

WITH SWOT AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

Vertical gardens test users' feedback (November 2021 – January 2022)

CityZen
Interreg Europe



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

<https://www.interregeurope.eu/cityzen/>



CityZen project, Interreg
Europe programme,
co-funded by EU's ERDF



Background

In the period November 2021 - January 2022, six pilot vertical urban gardens were installed in six different locations in Sofia - a tech park, a library, the municipality, and NGO, a supermarket and a block of flats. The 16 volunteers in these locations planted their crops and took care of them. Throughout the period feedback was collected to allow for adaptations at the end of the pilot phase and to assist the further scaling up.





Urban gardeners feedback

01

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO
GET INVOLVED AND HOST A
VERTICAL URBAN GARDEN?

“Out of curiosity. It seemed quite interesting.”

“We wanted to support the cause. Moreover, in our team there are individuals who are passionate about gardening.”

“This is a good way to develop a sustainable worldview – learning by doing.”

02

WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST
ABOUT YOUR GARDEN?

"It turned into a place for informal communication with coworkers and relaxation."

"The design is appealing."

"Some crops like radishes cause a lot of excitement."

03

DID YOU MANAGE TO
GATHER ANY CROPS?

"Some herbs - rosemary, mint, sage, parsley."

"Onion, garlic, radishes. Picking them up was a celebration."

"Our strawberries are in bloom currently."

04 How easy it is to care for your garden?



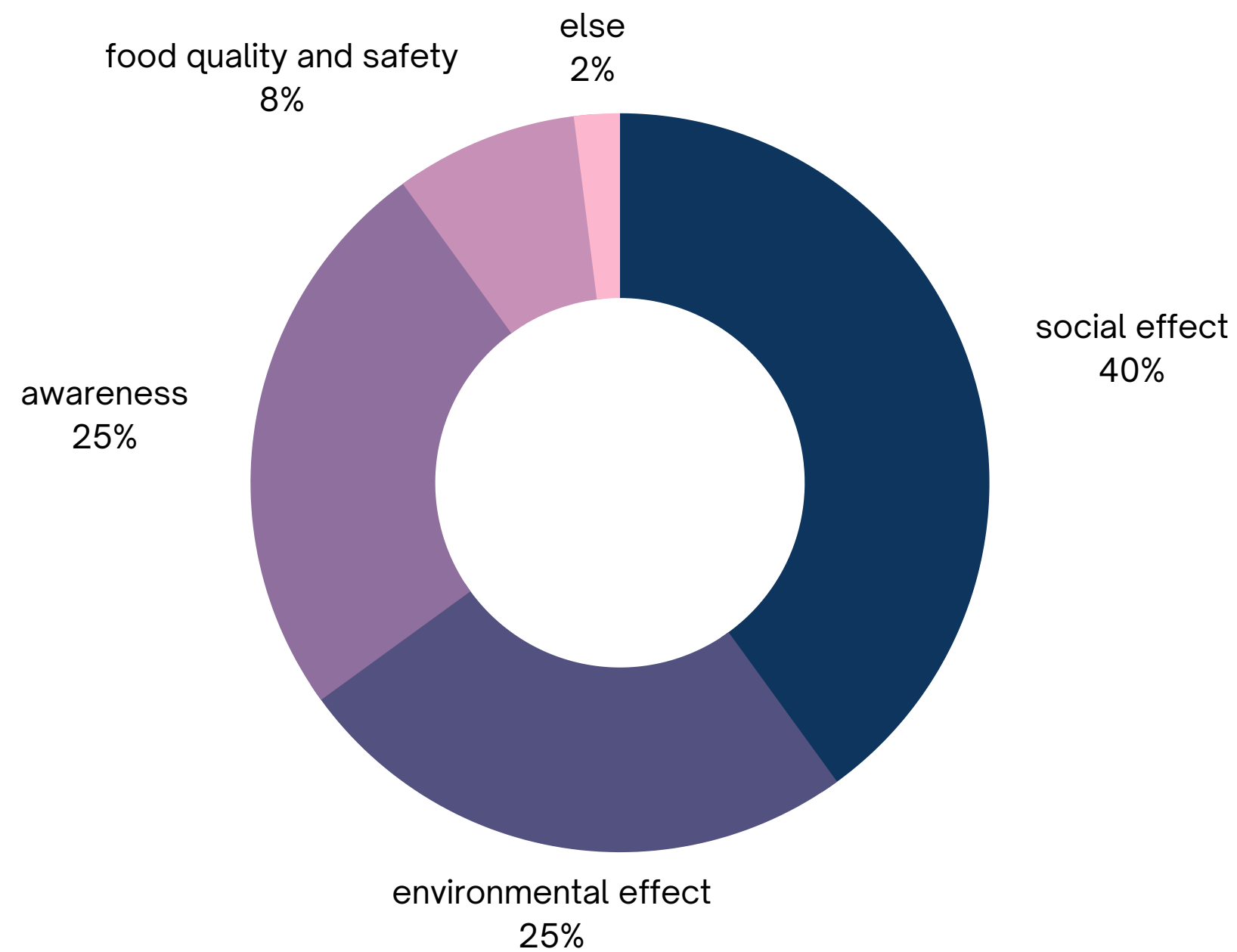
"It is relatively easy but still requires skills and appropriate" conditions.

05 Does your garden contribute to the ambiance ?



"This is particularly visible on a rainy and gloomy day".

06 What positive effects do you value most?



"The social effect is the most visible and the fastest. The other effects take more time to develop."



07 **WHAT WOULD YOU
LIKE TO IMPROVE**

"The design of the structure could be more efficient."

"The growing conditions -more light."

08 **HAVE YOU MADE
ANY MISTAKES?**

"The heat was too much in the beginning".

"We did not choose the right plants to grow."

"The seeds were too close and seedlings died."

09 **WHAT DID YOU
LEARN IN THESE 3
MONTHS?**

"Urban farming is not a joke. It is easy and fun but still requires skills and responsibility."

"It could be a very rewarding" activity.

"More preparation is needed - information about plants, growing conditions, watering."

10 **WHAT DO YOU PLAN
FOR YOUR GARDEN?**

"More herbs - it's the easiest."

"To plan more carefully what to plant and how."

"To improve the construction for more light and better drainage."



11 How can we spread the story and scale up urban farming?

"Through opportunities for exchange of experiences and leading by example."

"Demo sites where inexperienced citizens can get an idea what is needed."

"A lot of things can be done - fairs, competitions city games."

"Urban farming will be popular, if it is not promoted in principle, but the city should also provide land, roofs, finances and other resources."

"Media partnerships."



S

STRENGTHS

Environmental benefits
Potential to improve food security
Aesthetic merit

W

WEAKNESSES

Indoor environment does not
always provide good conditions
Could easily turn into growing
flowers

O

OPPORTUNITIES

Learn a skill
Grow food year-round
Build communities
Save money

T

THREATS

If based on enthusiasm, it shall
pass
Insufficient support
Job description conflicts



Recommendations for scaling up

More examples of structures to provide enough space between layers to provide for growth and light.

Alternative growing medium might be used instead of traditional soil, and hydroponics in particular to use less water.

Not just indoors vertical gardens but also outside walls, rooftops, sites in residential areas.

More visible urban projects.

Opportunities for funding.

We need more green spaces indoors and outdoors. It's not the colour that matters, it's the plan life!

