



Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences

Urban Activity Park in Gjilan, Kosova

– Green space for meetings, experience and recreation

Labeat Bickaj

Examensarbete inom Hållbar stadsutveckling- ledning, organisering
och förvaltning
Självständigt arbete vid LTJ-fakulteten
Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet, Alnarp
2014

Urban Activity Park in Gjilan, Kosova- Green space for meeting, experience and recreations.

Titel svenska: Urban aktivitetspark i Gjilan, Kosova- Gröna rum för möten, upplevelser och rekreation

Författare: Labeat Bickaj

Handledare: Caroline Hägerhäll, SLU instutionen för arbetsvetenskap, ekonomi och miljöpsykologi

Examinator: Gunilla Lindholm, SLU instutionen för arbetsvetenskap, ekonomi och miljöpsykologi

Btr handledare: Mats Gyllin, SLU instutionen för arbetsvetenskap, ekonomi och miljöpsykologi

Externa handledare: Ilir Gjinolli, University of Prishtina- Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Urban +, President for European Kosovo

Omfattning: 30hp

Nivå och fördjupning: A2E

Kurstitel: Självständigt arbete i landskapsarkitektur

Kurskod: EX0760

Ämne: Landskapsarkitektur

Program/utbildning: Hållbar stadsutveckling- ledning, organisering och förvaltning

Utgivningort: Alnarp

Utgivningsmånad och år: December 2014

Elektronisk publicering: <http://stud.epsilon.slu.se>

Nyckelord: Public spaces, places, design, urban, Gjilan, Kosovo

Key words: Public spaces, places, design, urban, Gjilan, Kosovo

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- BACKGROUND 5
- GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 5
- BOUNDARIES 5
- METHOD, LITTERATURE STUDIES 5
- METHOD, OBSERVATION 5
- METHOD, DESIGN 6
- WORK PROCESS 6

PUBLIC SPACES

- WHAT IS PUBLIC SPACE 8
- THE REVOLUTION OF PUBLIC LIFE STUDIES 10
- NEEDS IN PUBLIC SPACE 10
- THREE TYPES OF PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITIES 10
- QUALITY OF PUBLIC SPACE 11
- FOUR QUALITIES OF A SUCCESSFUL PLACE 11
- THE DIFFERENT USERS 12

PUBLIC PARKS

- PARK CHARACTERS 14

DESIGN ASPECTS

- POSSIBILITY TO SEE/DISTANCE AND LOCATION 16
- POSSIBILITY TO SIT 16
- POSSIBILITY TO HEAR 16
- CLIMATE 16
- ACCEBILITY OF MOVEMENT AND STAY 16
- DIVERSITY AND VARIATION 16
- SAFETY 16
- ENTRIES 16
- SPATIAL SHAPES 17

CASE STUDY

- KOSOVA – GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS 19
- THE URBANIZED KOSOVA 20
- PLANNING IN TRANSITION 20
- GJILAN – GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS 21
- OBSERVATION 1- UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE’S NEEDS AND BEHAVIOR IN THE CITY OF GJILAN 22
- THREE MOST USEFUL PLACES IN CITY 22
- ENTERTAINMENT IN GJILAN 22
- SPORTS AND MAIN ACTIVITIES 22
- CITY CENTER PARK OBSERVATION 23
- HOW DOES THE PROPOSAL AREA LOOK LIKE TODAY? 26
- HOW DID THE RIVER LOOK LIKE BEFORE? 27

PROPOSAL

- THE CONCEPT AND INSPIRATION 29
- PROPOSAL- URBAN ACTIVITY PARK IN GJILAN, KOSOVO 30
- PROPOSAL, SUBAREA WEST 31
- PROPOSAL, SUBAREA EAST 32
- CONCEPT SKETCHES 33

REFERENCES 34

1

2

3

Background

Urbanization is a powerful global trend. Today, over half the world's population lives in cities and within a few decades estimated that 70 percent of the world population will be urban dwellers (UN 2005). Along with urbanization we need smart ways to meet human needs with a better quality of life. That the city can offer an attractive living environment is therefore of great importance to the city's ability to attract both residents and businesses. As cities grow, develop and become denser, the public spaces become important to bring people with both similar and different interests together. Public spaces such as green and blue areas in the city are seen as positive for all three components of sustainability, economic, social and ecological (Jansson, M. 2012). The values created by these places support that people are happier, less stressed, feel better physically and mentally, feel more connected with others, experience security and creativity and that the climate of the city is improved and contains greater biodiversity. All this means that fewer resources need to be put on technical solutions or medical institutions.

Urbanization is also a big trend in Kosova. A housing boom in Kosova began to flourish after the war in 1999, because of people seeking better life quality in cities. Many multistory apartments and blocks had just began to rise, in other site few took parks, public spaces and recreation areas into consideration, they were pushed outside and forgotten. There was some fine public parks from the old times, but they were not enough to keep up with population grown and urbanization.

During the end of 2013 I visited Kosova, I saw the lack of development in almost all branches that has to do with urban planning and it was then I got my eyes opened. I decided to do my thesis in the newborn country of Kosova and contribute with some of what I have learn during my studies in Sweden. The idea of the thesis was established in January after a meeting and discussion with the professor and urban planner/architect Ilir Gjinolli. He mentioned an ongoing project of an undeveloped area in the city of Gjilan were also a park of 6.5hectar is going to be made in the future. The vision of this area is to build and develop an entirely new neighborhood with a mixture of apartments, workplaces, cultural attractions, a new school and a new city park. The park area consists mainly of wild meadows, few available trees and piles of bricks, concrete and other used construction debris. The time to start creating a new and regenerated parks, is at the very beginning of the process of change.

Goals and objectives

The goal of the work is to highlight and raise awareness of the green public space function side by side with public life, as a meeting place that must satisfy and meet the needs and interest of the citizens in Gjilan and Kosova. The idea is to understand the interests, uses and needs of the people in Gjilan and especially in an already existing park. Therefore good and bad examples can stand as evidence of the best that can be achieved in a new city park.

The aims of thesis are:

How can the meeting places in a green public place contribute to creating a social sustainable and attractive city and how should they be designed?

What types of activities are needed to best fulfil the needs of Gjilans citizens? How is the actual city center park used?

This knowledge is used to make a proposal for the development of a non-existent green belt and to turn it into an activity and recreation area.

Boundaries

The main focus of literature is the public spaces and parks as one part of the various public rooms. Literature has been limited to involve meeting places and the public life and quality of those. Some literature and design aspects are not included into the proposal because the need of more time to deliver a detailed planning like elevation or technical documents. But the idea behind literature and aspects of the thesis are also intended to arouse attention among urban planners and architects in Kosovo when it comes to planning and design of public spaces.

This thesis focuses on studying and understanding the basic problem of how people of Gjilan experience and use public spaces and capture the main needs through observations and analysis. The observations and analysis have been focused on the most fundamental aspects, such as where people prefer to move and stay and what the most important needs are. Urban space and urban life changes over time so the observation and analysis has been limited to the existing situation of the city center and park. Observations could not be done on the existing area where the proposal is taking place because it contains nothing more than an abandoned place where the eye cannot see more than a few trees and houses and where the ground is covered with weeds.

The final product consists of an illustration plan with some single details that enhances the overall proposal and no elevation or technical documents are included in the work. Proposal is based on the literature, observations and analysis.

Method, literature studies

The methods I chose to work with are literature review, observations of the city and the existing city park and from these give a proposal of a new city park.

The literature which laid the basics for the entire work was concentrated on the public spaces and life, related to people's needs, desires and interests. To answer the question of how places are experienced and why they are so successful the research on people's behaviors and experiences related to outdoor environment was also relevant.

Which literature to work with was clear to me right from the beginning when the idea of writing about public spaces was obvious. Matthew Carmona and Steve Tiesdell 2007 book Urban Design Reader, helped me a lot during the work, and Jan Gehl books and articles that I had available at home. SLU database and Epsilon, were also helpful and the used keywords were public spaces, public life, public parks. In one way or another I collected all the literature that seemed relevant to my thesis, from these sources. Professor Ilir Gjinolli also gave me many good suggestions of books to read already in the first meeting in January 2014.

About the general characteristics of Kosova and Gjilan, I used the sources by Kosovo Agency of Statistics 2012, Better cities for Kosovo UN-Habitat & SIDA, 2010.

Municipality Assembly of Gjilan 2008: Urban Development Plan of Gjilan 2006-2015+.

A search for relevant literature was required to summarize the main points that would affect the thesis. Chronologically most of the time was arranged by searching and review of literature.

Method, observation

To understand people's needs and use of outdoor space/parks in the city of Gjilan it was required to go out and see how people use public spaces and which places that attract them most. The observation was divided into two parts. First I made an overall analysis of the city in order to understand people's leisure habits, find the main attractions, and see how they move in the public sphere and what their needs are. Second part of the observation is more detailed and was made on the existing city park to see how and by whom it is used the most, what activities are available, the quality of the park and most important was to catch people's needs.

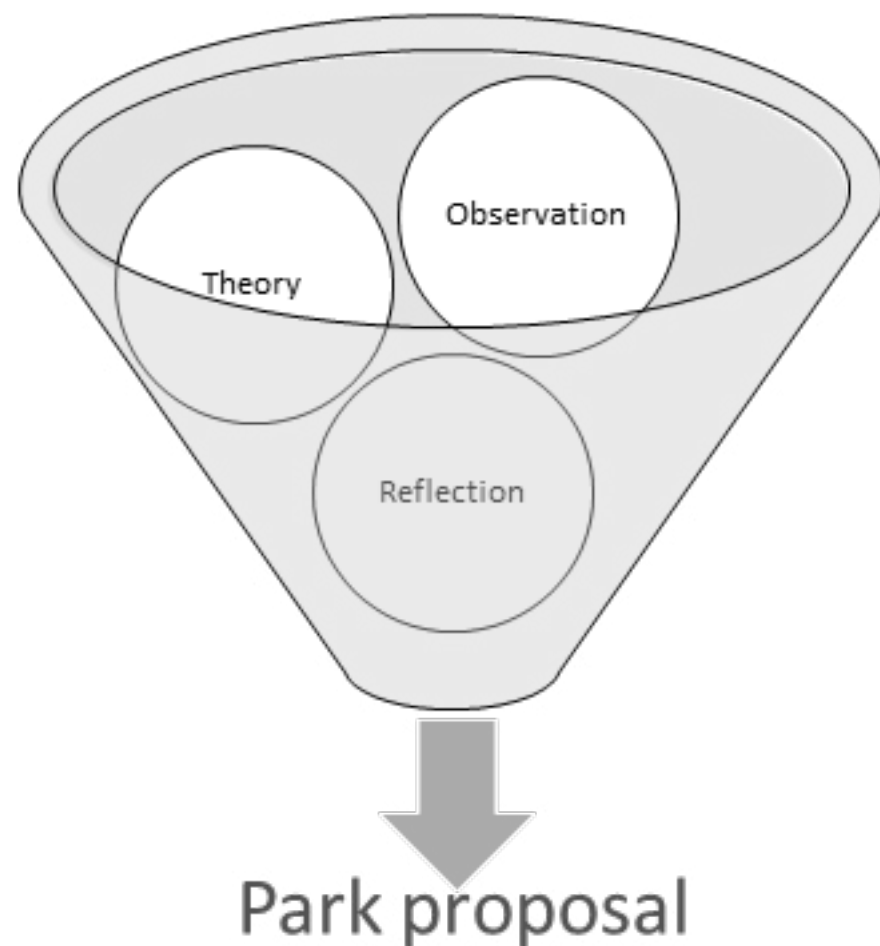
The observations were made on several occasions during the day, the week and month. The procedure of the observation was to walk, sit and watch while photographing and taking notes. One advantage was that I lived near the city center and got to experience most of the things that people themselves experiences in Gjilan. This facilitated my observation and I had the opportunity to see these places and people every day and I was one of them, except for that my camera and notebook made a difference between me and them. When I lived among these spaces and people for almost five months I got a broad picture of how the city and the life within it works.

Methods, Design

The design is based on literature studies and the observations of both the city and the existing city park. In early stage in parallel with the literature review and observation I sketched on different fundamental ideas. During the design I was concentrated on two tasks how to integrate the different activities with each other nearby the small river and the second one was to provide a space for both greenery area and a rich activity life. The idea of how to locate the functions and how to integrate different activities came from Jan Gehls book *Life Between buildings* (2006) where he uses four different opposites' forces to describe and analyze spatial shapes. The illustrated figure in Gehls book showing how a place can be opened up to its surrounding gave me the idea of making the design based on an organic shape where the tranquility of the park meets the activity life. Following the observation helped me to define the needs of activities of different people in Gjilan.

The second idea took place after reading Alan Tates book, *Great city parks* (2001) where he describes different city park for example Central Park in New York, who was design by the great landscape architect, Fredrick Law Olmstead. The main design aspect of the Central park in New York was the parkways who serve as a spine, where residents could travel or promenade through the park that shared a feeling of greenery and at same time promoted social activities.

