

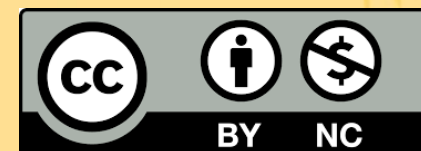
Pocket Parks Case

Lecture (online)

Learning Unit 42

Credit: Trinity College Dublin

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Introduction

Pocket Parks: A Nature-Based Solution for Urban Spaces

- Pocket parks are small, accessible green spaces integrated into urban environments to provide environmental, social, and health benefits.
- EU-funded NBS projects focus on creating and managing these spaces. We will discuss these examples.
- We will highlight the importance of community involvement and stewardship in the long-term success of pocket parks



“Solutions that are **inspired** and **supported** by nature, which are cost-effective, simultaneously provide **environmental, social and economic benefits** and help build **resilience.**”

Such solutions bring more, and more diverse, nature and natural features and processes into cities, landscapes and seascapes, through locally adapted, resource-efficient and systemic interventions.



NBS Definition – EU

Reference: [European Commission](#)

What are pocket parks?

Definition and Role of Pocket Parks in Urban Areas

- **Small Green Spaces:** Designed for accessibility, relaxation, and recreation in cities.
- **Benefits:** Improve air quality, promote mental well-being, enhance biodiversity, and provide spaces for social interaction.
- **Nature-Based Solutions (NBS):** Solutions that work with nature to address urban challenges, such as pollution, heat islands, and lack of green spaces.



EU Research Projects on Pocket Parks

Urban Green UP: Focuses on creating nature-based solutions in urban areas, including pocket parks for environmental restoration.

Go Green Routes: seeks to maximise public space for social and ecological benefit

Green4CITIES: Promotes the implementation of green spaces in cities, emphasizing biodiversity, public health, and community engagement



Why Pocket Parks?

Why Pocket Parks Matter in Cities

- **Urban Heat Island Effect:** Pocket parks help cool down urban areas by providing shade and vegetation.
- **Biodiversity:** Support wildlife, such as insects, birds, and small mammals, by creating ecological corridors.
- **Social Cohesion:** Foster community engagement and create spaces for relaxation, education, and recreation.
- **Health Benefits:** Improve air quality and provide spaces for physical activities, reducing stress and enhancing mental well-being.

Community Stewardship

The Role of Stewardship in Managing Pocket Parks

- **Ownership and Care:** Local residents and school communities must take responsibility for the upkeep and sustainable use of pocket parks.
- **Volunteers and Partnerships:** Encourage partnerships with local schools, universities, and NGOs to engage communities in the long-term care of green spaces.
- **Success Story:** Pocket parks in the **ReGREEN** project have demonstrated the benefits of community involvement in park maintenance for their longevity and impact

Pocket Parks for Sustainability

Best Practices for Managing Pocket Parks

- **Sustainable Maintenance:** Use native plants to reduce water use and enhance biodiversity.
- **Collaborative Management:** Local communities, schools, and local authorities should collaborate on managing the parks.
- **Inclusive Design:** Ensure that the park meets the needs of all community members, including those with disabilities or limited mobility.

Pocket Parks for Climate Resilience

How Pocket Parks Help Cities Adapt to Climate Change

- **Flood Risk Reduction:** Green spaces help manage rainwater runoff and reduce the risk of flooding.
- **Heat Reduction:** Vegetation in pocket parks can reduce temperatures and combat the urban heat island effect.
- **Sustainable Urban Development:** By incorporating green spaces into urban planning, cities can become more resilient to climate change.

Play Areas as NBS

Creating Play Areas with Pocket Parks

- **Active Play:** Pocket parks offer play areas that encourage physical activity, creativity, and exploration.
- **Nature-Inspired Play:** Natural elements like sand, water, plants, and trees integrate play with the environment.
- **EU Examples:** Schools and local governments are integrating pocket parks with nature-inspired play areas to encourage children to engage with nature.

Class Exercise 1: Design Your Own Pocket Park

- **Objective:** Students will design a pocket park that addresses the needs of a specific community (e.g., a school, urban neighbourhood, or university)
- 10 minutes
- Discuss why you choose elements and what will your garden aim to achieve



Examples

Successful Examples of Pocket Parks Across Europe

- **Madrid, Spain: Madrid Río** park, integrated with local schools and universities, offers green spaces that foster community engagement and enhance learning.
- **Paris, France:** The **Petit Bois** project created small green spaces and play areas in urban settings.
- **Copenhagen, Denmark:** Green spaces like **Superkilen** park provide cultural, recreational, and ecological benefits to local communities.

Challenges in implementation

Barriers to Creating Pocket Parks in Urban Areas

- **Space Constraints:** Urban areas often lack the space to create green parks, particularly in densely populated neighbourhoods.
- **Funding:** Securing funding for initial development and ongoing maintenance can be challenging.
- **Community Buy-in:** Getting residents, schools, and local authorities involved in the planning and stewardship of pocket parks can require significant effort

Funding Models



How to Fund Pocket Parks for Long-Term Success

- **Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaborating with private companies, local governments, and NGOs to fund and develop pocket parks.
- **EU Funding Programs:** EU projects like **Horizon Europe** and **Interreg** provide grants for nature-based urban interventions.
- **Crowdfunding and Local Fundraising:** Engaging local communities in fundraising efforts to support park development and maintenance.

Stakeholder Engagement

Educating Communities on the Value of Pocket Parks

- **Schools and Universities:** Schools can play a key role in educating students and communities about the value of pocket parks for health, well-being, and the environment.
- **Workshops and Events:** Organize local workshops and volunteer days to raise awareness and involve the community in park maintenance.

Class Exercise 2: Community Stewardship Plan

TAKE FIVE

Objective: Students will develop a stewardship plan for their pocket park, focusing on long-term maintenance and community involvement.

Social Benefits

How Pocket Parks Improve Social Well-Being

- **Community Spaces:** Pocket parks serve as venues for social interaction, fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity.
- **Health Benefits:** Physical activity in green spaces improves mental and physical health.
- **Intergenerational Spaces:** Design parks that cater to different age groups, from children's play areas to spaces for elderly relaxation.

The Future of Pocket Parks

Trends in Urban Green Space Development

- **Green Infrastructure:** As cities grow, integrating pocket parks and green infrastructure into urban planning will become increasingly important.
- **Nature-Based Education:** Schools and universities will continue to be key players in creating and using pocket parks as living classrooms.
- **Community-Led Development:** More emphasis will be placed on community-led development, ensuring that green spaces serve the needs of local residents.

(Network Nature)

Conclusion

The Importance of Pocket Parks in Urban Sustainability

- Pocket parks are essential for creating resilient, healthy, and liveable urban environments.
- Through EU-funded projects and community stewardship, pocket parks can significantly contribute to climate change mitigation, social well-being, and sustainable urban planning.
- Students and communities can play a crucial role in ensuring the success and sustainability of these green spaces.



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