardens in Europe (see page 56).

Study tours in and around Cologne on both days completed the programme.

On the first day the conference started with introductions by **Milena Karabaic**, Head of the LVR Department for Culture and Environment (Germany), who was hosting the event, and by **Alan Thornley** (UK), Chairman of the International Steering Group of Hybrid Parks – who also closed the conference at the end of the second day. Then **Katja Ecke**, Finance Officer at the INTERREG IVC Joint Technical Secretariat in Lille (France), reviewed the INTERREG IVC Programme and gave a short outlook on the new programme INTERREG Europe that will be operational in 2015.

"Parks and Gardens – More than nice pictures" was the title of the kick-off address by **Philip Smith** (UK), CEO International Garden Photographer of the Year. More than 20.000 contributions from 149 countries show both the great variety and the global interest in the values and the beauty of parks and gardens. A touring exhibition, shown at parks, gardens, museums, art galleries and other venues communicates this message, commitment and appeal worldwide.





### Focus “Economy”: Urban (Re)Development

In the first section of a joint presentation **Wolfgang Rembierz**, State Chancellery of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), demonstrated the growth of settlement areas in NRW and the tradition of policies to safeguard green belts. Preservation of the variety of cultural landscapes, sustainable cultural landscape development and consideration of climate change in the design of parks and open spaces are important issues in actual policies in NRW. He mentioned similar approaches that have been applied. **Evamaria Küppers-Ullrich**, Ministry of Building, Housing, Urban Development and Transport of NRW, presented the successful ecological urban restructuring of brownfields, conversion areas, urban neighbourhoods and city centres. These actions, and in particular the enhancement of parks and urban spaces within this context of integrated urban development, help implementing the objectives postulated by the state government in the Green City Strategy and the Liveable City Scenario.

The importance of urban green in modern cities was the main topic of the presentation by **Dr. Roland Bernecker**, Secretary-General of the German Commission for UNESCO. Parks are very popular on the World Heritage List as they reflect the relation between mankind and nature. Since 2007 the majority of people on our planet, for the first time in history, live in the suburbs of the cities and no longer on the countryside. It is crucial to manage this process as sustainable as possible. Parks are indispensable places for the people to slow down, to relax and to breathe. Economically, parks and gardens in cities are of emergent importance as locational factors and for tourism as a fast growing economy globally.

### Focus “Environment”: Public Awareness

A while ago, so **Pawel Kojs**, Director of the Silesian Botanical Garden in Mikołów (Poland), his work was mainly determined by the preservation of biodiversity. Then the Hybrid Parks project and



its professional exchange revealed the importance of communication with the visitors.

Exhibitions and garden shows are as important for a sustainable environment as seed banks for local plants. Beautiful gardens help to raise the awareness for the protection of nature and of our planet. The project also initiated a network to promote regional parks and gardens to the local population, to decision makers and tourists.

**Todd Forrest**, Vice President for Horticulture and Living Collections at The New York Botanical Garden, discussed how this garden has continued to grow and evolve by embracing the principles promoted by Hybrid Parks: providing economic opportunities for its neighbours; broadening its audience through the creation of diverse programs; and increasing awareness of how environmental change is impacting the living world around us through new gardens and displays.

His presentation focused on three areas: the garden’s exhibition program, which combines art and horticulture to explore how plants and gardens have inspired the work of noted cultural figures; the garden’s children’s education initiatives, which serves 90.000 New York City schoolchildren each year; and the ongoing restoration of the garden’s historic landscape with an emphasis on implementing more sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.



### Focus “Social”: Widening the Audience

In order to contribute to the social dimension of sustainability, parks and garden, according to **Cecilia Liljedahl**, member of the management team for Göteborgs Lustgårdar 2016 (Sweden), should connect people with each other and connect urban citizens with nature and culture in a social and healthy context. Experiences, mainly from a project in a housing district in Linköping, show that urban gardening is a tool for user participation and responsible production and consumption. Urban green provides the social meeting places and areas for recreation needed by all social classes and generations and helps to include the increasing immigrant population.

**Michele Mellara**, film producer and director from Italy, introduced his outstanding film “God Save The Green”. It is a documentary that tells the stories of people who are regaining a sense of community through gardening while changing their lives and the places they live in. One example is a family growing vegetables in large bags filled with soil from the forest surrounding Nairobi’s slums. While this is vital to ensure the family’s subsistence, other projects, such as Urban Gardening in Berlin-Kreuzberg, aim at creating new urban spaces and networks while growing healthy food too.

### Focus “Culture”: Protection of Heritage

**Geoffroy de Longuemar**, President of The Association of Parks and Gardens in Brittany (France), presented art as an important cultural aspect in gardens and as a donor for heritage protection. A garden is mainly made out of natural objects, but it is also made of ideas, of architecture, of a whole range of shapes and colours, which relate gardens to paintings and sculptures. Moreover, maintaining gardens often means working with nature against nature. Much violence is done to nature in gardens, in the name of culture.

Sometimes gardens seem to be out of the world, but they are part of a changing historical and economical context. Economic considerations now drive the actions of owners more than ever before. It has become

a rule to open private spaces to the public. A touristic orientation is a common way for private and public owners of generating income and of maintaining estates.

The promotion of gardens is well enhanced by networking and by promotional tools such as websites and brochures. But for the media there always needs to be something new to feed their curiosity. This introduces the necessity of events and the idea of art in the gardens.

