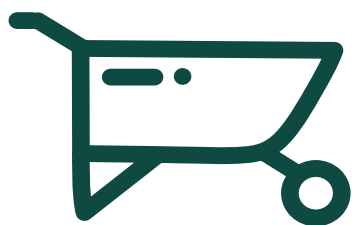




Living Lab Zagreb, Croatia



NBS 3



Community-based urban farming and gardening on post-industrial sites

Therapeutic Garden Sesvete





Living Lab Zagreb, Croatia

NBS description

Therapeutic gardens are specially designed gardens with the aim of strengthening motor, sensory, cognitive, affective, nutritional, emotional and social potential. The therapeutic garden in the Sesvete district of Zagreb is used by various groups of disabled individuals of all ages throughout the year.

The garden is managed by the City Office for Economy, Environmental Sustainability and Strategic Planning and the everyday activities are managed by Mali Dom day-care center for children with disabilities.

Aim & goals

The aim of the therapeutic garden is to provide users with an opportunity to spend time outdoors that benefits their physical and mental health.

Key goals of the NBS are:

- fostering social inclusion of people with disabilities within the community of healthy individuals, representing a great benefit of the garden
- potentially promoting social equality within the community and reduce discrimination and prejudice based on social status, ethnicity, disabilities and other characteristics.

Target groups (beneficiaries)

The NBS key target groups are disadvantaged and socially excluded such as:

- autistic people in the neighbouring housing development of New Jelkovec,
- local people with physical and mental disabilities,
- war veterans,
- children and grown-ups with disabilities from the entire city

Main responsible partner

City Office of Economy, Environmental Sustainability and Strategic Planning of Zagreb

Contact

✉ matija.vuger@zagreb.hr
iva.bedenko@zagreb.hr
branka.mrakuzic@zagreb.hr



(c) Mali Dom

Area of implementation

The therapeutic garden is implemented on a portion of land of 5145 m², in the southern part of the Sljeme factory area.

Approximate coordinates: 45°49'14.3"N, 16°06'28.9"E

ProGREG partners involved

- Mali dom
- NGO ZIPS - Green and Blue Sesvete providing the link to the local community
- AF- consultation on spatial planning
- ZZPU – city-owned consultation on planning regulations and requirements

Other stakeholders involved

Mali dom-Zagreb, Daycare center for the rehabilitation of children and youth founded by the City of Zagreb

Novi Jelkovec institution founded with the aim of providing social services in the community to children with developmental disabilities, younger adults and adults with disabilities.

City Office of Social Protection, Health, War Veterans and People with Disabilities

Implementation budget

Total implementation budget: 389,060 €

proGREG funding: 296,785 €

City of Zagreb: 92,275 €

Timeframe

Start
August 2020



Completion
May/June 2021

NBS description

The City gardens project was introduced in 2013, with the aim of using city-owned land as gardens for citizens. When planning started, the idea of creating new gardens as therapeutic gardens was welcomed by partners and the local community. The garden is managed by the City Office for Economy, Environmental Sustainability and Strategic Planning and the everyday activities are managed by Mali Dom daycare center for children with disabilities.

The therapeutic garden consists of three zones:

1. area for user interaction (gazebo, grill, wooden platform/stage, and circular benches),
2. area for therapeutic gardening and education (elevated garden beds for growing herbs, hügelkultur beds, storage for tools and a trellis)
3. sensory garden and sensory rest areas (elevated and classic beds with herbs, reflexology path, quiet rest areas and interactive sculpture).

