Paving the way for a greener, inclusive Halle – Identifying opportunities to support the city's green-blue infrastructure efforts

Notes from City Workshop Halle

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Content

SUMMARY

The first ENABLE City Workshop took place on 15 March 2018 in the City of Halle, Germany, back to back with the annual meeting of all project partners. The workshop saw the participation of 29 participants from the City of Halle, the local university as well as non-governmental organisations active in the field of urban green infrastructure planning and implementation.

The City Workshop in Halle was organised and implemented by the European Secretariat of ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI) as well as the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) with input and support by the Humboldt University Berlin and the Stockholm Resilience Centre – all are ENABLE partners.

The aim of the City Workshop was to make the municipality and other stakeholders aware of the ENABLE project, its potential to support in addressing challenges related to green and blue infrastructure (GBI) in Halle and to exchange on experiences in the other European cities involved in the project. The workshop helped to lay the grounds for a dialogue process between ENABLE, Halle's local government and local stakeholders. It also enabled the ENABLE team to better understand the city's green and blue infrastructure (GBI) activities, policies (particularly the integrated urban development concept and the role of GBI therein), challenges as well as needs.

ENABLE will organise more City Workshops in the other case study cities until the end of 2019.

More information on the project can be found at: http://projectenable.eu/

1. Overview of Agenda

The City Workshop in Halle laid the foundation for a more continuous interaction with the local government throughout the duration of the project. It clarified the objectives of ENABLE as well as the opportunities for the city to receive more locally specific insights into its green and blue infrastructure (GBI) – from evidence on its ecological and social values to planning and design considerations to foster social inclusion and make use of GBI's potential of making a city more resilient towards the impacts of climate change.

The half-day event was kicked off by the ICLEI European Secretariat and IUCN European Regional Office welcoming the participants and setting the scene for the morning.

The coordinator of the ENABLE project from the Stockholm Resilience Centre then introduced the goals, activities and envisaged outputs of the project. A panel discussion with experts from the Municipality of Halle, the University of Halle-Wittenberg and the Humboldt University Berlin as well as on stakeholder engagement outlined the developments of GBI over the past decades, supportive policies in place as well as opportunities for stakeholder engagement in planning GBI. Two subsequent interactive sessions delved deeper into understanding the local policy and planning landscape as well as identifying relevant stakeholders active on GBI.

A second panel discussion with representatives from the Planning Department of Halle as well as two local non-governmental organisations enabled a closer look at the planning process and development of the project's two case studies "Freiimfelde" and "Neutopia". Another round of group discussion then provided the local participants with a better insight into what the ENABLE project can offer.

The detailed agenda of the event can be found in Annex 1.

2. Participants

A total of 29 participants took part in this half-day City Workshop. Amongst them were representatives from different departments of the municipality, local non-governmental organisations, research institutes and the university as well as all ENABLE partners.

The participants list can be found in Annex 2.

3. Part 1: Getting to know each other

The first part of the morning helped the ENABLE project partners to get to know the stakeholders working on or affected by the policy-making on, planning and management of GBI in Halle and vice versa.

3.1 Presentation: The ENABLE project – Goals, activities and envisaged outputs

Erik Andersson presented the goals of ENABLE to all participants. To use the full potential of GBI, local governments have to look beyond merely environmental benefits and ensure that GBI offers benefits to all people and responds to societal challenges. ENABLE explores the boundary conditions, under what circumstances are (or can) the benefits of GBI realised. The project takes a look at five European city regions with different challenges, needs and socio-economic circumstances (i.e. Stockholm, Oslo, Halle, Barcelona and Lodz). The City of New York is studied to relay the European

approaches. In each case study city in-depth-analyses are conducted (e.g. Freiimfelde and Neutopia in Halle). In most cases, the wider region of each city is also taken into account.

ENABLE looks at the various different benefits GBI can offer, who benefits and how that they distributed. The dynamics over time are also an aspect, which the project researchers on. One question is what local governments can do to work towards objectives whilst the (environmental, policy, societal) context changes. ENABLE also aims to advance the understanding of the benefits that can be obtained from GBI and how they can offer solutions to respond to a number of urban challenges.