Being a work of art, a garden has its own artistic equilibrium and perfection. Introducing a work of art into a garden requires thoughts about a constructive interference between the two. The director of „Giardini La Mortella” on Ischia presented „Music and landscape as a driving force for a cultural enterprise” during our Assisi conference. The garden around the house of the composer Sir William Walton was designed since 1956 by the famous garden architect Russell Page and now combines the art of music with the musicality of the garden, bird singing, and sounds of water and refers music to the harmony of plants in their different colours, foliage and forms, the rhythms of light and shadow. At la Ballue in Brittany a real musical life is organised all year long, with high quality chamber music.

Parks are also wonderful places to exhibit large sculptures, like Kerguehennec and Le Bois Orcan in Brittany or Insel Hombroich in Neuss (Germany).

Thus art and gardens are good allies to keep heritage alive. Moreover, the marriage of art and gardens is a very good example of a hybrid operation for parks and gardens.

**Ed Bennis**, former professor at Manchester Metropolitan University (UK), spoke about continuity and change of the garden patrimony. The years pass and gardens grow, mature and decline frequently without notice. Daily, the light and weather changes our view and perception while the seasons gently merge and move the garden into a new but recurring time frame. The work of man has a more immediate impact. There is a rich physical, cultural, artistic and

environmental history of gardens across Europe with influences from many times and cultures.

Hybrid Parks is about the role and diversity that parks can achieve with considered change. Change that is sensitive, inventive and appropriate to today's society.

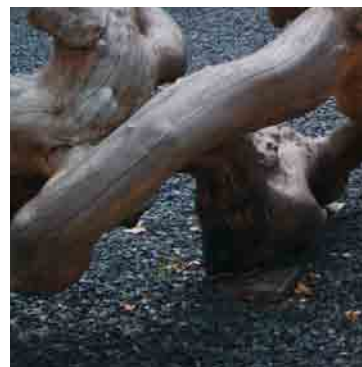
Het Loo is an example of change where the 17th century formal sunken garden was replaced by an English landscape park and changed again in the late 20th century when the formal gardens were reinstated as a symbol of national identity and the economic value of the Dutch horticultural industry.

Lincoln Center was replanted with different tree species, a different arrangement of the trees and different under-planting. What has been lost is the atmosphere, particularly the role of light and shade. The design concept was ignored and the result lacks the subtlety, sophistication and beauty of the original.

Oulton Park (UK) is a designed landscape from the early 19th century. Its current use as "the most picturesque racing circuit in the UK" is highly controversial. However, the fabric of the landscape remains. Oulton has found a new use that works and has saved this valuable landscape.

Not all parks and gardens are suitable for restoration, but most are certainly suitable for new layers of use. Uses that support and enhance our lives, which are manageable and sustainable socially, economically and environmentally. But a key in any decision is that the actions taken are reversible.

Each park and garden is unique and each needs to be understood and treated individually. It is not money, but our imaginations that restrict the future role of our parks and gardens. ■





## Development trends for parks and gardens



The intensified use of parks for sustainable local and regional development and thus the promotion and future implementation of hybrid parks across Europe will require a sufficient number of good (traditional) parks with all their facets as well as their continued upkeep according to established standards and actual requests.

The partnership questioned if there will enough of those high quality parks, gardens and other public green spaces in the future to develop (some of) them as hybrid parks. The project identified six trends and issues that make the partners uneasy (U1-U6) and request further consideration and problem solving strategies. But at the same time there are eight trends and issues that allow an optimistic outlook (O1-O8).

### **U 1: Climate change is an increasing risk for existing quality.**

The creation of parks and gardens always matched the local climate of that time and the plants used (even exotic plants) could live in the actual climate. Even with some setbacks, they flourished ever since. This quality is now under danger by climate change and increased average temperature, very hot and dry periods, flooding, storms, cold winters and so on.

### **U 2: A growing share of the population is not interested in the environment.**

Urban farmers, bird watchers, vegetarians, cyclists, children in the garden, garden visitors and many others are often considered as

indicators for the people's interest and care for the environment, for nature, for health etc. But what about people who leave their rubbish in the nature, people who are more familiar with artificial or virtual worlds, people who have no idea how tomatoes or onions are grown? Will they ever visit, understand or at least enjoy a park or garden? How can they be attracted and how can their interest for nature, parks and gardens be gained and sustained? Or will they cause changes in the society, in policy priorities and public expenditures that are problematic for the green infrastructure?

### **U 3: There have been and will be budget cuts.**

As most other public sectors, public green has been affected by budget reductions for both maintenance and enhancements. A major financial improvement for the public sector in the near future is unlikely. Private owners too will find it more and more difficult to invest in their gardens as less public subsidies are available and as there is always a priority for investments in the upkeep or enhancement of the house.

### **U 4: Studies show a narrow age range and socio/economic range.**

Without simplifying it too much, we can say that visitors to traditional parks and gardens include parents with children and those over 50, most of them middle class. Younger adults prefer urban parks and squares for outdoor activities such as leisure, sports, parties etc. It is the freedom of an open space that attracts them and not the beauty and the richness of a park. What can be done to raise their interest and to attract other groups? Can the new media be helpful? How can the less privileged be invited to enjoy (historic) parks and gardens?

### **U 5: Many parks are not easily accessible, particularly heritage sites.**

Worries about accessibility have often caused problems to parks and gardens with their slopes, terraces, soft trails etc. Here most parks have been able to provide assistance and improved accessibility without conflicts for the quality of the site or the monument. The other problem is the location which is often very rural and remote. Many parks are easily accessible by car only. If public transport is available, visitors often need long walks to reach the next bust stop or train

station. But even for those who own a car, increasing costs for petrol etc. reduce their capacity or willingness for longer rides. Also the number of households without a car is growing. All this is likely to affect visitor numbers. Transferable best practice examples to balance these shortcomings are still missing.