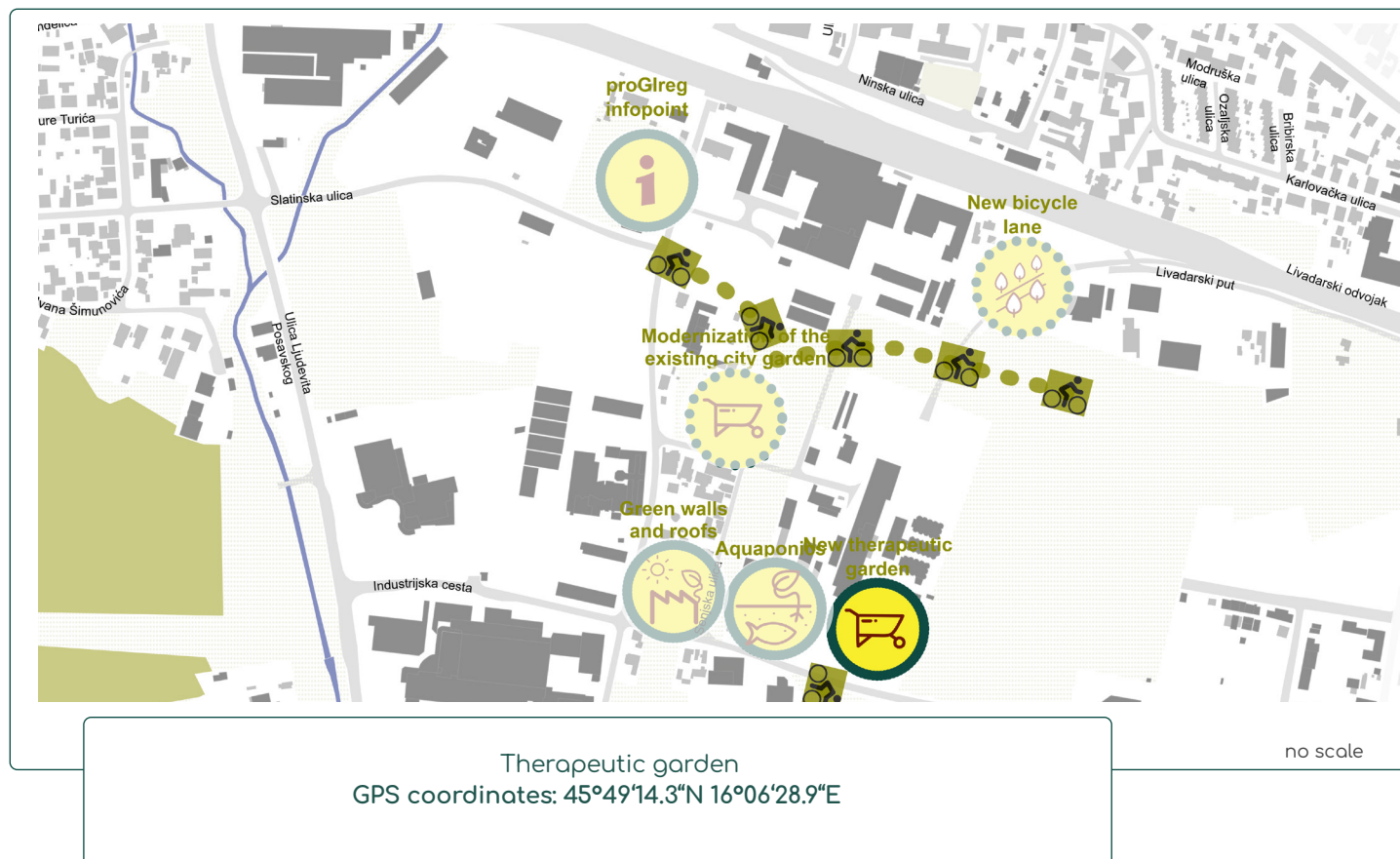
The design intends to be uncomplicated, readable and down-to-earth, using natural materials and simple forms. The garden is designed as a sequence of experience-zones along a curved path creating a circular trail. Common areas encourage socializing and relaxation of children and grown-

ups with disabilities, their therapists, parents and caretakers and people without disabilities. The stage is placed in the centre and used for theatrical plays and other events. Gazebos are equipped with green roofs, and the therapeutic garden features pollinator-friendly plants.



