



HOW TO PREVENT THE LOSS OF ALLOTMENT LAND TO DEVELOPMENT?

Challenge

How can allotments be rebranded away from being sometimes seen as a low-value collection of small individual plots towards a high value complex performing a better socio-environmental role in order to help to reduce the risk of their loss?

How can the wide range of functions and opportunities be promoted in order to convince policy makers and planners of the value of allotments and the need to protect existing areas and to establish new allotment sites?

Challenge 1: Why are local green spaces lost to development and budgets reduced?

Challenge 2: Why are allotment sites more prone to development and more of a target to developers or seen as more dispensable by local authorities than parks?

- Because the monetary value of the land is known but the (often non-market) benefits of the allotments has not been calculated in monetary terms?
- Because of their location? E.g. in marginal or city centre areas?
- Because gardeners and the public do not maximize the multifunctional potential of allotment sites?
- Because community groups do not share the site with the local people and do not sufficiently contribute to local urban policy development?

This factsheet addresses both gardeners and policy makers: Gardeners will find information on how to work effectively internally and externally so as to be an integral, positive part of society; Policy makers will find information on the contribution of allotments to society and nature.



Image 2 - Protesters against bulldozing of community gardens in New York City. Photo: Werner Heidemann



Image 3 - Garden Park Groenewoud (De Hoge Weide), Utrecht, The Netherlands. Photo:AVVN

Message to Gardeners

- Set up a garden association
- Create strong communities to build and protect sustainable gardens
- Select smart leaders and organizers
- Build a coalition with different groups and advocacy organizations
- Use social media to widen support
- Get your councillor on your side
- Mobilize your neighbours
- Build links with local businesses
- Work with local schools, clubs and kindergartens
- Identify areas for allotment gardens in the town or city



Image 4 - Protesters demonstrate against bulldozing of community gardens in New York City. Photo: Werner Heidemann

Advice Note

- Message to leaders and organizers: Develop the garden community; communicate, listen and practice what you preach
- Show your activities in a favourable light and talk about them as often as possible to different groups
- Set clear aims, put them into practice and make them known to politicians.
- Carry out innovative projects i.e. install beehives and insect hotels, create ponds.
- Institutionalize your organization to maintain activities in dialogue with the municipalities
- Explain your policies to your members and show them how to improve the system
- Make clear how you can help the municipality to meet its sustainability targets
- Consult people who know how to help you solve your problems.



Image 5 - Young gardeners in action. Photo: Werner Heidemann

Learn More

Useful links

- <http://www.urbanallotments.eu/>
- <http://jardins-familiaux.org/>
- <https://communitygarden.org/>

References

Micheline Nilsen, (2014) THE WORKING MAN ´S GREEN SPACE, Allotment Gardens in England, France and Germany,1870 – 1919 Univ. of Virginia Press

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Image 6 - Bangladeshi women prepare their garden plots, Ipswich, UK. Photo: The National Allotment Society in UK



Image 7 - Gardeners provide nest sites for wild bees. Photo: Werner Heidemann

Message to Policy Makers

10 key points for the development and protection of allotment gardens.

What are the greatest values of allotments and garden associations?

- Low cost multifunctional green areas that gardeners look after.
- Strengthening of the neighbourhood by promoting community social activities.
- They are platforms for integration and cross-cultural exchange.
- Gardens offer fresh food, short food chains, and therapeutic qualities.
- Gardening together teaches democracy: garden associations help to practice grass roots democracy.
- Contribute to food banks for destitute people.
- Provide biodiversity-hotspots, offering space for regional old, endangered plant varieties and pollinators.
- Room for social projects and partnerships, for example with schools and kindergartens, nature protection groups.
- Allotments support urban climate amelioration by regulating the air temperature and water infiltration.
- Win-win situation for all participant's: neighbourhood, NGO 's, politicians, municipality.

Policy Brief

- Find out about the motivation of allotment gardeners in your area.
- Identify allotment sites and register them in the urban plan – have them legally recognized.
- Be willing to enter long-term contracts with allotment or community associations.
- Set up a joint advisory committee together with gardeners' representatives.
- Involve the gardeners as a clear stakeholder group in planning.
- Establish rules together with gardeners and the neighbourhood in order to encourage visitors to enjoy the gardens, ensure safety and prevent crime and vandalism.
- Reduce bureaucracy within the system.



Image 8 - Music session in a vegetable plot of the Langemarck allotment gardens, Münster, Germany. Photo: Wilm Weppelmann, Kulturgrün

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Case Study

The allotment garden site "Park Groenewoud" in Utrecht (Netherlands) is a new site which was planned by a landscape architect and the design had to combine work and leisure. It became a unique park on a unique location. The garden site is planned around eight small office buildings. It is a beautiful park for gardeners as well as for the people that work in the surrounding buildings and the residents of the districts nearby. The park is open from sunrise to sunset and has special elements as for example: an insect garden, a compost garden, bird bushes, a food bank garden, a toad pool insect walls, etc.



Photos 9 & 10: The allotment garden site "Park Groenewoud" in Utrecht, Netherlands. Photos: AVVN

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