**U 6: Some new sites favour “aesthetics” rather than plants, people and usability.**

Many of the newly designed urban squares, but also sections of some modern public gardens tend to be uncomfortable, hostile, and artificial instead of welcoming, refreshing or organic. The total design and the elements used are in a dialogue with the neighbouring architecture rather than with visitors or users. However, there are good examples for contemporary gardens and parks that create a harmony between modern design, material and planting and the expectations, needs and comfort of the public. While aesthetics and design always have been and will be main principles for parks and gardens, they should not be the dominating or sole driving forces. On the other hand, “urban gardening”, “community gardening” or “natural gardens” should not ignore the main principles of garden design that are still appealing for the majority of the public. Hybrid Parks has shown good practice examples, such as in Lower Austria or in Sweden, for a harmonious, appealing and sustainable combination of nature, involvement and design.

The partnership also identified eight common trends and issues that are likely to support a positive, easy or smooth future development of parks and gardens, including the introduction of more sustainable hybrid parks:

**O 1: The public invests in green.**

People are ready to invest much more money in a house or an apartment if a garden or a balcony forms part of it. And this additional space needs further investments, for the design, for the construction, for maintenance and for adjustments according to new ideas and fashions.

In Germany, the turnover on garden products increased by 60 percent from 10 billion to 16 billion during the last 13 years. Amazon Germany

has “Garden” as one of its top level categories with more than 670.000 objects on sale, almost 270.000 of them “garden decoration”, while “electrical garden tools” and “plants” have less than 60.000 each.

Parks and gardens aim to profit from people investing in their gardens by offering equipment in their shops, plants in their nurseries or – as a bigger business – by organising garden festivals and shows.

People who do not have a garden, but garden owners too, spend money for a day out, to be on the countryside, to see forests and lakes or to visit parks and gardens. Some also invest in Urban Gardening or Urban Farming.

**O 2: The public supports green spaces and fights for them.**

Typical individual support for public green spaces includes caring for trees in the streets, working in friendship associations for a park, sponsoring, and collecting money to replace trees after a big storm and much more.

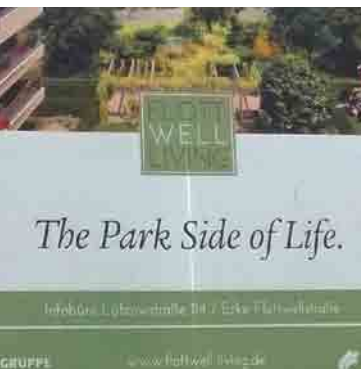
In some countries, such as the UK, there are also all kinds of voluntary work done in public parks and gardens. The National Trust is always mentioned as a best practice example. But we also know from our partners in Sweden that there is a long history of Swedish public parks financed by citizens or associations. And they still devote time and money for maintenance, enhancement and events. We have similar examples in Germany, such as the Barmer Anlagen in Wuppertal or the Bürgerpark in Bremen.

In recent years, plans for the demolition of parks have been the ignition for demonstrations, even if the reasons for the protests have been more complex. In Stuttgart it has been the very expensive plan for a new, underground train station “Stuttgart 21” and in Istanbul it was the idea of building a shopping centre on the site of Gezi-Park.

While these forms of commitment and support are positive for parks, gardens and urban green, we have to be aware that the understanding of a park and its standards can differ more and more between the



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professionals and the users. Tempelhofer Feld in Berlin is a good example.

The professionals gave this comment on the vast green area of the former airport in the centre of Berlin: “The open spaces of Tempelhofer Freiheit will not remain the way they appear today. Their current state represents only a point of departure for future development. The lack of pathway connections, limited offerings for children and the elderly, and a minimal infrastructure are among the site’s current shortcomings.”

The “future development” of course also meant that a significant percentage of the site should be used for up to 4.700 high quality residential units.

The plans were finally stopped by a referendum. More than 700.000 voters wanted to keep the site as an open space, open for different uses, for nature, for sports, for social projects.

We don’t think that this is a general trend. There is a huge group of “alternative users” in Berlin, who used the opportunities of the referendum as an example of direct democracy in action. But another 40 % voted for the Masterplan and many others did not vote at all. Thus a “normal park” would have attracted many people as well, who may be kept away by the new Tempelhof as it might develop now. Hopefully there will be a compromise – it could become a great hybrid park.

### **O 3: Public parks and gardens are not “on sale” or “closed”.**

Even as there are some examples of parks and gardens that were threatened or lost, the overall situation and trend for parks and gardens is positive.

The public sector needs to reduce expenditures. Culture and cultural heritage are often shortlisted for budget reductions or even for total closure. Also the budgets for the maintenance of public parks, especially when entrance is free, have been reduced in many cases, but we are not aware of many public parks that have been closed.

If a park or a green space has been sold, it has often been a neglected site.

And while cities and municipalities trend to sell public ground to property developers and other investors to increase income, parks and gardens are not “on sale”. Imagine how much money the public sector could make from selling 10 percent of Hyde Park in London, Central Park in New York or Englischer Garten in Munich. The remainders would still be very good and representative parks. Probably a master plan by a good architect or landscape architect could even show that the park gains qualities thanks to noise reduction, restaurants, public control etc.

Without having statistics on this, there is the overall feeling that the total area of designed open spaces, parks, squares, boulevards etc. is rather increasing than diminishing.

### **O 4: Money spent for parks and gardens is a profitable investment.**

There is academic research on the positive effects of urban green on real estate values and residential rents in cities across Europe. While “riverside development” is commonly used to sell high price locations, “parkside development” still lags behind, but has very similar effects.

