



Seeing is believing – experiments allow actors to try new things without losing too much.

Nature-based solutions are being developed in cities globally as forms of experimentation – novel approaches or innovations that respond both to the challenges cities are facing and provide opportunities for doing things differently. Large-scale formal experiments include test-beds, living laboratories and urban developments framed as innovative approaches for managing multiple urban challenges, from climate change to well-being. More informal but equally significant approaches to experimentation involve temporary installations, driven by a range of actors, as well as interventions taking place in existing urban landscapes driven by a few actors, for example in community gardens or existing public parks. The experimental qualities of nature-based solutions allow novel coalitions to be formed and risks to be taken in doing things differently, lowering the stakes involved if any particular intervention were not to succeed and allowing diverse approaches to be tried on for size. Yet despite the recognised value in experimentation it is often seen as just a phase which should be succeeded by more formalised, certain and regulated means of implementation. Experimentation may however be worth holding on to. It enables the development of knowledge in situ, further enabling the translation of generic information into locally embedded knowledge that meets the needs of communities and stakeholders. It allows for continual exploration and new possibilities, while at the same time recognising that not all new interventions will be a success. Iterative experimentation, that builds on what is already known and understood but which fosters an emergent, open approach to the development of nature-based solutions may prove productive for generating greater momentum for their uptake in diverse urban contexts.