Work process



[illegible]

WHAT IS PUBLIC SPACE

When we move through the city, we are inevitably in the public space. This room, that everyone is thought to have access to, is one of the city's most basic elements. Public spaces are all around us, an important part of everyday life. The streets we pass for different needs, the places where children play, the city parks where we encounter the nature and need of transition from the world of work to that of leisure, the traditional city streets, alleys, squares, pedestrian and cycling paths and so on. In other words, public space is our common outdoor living room. Today's public spaces are very dense and diverse. Being on this urban environment is an important social function for us humans. These various urban spaces has a constant flow of people where many get into it to fill their various purposes. City life is exciting and very unpredictable in terms of random events. People who have never met before can, through a few moments open a new and close contact. The meeting may turn a stranger into a friend. Places where different people can come together and share experiences in the public environment is important in order to build a tolerant, well integrated society. These open public places must satisfy many different people's needs. A socially sustainable outdoor environment needs to offer play environment, meeting places, views, comfort, relax etc. The key to an outdoor environment that contributes to social sustainability is that it offers different types of outdoor activities (Gehl, 1996).

Figure 1. Illustration by Labeat Bickaj

Public space, part of the built environment that is accessible to the public, including streets and passageways, malls, squares and parks.

(Swedish National Encyclopedia, 2014, Electronic)

“When we think of great cities, we invariably think of their public spaces: avenues, boulevards, streets, bridges, rivers, squares, parks, gardens, playgrounds, public buildings”

(UN-HABITAT, 2011, p20)

*“Our common living room?
The city’s public space is our common living room. There should be opportunities to take initiative and carry out activities. Everyone has the right to the city’s outdoor environment regardless of the need and circumstances. A good city is a human city”*
(Movium, 2014, Electronic, p1)

Urban places are the common ground where people carry out the functional and ritual activities and play an important role of binding the community.

(Carr et al, 1992 cited in Madanipour 1996, p146)

THE REVOLUTION OF PUBLIC LIFE STUDIES

If we want to have a discussion of public space, we should talk about public life first. There is a close relationship between outdoor life and people's demand for communication. Cities and planners should not focus on public spaces, but on people's behavior because public spaces are built for people, after all.

Before 60's life had been largely designed and constructed out of the cities, and people like Jane Jacobs, Jan Gehl, Christopher Alexander and William H. Whyte criticized this new modern city planning concept that had forgotten the life of people. They wanted to bring back the life in the planning process and to rebuild it from the ground up. (Gehl et al, 2013 p.47) Human needs are universal and it's like Jan Gehl has investigated since the 60's through mapping human activities in the public sphere. Also Jane Jacobs wrote in 1961 about what she observed in her quarter and streets and pointed out the problems with the new car oriented society with high buildings and open urban structure that La Corbusier preached about. Jacobs focused more on the problems and didn't provide tools for systematizing observations like William H. Whyte, Jan Gehl etc. (Gehl et al, 2013 p.47) The way Gehl approach studying and planning environments always starts with people, how they walk, the time they spend in the public spaces, how they move, see, hear and what they need in the public places.

We have different types of needs. We have social needs to be with other people. But we also have quite physical needs, we need to be stimulated. We need to be visually stimulated, sensory stimulated, to walk down the street and smell the bakery on the corner, to see the flowers the trees. We must plan, given what we see, how slow we go and how we can be invited to take part in city life.

NEEDS IN PUBLIC SPACE

"It is important to examine needs, not only because they explain the use of places but also because use is important to success. Places that do not meet people's needs or that serve no important functions for people will be underused and unsuccessful."

(Carmona et al, 2007 p. 231)

One of the most important parts in urban planning is to define the needs, preferences, and expected experiences of people who will use the park. An inability to meet these needs is one major reason that many urban open spaces fail (Carr et al., 1992).

The Anthology Urban Design Reader aims to provide a holistic view of the complex work of urban design (Carmona et al, 2007). Different authors describe the concepts, theories and research of public spaces based in both theory and practice.

The book identify five basic human needs that influence the appeal a certain public space has on us. As humans we seek comfort, relaxation, passive engagement, active engagement, and discovery in public space.

The authors addresses the human needs that a public space must satisfy to make it successful and clarifies the significance of the human perspective in relation to the public spaces. It is essential to understand the role that those

places play in people's lives and to understand that the physical attributes and social ones are interrelated. According to Carmona et al, (2007) the human needs of public spaces are described as follows:

Comfort: Comfort is a basic need for a public place to be successful. In the public places we all seek after something that satisfies our need, for example a place to sit and rest when tired, the need for food, drink, relief from sun or access to sun. Comfort refers to the convenience or welfare a place provides. An indicator of comfort is how long people staying in a location which in turn may depend on how well the place is protected from sun and wind, or on how comfortable the seating is.

Relax: Public places that includes trees, water elements or seclusion from traffic makes it easier to relax and find means of relaxation, the best place to find relaxation is city parks. Sitting on the grass, enjoying the weather, the flowers and the vegetation is highly valued. It is important to know that not all spaces should be designed and managed with only this in mind. Some places should accommodate people who seek liveliness and engagement with the city and its people.

Passive and active engagement: What attract people most in public places is other people. Passive engagement can be when people watch someone or something for example performances, parades, looking at a basketball match or just sitting by the path and looking at other people. Opportunities for passive engagement are provided by fountains, views, public art, performances, and so on. Active participation is a direct experience between people and place. Successful places offer more varied degrees of participation and space for those who do not want to participate. The social connection is highly recommended here, to create links between people by arranging benches, elements, sculptures and cafes. Interaction occurs spontaneously, where there are something interesting going on. For providing a link between people and promoting strangers to talk to each other, the designer should think about the shape of the public place for example triangle or circular. (Carmona et al, 2007 p.234).

Discovery: People also want to be able to explore the environment by variation, change and experience and seek sometimes something that deviates from the routine and the expected.

It can be concerts, art exhibits, street theaters, festivals, markets or other social events.

THREE TYPES OF PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITIES

To describe life in city spaces Jan Gehl indicates that outdoor activities can be divided into three categories, necessary activities, optional activities and social activities (Gehl, 2006 p.9-12).

Necessary activities are all the activities that the vast majority of people had to perform, such as wait for the bus, walking to school, biking to work, shopping, doing errands, stand to wait etc. It is mainly the daily activities that belong to this group. Because this group of activities are just necessary, it is affected very little by the physical environment. These activities occur throughout the year, whatever the weather, as there is no choice.



Optional activities are activities that you do if you feel like it, and if the weather and the place invites you to it. This kind of activities include below: going for a walk to see what happens out there, or sit by a warm bench, sunbathing. This group of activities is entirely dependent on the design of the outdoor environment and when the external circumstances are especially good. Even the weather can be a main factor. The majority of all the recreational activities that you do outdoors is included in this group.



Social activities are usually a result of activities that occur spontaneously when you are out and do some of the two other types of activities. Examples of social activities may be children playing with each other, greetings and conversations, group activities and the common social activity – to meet, see and hear other people. Social activities may have different characteristics, depending on the context in which they occur.



QUALITY OF PUBLIC SPACE

The activities described by Gehl are related to the quality of the public spaces and each other's. The importance of Gehl's argument is that when public spaces are of poor quality only necessary activities occur because people only use them to move through and when they are of higher quality even the social activities tends to occur. Furthermore, due to the increase of optional activities, the frequency of social activities will rise. Figure 2 illustrate the relationship between the environmental quality and the human activities.



Fig. 2. Illustration based on Jan Gehl, (1996) *Life between buildings*

FOUR QUALITIES OF A SUCCESSFUL PLACE

According to Project for Public Spaces (2000), places that are successful and great for people have four key qualities: 1. Access and linkage 2. Comfort and image 3. Uses and activities 4. Sociability

1. Access is an important part of a place to be successful, it must have an orientable connection to the surroundings both visually (see a place from a distance) and physical (a continuous series of interesting activities along a street can be more interesting) as well as being easy to get to and around through the streets.
2. Comfort and image are related to the physical design of the place. It includes access to sit on a comfortable place that is protected from noise, wind and sunlight during the hot summers, a place with character and charm. Comfort and image are the key to whether a place will be used and these can be achieved through good quality and design features.
3. For a place to be populated, lively and used, it's necessary that activities are adapted to different users. If a place have lack of activities it's going to be unused, empty, boring and people do not like to spend much time there. Having something to do gives people a reason to come to a place and spend their time there.
4. Sociability is about feelings and emotions of a place. The people who use the place have to feel like a part of society, be welcomed and be well integrated among strangers. The sense of belonging to society is achieved when people interact with friends and family and enjoy spending time with strangers, they then tend to feel a stronger sense of place. The explanation for these four qualities can be seen in figure 3 in a greater detail.



Figure 3. Illustration of the place diagram taken from Project for Public Spaces 2000

THE DIFFERENT USERS

People of different ages have different interests, whatever that is, they all are users of the public space in a way or another and are in need of interaction with friends and acquaintances. Therefore the planners have to consider the needs of different groups to successfully design a public space that attracts everyone. It is important to note that there are major differences in the use, preferences and motivation for outdoor recreations all over the world. Not only every country but even cities and neighborhoods have different needs depending on their culture and ethnicity (Gentin 2011). It is important that parks and green spaces are available to all and it should offer opportunities for all ages.

To understand the different needs of humans, it is required to separate them into age groups: children, youth/young adults (14-27), adults and seniors.

Children:

Children and adults have different perspectives of the outdoor environment. According to Sofia Celes study (2005), on foot in the city of children, children's experiences of outdoor environment are often associated with sensations such as sound, smell and touch. Adult's perspectives on the outdoor environment is more visual (Jansson 2010). According to research, what best stimulate children's physical and mental development is the green environments and particularly natural elements such as plants, water, sticks or stones (Ibid).

Children's play is encouraged by large areas, a lot of bushes, trees and hilly terrain. It is important that there are places where the child may have peace but also rush off in the rough games. Jansson's study (2010) has shown that children do best when they can toggle between the options. Being able to select between the different options requires sufficient space suitable for various types of play (Spaciousness). Play with other children is the main activity for children older than one year. However, it is not just the kids who need to be with others of the same age. Even adults prefer places where they can meet other parents. That is why many parents consciously take their children to places where they know others are.

Youths/young adults:

It is probably the young people that uses the public spaces in the city and neighborhoods more than all other groups (Boverket 2000). Young people use different places, rooms and contexts not only as places to stay in, but also as places where they qualify into adulthood (Lieberberg, 1992). For adults, particularly young adults, considerable socializing occurs in the context of recreation. This generation of young people primarily likes to be engage in sports activities and in places where socializing activities occur.

Adults:

Working adults is the group who use the public spaces the least, this because of the lack of time they have. However, what attract them most when time is available is the nature and possibility of different activities like jogging (Jergeby, 1996).

But parents caring for young children stay mostly in nearby parks and playgrounds not only as facilities to occupy their children but also as places to enjoy contact with other parents. "Play areas that can accommodate a long

social visit by parents supervising their children require comfortable seating arranged to enable face-to-face interaction, tables, running water, and ideally, restrooms" (Carmona et al, 2007 p.235).

Seniors:

Older people like to be in the center of watching and greet other people. The best places for them can be to sit nearby the paths. They use mostly the local environments and public spaces (Carmona et al, 2007 p.235).

Older people do not have a job and find themselves isolated within their own homes. Safe, high quality green spaces provide opportunities for social interaction with the local community. There they can evoke memories, meet new people and friends and the green space can provide a place for people to reunite. Parks with good quality of activities and paths make them an excellent place to go with a group of friends or grandchildren.

PUBLIC PARKS

2



The pace of urbanization around the world have begun to increase rapidly. Today lives just over half the world's population (3.2 trillion) in cities and the UN estimates that there will be 6 billion urban residents in just 30 years (Wheeler et al, p.316). This means that contact with nature is decreasing and the availability of a private garden next to the residence disappears. The green areas and city parks must be taken into consideration and that green areas not pushed outside the cities by the concrete urban jungle especially in developing countries like Kosovo. People choose to live in the cities because they seek a better life and work. But something municipalities in developing countries don't realize that in the city there is information flow that demands our attention and stress related diseases that urbanization gives us. The closer we are to a green space more often we use it and the less stressed we become (Grahn & Stigsdotter 2003). Urban green spaces can therefore have a significant role to play in cities, promoting public health (Stigsdotter 2004). In green spaces people can find calm, relaxation, peace and have the opportunity to go away from the urban jungle and stress that a city gives us. Not only health, these spaces provide many functions in urban context that benefit people's quality of life. Nowadays, in developing cities, there are limited green areas.

Parks or public open spaces are very important in the life of urban people. People who lives in the cities want to go outside, especially into green areas, whenever they have time. In the parks for example they have the ability to accommodate many different types of activities that can satisfy people's needs by offering many socializing activities, such as, playing, eating, reading, standing, running, gathering, interacting with one each other, and so on. But if an urban green space is successful or not depends on many things which are linked to the quality of it, from design to management of the place. To enable people in general to visit parks and green spaces it is required to fulfil the needs of different users, like, easy access and qualities that attract. Research has shown that we humans are looking for different qualities / characters in the parks and green areas (Berggren et al 1995). Patrik Grahn scientist at SLU in Alnarp in environmental psychology has developed eight characters to show how a park environment can be experienced. The more characters a park has, the more popular and visited is it going to be. Earlier research at the Department of Landscape Planning at Alnarp has shown that these eight main characters are (Berggren et al 1995):

1. SERENE- A peaceful and silent place that is clean and tidy and where the sound of birds, insects, wind and water can be heard. Users of this place can be those who wants to get away from the city noise and stress. The most common activities are reading, motion games, excursions and gathering activities.

Main qualities:

- Many birds, insects and others animals to discover.
- Many plants to study

2. WILD- Wildness represent a place where vegetation has been spread freely likely self-sown plants, moss-grown rocks and old paths. The place should give the feeling of mystery that have never been touched by human hand. A character that should look like nature itself. Here should it be able to find a

safe secluded place and get a sense of loneliness with the nature. Everything that has to do with humans in the form of street life, kiosks, fountains, etc. do not belong in this category. The most common activities are learning activities, excursion and gathering activities (ibid).