Thanks to research in Hybrid Parks, led by the UK partners, there is now a methodology or valuation toolkit available to investigate the economic effects of “investments in green infrastructure” on the value of goods and services produced within the area, on property value and on other economic benefits, such as health and wellbeing. In the case study region “Northwich Woodlands” benefits of 61 million Euros were achieved by initial investments of 13 million Euros. A complementary study, commissioned by Garden Platform Lower Austria for Hybrid Parks, identified economic indicators, ecological and environmental impacts as well as sociocultural and community effects and gives suggestions for their measurement.



The partnership is convinced to tell this whole success story more energetically and to ask for investments in parks and gardens more assertively. In particular as this economic point of view or the economic evidence is only an additional argument for parks and gardens. Even if their environmental and social effects would still not be measurable in Euro or Pounds, public requests and benefits are obvious and as cultural heritage sites or as contemporary works of art they deserve upkeep and enhancement too.

**O 5: Urban revitalisation and competition of cities counts on new public realm.**

New parks and gardens on neglected sites, enhanced landscapes in the urban fringe or in peri-urban areas, new boulevards along rivers or along converted main roads, urban squares as elements of new business district or residential areas are common trends to be found in many countries. This is true:

- for regions with successful revitalisation after economic decline (like the Ruhr region),
- for cities that need to adopt their green infrastructure to changed settlement structures or user demands (such as the city park in Lund or the Rhone River banks – winner of the European Garden Award in 2012),
- for cities that have derelict infrastructures (such as the High Line in New York or Landscape Park Duisburg-Nord),
- for cities with very attractive locations becoming available for new developments (such as the former harbour areas in Malmö, Hamburg and Duisburg or Phoenix-See in Dortmund)
- for those Global Cities that have to add something green to their mainly economically driven growth and development, but in a spectacular manner of course (such as Singapore).

It is important that parks, gardens and public spaces in these contexts

are not “add-ons”, but integral elements in the planning process from the very beginning, including a wider involvement and including the provision of sufficient budgets for both creation and – very important – maintenance.

Courageous stakeholders and planners should not wait until asked to contribute “something green” or “something looking nice”, but should – at a very early stage – show what public green could deliver and ask for the best spaces to develop something new – such as a hybrid park.

New forms of using urban spaces, such as “urban gardening” or “urban farming”, will become more important. They often earn public support, but need to respect the wishes and preferences of as many potential users as possible. Thus urban gardening areas should also be inviting and accessible for those who not “gardening” there. If those people are afraid to enter, afraid to get lost in the wilderness or afraid of not being welcome, then something is wrong. Pathways and benches, open structures and aesthetic principles are essential for these public spaces or at least for some of their sections too.

**O 6: Visitors accept fees for heritage parks if it is good value.**

“What costs nothing, is worth nothing” ...while this is often acknowledged by people, the public opinion on parks and gardens seems to be different. There are so many public parks and gardens without entrance fees that are well visited and used. Apparently parks and gardens seem to be considered as “commons” or “public good”, which means cultural and natural resources accessible to all members of a society and allowing our society to function. As with other public good, a certain quality level or freedom of use is expected for parks and gardens too.

But garden visitors also accept paying fees if there are good values for a day out, for an event or for educational activities. They require a high quality environment, a well maintained park with things they have not seen before or with inspirations for their own garden. According to the old saying “Tea and Toilets” are still important, but attractive shops, restaurants, information areas, exhibition spaces



## 54 – Development trends for parks and gardens

### Consideration of Climate Change in the Design of Parks and Open Spaces

A study within the framework of the INTERREG IVC Project "Hybrid Parks" commissioned by the State Chancellery of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia



are needed today to provide a good welcome and services and to get positive “word-of-mouth-marketing” and return visits.

An increasing number of garden shows and festivals is organised to attract a wider audience and to generate extra income. Thanks to Hybrid Parks, there is case study research on these shows as a business model (commissioned by Schloss Dyck Foundation). Comparative evaluation of a number of events in Europe (and the United States) shows a few unique selling positions, but also many similarities and limitations. Additional shows will need innovative ideas and thus new values to attract more (well paying) visitors.

#### **O 7: Climate change will raise the value of green.**

The approach of the Hybrid Parks project concerning climate change was clear, but twofold from its start: The partners understand climate change as a risk (see U1), but also as an opportunity. On a global level there may be the opportunity for more sustainable economies and societies in the future. On a smaller scale, on the level of public green spaces, parks and gardens, their values, contributions and resources to mitigate climate change and to maintain the quality of life for the citizens – as standalone sites or as elements within green corridors or networks – will certainly become more and more obvious.

It was good to notice that climate change is far away from causing panic among gardeners, managers and planners. But the project has shown the need and the resources to further develop the opportunities for a positive change. There is no need for emergency plans, but a response to climate changes requires innovative approaches and measures for existing parks and gardens to maintain their qualities and values, to develop them further and to create innovative concepts for new parks and gardens.

Only if people in charge are well prepared, if they are certain how to react or – even more important – how to act, there is a chance to get the support needed for the implementation of new concepts before it might be too late.

