

When Voluntary Work Meets Bureaucracy: A Personal, Political and Practical Analysis of Urban Sustainability Initiatives

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Abstract

As the populations of the world's cities are increasing at rapid rates, the development of effective sustainable solutions for urban areas is an important measure to mitigate further exacerbation of the environment. However, research has shown that there are challenges related to both participatory initiatives and policy measures for sustainability. In this thesis, I will explore how Oslo Municipality facilitates voluntary sustainable initiatives through the funding scheme Green Funds in District Sagene through the following question: *How can experiences from the Green Funds help to discover solutions for urban sustainability initiatives?*

Building on previous research and transformation literature, this thesis contributes to an understanding of how the strengths of political measures and participatory approaches can be coordinated. Through semi-structured interviews, this research investigates how the expectations, challenges, and lessons differ between beneficiaries of the Green Funds and the administrative staff members who manage the scheme. The results indicate that while Green Fund projects can lead to social benefits and increased environmental awareness, they also represent challenges related to social diversity, project management, and opposing expectations. On this basis, it is recommended that the aim and structure of the Green Funds be communicated more clearly to avoid different expectations, and that staff members facilitate beneficiaries to the best of their abilities to generate successful projects. As this research focuses on a single case of urban sustainability initiatives, further research is needed to understand how the case of the Green Funds in Sagene compares to similar initiatives in different contexts.

Key words: Norway, Oslo Municipality, District Sagene, sustainability initiatives, urban environment, voluntary work, participation, community, local context, local government, policy measures, transformation theory

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1 Introduction

1.1 Cities as Sites of Change

An ever-increasing amount of people live in cities. The 21st century represented a milestone in history: for the first time, over half of the world's population resides in urban settlements. By 2050, this number is expected to increase to 68% (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2018). Not only does this upsurge entail more people: In large cities, particularly, air pollution, waste management, and high consumption patterns continue to pose numerous challenges for both human well-being and the state of the environment. Although urban settlements account for only 2% of the Earth's surface, more than 75% of the Earth's annual natural resource depletion occurs in cities, making them the main source of environmental degradation (Vojnovic 2014, 30). It is therefore vital to explore different initiatives aimed at improving the social and environmental conditions of urban settlements.

Sustainability has become a pressing issue over the last few decades, as the results of human actions that harm the planet have become increasingly apparent. The term 'sustainable development' has been used to describe transformations in the social, economic, environmental, and cultural dimensions of society on which the survival of the human species depends (Vlek and Steg 2007, 1). Sustainability can be defined as "the set of behaviors that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; such behaviors often involve environmental activity and sustainable consumption" (Simpson and Radford 2013, as cited in Grinstein and Riefler 2015, 694).

The vagueness of this definition, however, leaves room for debate about how to achieve this goal. The issue of how sustainability should be defined has been the subject of debate since the term was introduced. When designing sustainability rules and standards, they should be conceived as universal concepts free from cultural bias and value judgments (Sverdrup and Stjernquist 2002, 21).

This concept of sustainability was first presented in the Brundtland Report of 1987, which was the driving force behind the ongoing debate on sustainable development. An important milestone in this conversation was the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio, which brought international attention to the environmental impacts of consumption patterns in industrialised countries (Evans 2019, 502). The latest and perhaps most influential development in this conversation was the establishment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations in 2016, which contributed to bringing sustainability into the societal discourse (Neckel 2018, 46-47). Sustainability does not only encompass environmental challenges, but also social and economic factors. One aspect of this is the social, environmental, and economic sustainability of urban settlements, as outlined in SDG number eleven: Making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2016, 26).

As urban areas are being increasingly regarded as important sites for sustainable transitions, more and more cities around the world are implementing new sustainable solutions in policy, discourse, and practice. 'Eco-cities,' 'green cities', and 'sustainable cities' are creating new and innovative solutions to tackle the climate crisis. There are several schemes in place to identify and promote cities that compete for the title as the greenest, including Britain's Sustainable City Index, America's Greenest City Index, and France's EcoCités scheme, to name a few (Rosol, Béal, and Mössner 2017, 1710).

Yet another is the European Commission's Green Capital programme. This title was awarded to Oslo, Norway for the year 2019. The award recognises Oslo's achievements in recent years in the transition to become a green city. The ambition of the Oslo Municipality in this project was to present Oslo as a good example and to inspire other cities to achieve sustainable urban development (Oslo European Green Capital 2019). While mega-cities are often the ones to receive media attention for their booming populations, it is, in fact, cities with less than a million inhabitants that are expected to grow the most in the upcoming decade, and they are also where the majority of urban populations in the world live (Vojnovic 2014, 30). As a result of its size, Oslo is both small enough to

explore and test new solutions, and large enough for these solutions to be scaled to larger urban areas (Oslo European Green Capital 2019). In light of these factors, I find Oslo to be an interesting research area to explore the possibilities for sustainable initiatives in urban settings.



Figure 1: Central Oslo (The Agility Effect 2019)

The social aspect of sustainability is crucial. Participation, engagement, awareness, active understanding, and contact between people are key elements for anything to be sustained over time. While the aspiration for a green shift is certainly also a political challenge, activists and scholars alike argue that a focus on participation is just as important for creating sustainable transformations (Ghai and Vivian 1992, 14). Although development and environmental challenges are issues that require international response and cooperation, most actions both can and should be taken at national and local levels. Without the full support and commitment of ordinary people, there can be no full transition to sustainable societies (Ghai and Vivian 1992, 14).

With a focus on the social aspect in mind, I sought out to explore a sustainable initiative in Oslo that focuses on this important component. This led me to discover *Grønne midler*, which translates into Green Funds.¹ This is an environmental funding scheme provided by the Municipality of Oslo that originated District Sagene, which is why I have

¹All translations by May Lene Smith Hove unless otherwise noted.

chosen this district as my case. Politicians and district staff in Sagene has worked actively for several years to promote sustainable urban solutions through various initiatives and policy incentives (Paaby 2017a). Since the Green Fund scheme was developed here in 2012, it has been integrated into 9 of the 15 districts of Oslo. The incorporation of the Green Funds in the various districts of Oslo have taken place quickly, and are an example of the sustainable transformation of the Oslo Municipality across a wide range of city sectors.

These funds are provided annually to businesses, informal groups, green entrepreneurs, housing cooperatives, and non-profit organisations working towards sustainable initiatives. The scheme aims to promote increased environmental engagement in District Sagene by providing financial support for green initiatives, as well as promoting social interaction and inclusion. Projects must, among other things, have a local focus on Sagene, create a positive environmental impact, be innovative, and engage local residents (Bydel Sagene 2016).

1.2 Aims, Objectives, and Research Questions

While the Green Fund scheme has a strong focus on voluntary work, participation, and community involvement, it is necessary to critically discuss whether there is tangible potential for environmental initiatives such as this one. As different voluntary sustainability initiatives have been tested out in different contexts, various degrees of success and challenges have been identified. ² For incentives such as the Green Funds to achieve positive effects that extend beyond the lives of a few engaged participants, it is crucial to assess how effective the scheme has been in involving the wider community. It is also important to explore how municipal efforts and voluntary initiatives can function together to discover both the positive aspects as well as the challenges that can arise from this type of collaboration. In this thesis, I argue that since voluntary sustainability initiatives face several challenges to their success, they can benefit from being coordinated with political measures.

²See, for instance, Magnaghten and Jacobs (1997), Ghai and Vivian (1992), Fuertes and Jiménez (2000), Cleaver (1999), Alloun and Alexander (2014) and Cox (2011).

To examine different factors that influence the levels of success in Green Funds-sponsored projects, as well as the scheme itself, I am drawing on the tool 'three spheres of transformation' by O'Brien and Sygna (2013) and O'Brien (2018), who underline the need for interaction and collaboration between different areas of society to achieve sustainable transformations. The three spheres include the personal, political, and practical aspects of transformation, all of which need to be considered when attempting to facilitate sustainable societal changes. This tool and its notion is also the significance behind the title of this thesis. The framework will be used to discuss empirical findings from the Green Fund scheme. This includes personal aspects like context and norms, motivation, and participation; the political sphere, including local government and policies, and practical aspects; the concrete measures implemented and their relating challenges. Supplementary literature will also be included to investigate these themes.

