Allotment Gardens and their contribution to a healthy city

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Patrick Oehler & Timo Huber

Photo: Krista Willman
Empirical Basis: Research Project “Allotment Garden Communities and their contribution to neighborhood development”

• Research interests: understanding the connection between allotment garden communities, current transformations and their role in neighborhood development

• running time of two years (February 2015 – January 2017)

• 2 Allotment Garden sites (Basel & Bern)

• ethnographical & qualitative research approach:
  • in-field observations and in-field conversations with plot-holders
  • expert interviews (community and neighborhood development, planning officials and other representatives of the administration, social workers and civil society organizations)
  • group interviews with committee members
Current situation of Allotment Garden(er)s in Switzerland

Urban Gardens / traditional Allotment Gardens:

- Urban Gardening has become a new popularity in many cities in Europe and furthermore
- Traditional Allotment Gardens are increasingly being pressured by political-administrative urban development policies, because of:
  - perceived land shortage
  - “fight” for urban green spaces
  - request to reuse parts of allotment garden land for housing projects or re-develop them for wider public goods such as public parks or open structured green spaces

Photo: Nicola Thomas
Potentials of Allotment Gardens

- creative potential in an urban context
- relevant for local action
- knowledge gain about sustainable and environmental issues cultivating plants
- contribution to environmental awareness
- potential for generating mixing between different cultural and social groups

Photo: Timo Huber
Allotment Gardens & Health

- local & sustainable food production
- physical & mental recreation & regeneration
- Physical activity
- air quality
- self-realization & contentment
Conclusion for Designing the urban environment for health and well-being:

- Take care to grown and good working social worlds (recognition)
- Pursue a multidimensional outlook and approach (sustainability)
- Organize urban development democratically, that means in dialogue with all relevant people (result open process)
Thank you for your attention!

Contact:
patrick.oehler@fhnw.ch
timo.huber@fhnw.ch