



CATCH

an Interreg North Sea Region project

Activity line: Water sensitive communities

Developing water sensitive communities: the key take aways from CATCH

In leaps and bounds to a water sensitive city

ABOUT WATER SENSITIVE COMMUNITIES

In CATCH midsize cities work to become adaptive and resilient to climate change and resulting extreme weather events. To evolve from an engineered system into an adaptive and resilient system, partners are inspired by the water sensitive cities theory. One of the main principles of this theory is to work on the development of water sensitive communities. These are communities where citizens have the knowledge and desire to make wise choices about water. In CATCH several pilots are performed where options for the development of water sensitive communities were tested and demonstrated. From all experiences, these key take aways are distilled.





KEY TAKE AWAYS: HOW TO ATTRACT CITIZENS?

The major issue when you want to work on water sensitive communities is that you need to engage citizens. The CATCH partners experienced jointly that this can best be done by:

- Working in co-creation in climate projects. Give citizens options to develop their own designs and ideas.
- Starting with what the community is already doing. motivate people by saying: small contributions do matter! And it is great if you can make this visible. E.g in a model or a picture. In Norfolk they showed how privately installed water butts really help to diminish flooding. In Zwolle a digital game for rearranging gardens was developed.
- Using a fun factor! Make a game, organise a fair, design a contest. Working with schools is also a good method to create more awareness in a neighbourhood.





KEY TAKE AWAYS: HOW TO ORGANIZE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT?

Working on community engagement is not easy. It is good to realise that engaging with communities takes time.

- A good starting point is to get to know your communities and their concerns. You need to have a good story on the 'Why'. Why do people need to act, why do they need to engage?
- Be honest on what can be expected from measures. Every contribution helps, though the risk of flooding or heat stress cannot be eliminated completely. So be realistic.
- To do this, highly motivated professionals are needed. People who know what they are doing and have the energy to continue the process for a longer time.
- Form a team in your organisation with technical professionals and communication professionals. If you experience distrust in neighbourhoods, acknowledge this and engage with a neutral person or organisation to start a change. But do not give up! People deserve a liveable environment.

More information

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Or visit our website:

www.northsearegion.eu/catch/ 