My overall all objective is to investigate the positive outcomes as well as the challenges of local participation combined with political incentives in sustainability facilitation. The material on which the study is based derives from interviews with a limited numbers of actors, and I will use the findings to examine what characterises and motivates the beneficiary informants who have received the Green Funds, and investigate the experiences and expectations of different relevant actors. The final objective is to analyse the Green Funds in Sagene through the lens of transformation literature.

The main research question that guides this study is the following: *How can experiences from the Green Funds help to discover solutions for urban sustainability initiatives?* This can be divided into the following sub-questions:

1. What characterises and motivates beneficiaries involved in Green Funds-supported projects?
2. What do the beneficiaries consider to be the challenges of their projects and the Green Funds?
3. What are the District Sagene staff's expectations for the scheme, and what have

been their challenges in managing it?

4. How can the case of the Green Funds be understood in the light of transformation theory?

1.3 Thesis Outline

The thesis is outlined as follows: In Chapter 2, I introduce the conceptual framework that guides this study, and shortly review previous research. In Chapter 3, I present two international grassroots environmental movements and discuss the commonplace challenges of self-regulatory initiatives. I describe the research process and methods used for gathering and analysing empirical material in Chapter 4. The context of Sagene and the Green Funds are introduced in Chapter 5, and the results of my empirical research are presented in Chapter 6. In Chapter 7, I discuss the findings and elaborate on how they can be understood in relation to the literature. Finally, I conclude in Chapter 8 and reflect on the significance of my findings.

2 Conceptual Framework and Previous Studies

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the overarching conceptual framework that guides this thesis, the three spheres of transformation heuristic by O'Brien and Sygna (2013) and O'Brien (2018). This framework is then used to initiate a wider discussion of relevant previous research that will enable us to understand the Green Funds as a political measure, the motivation and characteristics of the participants, the meeting between voluntary groups and the municipal sector, as well as the related challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the success of the Green Fund scheme.

According to Shove (2010, 1273-1274), there has been a missed opportunity to include reflections from the social sciences into environmental policies, such as the incorporation of knowledge on social change. According to her, it is necessary to move beyond the standard model of social change that has often been applied to environmental policies. She criticises this behavioural approach, which she calls the ABC model. This is an abbreviation for attitudes, behaviour, and choice. This model, which often uses language that focuses on the individual's personal responsibility and actions, fails to recognise the wider range of actions required. The model is derived from the psychological literature on planned behaviour and is based on policymakers seeking to convince individuals to make sacrifices and environmentally friendly choices.

The ABC model has impacted the development of climate change policies and strategies, but Shove questions whether it can cover all the dynamic processes of social change that are required on a large scale (Shove 2010, 1277). The belief that attitudes, behaviour, and choices of individuals can transform societies towards sufficient climate mitigation practices, neglects the wider context of transformations required. While these factors are also central aspects of O'Brien and Sygna's framework, they pay attention to a broader set of actions as well. The aim is to demonstrate that there is no single driver for sustainable transformations – rather, it can only be accomplished through interaction on different levels of society (O'Brien and Sygna 2013, 3).

Transformation literature emerged as a response to the negative environmental consequences resulting from human actions. The premise is that major transformations are needed across multiple levels of society to prevent disasters. In the context of this literature, transformations can be defined as “the capacity to create untried beginnings from which to evolve a fundamentally new way of living when existing ecological, economic, and social conditions make the current system untenable.” (Westley 2011, 763 as cited in O’Brien and Sygna 2013, 1). As this definition shows, transformations involve a variety of different factors. This includes organisational and institutional structures, leadership and politics, social networks, and changes in meanings and perceptions. Transformations can be initiated from above by those in positions of power, or initiated from below by groups and communities (Folke et. al. 2010, 5).

While the term ‘transformation’ is often used as a term to describe large and overarching political, technical, and systemic changes, O’Brien and Sygna note that changes in human behaviour are also central. Rather than focusing exclusively on new technologies, changing policies, and improving governance, it is also necessary to understand how the human agency can exert influence. Individuals and groups may become agents of change through self-awareness. By understanding underlying factors such as beliefs, values, and worldviews, it is possible to study how social structures shape human actions, and vice versa (O’Brien and Sygna 2013, 3).

These reflections led O’Brien and Sygna to create a tool that can be used to investigate relevant factors that come into play in the mitigation of climate change, known as the three spheres of transformation, shown in Figure 2 on page 9. It describes how responses to climate change crises must take place across three different, but interactive spheres of society: the personal, the political, and the practical modes of action. Therefore, I consider this framework to be a useful starting point for describing and analysing the Green Fund scheme in a broader societal context.

The term ‘spheres’ is used to describe that the different areas of society are integrated

aspects of a larger whole, not separate entities (O'Brien 2018, 155). This is because actions in the practical sphere are shaped by political structures and systems of society at large, which, in turn, are shaped by social interactions (O'Brien and Sygna 2013, 8). The

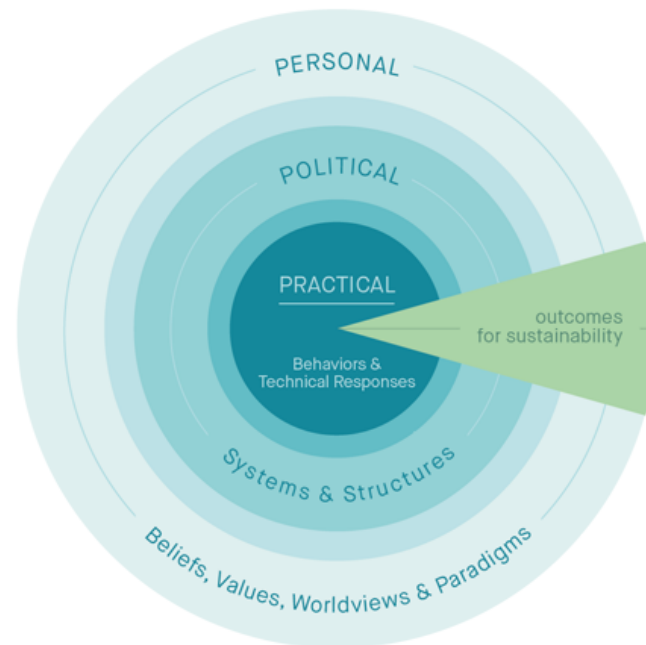


Figure 2: The Three Spheres of Transformation (O'Brien and Sygna 2013, 5)

practical sphere is located in the centre of the figure. This includes specific behaviours, strategies, practices, actions, and interventions that are directly linked to a specific outcome. This sphere has historically been the main point of focus in climate mitigation strategies, as the results achieved in this sphere can be easily measured, evaluated, and quantified. Examples may include growing local food, reducing plastic use, using public transport, and upgrading infrastructure. It is also in this sphere that most mitigations to climate change take place (O'Brien and Sygna 2013, 5).

While practical transformations do have the ability to inspire transformations in the personal and political spheres, they are often difficult to implement on a large scale. This is due to the challenges of coordinating the actions with structures and established norms in the two other spheres. Also, the efforts may not address the underlying issues and profound changes needed. If the overarching systems and structures in society are not transformed as well, the actions in the practical sphere will merely be symbolic efforts

(O'Brien and Sygna 2013, 5).

In between the two other spheres, is where we find the political sphere. This contains structures and systems that either facilitate or constrain the practical responses described in the previous sphere. "Systems can be described as relationships between parts that form a larger whole, and structures describe the norms, rules, regulations, institutions, regimes, and incentives that influence how systems are designed, organised and governed (O'Brien 2018, 156). This includes social, cultural, political, economic, and legal systems in society that often reflect the worldviews, values, and beliefs of the past.

