

# Climate change platform / Case study / Improving courtyard gardens

## How the problem was approached

We contacted an existing NGO, Belső kertek csoport (Courtyard Garden Group), which was formed in the 13th district of Budapest, with the goal of creating green spaces instead of the pavement inside the blocks. Their first festival was organised in May 2015, where the participants were informed about grants available for condominiums, and were able to connect with successful inner garden owners.

The whole group took part in a visit of selected courtyard gardens in downtown Budapest. During the visit, we had the chance to talk to members of the community, and collected information about their initiative, obstacles and solutions.

The group worked together on a Prezi which collected the best examples, initiatives, obstacles and solutions, which would be an online tool for future project owners. This animated presentation would be helpful to support the activities of the Courtyard Garden Group.

Taking advantage of experience from Budapest, we presented the project to Timisoara Municipality, and they proposed working together to write a set of guidelines about inner gardens. We were introduced to Kratima Association which is developing a project on the restoration of the main entrance gates of the historical buildings in Timisoara. They proposed creating green areas in the courtyard of the building they are currently working on.



From grey to green



From concrete to gardens



From individuals to community

## Low carbon relevance

Climate change is one of the most serious environmental issues faced by cities today, affecting their residents, and posing a serious threats to quality of life.

Inner courtyards have great potential to adapt effects of climate change. These are common in Budapest, especially in the inner historical city centre. Interestingly, these districts also lack public and green spaces, so these courtyards are increasing the heat island effect in the city when they could be reducing it.

The main goal of the project is to help communities to save these abandoned spaces and to convert them to new, liveable green spaces.

We approached this problem from different aspects: environmental, social, technical, financial, as the these new green areas can have various benefits:

- Increasing green space in cities;
- Increasing the capacity for water infiltration and storage;
- Creating a more pleasant environment, increase health benefit;
- Long-term goal: creating environmentally responsible society.

## Conclusions

Small initiatives like courtyard gardens could make big differences in communities' life. They are a smart adaptation measure to climate change, if not a panacea.

### Green spaces are multifunctional:

**Environmental** – The courtyard gardens have the potential to be transformed into community green spaces to reduce the heat island effect, to increase the capacity for water infiltration and water storage and to provide a soothing environment.

**Social and recreational** – The courtyard gardens have the ability to provide spaces for social interaction, to create a sustainable and responsible community.

**Financial** - The courtyard gardens can increase the value of the property.

Existing initiatives are just the first piece of a bigger project whose aim is to create a platform where different stakeholders could share information in order to identify and fix problems related to climate change. The platform can inform people why and how to solve a problem, why and where to ask for information, how and where to apply for funding. Online platforms make easy access for the information, but offline communities change the world.

“These districts also lack public and green spaces, so these courtyards are increasing the heat island effect in the city when they could be reducing it”



## Central Hungary

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