Main qualities:

- Many birds, insects and others animals to discover.
- Many plants to study
- Opportunities to find quiet, secluded places
- The place has natural character
- The area feels big and free

3. RICH IN SPECIES- This character is made up of a diverse flora and fauna by different species, plants and animals. Botanic gardens can be a good reference where the supply of plants is great. Water elements, in the form of streams and lakes, are elements that enhance the character. Common activities can be learning activities with school, excursion, seeing and gathering activities.

Main qualities:

- Many birds, insects and others animals to discover
- Many plants to study
- Water elements

4. Space- A green big park or natural area that offer a feeling of entering another world, like a beech forest. The feeling of being able to move there for a long time without immediately reach other side of the park or be disrupted by barriers. Common activities can be motion by exercise, learning activities, excursion, gathering activities.

Main qualities:

- The area feels big and free
- Easy to move within area
- The area has an natural character

5. THE COMMON- A place there different activities and events can occur like theatrical performances, music, circuses and different sport activities. Life and movement is to be preferred. It is import to know that the place shouldn't have only one specific use. To think about hills and audience is another important thing according to the design of these areas. The most common activities are sports activities, motion games and different entertainment activities.

Main qualities:

- Ball fields
- The area has a green open place

6. MEETING POINT/TOGETHERNESS- A socialized green place that encourages meetings between people. The area should provide opportunities of activities such as eating, taking a coffee, dance, music, or to watch other people. Any cultural events such as maypole and Christmas tree can occur. The area should be well lighted and cleaned in order to feel safe and secure. This kind of characters can be found in places such as plazas, piers or larger park. The two most common activities are entertainment activities and socialization activities.

Main qualities:

- Cafeterias and kiosks
- There is a lot of people and movement
- Possibility of entertainment e.g. park concerts
- The area is decorated with flowers, statues and fountains

7. THE PLEASURE GARDEN- Parks with this character has properties that make it comfortable especially for children to play. It is a place where kids can move around freely, experiment the environment, dirty themselves, build huts and feel like they have come to their own world. Climbing trees, large rocks and different type of shrubs can be found here. The value of the place can be increased by sandboxes, swings and water elements. This area is surrounded and should not be larger than the parents can watch over their children. The most common activities are swing and slide games, motion games and sport and entertainment activities.

Main qualities:

- That there is good play equipment
- The area is hilly and there are grassy slopes for play and sport

8. CULTURAL- A green historical place with remains such as for example an old stone wall, which reflects the cultural landscape. But it can also be a square with different culture imprinted items such as fountains, statues and flower arrangements.

Main qualities:

- The area is decorated with flowers, statues and fountains

Public parks have a lots of sustainable benefits to, social, ecological and economical.



DESIGN ASPECTS

3

Parks are seen to have as their main objective to make people go there, stay and stop by. So the urban green places should be able to offer people physical and mental recreations like activities, rest, motivation, social interaction, encounters and natural experiences. To achieve this we have to think of some different aspects that can contribute to a better and attractive place. In this chapter you can see a summary of the aspects that are based on different authors.

Possibility to see/ distance and location:

Gehl (2006) points out that location of functions and activities are strongly dependent on distance i.e. possible to reach, see and experience from a location. In order to be able to see the distance it should not be too long. Humans have a very limited so-called radius, within which she is willing to walk on foot. This radius is estimated to comprise between 400-500 meters. The opportunity to see events is between 70-100 meters and experience other people (facial expression) is estimated to be 25meters. The human range is very limited and must therefore be taken into account when designing every meter of the public space. Small distances between entrances, activities, and other functions are small contributes to increasing activities in the public space.

The location of an activity depends on specification of the place, the surrounding conditions and the strategy to bring them together within acceptable distances. If a place is visible and people have the possibility to see what is going on there, attract more users than if it was not transparent. Being able to see and experience the activity will inspire to further activities. Children who see other children playing inspire themselves to play, so activity breeds therefore new activity (ibid). If an area is large and this short human radius is difficult to achieve an alternative may be to create a view to any remote location that takes the focus.

Possibility to sit:

The possibility to sit is essential to be able to go. This may be a good explanation of how we humans work. A main component for an available city is accessible to the public benches. If we want people to use the park or a public space we must ensure that people have places to sit. But just to satisfy the requirements of sitting is not enough, people want to enjoy or avoid the sun, they want to feel safe behind the siting, they want a good view and to sit comfortably etc. (Gehl Architects 2004). Good, comfortable seating which are placed in the right location provide people to sit and stand longer which contributes to a livelier city (Ibid). A good public place should offer many different types of seats, even secondary seating which can be, for example, stair railings, edges and lawns. There must be access to both primary seating (benches and chairs) as well as secondary seating (e.g. stairs, low walls, edges, lawns, etc.).

Possibility to hear and talk:

It should be possible to hear such things as talking in a place without problems. The noise level in the public environment should be at a level (60db) such that it is possible to converse. Even the benches in the public spaces is important for whether conversation can be held or not. Benches placed against each other allows for social interaction, something that Gehl calls “talkscape.” (Ibid)

Climate:

Different countries and regions have different types of climate and solutions must be based on current conditions. In an attractive meeting place there should be an opportunity to choose between sun and shade, warmth and coolness and shelter and wind. (Ibid)

Accessibility of movement and stay:

When we think about accessibility the usual notion is the ease to approach something. Accessibility is a broad subject that take into account not only the physical factors as distance, safety or location but also the political, social and cultural aspects like price of transport, rules, etc. (Dischinger. M, 2000). If an urban park or a place is easy to reach, safe to access and satisfies convenience of mobility then it is going to attract more and more people. Madanipour (2010) argues that it is not only the design of the place which determines the number of users. It is also important that there are paths that connect with the rest of the city by pedestrians and cycles. Comfort by traveling and comfortable paths can also play an important role for the users of the public spaces.

A friendly path-environment for example can include smooth and soft surface, security based on lighting and road safety as well as a lively surrounding environment that gives sense of security and positive experience. Other elements that are important in planning of the movement are the effectiveness, opportunity for meetings and several alternative paths (Berghlund, Eriksson & Ullberg, 2011).

Diversity and variation:

Places should satisfy diverse experiences in function to meet the requirements of an attractive place. Create variation and diversity in the sense of place through activities, green areas with different plants breaks the monotony of a place. Monotonous environments without variation, makes the journey through the area feel longer (Cullen, 1971). Even Kaplan and Ryan (1998) emphasizes the importance of variation in urban planning to fulfil the variety among different people. People should have the ability to choose what, when and where they want to stay or move. Places with several various activities and experiences tend to be the most popular. Even the design of place needs to be varied as repetitive, large open spaces without any elements are places that are least desirable. Also extremely dense and unavailable forests are not so attractive.

A place that feels exciting, brings curiosity and excitement is the one that makes people get the urge to move on and explore more. This should be used for the different various areas of the park.

Safety:

Good designed and well used parks and recreation areas are a great asset for local communities. But that asset can quickly become unsafe and lose its value and benefit to the community. What to consider when designing a park due to safety can be:

- Lightning can be referred to safety of a place. If different activity areas and walkways is well lit after the dark then people can accept to walk through these areas. (NRPA 2012)
- Night activities like night time movies, camping, school or family activities, can contribute to a safer place because more people are going to

use these places during the night if it is less safe (Ibid).

- A strategy and participation with different actors is required to create a place that is safe for everyone. Different actors must be involved, the police, communities, park guards, schools and so on. The problem cannot be solved by a designer alone or any other single action (Ibid).
- Green elements such as bushes and trees should be positioned so they do not obstruct the view. The importance of care and maintenance from a crime prevention perspective plays an important role. Trees that are grown big can be trimmed and shrubbery that impairs visibility can be thinned.

Entrees:

Entrances and exits can provide legibility if they are visible for people inside and outside the park. Clear entrance zones can help to create orientation and cohesive areas. Park entrances should be opened up removing the visual barriers along the park’s periphery.

SPATIAL SHAPES:

In the book, *Life Between buildings* Jan Gehl (2006) use four different opposite forces to describe and analyze spatial shapes, they are: Gather or spread, integrate or segregate, invite or exclude, open up or close inside. These four opposing forces should be seen as a prerequisite for the attractiveness of a place, and through these opposites we can examine the room's accessibility. It is not necessary that the one or the other is preferred, but it varies with different projects and places and what the intent of the project is. For example, if the purpose is to establish a more peaceful place, spreading is to be preferred before gathering and so on.

Gather or spread:

If a place gathers its activities or people instead of spreading it out then the possibility of interaction and meetings among people becomes bigger and more activities will take place at the same place. Activities and people enable stimulation. Good examples of places that gather people and activities is an old medieval square where buildings' entrances are located around the square and where the distances are short.

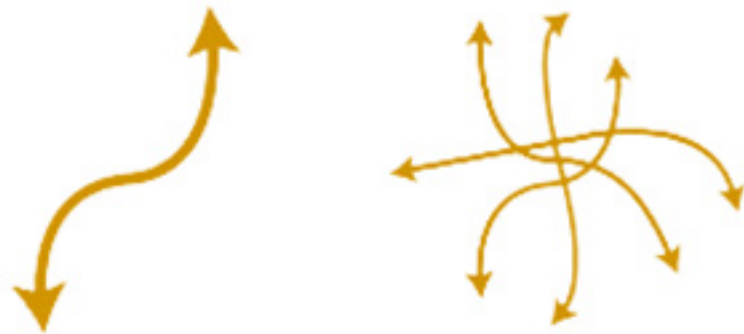


Fig. 4 Illustration showing how the shape gather or spread

Integrate or segregate:

With integration Gehl (2006) means when a place is integrated with different kinds of activities and functions where people can be side by side and give one another stimulation and inspiration. Segregation implies that the functions, activities and people are separated from each other. Gehl argues that the living room is a great example that can serve as a model for integration of activities, where each of the family members is engaged in various activities at once but at the same time act together. Another example of a well-integrated place or city is the compact city where different functions and activities take place. Therefore segregation is a typical example of a functionalist city with its separation of different activities and functions.



Fig. 6 Illustration showing how the shape integrate or segregate

Inviting or exclude:

Urban spaces can be inviting, available and attract users or they can be difficult to access and unavailable, both psychologically and physically. An inviting place is related to the possibility of visibility, to see what goes on there and if there are things to do. Different activities may also have an inviting effect on the public room. It's important to know that people need to do things.



Fig. 5 Illustration showing how the shape inviting or exclude

Open up or close inside:

A place, a path or a café that is opened up to its surrounding can provide opportunities for activities and enables social interaction. Open up means creating good connections between two or more places and the people who use these surroundings because of the opportunity of being able to see into it.



Fig. 7 Illustration showing how the shape open up or close inside

CASE STUDY

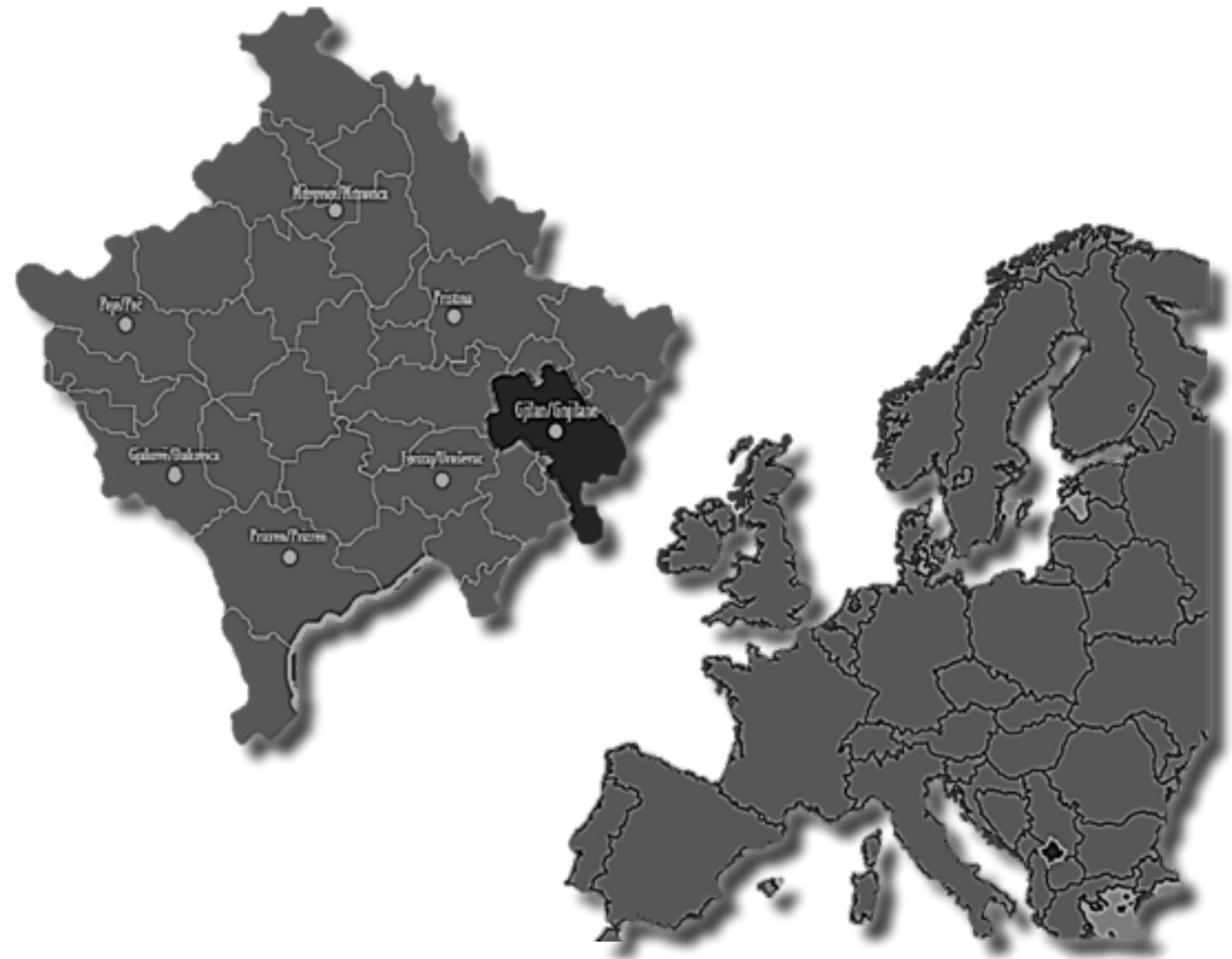
4



KOSOVA – GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Kosova is located in Southeast Europe. It borders Albania in Southwest, Macedonia in the South, Serbia in Northeast and Montenegro in Southeast. Kosova currently has the youngest population in Europe with an average of 25.9 years old (Kosovo Agency of Statistics- 2012).