ENABLE works on three dimensions:

- Perceptions of GBI – that is how people make sense of GBI
- Institutions influencing the planning, implementation and maintenance of GBI – such as the governance of GBI and rights to use land
- Values to GBI – which people relate to GBI and which (thus) feed into the GBI policy development
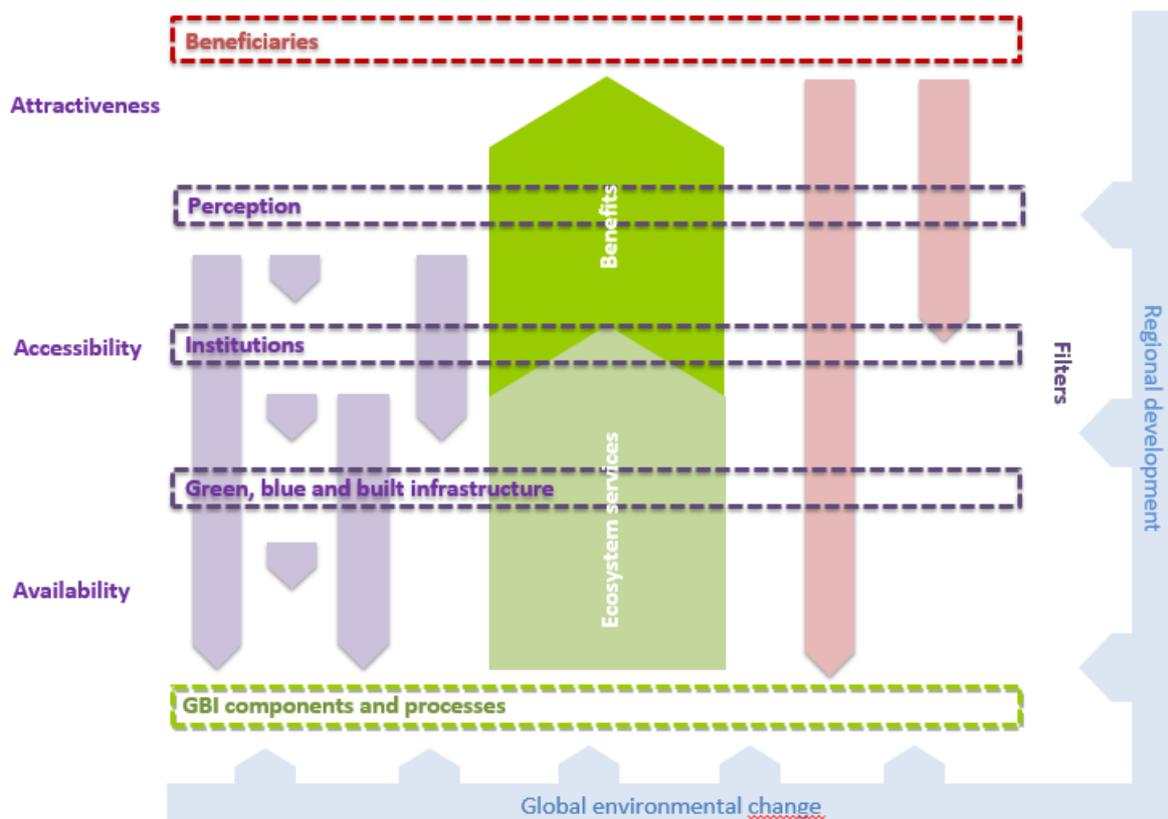

Figure 1: Dimensions of the ENABLE project (Erik Andersson, 2018)

ENABLE works with a wide range of partners, using a multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach and collaborating with the public and private sector in the case studies. It will provide a better understanding how GBI is embedded in the larger city planning and development.

3.2 Panel discussion: Greening Halle – Objectives, policies and activities of the City of Halle

The objectives, policies and activities linked to GBI of or in the City of Halle were explored in a panel discussion with Christiane Lütgert from the Department for Urban Development Funding and Urban Planning Legislation (who is also responsible for the project "Freiimfelde" from the city's side), Jennifer Hauck from CoKnow Consulting – Coproducing Knowledge for Sustainability, Patrick Halka

from the Martin-Luther University Halle-Wittenberg as well as the ENABLE partner Dagmar Haase from the Humboldt University Berlin.

Key points from the discussion were:

On the significance and development of GBI in Halle from the point of view of the municipality:

Saale floodplains and heathland are major ecosystems and the largest green areas, located at the edge of the city. The major challenge for planning for the last 25 years is how to establish a green network. Many projects were initiated to interlink the city's green spaces. The Weinberg meadows are a major example in which former military grounds were transformed. Another connectivity project, is a former railway station area, which was connected to the river, as green corridor and park through the floodplains (and to encourage cycling). These projects show that GBI has mainly been about the transformation of space, i.e. changing the use of areas and using opportunities. It was clear that if there is no pressure for urban development, green development is given space.

