Creating sustainable (city)green; a framework for community projects (80)

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A critical reflection on community-based research projects, has learned that despite the great diversity in such projects, the basic elements are often similar. This notion made it possible to develop a framework for working with communities on (city)green projects. This framework consists of an overall governance structure in which the following aspects all have its place: a pro-active attitude, coalition forming (between communities, municipalities and other stakeholders), conflict management, interventions, managing the internal organisation, integral development and expectation management. All these aspects are related; gaining insight into how these aspects and their relations work in a specific situation make it possible to create sustainable solutions for neighbourhood questions. This model has been deducted from several Wageningen University Science Shop projects with multiple stakeholders in the domain of rural and urban landscapes with at first sight often conflicting interests. The model creates awareness of the many aspects an actor in such situations has to pay attention to in order to operate successfully, with respect to both ecological and social goals. It stimulates actors to integrate different stakes in one plan. We will illustrate this with two case studies of interventions of Wageningen University Science Shop. The first case resulted in an integrated rural development plan for a former mining area in the south of the Netherlands, the second in a plan for city gardening in the city of Utrecht which was beneficiary for many stakeholders. In both cases the capacities of local groups, students, researchers and teachers were combined. This process not only led to knowledge development, but also to capacity building and empowerment. In fact, the latter was the most important aim of the intervention. This paper is based on a book: Communities creating (city) green (2012, in Dutch: Bewoners maken het groen). Often, interventions such as those of the science shop are of vital importance, but the insights of the book make it easier for communities to find their own sustainable solutions.