Area of implementation

The therapeutic garden is implemented on a portion of land of 5,300 m², in the southern part of the Sljeme factory area.



Aim & goals

The overarching aim of the project is to contribute to the quality of life of vulnerable groups and citizens with disabilities by providing opportunities to be active outdoors that benefit their health and wellbeing. Participating in workshops and trainings is for all interested citizens, hence positively impacting the wider community. The project can be upgraded by involving garden therapists, specially trained experts in medical and psychosocial effects of garden work who are part of the therapeutic-rehabilitation team.

Key goal of the therapeutic garden and education is to encourage social inclusion including:

- integrating vulnerable groups into society

- enabling people with developmental or acquired difficulties and other socially vulnerable groups to do gardening in city gardens
- offering the opportunity to develop and show empathy and understanding.
- offering longer term training for multiple types of users.

The therapeutic garden is meant as a living incubator inside the Living Lab. While the city garden's product is food, the therapeutic garden's product is the process.

Additionally, the garden is part of redeveloping the brownfield site of the former meat processing plant, opening up new public spaces, thus providing momentum of brownfield transformation.

Target groups

Key beneficiaries include:

- people with mental and physical disabilities,
- families of disabled children,
- care institutions for the disabled,
- schools of the district.



Stakeholder constellations

Main responsible partner

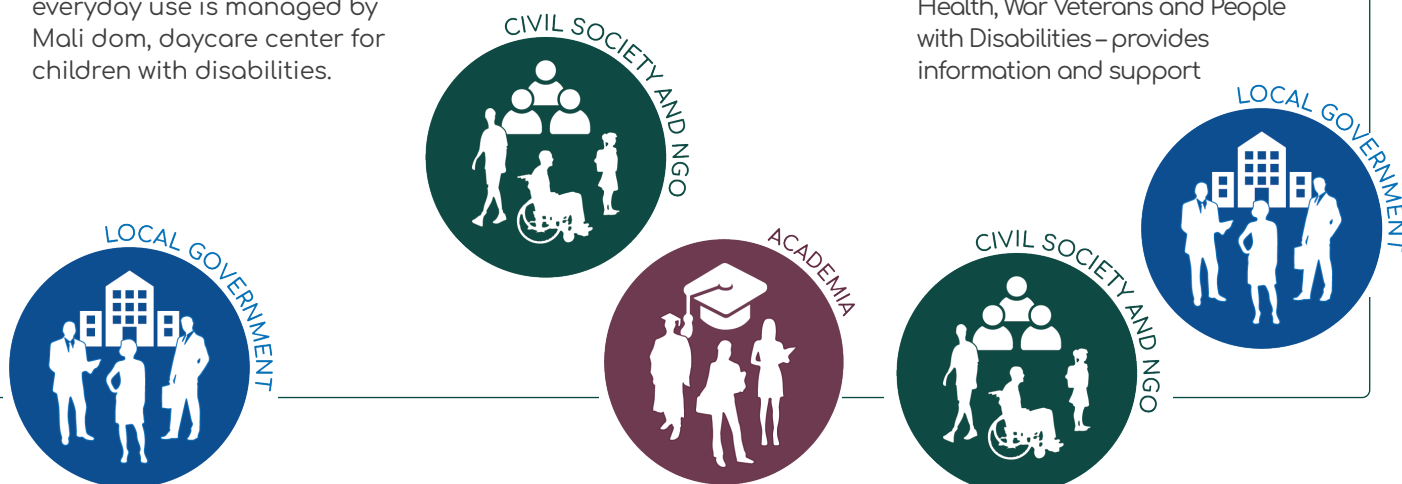
- City Office of Economy, Environmental Sustainability and Strategic Planning of Zagreb is the main responsible partner and coordinator of activities of the therapeutic garden.
- The City coordinates planning, implementation, use and maintenance of the therapeutic garden, and everyday use is managed by Mali dom, daycare center for children with disabilities.