Systems and structures are often created and managed through political processes, which in turn, shape the conditions under which practical responses can be made. Political forces establish rules in society; and social movements, organisations, and lobbyists respond to them. Problems and solutions are identified, and conflicts of interest are bound to arise. Whereas natural resources management was previously not believed to be within the realm of human agency, people now influence the state of the environment, and decisions about the environment are usually decided through political processes (O'Brien and Sygna 2013, 6).

Finally, the personal sphere is located in the outermost section of the figure. This sphere regulates how structures and systems are perceived and influenced, and contains subjective factors which influence interventions and behaviours (O'Brien and Sygna 2013, 5). This includes both individual and shared subjective worldviews, values, and beliefs. This influences what is considered to be possible, desirable, and who is considered to have power. This, in turn, shapes behaviours and practices in the practical sphere. Themes and discussions that emerge in the personal sphere also influence what questions are asked or not, and in turn, what subjects come politicised in the political sphere (O'Brien 2018, 157).

While individual beliefs and values may be used to justify and confirm pre-existing beliefs, they might also be transformed over time or after significant events (O'Brien 2018,

156). Transformations in worldviews and beliefs cannot be forced, but may only come about through a willingness to accept the information presented and an inclination to change one's worldview. Although these changes are not as tangible as the ones in the other spheres, transformations in the personal sphere are considered to have the most profound effects. As changes in this sphere can lead to different understandings of the world, they can, in turn, also change the world (O'Brien and Sygna 2013, 6).

The three spheres of transformation is not a theory, but rather a tool capable of integrating different theories of transformation. This approach of analysing transformations is compatible with several other frameworks, such as the multi-level perspective, socio-ecological transformation, and social practice theory (O'Brien 2018, 157). According to O'Brien (personal communication per e-mail, January 31st, 2020), the framework of the three spheres is a simple heuristic. While this is a benefit meaning it can be used on many different phenomena, its vagueness may also make it difficult to criticise. The greatest challenge is to communicate the relationships between the spheres in a clear manner. On one hand, it is a process-oriented model rather than a causal one, but some changes in society still have more leverage than others.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss additional research and studies in light of this framework. The spheres will be used to investigate driving forces and barriers to the implementation of sustainability initiatives in different areas of society. As O'Brien and Sygna's approach is designed to be fluid, several of the themes could be placed under more than one category. The point is to show that these spheres interact, so the following categorisation is not intended to be a stringent division.

2.2 The Personal Sphere

The sociocultural factors that govern people's willingness to identify with and participate in sustainable transformations must be taken into account when it comes to facilitating long-term societal change. Sustainability initiatives depend on public identification and support to succeed, particularly at the local levels. In 1997, Magnaghten and Jacobs (1997, 5) observed that there was little research that examined the cultural factors that

influence how people respond to and participate in sustainability initiatives.

They claimed that too much attention had been focused on the objectives and meanings of sustainability and policy mechanisms for which sustainability initiatives could be implemented, while too little attention had been paid to political contexts, including the relationships between residents and governments that are required for initiatives to succeed (Macnaghten and Jacobs 1997, 5). Since then, a great deal of research has emerged on sociocultural aspects: Social cohesion, community, local contexts, shared beliefs, and worldviews are now more widely recognised as relevant factors for success.

Cultural orientation, for instance, are the specific ways of acting, thinking, and feeling that are culturally determined by the societies in which we live. Cultural orientations influence the capacity to engage, as well as the perceived levels of self-efficacy. Research has shown that people are more likely to engage in pro-environmental activities when they perceive their actions to be directly tied to the state of the environment, and therefore believe their actions can alleviate environmental problems (Grinstein and Riefler 2015, 698). We will now explore how particular social settings and local contexts influence people's willingness to participate in sustainable activities.

2.2.1 The Influence of Context and Social Norms

According to Hopkins (2008, 91), the founder of the Transition Towns Network (which we will return to in the upcoming chapter), it is vital to have common visions and goals to create changes in behaviour. The notion is that increased senses of unity will promote sustainable behaviour by creating local identities, focusing on social inclusion, thus creating a desire to improve the state of an area. This can allegedly be accomplished by initiating sustainable small-scale projects where people can become aware of their habits and change their worldviews and beliefs towards more environmentally friendly actions (Hopkins 2008, 92). Similarly, Dassopoulos and Monnat (2011, 561) claim that collective efficacy and neighborhood satisfaction is created by social cohesion and involvement among residents. An important issue in participatory approaches is the attempt of unifying people in a given area of different socioeconomic statuses, ages, genders, and ethnicities

into a single 'community' as some form of natural entity. This is a strategy created by development interventions to engage residents but does not take into account the fact that residents of urban settlements often have the least amount of social cohesion and collaboration, and the highest amount of divisions and conflicts (Cannon and Schipper 2014, 93).

A community can be defined as "a group or network of persons who are connected (objectively) to each other by relatively durable social relations that extend beyond immediate genealogical ties and who mutually define that relationship (subjectively) as important to their social identity and social practice" (James 2014, 32). It is clear from this definition that even though a group of people may live in the same area, neighborhood or district, strong social ties must also be established for a group of people to identify themselves as a community.

Creating sustainable initiatives in larger areas (such as urban districts), with a focus on 'improving the community' could, therefore, face challenges. When creating goals while assuming that everyone adheres to the same worldviews, values, and beliefs about sustainability, one ignores the fact that modern society is a complex web of different personalities and interests that often clash (O'Toole, Wallis, and Mitchell 2006, 39). The term 'community' should, therefore, be used with caution in sustainability discourses. In practice, this could mean that different groups represent different interests, perceive and measure sustainability in different ways, and have conflicting objectives and different strategies to achieve them. It should not be taken for granted that people in an area have a common group mentality that allows them to work together towards sustainable transformations. In circumstances where a group of different people is labeled as a 'community,' it is difficult to unite the views of all and to develop strategies aimed at changing people's perceptions of sustainability (O'Toole, Wallis, and Mitchell 2006, 39).

As have been shown, there are various factors that influence norms, values, and worldviews in the personal sphere. While these factors *can* be shared by a large group of people, they are nevertheless social constructs. Subjective perceptions of reality influence people's behaviour, shape how structures and systems are influenced and perceived, and

how practical responses are viewed. The feasibility of transformational attempts depends on the sense of community, participation, local context, and public acceptance - as well as the degree to which worldviews are shared within a group of people.

2.2.2 Engagement through Participation and Voluntary Work

While the importance of people's participation in sustainable development has become more widely recognised, there is little awareness of the various aspects involved participation (Ghai and Vivian 1992). One question in this regard is what needs to be done to make people's efforts impactful. To create long-term and effective sustainable transformations, it is insufficient to focus on the efforts and capabilities of individuals. They are the smallest decision-making units in society and, as a result, the results of their efforts will have limited impact unless coordinated with the efforts of larger actors. As such, transformations should be initiated from units at either group, community, or local levels, as interactions in these areas shape people's behaviour (Uphoff 1992, 3). O'Brien and Sygna (2013) also emphasise this point: different spheres of society interact and influence each other.

The social sphere has traditionally been separated into two spheres: public and private. This division does, however, fail to recognise a third sector which goes by different names, such as the voluntary, membership, or collective action sector. Uphoff (1992, 4) calls this the participatory sector, and it has similarities with both the public and private sectors. Like the public sector, the decisions made in the participatory sector are designed to serve common interests rather than individual ones. Additionally, it has a degree of flexibility, like the private sector. However, it differs from the others in the sense that it is not oriented towards profit, like in the private sector, and not supported by public authorities, as in the public sector (Uphoff 1992, 4).

Participatory or bottom-up approaches are a common way of creating sustainable actions. In a governance setting, it is based on the active involvement of a range of stakeholders in both action and decision-making processes. This process of democratic participation has been particularly prominent in environmental governance (Few, Brown, and Tompkins

2007, 47). However, until recently, there has been little research on the benefits and challenges of bottom-up regulations (Mariam 2001, 11). While political participation focuses on collaborating with governments and policy-makers, grassroots participation focuses on the idea of self-efficacy and self-organisation. The idea is not to centralise the decision-making processes, but rather to connect to and learn from many different knowledge-sharing initiatives, practices, experiences, ideas, and skills (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 2).