#### **O 8: There are good professional standards, skills and commitment.**

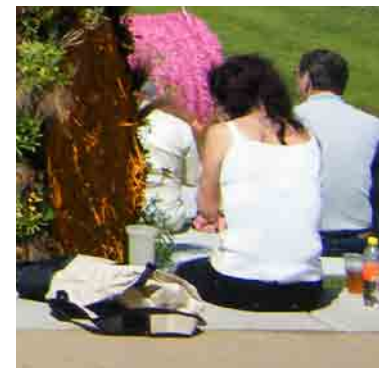
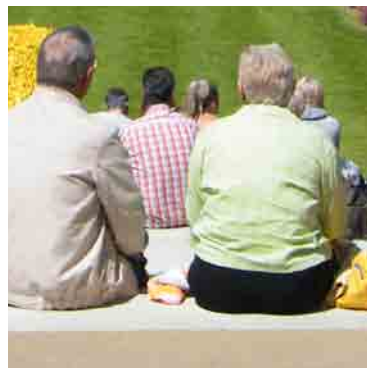
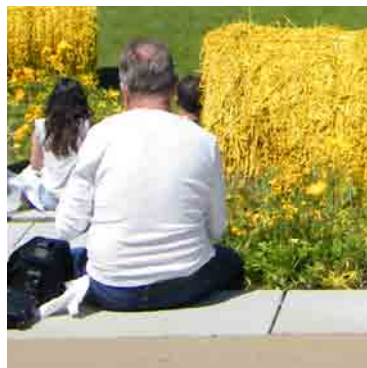
The entire project has shown numerous high quality parks and gardens, both modern and historic, across Europe.

In this context the commitment of private garden owners needs to be mentioned too. Many splendid gardens were created, owned, restored, managed, maintained and/or financed by individuals. And the public can enjoy many of them for some Euros only and without being bothered about all the investments of time, efforts and money needed.

Whenever a park or garden wasn't in a perfect condition or did not fulfil all standard requirements or expectations, this was caused by pending political decisions or by insufficient budgets and not by missing skills, knowledge or passion of those who are responsible for maintenance and management.

Hybrid Parks also revealed the intriguing commitment of gardeners, both in presentations given and during site visits. During the conference in Rhodes the question about “the soul of a garden” was raised. Participants could not find a final answer, but it seemed that it is always a combination of the place and of someone working there and keeping the site alive and enhancing it. These are the committed gardeners who deserve great respect and gratitude.

There are so many skills needed for an up-to-date park or a hybrid park: botany, ecology, gardening, landscape design, education and training, event management, tourism development, retail, gastronomy, psychology, just to mention some. There have been some good examples of all these professions working together well in a park. There have also been good examples for the commitment of other stakeholders and decision-makers and for policies and programmes – again with a wide range of objectives and priorities – supporting the upkeep and enhancement of existing parks and the implementation of new ones. Together, these are the key resources for the realisation of hybrid parks and for their successful use in sustainable development policies. ■





## A Hybrid Parks Model?



The excellent and very rewarding knowledge exchange within the Hybrid Parks partnership and with external experts and organisations already started with the first preparation meeting in October 2008 at Schloss Dyck.

Since then, partners as well as politicians and external experts who were invited or commissioned by them, explored and experienced many good practice examples and new project ideas. Additionally, presentations by external experts, in particular during the Final Conference, added those aspects that the partners have not been able to see and highlighted what could be done next and if and where others are ahead of the expertise and projects in the partner regions concerning the management, enhancement and development of sustainable parks, gardens and landscapes.

All this showed the great diversity of parks and gardens, but also helped to identify those common challenges and opportunities that are likely to influence future work for and with parks and gardens.

Already during the preparation phase (2008 – 2011) there was an increasing debate in car industries about reducing consumption and environmental impacts. This affected the entire market, but there was also a dispute about the advantages of fully electric cars (revolution) and hybrid cars (evolution). Hybrid cars maintain the comfort of a car (for example its range) while reducing consumption and emission thanks to an additional electric engine that starts working whenever it is helpful and without the driver really noticing it.

This was very similar to what the partnership wanted to achieve: to enhance the social, economic, environmental and cultural values of parks and gardens by targeted measures and without substantial changes. This helped us to find the name of the project: Hybrid Parks.

The project was neither designed to tackle very specific or very small scale problems, nor did the partnership intend to start the revolution in park management and design. But from time to time new ideas were identified that made a park or garden special and unique. There were – often based on small investments only – extra values for visitors,

for the park itself or for nature without endangering the character or beauty of a site.

This evolution was the heart of the story: to enhance the usability, values and thus the sustainability of a site without affecting what people know, expect or love. Very often visitors enjoy enhancements without recognizing how they were achieved.

Partners used all opportunities to exchange on experiences and on new ideas. Thus across 10 countries with 16 partners, through six thematic workshops and some hybrid workshops, three study tours and four conferences. All partners have been able to use Hybrid Parks to gain new knowledge, to improve skills, to develop new ideas and to convince their politicians to support them whenever possible. The “Hybrid Parks Idea” with its diversity of partners, subjects and locations allowed studying numerous parks and gardens and analysing many supplementary uses and recent development trends for parks and gardens across Europe.

The result is, as far as we know, a unique collection and description of green infrastructure projects and a knowledge transfer that would have not been possible without INTERREG IVC funding.

Following the objective of all INTERREG programmes to promote best practice transfer, there was the internal and external demand for a Hybrid Parks Model to ease this transfer.

After working together so long across Europe, we are now convinced that creating such a model is not possible and/or not useful. There is such a huge variety of parks and gardens, with specific histories, assets and values, resources and limitations. There is an enormous variability thanks to so many things that can be added, ranging from a flowerbed to a new visitor centre for instance. All partners and externals agree that there needs to be a convincing basic structure and idea. It is then the careful, site and resource specific selection and implementation of one or some of these manifold frills or enhancements that can help a site to become more attractive and vibrant, sustainable and “hybrid”.



