

GREEN-BLUE-GREY CAMPUS/RAIN GARDEN PROJECT

Executive Summary

Project Details:

Project Funder:	Chancellor's Fund
Project Leads:	Minty Donald, Larissa Naylor, Stewart Miller
Project/Report Contact:	Rachel Clive
Project Delivery:	Rachel Clive, Neil Jackson, Philip Nicholson, Yingying Liu, Qiuyi Zhang
Partners in the project:	Multiplex, Careys, Maggie's Centre, Kelvin Park Early Years Centre, UofG Sustainability Team.
Project Ethics Approval:	James Simpson

How to cite

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Background

The Chancellor's Fund Green-Blue-Grey Campus project brought together University of Glasgow staff and students from Geography, Theatre Studies and the University's Sustainability Team in an art-science public engagement project. The project used creative art-science methodologies to explore, devise and test strategies for successfully integrating green-blue infrastructure with specific reference to the sustainable design features of the ongoing university campus redevelopment.

The project was building on live research across both Geography and Theatre Studies, in particular Naylor et al's (2017 and ongoing) 'Greening the Grey' work and innovative public engagement research, and Donald and Millar's practice research on human-water inter-relations 'Guddling About' (ongoing since 2013), and 'Living, Working, Playing with Water' (2018) project:

a creative toolkit devised to address gaps in public knowledge about sustainable design. This executive summary synthesises the main project report's findings.

The project was devised by interdisciplinary doctoral and postdoctoral researchers Rachel Clive, Neil Jackson and Philip Nicholson, with input from Theatre Studies masters' students. It was delivered in partnership with Glasgow University's Sustainability Team, the Maggie's Centre, Kelvin Park Early Years Centre and Multiplex/ Careys. The project engaged with diverse publics who access / live / work in relationship with the university campus redevelopment site, including local residents, students, passers-by, tourists and workers.

The project team focussed on the sustainable design feature of the rain garden, a sustainable urban drainage system that will be constructed on the new campus, and which encapsulated the green blue grey themes that were explored.

Six key recommendations to take forward:

1. Signpost water features and processes creatively and imaginatively– people care about the area and the environment and want information.
2. Using creative public engagement practices was well-received and would benefit from being applied more widely.
3. Make the rain garden and the wider campus accessible, playful, green, blue and sensory – people want to connect with the water, with the earth and with each other, and feel better and healthier when they do.
4. A public art installation or sculpture as part of the rain garden design would help people to engage affectively with sustainable practices.
5. People appreciate greenspace not just for sensory reasons but also because it increases biodiversity. Think about design which actively increases biodiversity.
6. Involve diverse publics in the design process, and keep them involved during the construction and operational phases of the build.

Project aims - The Green-Blue-Grey Campus project aimed to:

1. Raise public awareness of sustainable urban design in the context of increased surface flooding, with a focus on blue-green-grey infrastructures to mitigate excess rainwater.
2. Gather information/ consult with diverse publics around understandings of green blue grey infrastructures, including the role they can play in sustainable urban design and the effects of this infrastructure on essential health and well-being, and biodiversity.
3. Build new partnerships of people interested in the environmental aspects of urban regeneration in the context of accelerating climate change.

Project Methods - three primary creative art-science methods were used:

Method 1: 'Guddling About' on four different locations around the university campus redevelopment site, testing and building on the toolkit devised by Donald and Millar in their project 'Living, Playing, Working with Water' (2018).

Method 2: Spatial Video Geonarrative (SVG) interviewing and digital storymapping building on work developed by Nicholson et al in mapping collaborative knowledge production in art-science projects (2019).

Method 3: Creative workshopping and focus group work with Kelvin Park Early Years Centre and Careys building contractors, building on the combined expertise of the team, and in particular on the doctoral research of Clive (2018) and Jackson (2019). A final workshop/ consultation event bringing multiple parties together to explore methods, discuss findings and identify ways forward.

Key Findings

Sustainability

- Sustainability is of great interest and concern to diverse publics, but specialist languages can intimidate and divide people – playful art-science practices can help to counter this and create new shared languages across traditional divides.
- People are interested in how water moves and in how urban water systems join up. People would like more information about this.
- People are concerned about climate change but have given less thought towards the potential of flooding in the Glasgow West End. Nevertheless, they are generally supportive of measures which could help to reduce flood risk.

Design

- Designers and architects need to communicate with those working on the ground.
- Publics appreciate sensory, interactive and playful aspects of sustainable design.

Waterplay

- Water can be a playful and positive connector of people and place. The 'Guddling About' methods and 'Living Working, Playing with Water' toolkit are generative of new art-science practices and effective in engaging publics in new ways as a result.
- People enjoy connecting with water and are happier connecting directly through water than through hidden or fenced off systems.
- Attitudes to playing with water are culturally-specific and vary depending on people's formative experiences of water.

Public Engagement

- Diverse publics have strong connections to the campus site and want to be consulted with regards to its redevelopment.
- There are capacities and possibilities for sustainable practice which are not being realised because of socio-economic inequalities and land ownership issues.
- To be effective, public engagement needs to be long term and embedded.
- SVG and storymapping work can help to map complex art-science/ sustainability projects and capture knowledge produced collaboratively.

Endnotes:

Naylor, L.A., Kippen, H., Coombes, M.A., Horton, B., MacArthur, M. and Jackson, N. (2017) "Greening the Grey: a framework for integrated green grey infrastructure" (IGGI) University of Glasgow report. URL: <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/150672/> NERC (National Environmental Research Council)

Donald, M (2018) Living, Working, Playing with Water: Exploring Perceptions of Water in the Urban Environment Through Creative Practice. Project Report. The Metropolitan Glasgow Strategic Drainage Partnership, Glasgow. URL: <http://eprints.gla.ac.uk/155513/>

Nicholson, P., Dixon, D., Pullanikkatil, D., Moyo, B. Long, H.& Barrett, B. (2019) "Malawi Stories: mapping an art-science collaborative process" Journal of Maps DOI: 10.1080/17445647.2019.1582440 <https://doi.org/10.1080/17445647.2019.1582440>