ProGReg partners involved

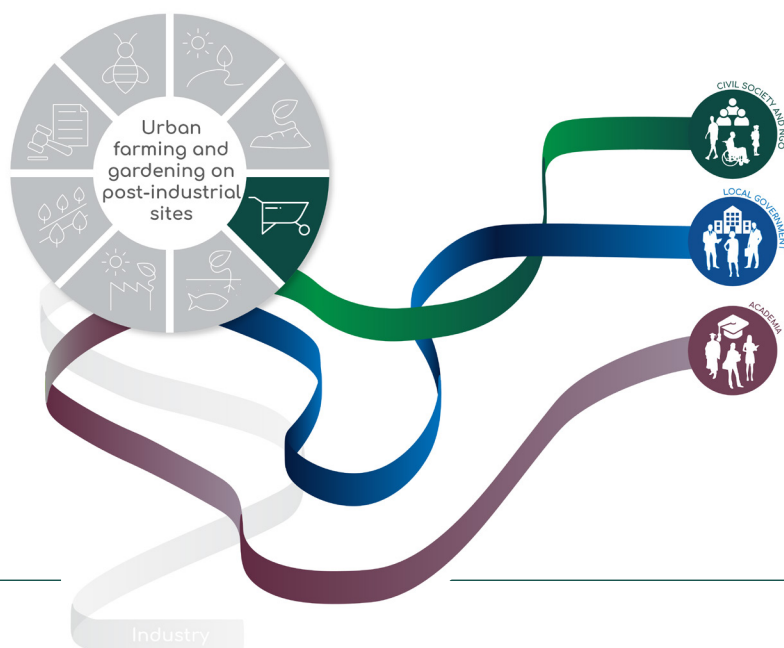
- Green Blue Sessvete provide the link to the local community.
- Zagreb Faculty of Architecture provided consultation on spatial planning, and City Bureau of Spatial Planning on planning regulations and requirements

Other stakeholders involved

- Mali dom-Zagreb, Daycare center for the rehabilitation of children and youth founded by the City of Zagreb – organizes everyday activities and manages other users
- Novi Jelkovec institution for assisted living – organizes use of the garden
- City Office of Social Protection, Health, War Veterans and People with Disabilities – provides information and support



Co-design activities, stakeholder engagement, and pre-implementation activities



(c) Mali Dom

Planning and preparatory activities
(administrative and technical procedures)

In the eight years of implementing the „City Gardens“ project, vulnerable groups and people with disabilities have repeatedly expressed interest to participate in gardening activities. Initial ideas included integrating facilities into the existing garden but proved difficult.

This led to the idea of implementing an adequately equipped therapeutic garden for people with special needs. Since the future users include people with autism, children with various developmental disabilities, people in wheelchairs etc., the codesign workshops served to define the exact needs of the users, which formed the basis of the garden design.

Implementation budget



The implementation of this NBS has been funded by European Horizon 2020 projects. Funds have been transferred first to the City of Zagreb, which organized the implementation and payment. All phases have been accounted for.

Total implementation budget: 389.060 €

Other funds:
92.275 € City of Zagreb

proG!reg Partners funds: 296.785 €



(c) Mali Dom

Co-design and engagement activities

The City of Zagreb as the main partner has been actively involved in the co-design phase of the project. During the co-design phase, partners from the City Office proposed the newly planned garden to be transformed into a therapeutic garden. Feedback of stakeholders confirmed the great need for such a garden in Sesvete, given plenty of potential users living in the neighbouring area (including war veterans and several housing communities of people with autism). The therapeutic garden has been conceived in an intense co-design process.

- First co-design workshops organized within proGleg offered the opportunity to gather all potential stakeholders for inclusion in the planning phase, ensuring the garden is planned adequately to cater to the needs of all the possible users
- Subsequent meeting with prospective users and the therapists from the Mali dom (little home) daycare center for children with multiple disabilities, the centre for people with cerebral palsy and centre for autism.
- Active engagement of local institutions representing the users to influence the design of the therapy garden to suits different user needs.