## 58 – A Hybrid Parks Model?



It was however possible to identify basic ideas and common features or development options and resources on the way forward to hybrid parks. But even then, five different types of “green infrastructures” have to be discerned because of their different history and status quo and their distinctive social, environmental, economic and cultural development options: historic parks and gardens, traditional urban parks, new urban green/squares, botanical gardens and finally a category dealing with new designs, uses and/or locations.

At the same time, three general observations concerning the limits of sustainable – or to use a different word – meaningful hybrid parks have to be communicated:

- Hybrid parks are first of all parks too and no schools, event halls, restaurants, hospitals, nature reserves or employment projects.
- As such they need a clear motto, design guidelines and good maintenance. Hybridisation is no argument for a bewildering variety of elements or for a lack of quality.
- Parks have to be open and to be capable of consensus. Neither modernistic design, nor environmental objectives or urban gardening – just to mention some – may discourage a wider audience to use them.

However, the partnership identified these main development options and resources for the five types of open spaces mentioned above:

### 1. Historic parks and gardens

Historic parks and gardens are well recognised across Europe as cultural and heritage monuments that should be protected. But there is a difference in the awareness of historic gardens as living monuments across Europe. Gardens do not have the same high status in all European countries as in the UK – probably thanks to their early economic use, in particular for tourism. Very often parks are regarded in the context of monuments that have to be protected. Heritage protection would often prefer to have no “modernistic” alterations and hardly any visitors. There is an overall lack of awareness or acceptance for the economic, social and ecological values and importance of historic parks and gardens.

These are development options and resources identified by Hybrid Parks:

- Awareness-raising for the cultural importance, including the intercultural relevance, of historic gardens in Europe (social/cultural focus)
- Protection and improvement of these sites in regard to biodiversity and climate change (environmental focus)



- Addressing new user groups and interest groups by carefully selected events that are suitable for historic sites (economic and social focus)
- Improvement of marketing and tourism activities addressing both local and national or international target groups (economic focus)
- Enhancement of networking activities on a regional, national and international level (economic, environmental and social/cultural focus)

Examples from the Hybrid Parks project include, among many others, the events in the protected park of Schloss Dyck (Germany), joint touristic promotion of historic parks in Cheshire (UK), the European Garden Heritage Network (covering 12 countries), educational activities and exhibitions in the gardens of La Roche Jagu (France), and the Kitchen Garden in the President's Garden in Malta.

## 2: Traditional urban parks

There is a high density of urban parks in most European countries, created and maintained to serve as recreational areas for the inhabitants. However, many urban parks can be compared to Sleeping Beauty. They are acknowledged as relevant elements of public realm in the urban structure, but not always well maintained and not always fully used. But there is also some evidence that the relevance and the unique qualities of urban parks are more widely accepted, in particular in cities that are growing or getting denser. This results in an enhanced support and in new initiatives for the upkeep and development of urban parks.

These are development options and resources identified by Hybrid Parks:

- Protection and enhancement of urban parks as important high quality open spaces for the local population, for leisure, recreation and as one option to experience nature (social/cultural focus)

- Further development of urban parks as locations to meet other people, to interact and to communicate (social focus)
- Promote and "sell" the relevance of inner city parks as soft locational factors and for the quality of life (economic focus)
- Raise the status of inner city parks in strategies of climate change mitigation and develop succeeding activities (environmental focus)
- Active support for the ecological diversity and for environmental education in cities (environmental and social focus)
- Ensure future attractiveness and use of public parks by including new offers and facilities and by addressing new user groups (economic and social focus)
- Enhance existing resources and implement new measures to enhance urban climate, to offer locations with reduced temperatures, to create green corridors connecting the city core with the urban fringe and surrounding landscapes (environmental focus)

Examples from the Hybrid Parks project include, among many others, the City Park in Lund (Sweden), the City Park in Linköping (Sweden), Grosvenor Park in Chester (UK), Silesian Park in Katowice (Poland), and City Garden Centre and Kirjurinluoto Park in Pori (Finland).

## 3. New urban green and urban squares

Many of those European cities that need to revitalise derelict sites or to enhance urban structures as well as those cities that are in a period of growth, often invest in contemporary design for urban squares and green areas. In some countries such measures are supported by regional/national policies such as sustainable garden shows or building exhibitions. As testimonies of their time they combine history with new development objectives and actual design trends. Determined by multiple objectives and user requirements they often serve "multi-purpose activities and recreation" or deliver a "positive contribution to climate change".





The development options and resources are similar to those of traditional urban parks, but Hybrid Parks also identified these:

- These sites can perfectly showcase the actual cultural, ecological and economic situation and transition of our societies as well as inter-cultural trends (economic, social/cultural and environmental focus)
- New urban green spaces with their modern design elements add to the identity of a city and to the identification of their citizens. They enhance public realm and the quality of life as well as the touristic relevance of cities (social and economic focus)

Examples from the Hybrid Parks project include, among many others, Mdina Ditch in Malta, Phönix See in Dortmund (Germany), Daniaparken in Malmö (Sweden), LinköpingsBo2017 (Sweden), Landschaftspark Duisburg-Nord (Germany), Die Garten Tulln, Lower Austria (Austria).

### 4. Botanical gardens

Botanical gardens have a long scientific and educational tradition and helped to raise the number of plant varieties that all parks and gardens can make use of today. They are established as an important but also as a quite autonomous element of our garden culture and today's public realm. The collection, preservation and propagation of endangered plants and seeds as well as research on climate change are missions of increasing

importance. These and other new development trends, such as biotope management or recreational functions, will accomplish the traditional functions of botanical gardens and raise their value as "Hybrid Parks".