The notions of participation and voluntary work are rooted in the ideals of democracy itself. By participating, making decisions, and deliberating at the local levels, ordinary residents can effectively learn about democracy. Participation creates more transparent governance, while residents are politically socialised. In participatory democracy literature, it is claimed that participatory systems become self-sustaining because few qualities are required of individual residents. Moreover, trust, knowledge, and skills acquired through participation are often transferred to other political and civic spheres (Pateman 1970, as cited in Schugurensky 2013, 164-165).

A common way to facilitate participation is through voluntary work. In a review of more than 300 publications dealing with voluntary work, Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth (1996) found that the term itself was rarely defined. Because of this, they set out to create an overview of what the term entails. According to them, multiple criteria need to be fulfilled for an action to be categorised as voluntary work. In the widest sense, the term refers to formalised, unpaid work that is freely chosen and normally part of a non-profit organisation, and benefits the wider community (Cnaan, Handy and Wadsworth 1996, as cited in Schugurensky, Duguid and Mündel 2013, 18). This definition is in line with the Green Fund guidelines' description of what kinds of projects that are eligible for funding, as well as the practical aspects of the initiatives and motivations of the participants. We will return to this in Chapter 6: Findings.

While participation appears to be emphasised as a natural and desirable way of facilitating social change, there is little evidence that supports its effectiveness. There are disagree-

ments regarding the validity of participation's ability to change perceptions, habits, and attitudes towards sustainability (Cleaver 1999, 597-598). Voluntary work, for instance, represents several issues concerning social stratification. Cannon and Schipper (2014, 108) found that the people most likely to engage in participatory, voluntary activities are, in most cases, wealthy, educated people with high socio-economic statuses. This is known as elite capture, a process in which resources allocated to a larger group are controlled by a few dominant people in society for the benefit of their interests. When allocating public funds to sustainable urban initiatives, it is essential that the conversation not becomes dominated by any particular group and turns into so-called 'middle-class voluntarism.' If development is to be truly sustainable, it also involves the inclusion of elders, immigrants, and other often excluded social groups (Alloun and Alexander 2014, 11).

In a study of over 9000 Canadian volunteers who performed unpaid work for organisations and groups, Stowe (2013, 44-46) found that there are clear patterns of characteristics of volunteers by looking at factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, employment status, educational- and income levels. Interestingly, 43 % of Whites report spending time on volunteering compared to 35 % of South Asians and 31 % of Blacks. This may be linked to findings from previous studies that show that minority racial groups are generally less satisfied with their neighborhoods than ethnic majorities, and, in turn, have less motivation to engage in and improve their communities (Dassopoulos and Monat 2011, 561).

Stowe (2013, 44-47) also found that higher education levels correspond with time spent volunteering. Additionally, high-income earners are more likely to donate their time to voluntary work. She speculates that this is because low-income earners have less time to spend on doing activities of their choosing. In sum, Stowe concludes that the most typical voluntary worker is a white woman, working either full-time or part-time and is married with children. Wilson and Musick (1997, 711) had similar findings. Using a sociological point of view, they argue that the fact that the majority of voluntary workers are female can be related to the values of care and nurturing that is embedded in gender roles. They also claim that the lack of participation among immigrants compared to that of Whites is related to immigrants' alleged lower rate of social integration.

Specific socio-demographic characteristics of urban residents, such as higher education levels and financial status, also tend to increase awareness of environmental issues (Grinstein and Riefler 2015, 697). Besides, people with higher socio-economic status have better verbal, writing and communication skills, making it easier to reach out to others, and thus increases the likelihood of engagement in both formal and informal activities (Wilson and Musick 1997, 711). Volunteering also requires several forms of capital. Productive work requires human capital, including income and health status. Social capital, including social networks, support, and social skills, is required, in addition to cultural capital, including the values of wanting to help others and to contribute to society (Wilson and Musick 1997, 709-711).

According to Bourdieu (1991, as cited in Schugurensky 2013, 164-165), the monopolisation of the political field is not a natural phenomenon, but a social construction that can be challenged by social action. This is particularly important for underrepresented and marginalised groups, as studies have shown that there is a correlation between political participation, socio-economic status, and political efficacy. Since higher-income groups have more capital, they also tend to be more involved, thus more effective.

2.2.3 Motivations for Participating in Sustainable Initiatives

Social characteristics and capital are not the only prerequisites for participating in sustainable initiatives; the motivational factors that facilitate engagement are equally important. If participation and voluntary work in sustainability initiatives are to be useful tools for including people in transformations, it is relevant to investigate the reasons that cause people to search out and participate in voluntary work, and which motivational factors result in their continued participation over time (Fuertes and Jiménez 2000, 76).

Stowe (2013, 47-49) states that the most common reasons for volunteering are believing in the cause (92%), wanting to contribute to and improve the community (83%), putting skills and experiences to use (77%), being directly affected by the cause (60%), exploring new skills (49%), and meeting and networking with other people (47%). According to

Fuertes and Jiménez (2000, 76), there are two types of motivation for volunteering: other-oriented and self-oriented reasons. This categorisation describes whether the sources of motivation are mainly to do good for the community or to improve their own lives. Within these two categories, five motives are most commonly cited for volunteering. These include community concern and values (other-oriented motivation), as well as personal development, knowledge, and social relationships (self-oriented motivation).

Regardless of the duration of their participation, volunteers in Fuertes and Jiménez's study (2000, 79) identified community concern and values as the most important factors. Looking at motivation compared to the length of participation, it appears that other-oriented motivations are significantly more important for volunteers who have participated in an initiative over a long period. Despite this, the volunteers that had been involved for a long time also gave more importance to self-oriented motivations (personal development, knowledge, and social relationships) compared to those who had been involved for a short time. This means that both other-oriented and self-oriented motivations are important for and related to, long-term participation (Fuertes and Jiménez 2000, 79).

Long-term participation is, however, difficult to ensure. Participant drop-out is a common feature of voluntary initiatives and is a challenge for their sustainability. Drop-out can be caused either by turnover or burnout. Turnover can be due to general changes in life circumstances that lead people to quit, or due to motivation weaning away. The latter is according to Cox (2011, 1), often related to people who have more self-centered motivations for volunteering than those who volunteer for values greater than themselves. 'Burnout-syndrome' can be caused by several factors (Fuertes and Jiménez 2000, 75). Some of the most common reasons are lack of resources (such as time and money), resistance and lack of external recognition, and lack of immediate results (often due to high expectations). The people who burn out are often the ones who are committed to taking on the highest amounts of responsibility. As a result, they tend to overwork themselves and lose motivation. Personal conflicts that undermine the social dynamics of the groups represents yet another reason behind burnout (Cox 2011, 11-15).

This section has shown challenges in making participatory/voluntary initiatives socially inclusive and sustainable long-term. It is therefore essential to have a nuanced approach towards local participatory sustainability initiatives, recognising both their benefits and challenges. While group-based sustainability initiatives can indeed bring issues to the political agenda, small-scale initiatives cannot alone have transformative powers unless they are supported by systems and structures (Morse 2008, 347). This brings us over to factors relevant to sustainable transformations in the political sphere.

2.3 The Political Sphere

It was mentioned in the Introduction that the populations of cities around the world are expected to increase in the upcoming years. As a result, the role of cities and their capacity to promote sustainability will only become increasingly important (Brugmann 1996, 371). In response to the widely accepted notion that local action must be taken to achieve global sustainability, local government initiatives are becoming more widespread (Saha 2009, 39).