The City organized other meetings and workshops to ensure users needs are clearly defined in order to plan the garden accordingly. Participants provided comprehensive lists of special requirements. The garden was designed using this data assuring correct NBS implementation. Stakeholder mappings in collaboration with the City Office of Social Protection, Health, War Veterans and People with Disabilities provide a valuable source of contacts for future interventions.

Key achievements and implementation results

The implementation of the therapeutic garden is benefitting users including people with autism, children with various developmental disabilities, people in wheelchairs etc. Thus achieving the key goal of providing a serene space for relaxation and therapeutic activity.

Since its completion in June 2021, the garden has been in continuous use depending on the season: the users are assisted by their therapists or caretaker (parents/family) in executing all gardening work and maintenance of the raised garden beds. The raised beds have been assigned to the users to provide continuity in tending to the plants.

The project is expected to positively contribute to the quality of life of vulnerable groups and people with

disabilities. The possibility of staying in the natural environment and participating in workshops and trainings addresses all interested citizens, thus having a positive impact on the wider community. The project can be upgraded by involving garden therapists, specially trained experts in medical and psychosocial effects of garden work who are part of the therapeutic-rehabilitation team. New, safe, public space that was transformed from neglected land which was unsafe before, is created.

Critical implementation issues and barriers encountered



The COVID crisis and two subsequent powerful earthquakes hitting Zagreb in 2020 hindered implementation plans in Zagreb. However, since the therapeutic garden was largely financed by proGleg funds, municipal budget cuts had no impact on the construction works of the therapeutic garden. Implementation was finalized within the set timeframe. In the early implementation stage the land was owned by Zagreb Holding company, requiring political decision to assign the land to the City of Zagreb. Given the garden is an outdoor area and limited number of users at one time, social distancing measures had little impact on the use of the garden.

Synergies with other proGleg activities

Therapeutic garden is closely intertwined with the activity of the Info point and can be also connected with the NBS 4/5 self-standing fixture –modular urban farm as an educational platform. The inclusion and constant dissemination are crucial to ensure activity and awareness of the importance for the local community and beyond.



NBS 4: Aquaponics



NBS 5: Green roofs and walls

Links with other external projects or activities

The NBS is linked to the city gardens, especially the Borovje garden that is planned in the eastern part of Zagreb. The institutions managing everyday use of the garden occasionally organize educational activities, food production workshops and gatherings with parents and friends.

Communication activities



All project activities are being advertised in the Info point through lectures, exhibitions, discussions, film projections and other events, and the programme of the Info point is published in the local media, especially social media.

The Mali dom and Novi Jelkovec institutions have their own communication channels – both have web pages and Mali dom has a Facebook page with 4.600 followers.

Green and Blue Sesvete provide communication channels through an active web page and Facebook page with 7000 followers.

Links with other external projects or activities

The NBS is linked to the city gardens, especially the Borovje garden that is planned in the eastern part of Zagreb. The institutions managing everyday use of the garden occasionally organize educational activities, food production workshops and gatherings with parents and friends.