These are development options and resources identified by Hybrid Parks:

- Botanical gardens are in a good position to strengthen and to widen their important role in relation to biodiversity, ecology and environment (environmental focus)
- Botanical gardens are important institutions for research on climate change. Their capacities are ideal to act as laboratories or pilot sites for implementing and testing innovative measures of climate change mitigation (environmental focus)
- Environmental education, also including "new" aspects such as the preservation and promotion of local fruits and vegetables, is of increasing importance. There are good practice examples from (botanical) gardens that need to be continued and to be transferred (social and environmental focus)
- There is also increasing tourism relevance as botanical gardens develop from academic grounds with square beds and myriads of labels to attractive parks, including show gardens and multi-purpose greenhouses and exhibition areas (economic focus)

Examples from the Hybrid Parks project include, among many others, the Botanical Garden in Mikolów (Poland), Ness Botanical Garden (UK), Rhodes Botanical Garden (Greece), Parc Botanique de Haute Bretagne (France), Flora in Cologne (Germany), Botanical Garden Malta, and Arche Noah in Schiltern (Austria).

### 5. New designs, uses and/or locations

Other green concepts, such as Urban Gardening and Therapy Gardens, have initially not been listed as main subjects of Hybrid Parks, but were then visited and discussed during many workshops and study tours.



There is much evidence that Urban Gardening might become a new element of European garden culture. Such new community gardens are often spontaneously set up on abandoned sites, on green spots along the streets or on spaces between housing blocks. They are manifestations of a changing society aiming at new forms of interaction with the local environment. Other new parks and gardens enriched landscapes and made them accessible and more enjoyable. At the urban fringe, parks often use a specific design to show the transition into landscapes and to stop further urban growth into these landscapes.

These are development options and resources identified by Hybrid Parks:

- Opportunities for a better social inclusion and identification of inhabitants with their local environment and for their active contribution to its enhancement (social focus)
- Increase of the ecological diversity in our cities, also replacing decorative plants by useful plants with long regional tradition or exotic plants by local species (environmental focus)
- The active inclusion of minority groups and of people with different ethnic backgrounds into the design and use of their living areas by making use of their individual knowledge and skills (social/cultural focus)

- Using the openness of sites and procedures for activities that reflect the current understanding of sustainability and environmental protection and support for related activities (social and environmental focus)
- Increased attractiveness of sites, some of them with touristic relevance (social/cultural and economic focus)
- Prospects to capture sites that have never been locations for parks and gardens but gain reputation, reception and use by doing so (economic and social/cultural focus)

Examples from Hybrid Parks include, among many others, Skäggetorp in Linköping (Sweden), the Therapy Garden in Alnarp (Sweden), Nordpark Pulheim (Germany), National Urban Parks (Finland), Slottsträdgården Malmö (Sweden), Parco Urbano G. Bassani and Terraviva, both in Ferrara (Italy), and Bosco di San Francesco, Assisi (Italy). ■



## Epilogue: We have always been hybrid



### We Have Always Been Hybrid

**Essay by: Manfredi Patitucci (Landscape architect, Ferrara, Italy)**

In the last three years the Hybrid Parks project has sought the most appropriate management for the public parks which comprise a territory more or less as vast as that of Europe. An ambitious project begun with the faith of the enthusiastic; a project that closes, now, with the same faith, but with the discretion that comes with the knowledge of a long and unknown road ahead. No one of us, at this point, would presume to believe that the Hybrid Park model which he sought exists.

And this is the true success of the whole project: to have removed the seductive tendency to simplification, and to have demonstrated the complexity and the fascination of the European territory.

If the problem to confront is the ecological question, then it is easy. We have all the knowledge to create green spaces adapted to the slow, progressive decline of climatic and ecological variety, the trend of rising temperatures and the scarcity of water. Technically, it is easy. All we need is attention to the sustainability of plant choices, along with informed planning regarding naturally occurring biological systems, in the creation of somewhat self-sufficient plant communities. Sturdy, resistant plants placed in a plan which mimics natural landscapes, so that the dynamism of those ecological communities enters into the landscape of our cities.

The corollas of dried flowers for insects and birds, to be pruned only in winter, with a notable reduction of expenditures, will bring beauty to cities which no longer expect it, a new aesthetic, in which the plants can finally express their whole life cycle. Sustainability in the choice of the species, sustainability in planning, and sustainability of management.

We are talking about a culture of green spaces that opens up to a beauty that we're no longer used to, a beauty constructed of formal, yet unusual solutions. And here the ecological issue opens up a vista that goes beyond the purely aesthetic. As I was writing I realized that thinking about these unusual methods of planning, capable of following the plants in their natural development, led to another, parallel thought which very gradually took form. I realized that I was looking at plants in a way that I was no longer used to. I realized that concentration on the plant forms necessarily led to thinking about social ones, and that the way of looking at plants became a sort of suggestion of how to open my eyes wider.

Perhaps the understanding of biodiversity contributes to a comprehension of the social diversity in our cities. We discover that that new aesthetic is capable of exceeding the confines of ecology, and tells us something about our parks' potential to adapt better to the dynamic social fabric of our cities; parks capable of allowing that dynamism to express itself without being impoverished.

An aesthetic of ecology which is totally new, simply because only recently have we learned to notice the abandoned patches behind our house, where the plants occupy the space best adapted to them. At the Ferrara conference last November, I hinted at the risk of not heeding ecological urgency in planning green spaces: the risk, beyond the obvious ecological issues, that the landscape in which we live would cease to represent anything for its inhabitants and that its forms would no longer generate any sense of belonging.