On the potential of areas that can be transformed and used as public space in Halle

Large former industrial areas in the city, particularly near the river, have been changed into housing areas. There was the need to protect the river front from becoming private property, ensuring that it remains accessible for public use, which required negotiation. Private investors were necessary for the city, yet requirements had to be issued that they can only develop the area if the stretches along the river remain green and open for public use. The city also bought parts of the river banks to protect this space plus there is legislation in place to ensure that the private developers have to give this area back. These spaces have to be connected to the other city areas via green corridors.

This approach is challenging in the dense city centre, yet the approach of climate resilient planning helps, particularly using measures of green compensation for urban development. Balancing the densification of the already built up city centre with the development of green public spaces to ensure a good quality of living in light of climate change impacts (e.g. the temperatures in the city centre are 10 degrees Celsius higher than in the Saale plains) remains a challenge. The priorities in deciding which green spaces are most important in the city centre lie in promoting social, mobility and climatic benefits, less so environmental and biodiversity benefits. The integration of biological aspects in the inner city development is challenging. Health aspects are essential, particularly when it comes to reducing the urban heat island effect.

GBI offers opportunities for those neighbourhoods in Halle, which have experienced stark shrinkage since reunification. An example is the prefabricated settlement of Silberhöhe, which was the most densely built up settlement in the former GDR with then 40,000 and now 13,000 inhabitants. The neighbourhood's development was dominated by demolition works for many years, before its green spaces were identified as a means to changing the image of the settlement. Silberhöhe hopes to be a 'forest city' soon. While it was too far away from the city centre before to live there, the green space here have helped to make Silberhöhe an attractive place to live again, including for people with low income - especially as the prices of rents are going up in the city.

On the opportunities to engage stakeholders

There have been many good experiences with engaging stakeholders in topics related to sustainable urban development – also within European projects (e.g. GLAMURS project, FP7). Halle has an active transition town initiative and urban gardens, yet such activities are independent from urban development efforts. Generally, the institutional engagement is strong in Halle; next to the administration housing companies are also very active and engaged and easy to work with in comparison to other cities. In light of the small planning department (and its staff capacity being reduced over the past 15 years from 100 to ca. 70 staff), this is not a given.

Engaging citizens in research has been more challenging. Interviewing people and asking them for pictures how they would like to see their green spaces develop from different community groups was

more time consuming than planned and it did not work for all. Getting all people involved in participatory meetings requires a lot of convincing as well, is not easy.

4. Part 2: Taking a closer look at green-blue infrastructure in Halle

In an interactive session the policy landscape as well as the opportunities for stakeholder engagement were discussed.

Key points of the discussions were:

On policy and planning GBI

- GBI is an important driver of Halle's urban development and planning approach
- GBI is mainly dealt with in the environmental and urban planning departments
- GBI has offered the opportunities to deal with a shrinking city, the transformation of brown fields and empty spaces (likely it was possible to implement GBI only in this way due to Halle shrinking and there not being any pressure on space)
- Efforts put into developing GBI have shown positive effects on the development of Halle through renovation work down, new owners and investors coming in and a new demand on construction after decades of shrinkage
- Responsible municipal departments have created green spaces without a solid concept or council resolution in place to "protect" the space, beginning in the 1990s to make a declining environment more attractive, e.g. establishing residential buildings near (not on) green space and linking private green to the city's green network
- Conflicts with transportation planning arise most as traffic needs more and more space, yet collaboration is sought across departments
- There have been no failures related to GBI implementation, but time is essential (e.g. the pathway along the river bank has been worked on for the past 25 years) and it is necessary to define ideas first to then persuade the council
- Third party funding has been essential and it is unclear how the expenses could be covered without national or European funding
- Due to the departments' head-start citizens may have gotten used to the municipality driving transformation, which now makes stakeholder engagement difficult and projects with them so important (often projects have also been driven by people outside of the neighbourhoods' community, e.g. Freiimfelde and Neutopia)
- Halle's seeks support in having the time to clarify and solve the ownership of vacant spaces to further promote the green network of the city as there is often little leeway to use and develop the spaces that contribute to the city's green network when the owners are not clear or unwilling to act; what could be done after a certain period of time with inactive/unwilling owners to be able to develop their vacant spaces?