Maintenance & Sustainability beyond proGleg

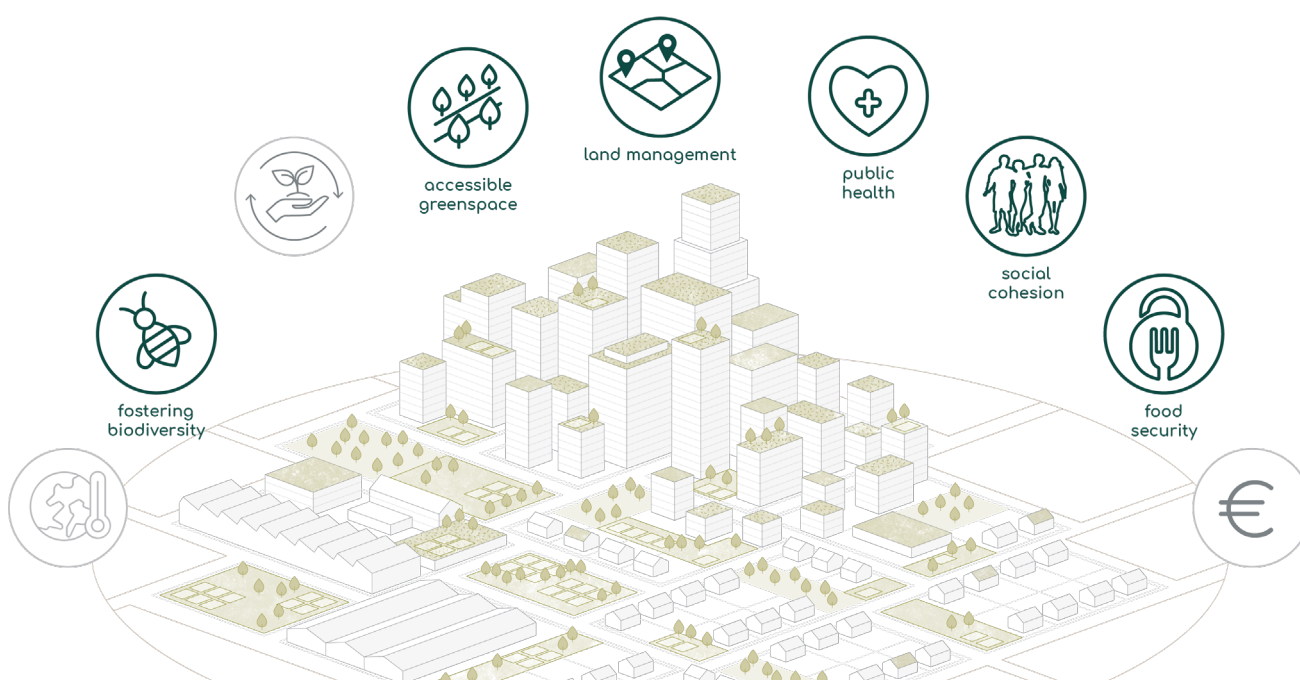
The operating of the therapy garden is in line with the Goal 5 of the City of Zagreb Development Strategy, Improving the quality of life; Priority 5.2 - Social integration of local communities, safety and quality leisure time; Measures 5.2.4. Facilitate greater inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community life and 5.2.5. Facilitate greater community inclusion of children and young people with developmental difficulties. Therefore, the long-term aim of the City is to ensure the operation of the therapy garden.

Further upgrading of the garden, and introduction of interactive tools and playground elements for children with disabilities is planned in the future.

Therapeutic garden is a thoroughly flexible concept. It can be planned in an area of any size – from a small backyard or part of a public green area to a large, comprehensive public garden. It can provide a gardening, sensory stimulating, relaxing or socializing area, depending of the investor's wishes and needs. It can also be planned as part of a schoolyard.

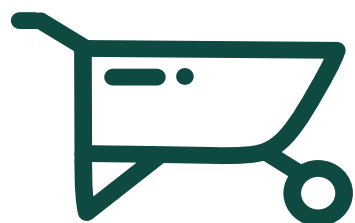
There is also a possibility of introducing a part dedicated to people in wheelchairs in every city garden, enabling therapeutic gardening in all the neighbourhoods.

NBS benefits and co-benefits





Fact Sheet Therapeutic Garden



NBS 3



Community-based urban farming and gardening on post-industrial sites



Therapeutic Garden Sesvete

Contact:

✉ matija.vuger@zagreb.hr
branka.mrakuzic@zagreb.hr
🌐 www.zagreb.hr



🌐 www.progireg.eu
🐦 @proGlgreg
in proGlgreg-project
f proGlgreg: Nature for Renewal
@ #proGlgreg
📺 proGlgreg: Nature for Renewal
▶ proGlgreg: Nature for Renewal

Partners

ze|ene
i|plave
Sesvete