2.3.1 Local Government as a Sustainability Facilitator

Significant amounts of recent research on climate mitigation policies have focused on the role and function of sub-national governments. In Norway, this includes counties and municipalities. It has been argued that local institutions and authorities should be at the forefront of these efforts, which raises questions as to what types of policies should be implemented to achieve climate mitigation objectives (Kasa, Westskog and Rose 2018, 98). Uphoff (1992, 2) claims that behaviour is influenced by consensus and community norms (cf. the personal sphere). As such, creating environmentally friendly initiatives requires not only individual persuasion, but also needs to be tailored to fit the specific audience. The strength of local governments is that they are the level of governance most closely linked to the residents of the area. They are, therefore, in a position to educate, mobilise, and respond to the public. This way, they can identify and respond to the unique cultural context and needs of an area to develop sustainability policies that resonate with the public (Bregon et. al. 2015, 1).

According to O'Brien (2018, 156), the political sphere contains systems and structures that are designed, organised, and governed by political processes. New structures that can encourage sustainability innovations in the practical sphere are created in this sphere. Institutions, regimes, laws, regulations, and incentives in this sphere are managed through collective action, which also represents its challenges. The political sphere encompasses social fields where there are shared interests and understandings, but also disagreements and tensions that can create conflicts. Besides, the initiatives are most often led by public actors, such as government agencies, elected officials, state-owned companies, and local authorities. This means that architectural, engineering, consulting and construction professionals are shaping sustainability narratives through selective expert opinions (Rosol, Béal and Mössner 2017, 1713-1714).

Vasstrøm and Lysgård (2015, 137) use the term 'reversed participation' as a means to avoid this. According to them, the overarching systems and structures of society also need to be open to residents and communities to express their perspectives, challenge norms, argue their agendas, and be active members with a voice in how societies should be organised. Rather than having rules, regulations, and initiatives created solely by expert definitions and policymakers, the planning system also needs to listen to the residents through reversed participation. The political sphere is where social movements occur, and norms are challenged. This can also lead to new forms of collaboration between different groups within society (O'Brien 2018, 156).

2.3.2 Policy and Local Context

According to Tørnblad, Westskog and Rose (2014, 38), it is essential to consider local contexts when attempting to develop green policies in any given area. The local context can refer to both a geographical location and a sense of common identity among the inhabitants of the area. Views on how public policies should be developed have changed over time, with increasing recognition of the importance of the local context and norms in the context of public acceptance. In the modernist approach, policies were implemented in a one-size-fits-all approach and did not take into account local variances. These blueprint

policy practices were criticised by institutionalist perspectives, where it was argued that social relations and place-specific contexts must also be considered. This idea was further developed by a variety of disciplines. For instance, studies in environmental psychology show that spaces influence emotions, self-awareness, and identity. In human geography, it has been shown that attachment to a place affects how people perceive and react to environmental conditions.

Attitudes towards environmental sustainability are also influenced by place-related social identities. As a result, policies for sustainability and public acceptance cannot be treated in isolation, as results of policy will vary from context to context (Tørnblad, Westskog and Rose 2014, 38). In a qualitative study of responses to restrictive policy measures in Drammen and Bærum, Tørnblad, Westskog and Rose (2014, 51) conclude that local contexts cannot be overlooked if environmentally friendly public policies are to be implemented. Knowledge of the collective norms, identities, values, and perceptions of the population in the area is crucial to develop policies that will be accepted by the public.

Similarly, Saha (2009, 41) argues that several factors influence the success of local government sustainability efforts, one being economic variables. In cities that are struggling financially, development concerns are likely to override sustainability concerns. As a result, cities with healthy economies are more likely to have successful sustainability initiatives. Political cultures are another important factor. According to Saha (2009, 43), cities that have the greatest success in promoting sustainability share many characteristics. These cities can be described as having what she calls 'new political cultures', which can be explained using Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Rising affluence levels and high-quality education systems have an impact on political culture. When basic needs are met, people's aspirations and values change as they seek a higher sense of fulfilment in themselves and their societies. This is reminiscent of O'Brien's description of transformations in the personal sphere that can lead to new ways of seeing and understanding the world and influence the political sphere (2018, 157).

Despite these findings, Saha (2009, 46) also notes that it is challenging to assess whether

local governments with successful sustainability initiatives are responding to and creating policy *for* the culture of the population, or whether local government officials have *internalised* the cultural and political environment. Following the line of thought of O'Brien and Sygna (2013), it could be argued that this is not a causal process, but rather an example of the personal and political spheres interacting in non-linear processes of transformation.

While there have been many positive environmental impacts from the rise of sustainability initiatives in urban governance, there are also several problematic aspects. Rosol, Béal, and Mössner (2017, 1713-1714) discuss what they call 'new environmental regimes', where urban sustainability strategies have become common in recent years. These governmental strategies have several traits in common. First of all, they are what they describe as 'best practice-driven', meaning that urban environmental strategies are largely based on pilot projects that are designed to inspire and be replicated elsewhere. While pilot projects are often applauded for promoting innovation, Rosol Béal, and Mössner (2017, 1713-1714) claim that these usually tend to be concentrated in wealthy areas where only the privileged benefit.

Another feature is that 'new environmental regimes' are socio-spatially selective, with sustainability initiatives often used as tools for creating attractive spaces for upper-middle-class social groups. As these initiatives are usually unevenly distributed, their benefits do not reach disadvantaged populations, what they call 'eco-gentrification', described as a commodification of early environmental movements. While drawing inspiration from their ideals, most governments are still focused on continued economic growth. According to Rosol, Béal and Mössner (2017, 1714), it is necessary to recognise what can be learned from environmental movements and grassroots initiatives that resist the idea of continued growth and advocate more transparent decision-making processes. However, these movements also depend on political regulations and power to unfold their ideas. This will be the point of focus in the next chapter.

2.3.3 Soft Policy Measures

The distinction between soft and hard regulatory measures is relevant in figuring out how to promote sustainability. Hard measures may be defined as those consisting of some form of legal or economical sanction if policies are not followed. In this approach, costs and restraints are implemented to achieve a political goal. Examples of this include fines, road tolls, and rush-hour fees (Tørnblad, Westskog and Rose 2014, 38).

Soft measures, on the other hand, are based on normative and non-sanctioned codes of conduct and recommendations. "Soft regulation refers to a wide range of quasi-legal instruments that differ from hard law as they lack immediate, uniformly binding, direct effects, precision, and monitoring, dispute settlement, and enforcement authorities." (Koutalakis et. al. 2010, 330 as cited in Kasa, Westskog and Rose 2018, 99). Following this definition, it seems like the Green Funds, a municipal financing scheme that encourages green initiatives, can be defined as a soft measure. These different approaches to sustainability raises the question of what is the best approach to mitigate climate change at local levels. What this review has shown, is that the results are, either way, dependent on local contexts.

In a study of several Norwegian municipalities, Kasa, Westskog and Rose (2018, 111) conclude that while soft measures can inspire and engage local activities for climate mitigation, it is difficult to see any major impacts due to lack of manpower and financial constraints. They also identified several additional issues in the area of soft regulation and local climate mitigation policy (2018, 105):

- Too much responsibility placed on local governments,
- Municipalities being too small to take responsibility for climate policy,
- Lack of financial support from central governments to implement measures,
- Little political interest in climate issues at the local levels, and
- Lack of support from residents

These issues can not be resolved by simply creating guidelines stating that local governments should be the frontrunners of climate mitigation, or introducing non-binding soft measures. In Kasa, Westskog and Rose's view (2018, 110), soft and hard policy instruments should, therefore, be combined to achieve long-term sustainable transitions in local environments. Another possible strategy is to provide state-level financial support for financing measures aimed at creating sustainable initiatives (Kasa, Westskog and Rose 2018, 110).

Simultaneously, Morse recognises that participation and self-regulatory movements face many challenges in creating well-organised and long-lasting initiatives. As a result, he concludes that some degree of political top-down regulation is inevitable (Morse 2008, 347). Transformations in the political sphere can both constrain and facilitate transformations in the practical and personal spheres, while at the same time bridging them. Changes in the political arenas of society shape worldviews and understandings of the population, as well as the structures in which concrete interventions can emerge (Few, Brown and Tompkins 2007, 146).