- Territorial area: 10,887 square kilometers.
- Capital city with number of inhabitants: Prishtina, 145,149 residents (2011)
- Population: 1 815 606 (2012) 38% lives in urban areas and 62% in rural areas.
- Government: Republic
- Ethnic groups: Albanians 88%, Serb 7%. Others (Turks, Romans, Bosnians) 5%
- Language: Albanian
- Religion: Mainly Islam (Sunni) with a minority Roman Catholics among the Albanians and Orthodox Christianity among Serbs
- Main exports: Metals, minerals and food



THE URBANIZED KOSOVA

When the war ended in Kosovo 1999 after intervention of NATO-led KFOR troops, the population grew and people migrated to the larger cities. Within a few years the population doubled because of the influx of returning refugees. To fulfill the need of housing an instant building boom all over Kosovo began and the estate market became one of the most profitable branches. The investors profited and created non-standard buildings, occupied the public spaces, neglected green spaces and public squares and made the cities look like a giant concrete jungle. This urban scariness changed the cities of Kosova dramatically and of course most of the constructions was built illegally. Another main issue is the car traffic that dominates the cities of Kosova and which is increasing day by day as well as the pedestrian insecurity and the pollution from traffic. The public transport is missing in most of the cities in Kosovo besides the capital where it works extremely poorly. Pedestrians, public transport and public spaces in Kosovo are neglected and not functional. Some other factors that poses a threat to the quality of life beside the illegal constructions and increasing automobile congestion is informal settlements, polluted air and rivers, illegal dumpsites, and substantive loss of natural and cultural heritage (UN-Habitat & SIDA, 2010). Kosova and its cities are not prepared for this chaotic urban jungle and influx of population although it has been 15 years since the war ended. The people of Kosova have the right for a better place to live in, therefore the government and municipalities must fulfil people’s needs by renovating the public spaces that meets the standards of design, sustainability and creating opportunities for citizens, men and women, boys and girls, to enjoy the social life outside their own household. The global association ISOCARP, International Society of City and Regional Planners, during a workshop with Kosovars’ Department of Spatial Planning, completed a matrix in an attempt to balance the problems with some opportunities about the Kosovar cities (see below). (F. D’hondt, 2008).

Spatial problems:	Spatial opportunities:
– Traffic congestion	– Diversity of landscapes
– Lack of public transport	– Cultural/natural heritage
– Illegal constructions	– Industrial heritage
– Informal settlements	– Old railway networks and stations
– Ribbon development	– Walk able / bike able short distances
– Environmental degradation	– Potential for private investment
– Lack of green spaces	
Non spatial problems:	Non spatial opportunities:
– High non-employment	- Many youngsters (cafe bars)
– Increasing poverty	- Potential labour force
– Increasing criminality	- Strong family ties
– Rate of migration	- Cross road of cultures in Balkan
– Serbian enclaves	- Multi religious/multi-cultural society
– Cohabitation	- Mercantile tradition
– Non effective institutions	
– Lack of education and other social	

PLANNING IN TRANSITION FROM TRADITIONAL MASTER PLANNING TO STRATEGIC SPATIAL PLANNING

In Kosovo there are some problems according to culture of planning that even today have roots in former Yugoslavia. It is about the traditional master planning and unrealistic master plans that once upon a time ruled even other countries in Europe and some of them even today. The culture of ‘master planning’ and ‘land use planning’ is however still deeply embedded in the architect planner community in Kosovo even if UN-Habitat together with the Swedish organization SIDA have work since the end of war to change this traditional planning culture into the new strategic spatial planning or participatory planning that is based on democracy and participation with different actors. The new planning theory is about how the collaborative process may appear when users and stakeholders work side by side in a project, this collaborative process serves as a planning tool (UN-Habitat & SIDA, 2010).

The social change in society over the past decades, where information flows changed, has contributed to the occurrence of new forms of control with participatory planning. We are now in the networking and collaboration age. A different perspective of looking at it is all the problems that municipalities and governments are facing today (cars, roads, more urbanised citys, technology and so on) which are of a completely different caliber than before, and cannot be solved through traditional bureaucracies. It would require forms that are flexible, more inclusive and adaptable and can work faster. The following text is taken from the rapport of UN-Habitat and SIDA, who explain the current planning situation in Kosova:

”Achieving higher levels of engagement by ordinary people, direct and transparent involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the planning activities of local government is not yet a common practice in Kosovo that would accommodate a more collaborative way of strategic and participatory -oriented planning”
Better cities for Kosovo UN-Habitat & SIDA, 2010, p11.

GJILAN – GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

- Location: In the southeastern part of Kosovo in Anamorava region
- Area: 515 km²
- Population: Municipality 91.413 and 52.000 of them lives in the city
- Official languages: Albanian

The municipality has borders both with Macedonia and Serbia. The settlement is known at least since 1455, but grew big only after 1945. Across the city there are three small rivers, Mirusha, Banja and Stanishor, that connects together and deposits in Morava, in the west of the village of Uglar. The city of Gjilan has two small parks, one in the city center where most of the people go and another one nearby the sport hall of the city.

Before 1999, Gjilan was an important industrial center in Kosovo. Since 1950 the city has developed into an industrial city, the processing of industrial products has dominated early, with the cigarette and textile industry and such as for the manufacture of batteries and radiators, but they have all been closed after the conflict. Still in operation are the radiator factory and tobacco factory, which have been privatized. There are 3,700 registered private businesses in the municipality employing 7,900 people.

The nearest airport from Gjilan is the Pristina International Airport, 60 km away, accessible by the regional road to Pristina.

The second nearest Airport is Skopje Airport in Macedonia, which is 80 km away. (Urban Development Plan of Gjilan 2006-2015+)



OBSERVATION 1- UNDERSTANDING PEOPLE’S NEEDS AND BEHAV-
IOR IN THE CITY OF GJILAN

Kevin Lynch noted that “The camera is a very useful record, but the experi-
enced designer may do as much by sitting quietly at the scene, looking for
something interesting and revealing. There is no substitute for this sympa-
thetic experience of real places in action” (Lynch, 1984 p. 86).

The public spaces of Gjilan in general and the park of the city center, have
never had a direct observation of the place and its users and it has never
been an official part of any surveying campaign. However, observation of
public use has been an important way in which planners have evaluated a
city. Additionally, observations have the potential to shed light on several
design issues facing a city and its public spaces.

Public spaces and places in Gjilan are like any other city in Kosova, unloved,
not valued, unused and they are typically seen as places to park the car, to
move through and places to dump garbage. These spaces allow people to do
no more than just the basic things that are its smallest functional require-
ments, such as allowing people to walk through it to get to work, to the store
or to school, likewise necessary activities. This has happened because the
number of open, urban public spaces is decreasing as more and more places
are privatized, gated or fenced.

However, a place can meet the basic functional requirements as well as offer
other qualities and opportunities that contribute more to the quality of life
of the people who experience it, since one can choose a variety of optional
interactions relevant to their personal needs and values (Gehl, 2010). Such
qualities may include other opportunities such as enjoy social interaction,
experience art and culture in many forms, experience emotions, watching
people go through, relax, experience nature and the city, be inspired, play
and learn, etc. These changes occur when a space becomes a place, where
it matters to the people who experience it, and when it goes beyond these
basic uses.
Through the observation some of the main challenges that the central city
faces in promoting more public life were also identified.

- Car dominated city
- Weak connection to amenities
- Monofunctional city life
- Lack of public spaces, no attractions and green spaces

In the center of Gjilan there are many disadvantages but among these there
are positive ones too. The attractive center is shared by cafes, shops, street
vendors and has a small-scale feeling and cultural values. The roads are not
designed for lower speeds and it doesn’t benefit pedestrians and cyclists.
There is no public transport in the city. A number of important regional
and magistral roads are running through the city center and the town is
constantly blocked with congestions. These roads in the center of the city
doesn’t have obstacles, which allows vehicles to drive faster than allowed, so
the pedestrians must adapt to the cars instead of vice versa. Below you can
see a list of the positive and negative things about the city:

Positive values:	Negative values:
Density/complexity	Few green spaces
Mixed functions / mixed used	Parking in sidewalks and in public places
Multi-functional attributes	Few attractive surfaces
The scale	Few possibilities to sit
Cultural values	Pollution/Environmental degradation
The Rivers	Traffic congestion
Available surfaces near the center that can be developed	Lack of public transportation
Young population	Illegal constructions
Walkable / bike able short distances	Narrow sidewalks and streets
Two existing green parks	Car-oriented/not pedestrian friendly
	Fences and Walls

THREE MOST USEFUL PLACES IN CITY:

Big malls: As public spaces do not satisfies the needs of different groups,
shopping malls are favorite places to go especially for families and young
people. As the citizens choose to go to the big shopping malls they seek
cafés, shopping stores, playgrounds for children and events arranged at new-
year, halloween, and so on. The cafés are most used by young and elderly
people and parents.

City café/ bars: Gjilan like Kosova is known for the macchiato and Turk-
ish coffees. There is a coffee culture in general where people mostly in the
morning and afternoons would like to go out, socialize with friends and
other people by taking a coffee. The city of Gjilan has a lot of small bars and
most of them are used by people under 25years. Especially young people
don’t have places where they can go so the cafés and bars is their first and
only choice.

The green parks: The city park is mostly used by elderly people and most of
them live nearby the park. The park gives them shade during the summer
under the existing trees, relaxation, greenery, and most important of all a
meeting place for playing chess. Parents with children is another group who
use the city park frequently.

ENTERTAINMENT IN GJILAN:
The theater on Merlin Olbright Street, hold performances twice a week at
20euro a person, but not many people visit it because of the high prices and
there is a lack of performance information. The multidimensional cultur-
al festival Flaka e Janarit(Flame of January)is also held here. This cultural
event starts on the 11th of January, with symbolic opening of the flame, to
keep up with various cultural activities to 31 January of each year. Under
this time the city gathers thousands of artists and art lovers from all over
the Albanian territories, who for three consecutive weeks transform the city
into a culture metropolis. This event started in 1991. Activities dedicated to
Flame of January can be different literary competitions, concerts of classical
music, and brush of flame awards given in visual arts, the festival of Alba-
nian drama called flame’s talia and other folk music and games for different
ages.

SPORTS AND MAIN ACTIVITIES:

- Swimming pools: Under the hot summers the outdoor swimming
pools are an option for the youth especially children, even if the pool
is crowded.
- Playgrounds: There are almost no public playgrounds in the city
beside in the city park where there are some swings and climbing
trees. There is a public place nearby the city park outside the
theater that young people use for skating and rolling because of
the smooth surface.

- Street ball Kosova: Under the summer there is a basketball tourna-
ment called street ball Kosova, which every year gather a lot
of young people from the city where they besides watching and
playing can enjoy the music too. The tournament is held in the
city center and is arranged by different groups of youth. There are no
basketball fields in the area so they put up the basket in place by themselves.

- Cyclists in Gjilan: In Gjilan, there are many young people and
adults who usually cycle. This can be clearly seen during fine weath-
er conditions, especially outside the city boundaries, such as in Stanishor.
There’s even a Facebook site with up to 800persons where different groups
organize various cycling rounds especially in green areas outside the city but
even around the city center although there are no pathways for cycling.

- Promenade: Within the city you can see a lot of people that slow
walk for fun especially nearby the city park and at Stanishor (the green area
outside the city). The most visible are the elderly people and the youth.

CITY CENTER PARK OBSERVATION:

Unfortunately, there are only a few parks in Gijlan enjoyed by residents. There are only two parks and they both have lack of activities. These parks provide needed venues for recreation but, more importantly, they provide trees to help clean some of the air pollution from the nearby congested roads. The observation has been made in one of the parks, the city center park on 4 different occasions. In addition, at various times and for different weather conditions to see how people use the area and what type of activities are occurring, number of park users, seating and the accessibility and visibility of the park in relation to the surrounding area.

The city center park is located in a dense residential area, surrounded by small bars and the main city road that connect the city center and the southwest part of the city.

STRUCTURED OBSERVATIONS:

Structured observations took place at 4 different occasions. The results are summarized in Table 1 and 2.