I asked myself, then, what form our landscape should have. I talked about how, in the first half of the fourteenth century, the frescoed "Allegoria del Buon Governo" painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti at Siena,

exemplified the representation of the landscape most suited to contemporary ideas of well-being, social cohesion, peace.

Hybrid Parks has sought to represent the landscape most reflective of our idea of peace.

And at the end, the project admits a sort of wistful diffidence, and asks if it must necessarily develop a specific sort of “laboratory model” super-park, or if, instead, we must think about a park privy of predefined form, a park to redefine every time, capable of adapting in any moment, always responsive to what happens inside and around it. Contemporary peace, as is now evident everywhere in the world, lives in the successful management of ecological integrity and social cohesion.

A territory’s social cohesion depends on the sharing of common values formed around life’s fundamental necessities, needs which are the most direct expression of our relationship with the environment.

Sustainability and peace are identical. Public spaces are definitively most appropriate to allow the formation and maintenance of urban cohesion because it is therein that sharing may express itself in all its myriad forms, growing without weakness.

The multiplicity of forms in which this sharing manifests itself becomes an important tool for us. If, at the technical level, as we have seen, the differentiation of management of the green zones guarantees the quality of the biodiversity of a natural environment, then responding to the various needs of those who will use and share public spaces is required. In other words, it is required to differentiate the opportunities for use of those spaces. From plants we have passed to people, because society and environment share the same destiny, and both can function only as a unified system.

It is possible to create differentiated public spaces only if one draws on a multiplicity of management techniques capable of satisfying as many needs. This is the spirit of the Hybrid Parks project – the synergy

among crafts, businesses, techniques. Thus we see that “hybrid” and “bio diverse” are effectively synonymous. The same spirit animates them, teaching us to resist every temptation to specialize our gaze. The gaze must maintain its bird’s-eye view of the differences; it must remain capable of taking in the diversity of things by seeing them as a unified entity without any reduction or impoverishment.

If we imagine seeing a city from above – as I said back then at Ferrara – blessed with a bird’s-eye view, the fragmented totality of its gardens reveals itself as a single garden. Birds do not notice dividing walls between gardens, or whether a plant is in one garden or another... they fly above a single garden as large as the entire city. The rich biodiversity of this single garden is due, simply, to the random variety of the larger and smaller habitats which comprise it, not to the presence of model super-gardens specially designed for biodiversity.

Thus Hybrid Parks did not arrive at a formal model, but the bird’s-eye view of the unified totality of each of our material and spiritual needs. The fact is that we need to dust off our imaginations. At least this is what certain events, such as a visit to Palermo (below), have taught me to do. I believe that Italians may more naturally understand something that other, more orderly and precise, cultures have difficulties in recognizing, if they even remember it. This summer I travelled to Sicily. My plane flew in to Palermo. It was the first city I visited. A masterpiece!

Visiting Palermo is like going to the psychologist: the more you walk, the farther away you drift from familiar things. But at the same time, you feel as though you’re coming home, only with a clarity that you never had before. Walking around historic Palermo, one slowly learns to welcome the chaos of its streets and facades, and at the end of the day, what you see – in a mixture of reality and transfiguration – is a unified totality of formal richness, become a sort of sensation of belonging.

What I called chaos on the day of my arrival, the day after I called multiplicity. The city appeared to me as a palimpsest. Palermo is a leaf



## 64 – Epilogue: We have always been hybrid



of parchment on which is written a text written upon a pre-existing text, scribed centuries earlier and then scratched away to fix a new text upon the sheepskin, without the previous writing being completely lost. The traces remain upon the transparent sheet for us to find.

In Palermo one perceives the resemblance between our lives and that palimpsest where the signs are left upon the surface, all rich with significance. At present those signs appear confused; all in their own space, all with their own fragment of sense, all abiding together and ready to tell us something. One only needs the patience to read them.

And perhaps we, who have begun to notice the beauty of the unkempt lawn behind our house, are becoming more capable of that kind of patience.

This is nature, this is the city, this is us.

Cities have always endured by their care for pre-existing things. The richest and most long-lived civilizations cared for multiplicity. In Sicily, the Normans did it with the Saracens and the Saracens with the descendants of the Greeks. To deny complexity meant death, to welcome it also welcomed prosperity.

We have always been hybrid.

And so it is necessary to re-train our gaze to the habit of complexity. It must relearn to be hybrid; only then will it be able to see the hybridity of the space around it and able to plan it so it's truly adapted to material and spiritual needs of those who inhabit it, against the temptation to reduce that which we hold to be important in fixing upon a form that presumes to be exemplary.

A palimpsestic landscape capable, too, of losing things by the wayside because, as this experience demonstrates, what is needed often manifests itself outside any planned project.

And so a model hybrid park, a hybrid park par excellence, does not exist. There exist ecological and social needs that must be attended to together, within the specificity of the conditions in which they exist, until the form of the park that is born is their most coherent representation.

Perhaps the hybrid park is that which allows such uses to settle upon the urban layout, a park that takes on meaning just as a formal opportunity for the layering of use, a park able to return the spaces of the city to the needs which present themselves.

This park which welcomes and increases multiplicity of use, by means of an internal differentiation of forms, becomes an instrument of social cohesion. Diverse members of society find the space most appropriate to them because that park reflects them as though it were the form of a habitual use. There, common values express themselves.

I like to think that our hybrid park already exists. It is different from every existing park and yet takes the best of all of them, in a Europe that we know is not more complex than fourteenth-century Siena in the eyes of its citizens. ■



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