On stakeholder engagement

- Asking questions and starting the conversation is key
- Key stakeholders in Halle are social housing companies, house owners, universities, citizens

- Some members of society are not engaged in local initiatives: How to connect to them? Do all need to participate/be engaged? Are people interested in green space?
- Whilst citizens are critical for developing GBI, considering the multiple socio-economic challenges, participation in all neighbourhoods is not a priority for everyone
- Involving people with a migration background may work in different ways; taking into account cultural aspects, there is also a difference among age groups and the level of education
- Opportunities for engagement may become clearer after providing information on the value of GBI, for example for flood prevention, improved air quality and health benefits
- Examples of increasing the knowledge and capacity of stakeholders include:
  - In Neutopia, there will be breakfasts for children with food from the local garden with the possible consequence of the children teaching their families about benefits of GBI
  - In Lodz there is a 3rd age university for elderly people, which also focuses on aspects of GBI

5. Part 3: Identifying opportunities for support by ENABLE

5.1 Learning from Neutopia and Freiimfelde to promote GBI across the city – First insights from bringing the ENABLE research together with local stakeholders' agendas

Christiane Lütgert provided an overview of the development of Freiimfelde, one of the two case study areas of ENABLE.

Freiimfelde is a project driven by a few citizen and its inhabitants, which makes it different from many other city projects. Freiimfelde is divided into two parts: there are living flats on the west side from the 60's and – separated by a large road and a tram line – there are houses from the turn of the century on the other side – next to the railways. There was also a slaughterhouse, which was broken down in 1991, many people lost their jobs. People never liked the area, which made for a difficult start of the original art project.

In Freiimfelde it was not clear what to do for a long time. The national funding source "Stadtumbau Ost" could not be used as the targets were not clear. A vacancy rate of 60% still in 2005 led to many buildings being in a bad shape and many of their owners also did not live in Halle.

In 2012, Henrik von Bussel, student from Dortmund University looked for the emptiest in all of Germany and luckily Freiimfelde won. At that time the local government was not pleased with this. They initiators started with three street art festivals to prove that you can change areas with urban art. They involved the inhabitants, yet not all were interested, as they had the feeling they were forgotten by the local government. That made participation more complicated in comparison to other neighbourhoods.

Following the positive effects of the large scale street art on the houses in Freiimfelde, the inhabitants came to the municipality in 2015, asking for a planning concept for their area like ones all other districts of the city had. The residents decided to develop this concept themselves and the city supported the "Freiraumgalerie" (open air gallery) to organize meetings and establish connections.

Two large scale ideas currently – and funded by a national programme "GreenUrbanLabs" across a number of German cities – to establish a "Bürgerpark" (citizen park) and to use parts of a brownfield north of the park's area as an "edible food forest" – funded by a compensation scheme by the German railway company. A twice-yearly festival with different activities such as green wall design with artistic ideas and green spaces design will help showcase the many different ways of combing greening the city with art and engagement.

Main points discussed were (with input by Christiane Lütgert, Johana Ludwig from the projects "Neutopia" and "ARBEITsPLATTE"and Jennifer Hauck):

On continuous maintenance and stakeholder involvement over time

City has to accept that initiatives break down. While this is not ideal, it will not change the area if the concept behind the activities is strong. The area planned for the citizen park will be turned into a green space – even if it 'only' becomes a meadow. In the best case, the inhabitants take on the responsibility of shaping the area and city tries to support them.

After long discussions, the owner is willing to take part in the project, and the space is being designed as an urban food forest. The railway company will fund parts of the project as in line with spatial compensation requirements. The municipality provides support with 150,000 EUR, whilst 300,000 EUR come from the Montagsstiftung (Monday Foundation), linked to specific stipulations. The soil has to be cleaned up, which cannot be financed with government budget, so the nature conservation budget is providing financial resources. Yet, further funding is still needed.

On dependency on third party funding to realise GBI

City is dependent on third party funding at national or European level, e.g. the Green Urban Labs project. City needs to put 'puzzle' of funding sources together in line with city's strategy on developing GBI.

On developing the GBI strategy of Halle

Planning process often does not allow to make GBI a main topic, it always becomes more complicated with private ownership of spaces, the advantage of Freiimfeld and Halle Neustadt, in a growing city, there is space to use for green and urban gardening. This could be the starting point for other types of housing and living projects.

On connecting the Freiimfelde and Neutopia projects

Neutopia can only work if the area is given support by the city and the materials for the garden are given by the municipality. Street artists also came to Halle-Neustadt, where Neutopia is located, to explore the possibilities of the area becoming part of the nationally funded Zukunfts-stadt programme. A first mural has been painted with more to come, the idea being to recreate GDR art. The participatory approach in both neighbourhoods connects the projects. The paintings in help to open minds and make people talk in both parts of town, bringing ideas from one area to the other. Shaping the public space interests many and provides the entry point to talk about other issues with art, however, being a key topic in the local discussions. Such participatory projects show that GBI is often a result of these processes rather than an instigator. A city-wide garden network also holds meetings regularly to share ideas, discuss how to access funding, etc. This provide another way for both projects to connect.