First two structured observations were made when it was good whether on march 16th and 17th (approximately 17 ° C). Two others were made on April 17th and 18th when it was a rainy day.

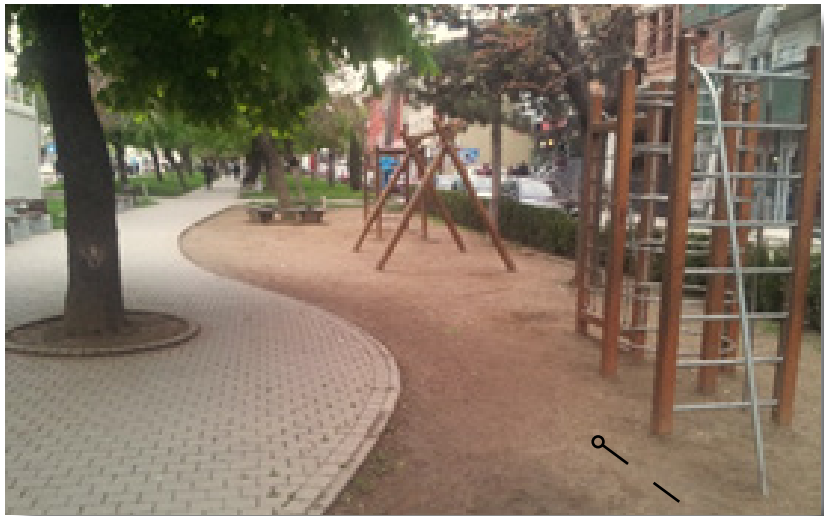
TABLE 1: QUALITY OF THE CITY PARK

SAFETY - Well-lit - Visibility - Cross walk nearby entrances - Wheelchair accessible - Circulation by dark	No- There is street lights in the middle and the south side of the park but some of them are demolished and don't work. Yes- There is good visibility to and from surroundings due the low shrubs Yes- But the main magistral road to Prishtina (Merlin Albright road) split the park in two and create a barrier for pedestri- ans according to safety. Yes Yes- The park is surrounded by apartments, small bars, stores and different businesses that make it more safe by night.
RECREATION SPACES - Playground - Open lawn - "Skating and rolling"	Yes and No- There is only one little playground with one swing without function and some climbing games. Yes- To small No- There is no place for this recreation but the youth use the public space nearby the theater and park because the paved surface which enable them to ride there.
SEATING - Benches - Chairs - Movable	Yes 41 benches are available, some are damaged, soiled by birds and some of them are too small to enable people to watch others playing chess. No- Only for users of the coffee bars No
SHADE	Yes- In general densely shaded by the trees, but, the possibility to sunbath is available in the south side of the park.
WATER	No
CLEAN	Yes- But some benches, trees and the ground can be soiled by birds which smells.
CONFORM	Ability to get relief from sun and the ability to sunbath is available. Ability to rest, take a coffee, to eat. Some benches are not comfortable, people don't sit there for long.
RELAX	A lot of trees, open lawn but the park have capacity for more greenery. The cars by the road on both side of the park make it less relaxing. Lack of flowers. Many necessary activities take place because of the central location.
DISCOVERY	No
Passive and active engagement	Yes- Sitting by the path and looking at other people is the main activity especially for elderly and adults. The social connec- tion is good and interaction between people occurs spontaneously.

TABLE 2: USERS OF THE CITY PARK

<i>Survey Variables</i>	<i>Children</i>	<i>Youth</i>	<i>Adult</i>	<i>Seniors</i>
Number of users	5-7	10-15	15-20	30-35
Activities	- Many necessary activities, to and from school - Playground- Climbing - Open lawn- Playing soccer. Sometimes they are not allowed by the janitor - Open lawn-Different games - Cycling-Nearby the theater and city hall	- Many necessary activities, to and from school - Skating and rolling nearby the theater Bypass the park Waiting for buss	- Playing chess - Slow walk - Sitting and watching - Many necessary activities be- cause the central location of the park	- Most of them are playing chess - Sitting and watching

CURRENT CITY PARK IN PICTURES



Traditional playground
Photo:Labeat Bickaj



Popular chess play
Photo:Labeat Bickaj



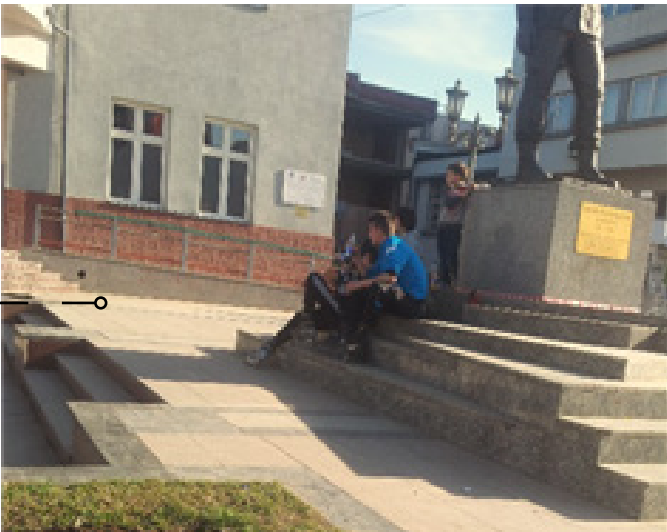
Unused place
Photo:Labeat Bickaj



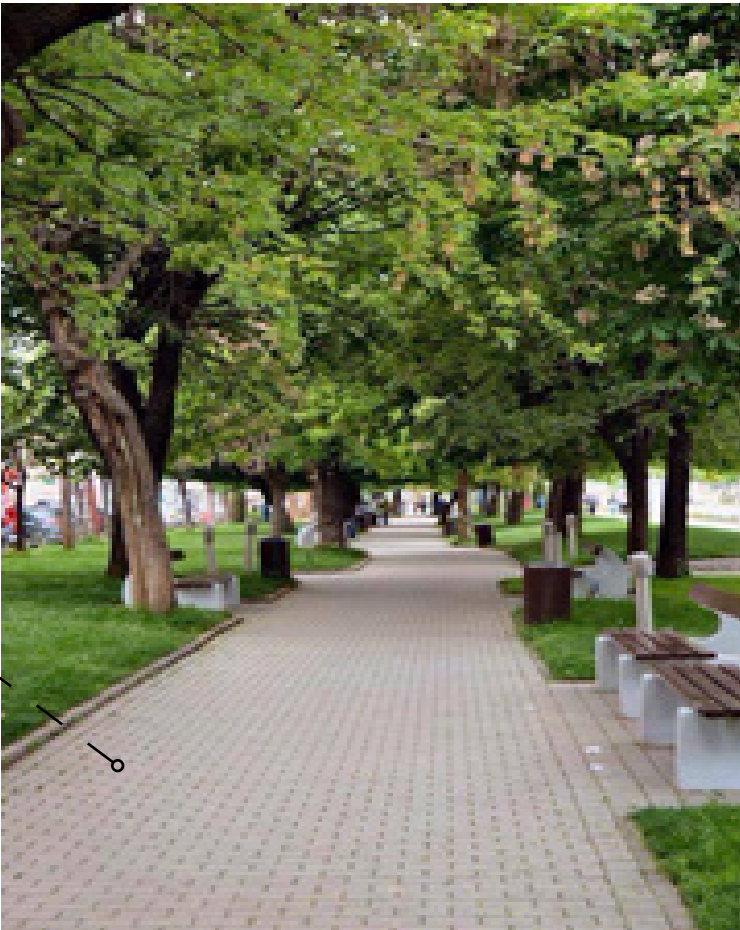
Unused space, children use it most
Photo:Labeat Bickaj



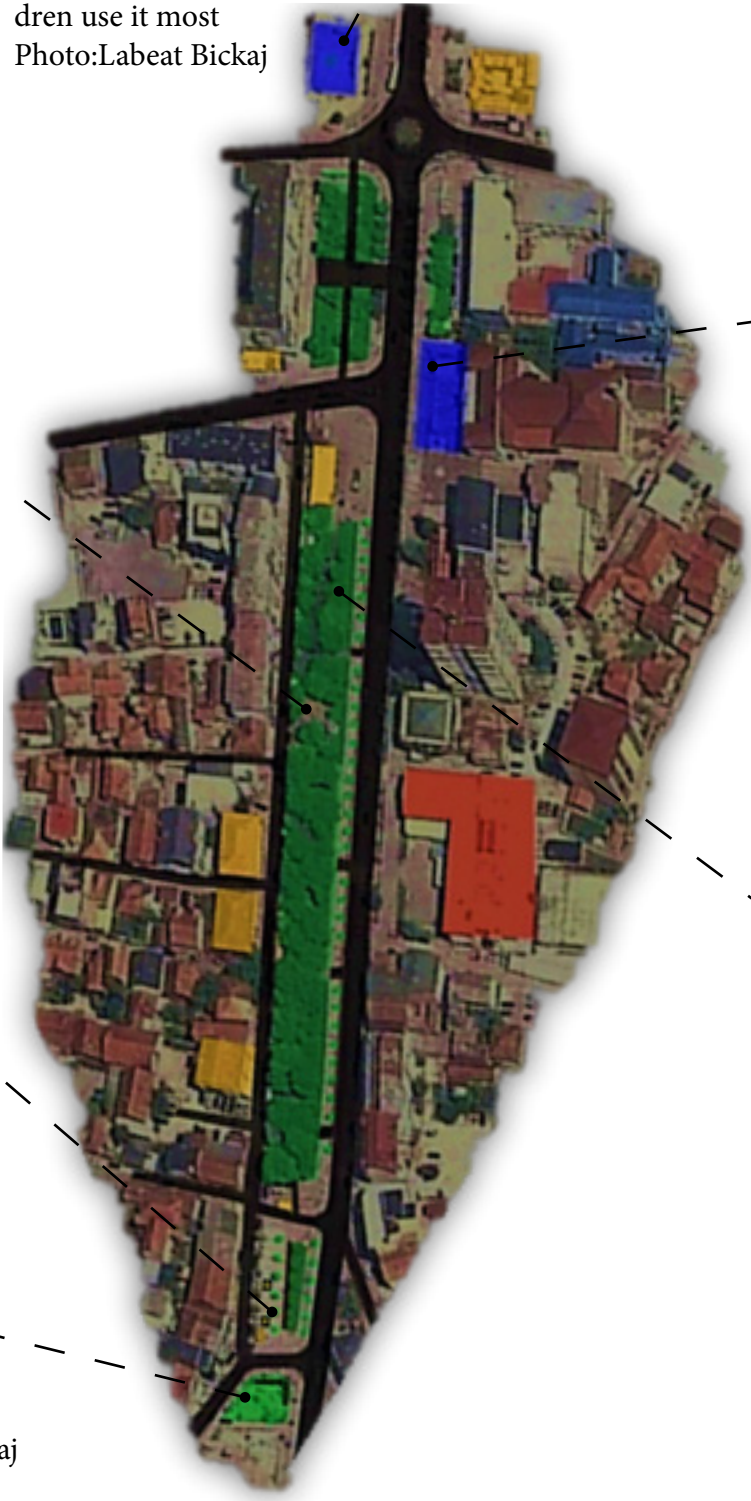
Very attractive place for children to skate and roller.
Photo: Labeat Bickaj



Youth with rollers
Photo: Labeat Bickaj



The park promenade
Photo:Labeat Bickaj



WHAT DOES THE PROPOSAL AREA LOOK LIKE TODAY?

Adjacent to the park, there is also a river (creek) that runs through the city center, which also will connect the park with the city center, which lies between 1.5 and 2km away. The planned park is longer (about 630m) than it is wide (100-120m) and takes up almost 62,000m2 land.

New connections to the surrounding grid will improve the area’s level with the city. It can become a part of daily life not only for its own residents, but also for people living in the surrounding areas. Spatial integration results in increased opportunities for local commerce (economical sustainability) as well as new meetings between Gjilan citizens (social sustainability) in a green public space (ecological sustainability).



The positive and social value of water is stronger than the smell of the sewage who flows into it. Here we can se chil-drens playing nearby the river.
Photo: Labeat Bickaj

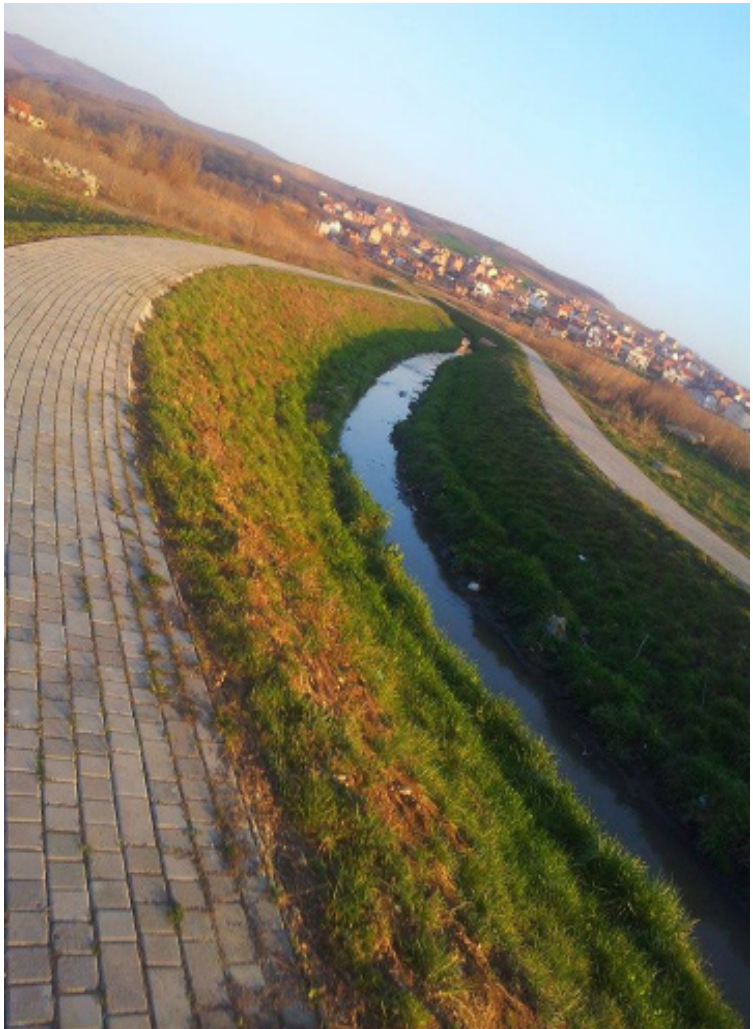


The park area consists mainly of wild meadows, few available trees and piles of bricks, concrete and other used construction debris.
Photo: Labeat Bickaj

Accesibility from city center on foot



The small Mirusha river that connect the city center with the proposal area.
Photo:Labeat Bickaj



WHAT DID THE RIVER LOOK LIKE BEFORE?

