

PARCKFARM, Brussels



Main theme	Capacity building/ Co-production / Empowerment
Year	2014 - ongoing
Budget	Design Budget (ex. BTW): € 205.400,- Execution Budget (ex. BTW): € 39.500,- NPO financed 50 000€/year
Initiator	Parckfarm was initiated by Bruxelles Environnement (public service responsible for the environment and energy in the Brussels-Capital Region) within the frame of a festival called Parckdesign.
Summary of the project	<p>The site was a former commercial train station (XIX s) and served as a custom house. The creation of European institutions made the custom house unnecessary and the site is abandoned. In 2000 private promoter buy the land but it stays vacant until 2014. In 2014, the Biennale "Parkdesign": parckfarm "du paysage à l'assiette" promotes participatory planning of the green public space, with special attention to creativity and artistic practices. The development would only last for one summer but due to its success it is still present.</p> <p>Curators were chosen too co-coordinate the festival. The challenged the site as it was a spatial, social and economic border condition. During their observations, the curator discovered an impressive network of local actors that contributed to turn the edges of this wasteland into collective gardens, animal farms and a pigeon shelter. Their proposition aimed to support these existing informal practices at the scale of the park Thurn & Taxis.</p> <p>The curators set up a public open call for pluridisciplinary teams formed by a designer, a local actor and a regional farmer to realize and activate the Parckfarm around relevant topics. Each team was invited to propose and co-produce an active installation and to organize several events on the site and beyond. A jury of experts evaluated the projects and consciously selected propositions upon their capacity to achieve a successful & durational contribution to the park in the making.</p> <p>They started up a monthly meeting at the Café Pannenhuis. Also, several mobile devices were built to make the project radiate beyond the neighborhood. The collective Rirbaucout built the Farmtruck, the mobile part of Parckfarm. It acts as an instrument to interact with the Brussels population and to share the festival.</p> <p>Different projects came to live during the festival: a farmhouse, vegetables gardens, a bread oven, a henhouse, an orchard.. Still, the project was</p>

	<p>considered as an outstander in the neighborhood because it attracted users from all over Brussels, Belgium and from abroad and became less social. It was difficult to involve the inhabitants of the surrounding neighborhoods, a difficult quarter with a low socio- economic profile. Nevertheless, some inhabitants thought it was a shame to waste all this effort made during 3 months and wanted to make the project last. Therefore, they created a non-profit association and Bruxelles Environnement decided to finance the NPO for 50 000€/year with no certainty for its permanent character... 5 years later the project is still standing.</p>
<p>Methods/tools</p>	<p>A NPO was created in order to maintain the project on a longer term. Since then it has been restructured and new people were hired. Its main objective is to have a project for and by the citizens, a sort of laboratory where social projects are tested. The project evolve in time, sometimes they work, sometimes not but the most important is to create social links true the projects and to involve all type of publics. Tree people work half time for the NPO, functioning with the subsidies of Bruxelles Environnement: one coordinator, one managing the activities and one managing the greenhouse. The rest works with volunteers; 150 are subscribed but only 20 are really involved. This because it takes time to involve citizens, to convince them of the project. The organized activities provide some extra incomes but not enough to become completely independent.</p> <p>The relationship with Bruxelles Environnement works with meetings and reports but also trust and good understanding. The administration is not part of the Support Committee who is only composed by 6 inhabitants.</p> <p>Parckfarm's role and values have environmental and social components: support for sustainable food, promotion of urban agriculture, valuation and awareness of biodiversity, raising awareness of a change in practices and consumption patterns, stimulating meetings between the inhabitants, strengthening social links, promoting sustainable and supportive lifestyles in urban areas.</p>
<p>Keys</p>	<p>During the first years of the NPO, the difficulty was to reintegrate the project in the neighborhood's context. Bruxelles Environnement decided to reorient the project towards social objectives. Therefore, the NPO, the practiced prices and the project itself were adapted in order to involve more inhabitants of the surrounding neighborhood's. This was not easy knowing that it takes them time and energy but it was finally made possible and inhabitants are now learning healthy food approaches. The NPO and Bruxelles Environnement work closely together regarding the management of the site, when problems occurs they try to solve it together in the most human way.</p>
<p>Results</p>	<p>Today, the park is composed by different little projects/activities all managed by volunteers. The coordination of all activities and the farmhouse (hart of the project) is assured by the NPO.</p>

	All activities participate to the liveness of the site and work as a real meeting place for the inhabitants.
Sources	www.parckfarm.be