5.2 Discussing the support ENABLE can offer

A second interactive session built on the discussion on Halle's needs to establish how the ENABLE project can offer support to the city within the context of its research work (incl. work in Barcelona, Lodz, Stockholm and Oslo) and helped to identify windows of opportunity to collaborate.

Halle voiced that there is a need to strengthen the biodiversity of its green spaces. Biodiversity is an important argument for more green spaces, yet it is a topic, which is difficult to discuss and raise

awareness on. After many years of work, climate change is perceived as a strong argument, as are health and flooding – all of which resonate well with citizens. The city of Lodz faces similar challenges with biodiversity being low in the list of the many priorities of urban development.

The development of scenarios would help if the different scenarios could be integrated with the priorities of the city and the benefits of GBI visualised for specific areas (e.g. recreational benefits). Scenarios could also support decision-making more, particularly if the values of GBI can be quantified. The most densely built up areas of Halle are those in need of green spaces, yet here the discussion is also very complex and long. Solid arguments would provide a better base for discussion and making decisions on GBI with the citizens. The different options of a resilient city and implementing it, can be visualized in scenarios, related to values. This is something the Halle team will test and support.

The ENABLE project could also provide more information on the accessibility of green spaces. One of the problems with participation in Neutopia is, for example, that people do not feel encouraged to use the gardens, are afraid of the produce being stolen and being granted (or not) the right to use them. Studying these barriers could help to enhance the use of green spaces in Halle.

It became clear that Halle and Lodz have many common features in relation to GBI, the built space and the use of street art. Both cities could exchange on improving the quality of GBI, the flow between them and engagement processes. Such an exchange between these two case studies would be very valuable. The ENABLE partner will explore whether the participation of Halle stakeholders at the next annual partner meeting in March 2019 in Lodz is a possibility.

Annex 1 – Agenda of Halle City Workshop

ENABLE City Workshop Halle
Paving the way for a greener, inclusive Halle – Identifying opportunities to support the city's green-blue infrastructure efforts

14 March 2018

Institute for Geosciences and Geography
Department Sustainable Landscape Development
Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg
Von-Seckendorff-Platz 4
06120 Halle, Germany
Rooms: SR4 3.40 and SR4 3.21

Objective: The ENABLE project invites the City of Halle to present its Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) policies and activities with a particular focus on the projects Freiimfelde as well as Neutopia. This workshop should help identify how the ENABLE project through its research work and insights from five other cities can provide input to tackling the city's challenges and needs with regards to GBI.

08:45	*Registration and coffee/tea*
09:15	**Welcome and introduction to day**
09:25	**Part 1: Getting to know each other**
09:25	**The ENABLE project – Goals, activities and envisaged outputs** > Presentation: Erik Andersson | Associate Professor and ENABLE coordinator, Stockholm Resilience Centre (Sweden)
09:35	**Greening Halle – Objectives, policies and activities of the City of Halle** Panel discussion with (tbc): > Christiane Lütgert | Department for Urban Development Funding and Urban Planning Legislation and project "Freiimfelde" > Jennifer Hauck | CoKnow Consulting – Coproducing Knowledge for Sustainability > Patrick Halka | Martin-Luther University Halle > Dagmar Haase | Professor of Landscape Ecology and Biogeography, Humboldt University Berlin
10:00	**Part 2: Taking a closer look at green-blue infrastructure in Halle**
10:00	**Interactive session 1** Objective: Getting a clearer picture of Halle's priorities and challenges in planning and implementing green-blue infrastructure as well as its opportunities and approaches to engage citizens, companies, organisations and other stakeholders in creating and maintaining GBI.
10:30	*Coffee/tea break*
11:00	**Reporting back to plenary and discussion on main needs to better plan and implement GBI**
11:20	**Part 3: Identifying opportunities for support by ENABLE**
11:20	**Learning from Neutopia and Freiimfelde to promote GBI across the city – First insights from bringing the ENABLE research together with local stakeholders' agendas**

	> Presentation: Christiane Lütgert | Department for Urban Development Funding and Urban Planning Legislation and project "Freiimfelde" Panel discussion with: > Christiane Lütgert > Johanna Ludwig | Project "Neutopia" and "ARBEITsPLATTE" project > Dagmar Haase
11:50	**Interactive session 2** <u>Objective</u>: Building on discussion on Halle's needs to establish how the ENABLE project can offer support to the city within the context of its research work (incl. work in Barcelona, Lodz, Stockholm and Oslo) and identify windows of opportunity to collaborate
12:50	**Wrap up and next steps** > Dagmar Haase | Humboldt University Berlin
13:00	*Lunch in Heidemensa canteen*