The photo is taken in the city center of Gjilan. The Mirusha river that flows through the city was important for the citizens according to the social sustainability. The river was clean and citizens took care of it. As we can see in the photo there was a lot of greenery beside the river and different activities could take place. People could fish beside the beautiful white geese and like my father told me when he was little they played almost every day beside the river and you could take a bath too.

The value of the river began to disappear when the drain pipes were linked adjacent to the river. But some things did never change, it was the value of the flowing water that attracted children to play there no matter of smell or sewage (as we can see in the photo of the previous page).

Photo: Google.se (search: photo of lumi i qytetit)



PROPOSAL

5

The proposal of the new city park should involve local people, schools, designers and different associations, and should be thought of as a continuous local design and innovation process that develop over time rather than as a finalized product.

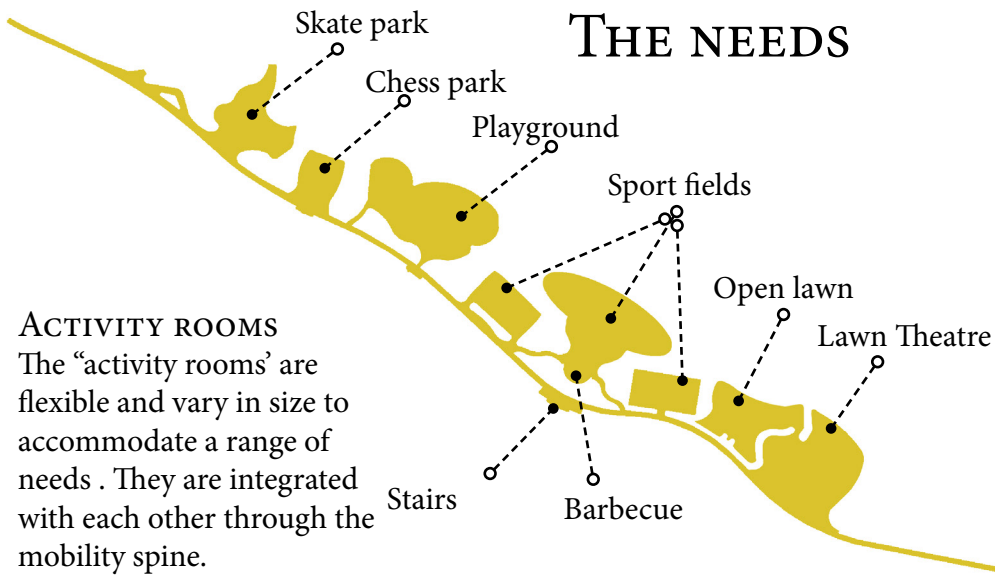
A successful city park will usually promote and reflect the identity and culture of a local community. Involving local people in the design process will help to achieve this. Every element of the green space design contributes to its identity. The choice of planting, materials, furniture, railings, paving and public art are not included here. This proposal is only one step towards a discussion with the community and municipality.

THE CONCEPT

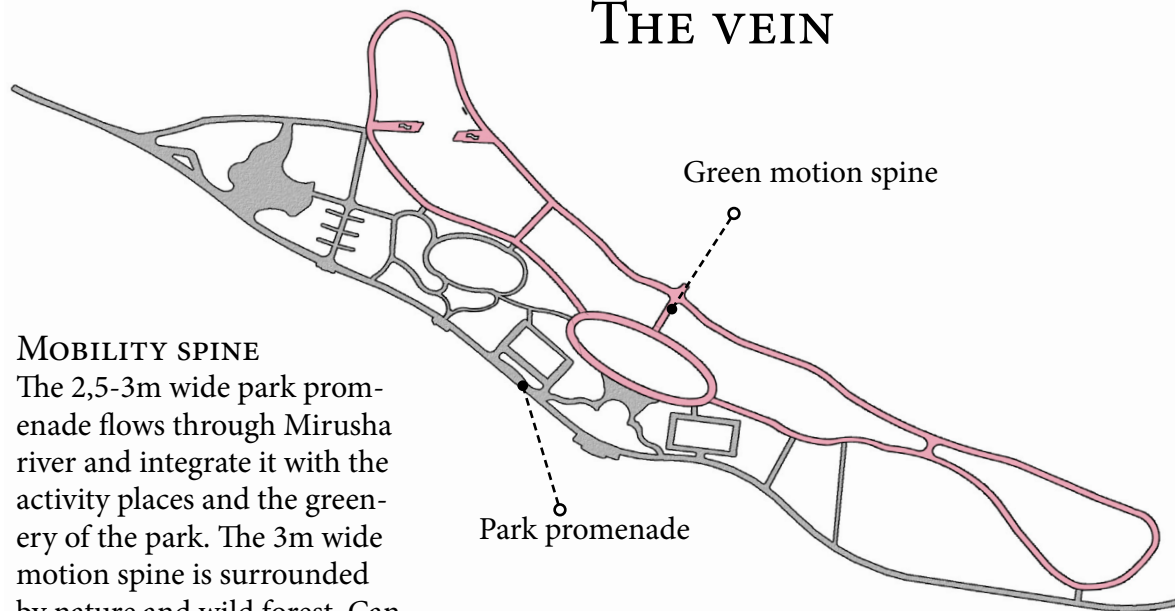
THE GREENERY

HEDGEROWS AND PLANTINGS

A 2.5m wide planting strip of different shrubs, tall grasses, perennial, cypress and young trees. The strip flows through the mobility spine.



THE VEIN



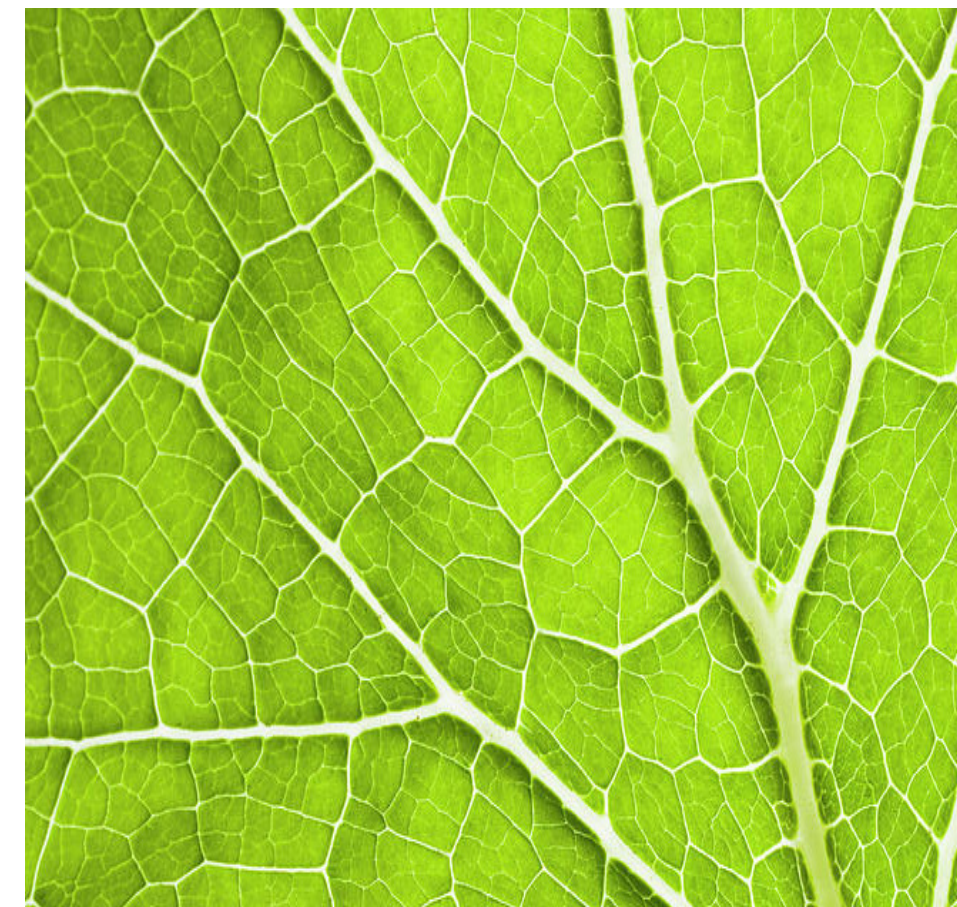
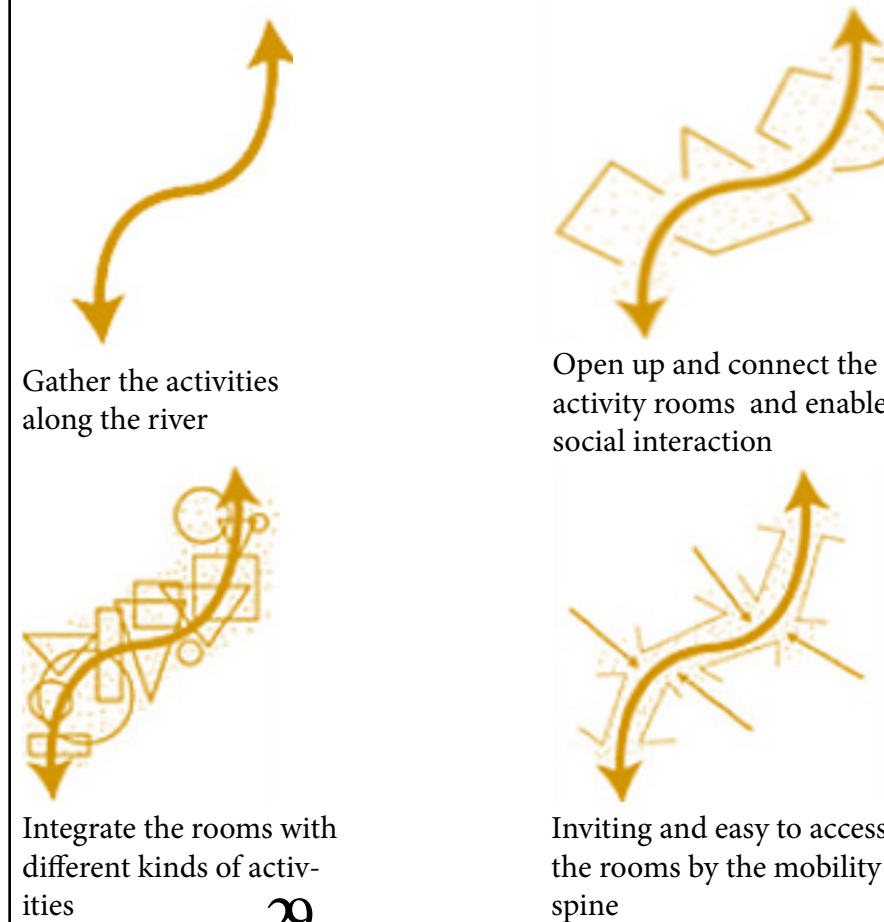
MOBILITY SPINE

The 2,5-3m wide park promenade flows through Mirusha river and integrate it with the activity places and the greenery of the park. The 3m wide motion spine is surrounded by nature and wild forest. Can be used both for cycling and walking.



THE INSPIRATION

The genesis of concept is inspired by the idea of collecting the needs, attractions and experiences for increased human activity and allows various meetings between people (Gehl 2006).



The park is designed with an organic design idiom, inspired by the vein of a leaf.

PROPOSAL- URBAN ACTIVITY PARK IN GJILAN, KOSOVO

The park should provide a resource for a wide range of people of both sexes and different ages. The urban activity park is a public open spaces and should be socially inclusive and accommodate a variety of uses. Generally all individuals should feel comfortable and no single group should dominate. Different people have different ideas about what open space is and what it is for.

By creating a series of places (activity rooms) that look and feel different, we will allow different interest groups to use them without reducing others' enjoyment. The space might include provision for play, seating, shelters, water features, places for contemplation, skate park, cycle routes and sports facilities. The park should provide social green places that encourages meetings between people. But also places for silece where the sound of different natural elemens can be heard, water, wind and the sound of birds and insects. A place to get away from the city jungle and noise.