2.4 Summary

As has been shown, transformations can come from below, as initiated by people in the personal sphere - or from above, through measures and regulations in the political sphere. By presenting personal factors that counteract and facilitate sustainable transitions, it has become clear that sustainability initiatives need to work around and address worldviews, beliefs, and values if they are to succeed. Pre-existing socio-cultural qualities, for example, shape how transformative initiatives are received in a given society to a considerable degree. Focusing on the political sphere also shows that the structures and systems of society can indeed impact the success of sustainability initiatives. An example of this is the position of local governments and their efforts to bring about sustainable transformation through closeness to the population. This review has shown that the path to sustainability needs is not straight forward, nor does it have a simple solution, as several different factors need to be addressed for initiatives to be successful. That is why efforts in all spheres must be coordinated to create sustainable transformations.

A third way of facilitating change is through concrete actions in the practical sphere, which has not been included in this chapter. Since this sphere concerns real-life actions, I find it appropriate to discuss this sphere in relation to empirical cases of sustainability separately. Following this overview of the systems and structures that shape worldviews and vice versa, we will now look at some of the practical responses that have emerged from self-organised initiatives. Moving on to the next chapter on two empirical examples of sustainable initiatives, a review of the Transition Towns Network and ecovillage movement will show the practical challenges that need to be overcome concerning the different spheres, and how the interaction between the three spheres is a necessary prerequisite for sustainable transformations.

3 Practical Lessons from Self-Regulatory Sustainability Initiatives

In this chapter, I will present empirical research that compliments the themes just introduced. Whereas the previous chapter was oriented towards the personal and political spheres of transformation, this chapter focuses on practical initiatives and challenges. As stated, the practical sphere involves particular attitudes, policies, procedures, activities, and initiatives that are specifically linked to a specific outcome, and it is also in this field that the majority of climate change mitigation strategies occur (O'Brien and Sygna 2013, 5). This can, for instance, be seen in the efforts of a self-organised sustainable community. Two widely known grassroots social movements acting locally through self-regulation is the Transition Town Network and the ecovillage movement. In this chapter, I will present and discuss the challenges that these movements have experienced, and that are commonplace in self-regulatory initiatives.

The intention of including this review is to demonstrate that no significant transformations are likely to occur without coordination with mainstream society and policymakers. While these communities have personal and practical strategies aligned with their agendas, critics argue that initiatives often fail to bring about major, impact changes due to lack of coordination with the political sphere. As O'Brien and Sygna (2013) argue, coordination between all three spheres is a prerequisite for success. These findings are later used in Chapter 7 to compare these types of initiatives to projects supported by the Green Funds and reflect on how lessons from self-regulatory sustainability initiatives can be used to help promote the scheme's success.

According to sustainable development consultant Kirsten Paaby, who works with environmental initiatives at Sagene, it is essential to focus on the interaction within local communities to implement a green transition. This includes knowledge sharing, long-term visions, the involvement of multiple actors and levels, and emphasis on social beliefs and values (Paaby 2017b). This idea is closely linked to the popular phrase "think globally, act locally" which urges people to take direct action in their immediate communities and

reduce their environmental impact to the benefit of the planet as a whole. These notions of interaction and local focus are linked to social movements for sustainability that began in the 1970s and 1980s.

Their aim is usually to criticise the growth economy and capitalism and to bring social, environmental, and economic issues into the societal discourse (Rosol, Béal and Mössner 2017, 1715). Social movements are also closely tied to grassroots movements, which can be defined as "innovative networks of activists and organizations that lead bottom-up solutions for sustainable development; solutions that respond to the local situation and the interests and values of the communities involved" (Seyfang and Smith 2007, 585). The common idea behind these voluntary, self-regulatory initiatives is that lower levels of consumption and production in affluent countries is essential to prevent the Earth from becoming uninhabitable. This requires a dramatic transition from 'business as usual' to simple social patterns involving self-governing, self-sufficient, frugal, collectivist communities that maximise the use of local resources. Rather than waiting for governments to implement the necessary measures, these communities aim to achieve their goals on their own (Litfin 2014, 191). Political change is too slow and insufficient according to these movements, so action must be taken by employing bottom-up solutions (Trainer 2018).

3.0.1 Transition Towns

The Transition Network started in England in 2006 and quickly inspired other communities. The network aims to promote grassroots engagement in local communities to avoid the negative effects of economic crises, climate destruction, and unsustainable energy consumption. The premise is that through participation and creativity, it is possible to increase material and economic self-sufficiency, equal distribution of resources, and to make local societies more resilient (Hopkins 2008, 87).

In addition to environmental aspects, this movement focuses on strengthening the social ties of communities through sustainability-promoting events and activities with a focus on social interaction, enjoyment, and fun. The founder, Hopkins, asks (2008, 8):

“What might environmental campaigning look like if we strive to generate this sense of elation, rather than the guilt, anger, and horror that most campaigning invokes? What might it look like if we strive to inspire, enthuse, and focus on possibilities rather than probabilities?”

Hopkins argues that we are fast approaching a point in history where dramatically reduced energy consumption is inevitable, and that it is wiser to be prepared for this than to be taken by surprise. Cities, districts, neighborhoods, and almost all kinds of communities lack the skills and tools needed for this turning point, therefore essential to act collectively and to start immediately. According to Hopkins (2008, 87), new ways of living can be created, that are more enriching, social and resilient while at the same time recognising the need to change habits for the sake of the planet through “releasing the creative, collective genius around us”.

This can allegedly be achieved through the creation of a vision with a concrete and clear approach, awareness-raising, dialogue, social inclusion, and sharing of ideas. Hopkins argues that the common emotions of overwhelm, powerlessness and isolation that climate science often stirs in people can be combated by creating safe spaces where people can connect, share ideas and feel as if they are part of something greater than themselves and work towards solutions (Hopkins 2008, 91).

The transition movement has also reached Sagene in the form of *Omstilling Sagene* (Transition Sagene). This environmental group has received Green Funds on several occasions. Since its beginning in 2010, the group has organised a wide range of different courses, activities, workshops, etc. at low-scale and low-costs levels. Practical skills are shared between people within the local area. The goal is to create an inclusive and secure social environment where everyone can participate in low-threshold activities, and most activities are based on voluntary work (Østervold 2013). While they are an independent group separate from any local governance strategy, they do cooperate with the Sagene district authorities. *Omstilling Sagene* use the venues at Sagene Community Centre for various meetings and events free of charge. In return, *Omstilling Sagene* does *dugnad*³ where

³*Dugnad* is a Norwegian cultural phenomenon based on collective action, meaning that people are

they help plant for the new season in the district's many parks and around the Community Centre. This way, the transition town principle of sharing economy is accommodated for (Paaby 2017a).

Omstilling Sagene was nominated for *Oslo Miljøpris* (Oslo Environmental Award) in 2013, where they were described as being 'an outstandingly great example of a grass-roots environmental initiative' (Hope 2013). The response from residents in Sagene has also been positive, and the group has received a great deal of support. According to the members, Oslo is such a busy city, and local communities do not have the chance to develop strong local identities because of it. They aim to create a prosperous social environment through *Omstilling Sagene*, where people can get to know each other and have fun while doing something positive for the environment.

3.0.2 Ecovillages

As with transition towns, ecovillages also stem from the notion that our current practices are rapidly destroying the environment, and from an effort to mediate the harmful changes that are the consequences of the modern way of life. Solutions to these problems require action by different actors through a combination of corporate social responsibility, municipal efforts, and government subsidies, but also changes that work from the bottom-up. Ecovillages do this by collecting individuals into larger, self-contained, coherent units in which the members are committed to living in an environmentally sound manner (Litfin 2014, 3).