It is important to provide many different activity rooms within parks for both active and passive uses, in order to encourage use by as diverse a range of people as possible. Different activities and events can occur in the park. It is import to know that the place shouldn't have only one specific use. The park's different zones vary in function and character. The main aim is to ensure as much variety as possible by including both short- and long-term cultural enterprises, including lawn theatre, music, fashion, film and visual art.



PROPOSAL, SUBAREA WEST

In the western part of the area, functions for different ages have been added. The skate/rolling park for the youth is located in the beginning of the park.

Between the skate park and the playground I have integrated the chess place for elderly people which can be surrounded by pine trees to provide shade.

The playground reconnects children with nature, including water elements, rocks and traditional play and a meeting place for parents enhanced by good seating around the place and a barbecue facility. The playground is a place where children can experiment with natural environment, dirty themselves, build huts and feel like they have come to their own world.

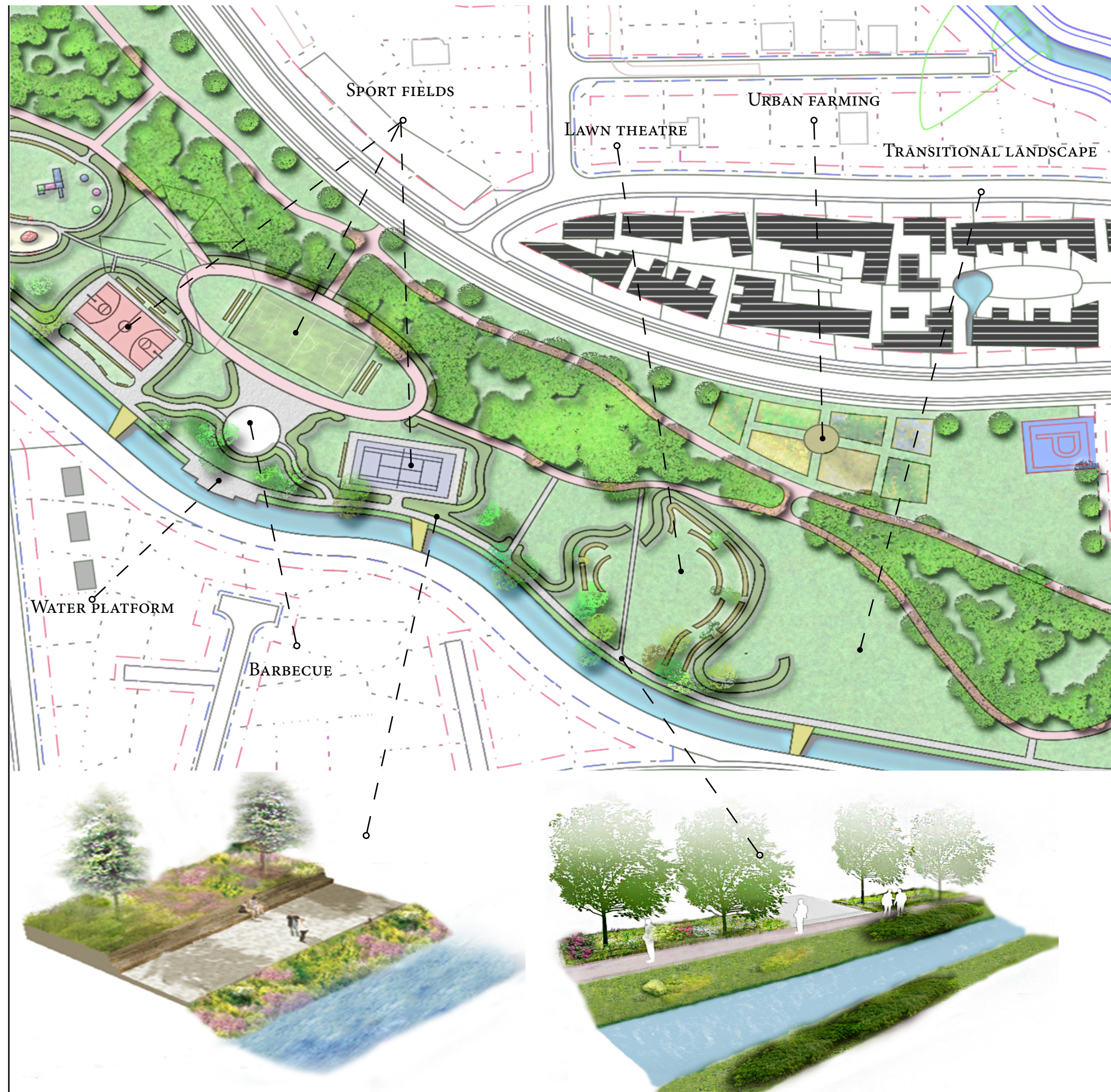
Except the social and ecological values elements in form of blue and green infrastructure have also been supposed. Accession to the west-east part of the park there is a raingarden which is intended to manage the water into the river. A small pond is also an important component according to the sustainability of the city park.



PROPOSAL, SUBAREA EAST

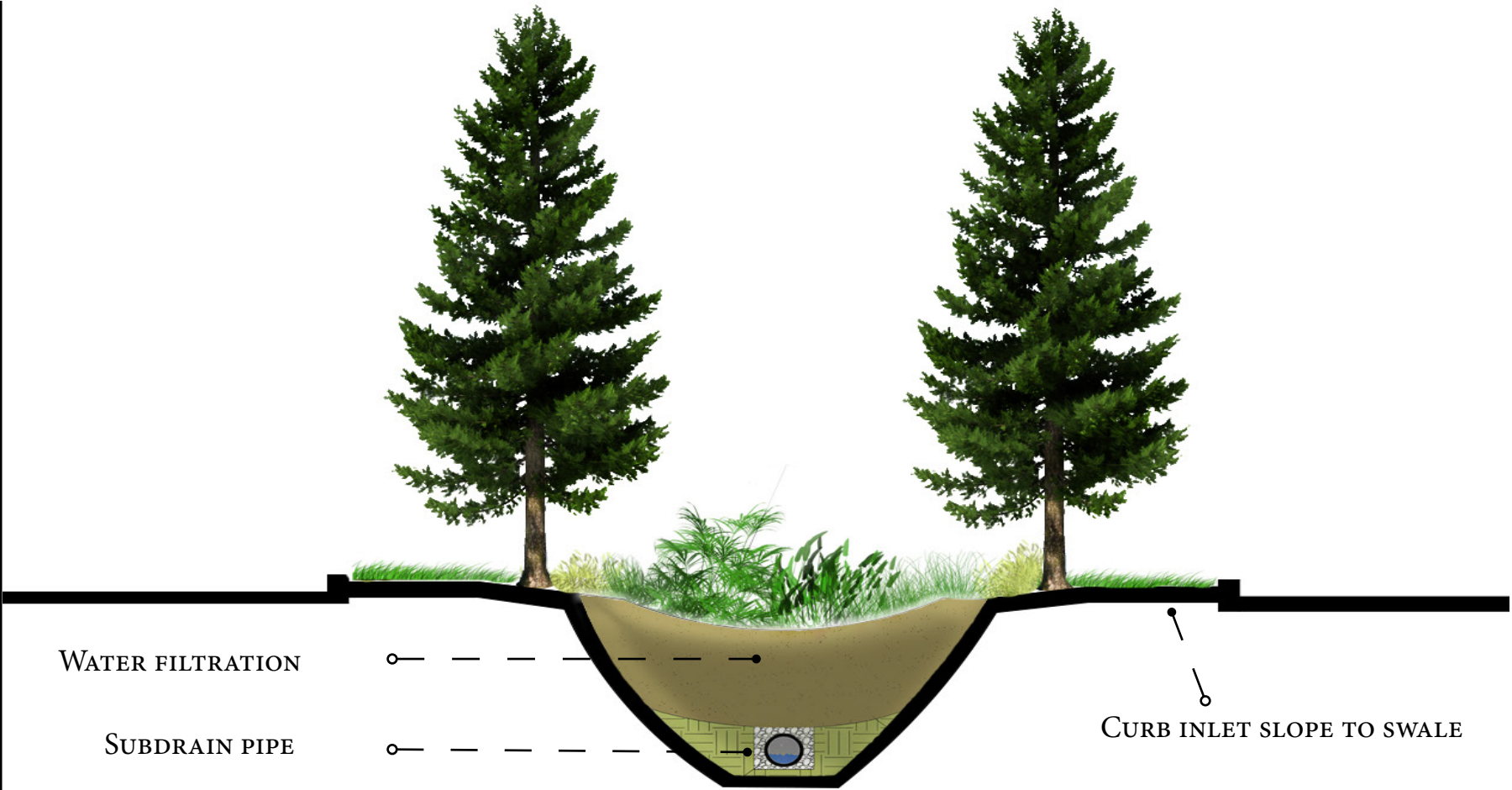
The eastern part of the park provides opportunities for sport and event activities. The sport fields are integrated with each other through the barbecue facility in the middle. This can provide a meeting place. Through the arc promenade people can also have the opportunity to keep in touch with the water through the comfortable water stairs and platform.

Continuing the arc promenade there also is an open up lawn theatre visible for the walking people. Possibilities to sit and see the sport fields and a stage for the lawn theatre are a must. The Park also have two transitional landscape that can clean, soil and enable new forms of social life.

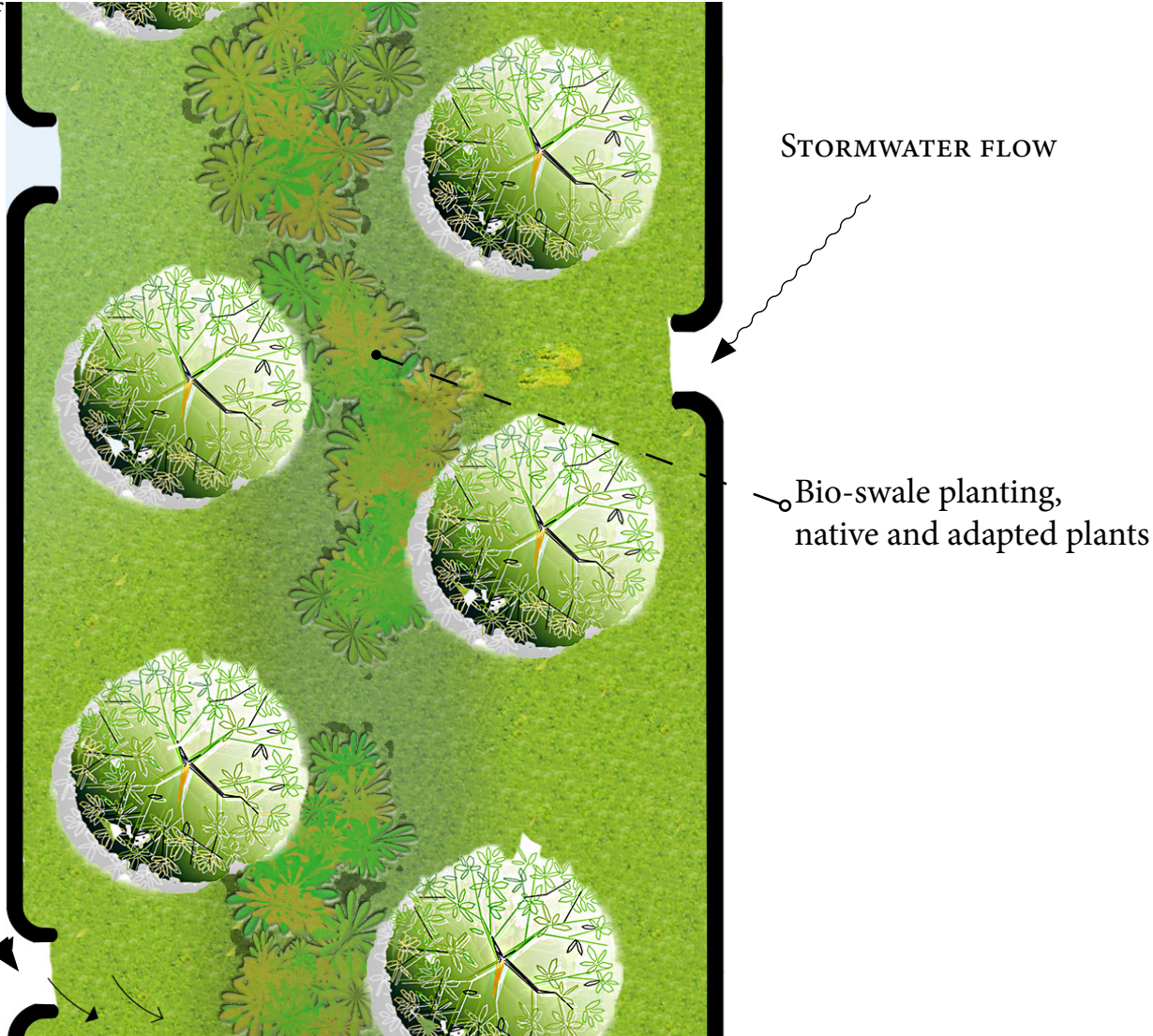


CONCEPT SKETCHES

Design sketch of the pond pond where people can relax and enjoy flora and fauna. The connection with water is avaiable through the platform.



The rain garden collects rainwater runoff from impervious urban areas around the park, like driveways, walkways, parking lots, and the compacted lawn areas. The rainwater is thought to be managed into the Mirusha river.



CONCLUSION

HOW SHOULD WE CONTINUE?

To optimally solve our common planning issues in the community, we need to have a vibrant democracy, it means to take into account and utilize the knowledge, experience and needs of citizens in the community. Democracy, civic participation and planning therefore goes hand by hand. We must provide opportunities for citizens to directly or indirectly participate in common issues and decisions. The users should be involved in decisions and proposals that touches and affects their daily lives, living conditions and their future living conditions.

In my thesis i have identified users in tems like childrens, youths, adults and seniors without specifying the gender. They can be found on school, city parks, neighborhoods and on diffrent public and private places. There are also a alot of association in Gjilan who can be found and who can help and contribute to the urban development of their city. But the municipality must engage and motivate the citizens to be involved and give them the opportunity to participate in deciding, the school can be a good place to participate with children and youth.

There is big need for a green and attractive public place in Gjilan there no cars are avaiable and there children can grow without the fear of getting killed by a car. An ecologic and social public sphere there all eages can meet, a park with alot of greenery and activities. First of all the society should be given much more influence over how the the city is planned, built and managed. Give them influence and participation on the basis of cooperation and dialogue between the stakeholders and policy makers (Municipality of Gjilan). Further down you can see how the thesis can be continued.

Part 1 Planing phase

- Identify users on their site and at times that suit
 - Give the meetings an informal character
 - Create credibility
 - Provide information
 - Provide knowledge
 - Consulate, give they opportunity to express their opinions
 - Example: What places do the various users use in their everyday life? Can the pathways be made better and safer? Whar are their needs?
- Methods: General meeting, internet, consultings, mental maps, walking tours and other methods to capture people’s knowledge.

Part 2 Implementation

- Users have skills that add value to the project and make the result better
 - Users have more local knowledge and understanding of their environment than many planners or stakeholders.
 - Make a follow-up and improvements to their needs and budget it now.
- Methods: Dialog group, dialogue seminars and future workshops

Part 3 Managment phase

- Users and especially young people are experts in their local environment and they know when something works well or poorly.
 - Voluntarily donated premises for users where they can have meetings.
 - Improve area through users.
- Methods: Future workshops, dialogues and meetings on their condition, there they are and in their places, they should not have to get to the town hall.

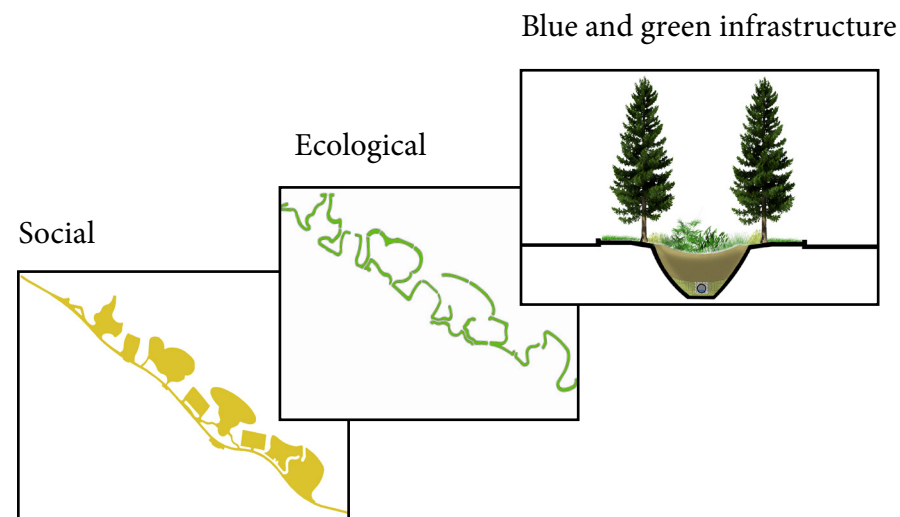
WAT TO DO? WORKSHOPS!

Almost anywhere there is talk about citizen influence and participation we bump into Arnstein’s ladder “the ladder of citizen participation ‘, who stated that especially vulnerable groups in society should be given much more say in how the city is planned, built and managed (Arnstein 1969). Like Arsteins method and idea I concluded to formulate a model that deals users influence, based on the ladder. This proposal is an attempt to accomplish the influence and co-determination on the basis of cooperation and dialogue between users and the Municipality of Gjilan. Next to the text the reader will find a step model described in more detail on the next page.



INFORMATION: Here the users *get to know*: The first step with users is to inform them about the project and the planning process, there they have the right to decide about their city. The information can be done through open days where the school may have an important role to spread information to young people. Open days is the best option because the information occurs verbally and stakeholders have opportunities to ask questions. Also the media and the web can help, but it is especially important that goals and objectives are not reformulated or misunderstood.
Methods: Open days, media, web.

Inform and learn about sustainability.



CONSULTATION: Here the users *get to speak up*: Here consulteds users by being invited to meetings or workshops to solicit the views of the area and their ideas, thoughts and possibilities for a public space. At the consultation, they work based on different techniques such as mind maps where they get a map of the area and based on in, mark parts of the sites or areas that feel confident, insecure, beautiful or ugly. The reviews must be ensured and documented in a professional manner as main purpose is to gather views on the basis that users think.
Methods: Mind maps, surveys, field walks and focus group interviews

DIALOGUE: Here the users *get to argue*: At this stage, try to meet on several occasions to conduct a dialogue in which the experiences, ideas and opinions are shared with each other. This requires that people have the opportunity to participate in shaping the process and come up with responses and arguments.
Methods: This can be made by dialogue seminars and activity councils.

PARTNERSHIP/ PARTICIPATION: Here users *get to implement*: Provide opportunities for users to participate in the planning of area's various activities and design in the form of design workshops. Where, they decide for themselves how they want the park and what it should look like and what activities annexing them. The partnership can for example take place between the young people, the project manager and subproject leader but also the local government may be involved in the planning and implementation of various activities.
Methods: Designworkshops

CODETERMINATION: Here users *get to decide*: In addition that the people should have influence in the entire process they also have to be involved in decisions on various issues that usually occurs through voting and through the counsels. Because the council will lead to policy decisions, it is important that as many people as possible participate. During the council shall steering committee, project managers, project leaders, media, stakeholders and citizens take decisions together.
Methods: Council meetings

Involvement of all community groups in the development process of urban planning is the basic condition of democratic governance. Urban planning must be a comprehensive process, where the municipality must find ways to ensure that community groups, especially those underrepresented, are part of the development of urban plans at all three stages.

FIRST STEP TOWARD FINALIZATION IS TO MEET EACHOTHER.

The difrent users voice needs to be heard, their views and needs have to be captured. So the users/stakeholders and the policy makers needs to meet and have a dialogue. For exampe the school is a natural arena where meetings can take place with the youth and childrens, the city park can be used to meet the elderly people and so on. It is important that these meetings take place where the users are located instead of let them go to the town hall. Conversations, make to know each other and create a trust which makes the fear and need for boundaries countered, this is one of the best planning methods.

HOW CAN THE PROPOSAL BE USED?

The idea behind the thesis is not to deliver a clear definitive project but only a part of a larger process where participatory design is the foundation. The thesis is for enriching dialogue between vision and action, targeted to trigger public debate among urban experts, policy makers, ordinary people and special interest groups. It implies a design process that seeks to enable people who live in cities to get more from their surroundings.

As a planner, architect or designer its my responsibility to be a "bridge" between users and stakeholders. The thesis is thought of as a continuous local design and innovation process that develop over time rather than as a finalized product. What i first did was to observe the city and its people, get to know the relation between people and public spaces. See how and by who public spaces are used in Gjilan and what their needs are according to the exsisting city situation. This information was used to get a proposal toward a discussion between users and stakeholders. The proposal treats only the view of the designer according to the needs, litterature and his own reflections. The thesis can be used as an important report toward an finalized product together with users and stakeholders.

CONCLUSION ACCORDING TO KOSOVA

From a societal perspective, the user participation is seen as a democratic right. Democracy is behind a civic participation. In Kosova should the perception of user participation develop instead as a tool that could be used for development. The approach to planning must therefore be changed. Instead of focusing on a traditional design with strict methods demanded a more flexible approach that can interact with the outside world rapid change, and where more people could be integrated in planning process.

What Kosova needs is a new form of planning that is more open and less hierarchical. However, still too often, participatory planning is conducted simply to comply with the law or to satisfy the demands of international donors supporting the planning process. There is a clear need for more authentic and customized participation approaches that take into account local people.

REFERENCES

Arnstein, Sherry., (1969) ”*Ladder of citizien participation*” American Institute of Planners Journal, vol. 35, no.4

Berggren-Bärring, A.M. & Grahn, P. (1995). *Grönstrukturens betydelse för användningen*. Institutionen för landskapsplanering. Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet, Alnarp & Ultuna. Rapport 95:3

Boverket (The Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning) (2000) *Unga är också medborgare – om barns och ungdomars inflytande i planeringen*. Boverket, Stadsmiljöavdelningen, ISBN 91 7152 595-8.

Carr, S., M. Francis, L.G. Rivlin and A.M. Stone (1992) *Public Space*. New York: Cambridge University Press

Cele, Sofia. (2005). On foot in the city of children. *Nordisk Arkitekturforskning*, Vol 1, 2005. p.85-96

Cullen, Gordon (1971). *The Concise Townscape*, Oxford, The Architectural Press

Dischinger, M. (2000) *Designing for all senses: Accessible spaces for visually impaired citizens*. Diss. Chalmers University of Technology

Gehl, Jan (2006). *Life between buildings, using public space*. Arkitektens forlag. The Danish Architectual Press

Gentin.Sandra (2011) Urban Forestry & Urban Greening: Outdoor recreation and ethnicity in Europe. *Danish Centre for Forest, Landscape and Planning, University of Copenhagen*, Denmark. vol 10, no. 3, pp. 153-161

Grahn, P. & Stigsdotter, U. (2003). Landscape planing and stress. *Urban Forestry Urban Greening*. Vol 2. p.1-18

Jansson, Märit. (2010) Attractive playgrounds: Some factors affecting user interest and visiting patterns. *Landscape Research*. Vol 35(1). p.63-81

Jergeby, U. (1996). *Offentlig miljö som arena och kuliss: att se, bli sedd och mötas på stadens offentliga och bostadsnära platser*. Diss. Uppsala: Uppsala University.

Lieberg, M.,(1992) *Att ta staden I besittning. Om ungas rum och rörelse i offentlig miljö*. Lund: Byggnadsfunktionslära

Lynch, Kevin (1984). *Good city form*. Cambrige, Mass: MIT Press

Madanipour, A. (1996). *Design of Urban Space: and inquiry into a Socio-Spatial Process*. Chichester: John Wiley.

Madanipour, A. (2010). *Whose Public space*: International case studies in urban design and development. Oxon and New York: Routledge

Municipality Assembly of Gjilan (2008): Urban Development Plan of Gjilan 2006-2015+

Project for Public Spaces (PPS) (2000). How to Turn a Place Around: A Handbook for Creating Successful Public Spaces. New York: PPS.

Stigsdotter, U. & Grahn, P. (2004). *A Garden at Your Doorstep May Reduce Stress. Private Gardens as Restorative Environments in the City*. Diss. Landscape Architecture and Health. nr 2005:55.article 4,

Wheeler, S. Beatley, T. (2009) *The Sustainable Urban Development Reader*, second edition. Routledge, New York.

ELECTRONIC

Berglund. U, Eriksson. M, & Ullberg. M. (2011). *Här går man*. Uppsala Institutionen för stad och land, Rapport nr 3-2011. Avaialbe: http://www.fot.se/documents/Har_gar_man_SLU_rapport2.pdf Last accessed [2014-03-10].

Frank D’hondt. (2008). *Re-Creating Kosovo Cities*. Available: www.isocarp.net/Data/case_studies/912.pdf. Last accessed [2014-04-11].

Gehl architects (2004). *Toward a fine city for people: Public spaces and public life*. Transport for London and Central London partnership. Avaialbe: http://www.gehlarchitects.dk/files/pdf/London_small.pdf. Last accessed[2014-02-25].

Kosovo Agency of Statistics. (2012). *Estimation of Kosovo population 2012*. Available: <http://ask.rks-gov.net/ENG/pop/publications>. Last accessed [2014-04-11].

Movium, SLU (unknown). *Strategiska teman*. Available: http://www.movium.slu.se/system/files/textpage/7776/files/strategiskateman_mp.pdf Last accessed [2014-05-09].

NRPA- National Recreation and Park Association. (2012). *Creating safe park environments to enhance community wellness*. Available: https://www.nrpa.org/uploadedFiles/nrpaorg/Grants_and_Partners/Recreation_and_Health/Resources/Issue_Briefs/Park-Safety.pdf Last accessed [2014-03-08].

Projekt for public spaces (unknown). *What Role can Design Play in Creating Safer Parks?* Avaialbe: <http://www.pps.org/reference/what-role-can-design-play-in-creating-safer-parks/> Laste accessed[2014-04-17].

Swedish National Encyclopedia (2014). *Public space*. Available: <http://www.ne.se/offentligt-rum> Last accessed [2014-04-20].

UN, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (2005). *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2005 Revision*. Available: <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/WUP2005/2005wup.htm> Last accessed [2014-04-21].

UN-Habitat. (2011). *Public Space in the Global Agenda for Sustainable Urban Development*. Available: http://www.urbangateway.org/sites/default/ugfiles/Global_Toolkit_for_Public_Space.pdf. Last accessed [2014-05-10].

UN-Habitat & SIBA. (2010). *Better cities for Kosovo*. Available: http://www.unhabitat-kosovo.org/repository/docs/UN-Habitat_visioning_toolkit-c_205245.pdf. Last accessed [2014-04-09].