Litfin (2014) conducted fieldwork in 14 different ecovillages worldwide, seeking to inspire people to learn lessons from ecovillages through practical, tangible knowledge of building sustainable communities. Another objective is to work towards sustainable everyday practices and awareness outside academic discussions. Ecovillages vary greatly

expected to participate in unpaid work for the common good of the community. *Dugnad* culture differs from standard voluntary work in the sense that there is a stronger expectation to contribute (Haugstad 2003). Examples may include tidying up trash in a neighborhood, helping to build a playground, or making cakes for sale at school.

from place to place under different architectural, economic, religious, cultural, and climatic conditions. What they have in common is that people live together in 'intentional communities' collectively addressing climate change in their day-to-day actions and coming together to share their knowledge (Litfin 2014, 9-10).

Inspired by the ecological principles of permaculture, Litfin (2014, 189-190) outlines five main points she considers to be the most important for eco-villages and their ability to be up-scaled. The first principle is systemic thinking, by which she means that architecture, food production, and transportation should be coordinated in ways that facilitate social trust and sustainability. The second principle of subsidiarity means that political decision-making should take place at the lowest possible levels. The third point of sharing is essential and includes everything from food, stories, skills, land, and cars. Design is the fourth principle. According to Litfin, the goal is that all societies eventually will be built in a way that mirrors ecovillages' focus on the quality of relationships rather than material goods. Also, building societies that can operate on renewable energy is a vital element for both the ecovillage and its scalability. Finally, the fifth principle is 'the power of yes', focusing on a do-it-yourself, hands-on approach to self-governance. Following these principles along with a focus on sustainability, Litfin argues that these ecovillage principles can be applied to all levels of society, from neighborhoods to global governance.

In a study of Hurdal Ecovillage outside Oslo, Westskog, Winther, and Aasen (2018, 16) found that the residents were motivated by both acting as positive examples for mainstream society, as well as surrounding themselves in a community of environmentally conscious and like-minded people. According to the authors, the success of the ecovillage and degree of acceptance from mainstream society depends on how well they can harmonise with people who are outside of their niche. In the early days of the ecovillage, there was a large gap between mainstream society and this niche group, but it decreased over time as values and practices became more widely accepted through an increasing consensus in society to promote sustainability.

Most of the ecovillagers had an outward desire to promote their eco-friendly lives and inspire mainstream society. While gaining acceptance from outside society in the promotion of their lifestyle over the years, protecting the identity of the village by not moving too close to mainstream practices, thus losing their ability to inspire eco-friendly living, was equally important. As such, Westskog, Winther, and Aasen (2018, 17) found that there is a fine balance between gaining acceptance and thus being able to influence the outside world, while remaining true to their values and promoting positive change.

3.0.3 Challenges

Terms such as neighborhood participation, the local agency, and knowledge sharing are used in abundance in these movements, and are presented as essential components of urban sustainability - painting a rosy picture of the transformative capacity of local grassroots activism. Despite these efforts, these movements have also received their fair share of criticism, as they often face numerous challenges in terms of both the establishment and maintenance of the communities. Studies have found that up to 80% of ecovillage communities have succumbed within the first two years of existence (Wilhelmus 2005, 378 as cited in Westskog, Winther, and Aasen 2018, 1). Litfin (2014, 10) also notes that if sustainability is to be defined as something that can be perpetuated in an indefinite future, most eco-villages should be described as being 'aspiring ecovillages'.

Critics argue that inspiring and educating people is not enough to mediate man-made planetary destruction, as power relations and politics are even more important. These movements have limited potential for sustainable change, and depend on other and more powerful players to change 'the rules of the game' (Trainer 2018). While these movements may have politicising effects, the question remains as to how such movements can effectively bring about large-scale and long-term changes that reach beyond the lives of the engaged participants. Rosol, Béal, and Mössner (2017, 1713-1714) states that the efforts of social movements alone will never be enough, and the success of their efforts depends largely on coordination with urban environmental policy to have an impact on social and environmental issues.

In a similar vein, Trainer (2018) argues that the main problem with the transition town- and ecovillage movements are that they are intentionally unstrategic devoid of theory. He claims, that for several reasons, they will never have any global significance in alleviating climate change. According to him, their approach is based on the logic of 'everything goes.' There is a lack of focus in the literature on these movements on developing coherent strategies for what works well, what challenges they face, and what is the most effective way to spread their message outwards.

In this chapter and the former, various challenges have been identified both in terms of self-regulating, participatory approaches to sustainability initiatives, as well as challenges that need to be overcome concerning local government or expert-driven sustainability initiatives, as outlined in the previous chapter. These areas of society can also not be viewed in isolation. As noted by O'Brien and Sygna (2013); the personal, political, and practical spheres are always interacting. Following the observations made in this chapter and the previous, I argue that bottom-up and top-down sustainability initiatives might be most effective when used in combination. This way, it may be possible to make use out of the strengths of different types of initiatives. We will return to this discussion in Chapter 7, but for now, allow me to present the research methods used in this study.

4 Methods

In this chapter, I present the research process and methods used for gathering and analysing empirical material. The chapter begins with a short description of the study, after which I go on to describe the research context, access to the field, the methods used to recruit informants, and the topics that were discussed during interviews. After reflecting on the ethical considerations of the study and the interview settings, the chapter concludes with information about how the material was analysed.

4.1 A Qualitative Study

To analyse the views of beneficiaries and administrators of the Green Funds as thoroughly as possible, I needed information on the ability of the Green Funds to promote social inclusion and environmental participation. Due to the nature of these themes, a qualitative approach was a natural choice. The qualitative research tradition is suited for understanding the experiences of individuals, groups, cultures, places, and situations through face-to-face engagement, and to explore the interactions, processes, and experiences of participants (O’Leary 2017, 142). Traits of this tradition include research conducted in natural settings, emerging methodological designs, small numbers, non-random sampling techniques, and rich data that help to find holistic meaning. Another important factor is that depth is emphasised over quantity (O’Leary 2017, 142).

This study is based on fieldwork conducted in Sagene between August and October 2019. I collected primary data, which is generated by the researcher for their study, and does not exist independently of the research process. The benefit of this type of data is that it is specifically targeted at addressing the issues that the researcher seeks to explore, and is customised for the particular study. The researcher is fully in charge of the data collected, seeing as she or he decides exactly how, what, when, and how the questions are asked (O’Leary 2017, 224). I chose this approach rather than using only secondary sources, as the information on the beneficiaries of the Sagene Green Funds has not yet been studied.

I concluded that interviews would be the most useful way to gather the information

needed. Qualitative interviews can be defined as loose or semi-structured in-depth conversations with a purpose (Seale 2018, 218). The material consists of interviews with beneficiaries of the Green Funds in Sagene, as well as administrative staff in District Sagene who are or have been involved in the organisation and distribution of the funds. I chose to interview these two different groups to get multiple perspectives on the scheme, as seen from different angles.

When conducting research, it is important to assess whether the material collected is reliable. Bell (2006, 117) describes reliability as to whether a test or procedure can produce the same results in several instances where the conditions are constant, and is important to consider when designing interview questions. This is, however, difficult to control for, as the informants may have experiences that cause their beliefs to shift from one day to another. The researcher may also interpret the answers differently on different days, depending on external circumstances, and the results could be affected by these variables. While there are some advanced tests to check for reliability, the reliability of a master's thesis is often only checked by careful consideration of wording in the interview settings.

Thus, I made sure that neutral language was used during interviews. I also avoided general, ambiguous, long, and double-barreled questions, and kept clear of unnecessarily complicated language. It is also important to create questions that are not leading (Bryman 2012, 258). The questions were open, meaning that the interviewees could interpret the questions and provide new information that I had not yet considered. The most important aspect of interviewing is the art of listening (O'Leary 2017, 239). Because of this, I only talked as much as was required to facilitate the informants' ability to answer. A flexible structure is followed in semi-structured interviews. This allowed me to start with a plan and move on to unscripted questions to follow the flow of information, and to pursue new and interesting topics that emerged. This also makes it possible for the interviewee to present the subject 'in their own words' (Seale 2018, 220).

Interviews can be done on a one-to-one basis, or with multiple participants (O'Leary 2017, 240). The material for this thesis consists mainly of the former, except for two

group interviews. The latter were informal discussions in which the informants were able to deliberate and change their opinions. This does, however, mean that the data will be influenced, which was taken into account when analysing the material. It was, however, interesting to observe the discussion unfold between the informants.

In addition to the interviews, I also made site observations that helped to gain a better understanding of the projects. Conducting my fieldwork in late summer and early autumn gave me the benefit of seeing the urban gardening projects while they were still in bloom. I got to see most of the projects first hand, as most of the interviews happened on the project sites. I was invited to shops, historic landmarks, and community gardens, and got to see firsthand what the informants had been able to do through the help of the funding. I also participated in several events and meetings on the Green Funds for potential applicants, municipal staff, and politicians between November 2018 and October 2019. These meetings were hosted by the District Sagene staff at their Community Centre and at *ByKuben* (Oslo's Centre for Urban Ecology). I attended these meetings for the sake of inspiration and potentially meeting informants. As a result, I did not register the findings in a structured manner or request permission to reproduce the findings. Therefore, the information learned from this preliminary fieldwork will not be included in the thesis. However, participation in these activities provided me with a better understanding of Sagene, the Green Funds, and the actors involved.

4.2 Collecting Empirical Material

4.2.1 Access to the Field and Recruiting Informants

I was first introduced to District Sagene by a UiO associate who had previously worked with one of the staff members there, and who presented an opportunity to collaborate with them. After having shown our interest in this collaboration, I and some fellow students organised a meeting with the staff at the Community Centre in early 2019 where we received valuable information and assistance. I also attended several meetings with the staff where we briefed each other on our work in the following year. Since the establishment of the Green Funds in 2012, there have been a total of four staff members who have de-

veloped and administered the scheme, all of whom have been interviewed.

To recruit Green Fund beneficiary informants, I created an invitation letter to participate in the study which was addressed to all 64 beneficiaries of Sagene Green Funds in the 2015-2018 timeframe (see Appendix A). The reason that this timeframe was chosen, was that I suspected that people involved in earlier years might have forgotten important details about how the projects went, moved away, no longer be engaged in the local community or sustainable initiatives, etc. The latest year is 2018, as this was the latest information available on completed projects at the time of doing research for this thesis. An important aspect of doing fieldwork is gaining access to your informants in a non-intrusive and ethical manner (O’Leary 2017, 240). This was done by reaching out to a gatekeeper at Sagene whom the beneficiaries were already familiar with, who sent out the invitation e-mail to them. An overview of the informants is presented in Table 1.

Informants	Amount
Green Funds beneficiaries	13
District Sagene staff	4
Total	17

Table 1: Overview of informants.

The beneficiaries were made aware that I was not affiliated with District Sagene or the Green Funds in any other way than as an independent researcher. Despite this, the invitation was delivered by a person associated with the Green Funds. This may entail that beneficiaries linked me to District Sagene, and was certainly the case in one of the interviews. An informant thought that I was employed by the municipality and had come to take a tour of the garden to see what the funds had gone towards, and I explained that I was a student who had come for an interview. While they still agreed to go through with the interview, this was not what they had expected to happen, and did not seem as eager or prepared to discuss their experiences as other informants did. This likely happened because the informant noticed that the email had been sent by the contact at District Sagene, and had not read the invitation thoroughly.

4.2.2 Project Categories

There are five different project categories that the Green Fund projects are organised by. More information on this will be presented in the upcoming chapter, but I would first like to introduce what types of projects my informants have been involved in, and their methodological implications. Urban farming/biodiversity is the project category that largest amount of Green Fund projects have centered around, which was also evident from the number of informants in this category who reached out. However, to gain a wider understanding of the various initiatives, I realised that it was necessary to recruit a more diverse pool of informants. Therefore, I searched up the Facebook pages and email addresses and contacted various businesses, cafés, green entrepreneurs, theatre groups, and repair initiatives that have received Green Funds. The projects that the informants have created and participated in can be divided into the categories as shown in Table 2. Some of the projects could have been placed in more than one category, but I have sorted them according to what their main activities have revolved around.

Projects of Beneficiary Informants	
Category	Amount
Urban farming/biodiversity	4
Environmental information/theatre/networking	3
Repair and reuse/renovation	1

Table 2: Categorisation of the beneficiary informants' projects

While my pool of informants is largely skewed towards Urban farming/biodiversity, I do not regard this to be a significant drawback. First of all, the Green Funds have been allocated to 103 projects in the timeframe from 2015-2018. Out of these, 59 of the projects concerned Urban farming/biodiversity. In other words, this category represents 57% of the projects financed. Out of the beneficiary informants' projects, six of out of eight were concerning urban cultivation and biodiversity, or 75%, which is fairly similar to the distribution at large. The distribution of funds will be discussed in further detail in the upcoming chapter. Additionally, while parts of the interviews were spent discussing the

beneficiaries' projects, a fairly equal amount of attention was also paid to their views on participation and voluntary work, Sagene, and sustainability in a wide sense.

4.2.3 Interview Topics

A project's validity determines whether its' instruments can measure or describe that which it is designed to, and how to design the research project to get credible results. The structure of the research determines what conclusions can be drawn; for instance, whether another researcher would be able to get the same or similar responses to the same questions (Bell 2006, 118). To evaluate the structure, I conducted a test interview with a fellow student, who helped determine if the questions were suited to explore the relevant themes, and which ones that needed to be rephrased, omitted, or added.

In qualitative research, the researcher's main information-gathering tool is themselves. This may lead to the presence of the researcher altering the interview situation, biases skewing the results, or lack of competence creating problems with validity. As a result, it is essential to reflect on how one's position as a researcher might influence the informants' responses and to try to control for this (Brink 1993, 35). This was done by encouraging informants to provide honest and open answers, and by trying to analyse their responses objectively. It should further be noted that the informants knew they were being interviewed by a researcher studying environmental and social issues, and, therefore, might have amplified their concern for these topics to provide what they considered to be the 'correct' answers.

I created two interview guides; one for beneficiaries and one for the district staff (see Appendices C and D). These were largely similar, but while the beneficiary guide was more oriented towards the Green Fund projects, the staff guide focused more on their experiences managing the scheme. The questions should be sufficient to provide an overview of the informants' roles and motivations, their experiences with and reflections around Green Funds, and information on the projects. The interviews consisted of six main themes:

1. An introduction to get to know the informants

2. About District Sagene to get an overall impression of their views on the area
3. General questions about their respective projects (beneficiaries only)
4. Questions about their views on the Green Funds
5. Involving participants, communication within the groups and with District Sagene
6. Views on sustainability – how and if Green Fund projects may have positive impacts on the social and natural environments of Sagene

Aside from these topics, I largely let the informants lead the conversations. The length of the interviews varied depending on how much the informants had to share, but the majority averaged at around 45 minutes. One way of ensuring thoroughness and credibility in qualitative research is by saturation (O’Leary 2017, 144). I only finished collecting data once the new material no longer added additional understanding. In the final interviews, I found that the same information resurfaced and concluded that the topics had been covered relatively well.

4.3 Ethical Considerations of the Study

The protection of the interests of my informants was an important concern in this research. Before doing fieldwork, the study was approved by the NSD (Norwegian Centre for Research Data), who guides research projects dealing with the collection of personal data. To anonymise the informants, their names were not entered in any documents, but were replaced by a sequence of letters and numbers based on the name of their project and interview order. When the material was transcribed and it was time for analysis, I replaced the aforementioned codes with pseudonyms.

However, I concluded that for some informants, pseudonyms were not sufficient to protect their anonymity. My research centres around a small group of people in a small district and some informants have been in charge of well-known projects in the area. Thus, the informants that I suspected could be identified were sent the sections relating to them for approval. I decided not to provide an overview of the study participants for the same reason of recognisability, as I found it redundant to draw more attention to the informants

than what was relevant. The initial transcripts were retained until the study was close to completed to preserve the participants' original contributions, so I could check to see that my use of their statements remained close to their original accounts.

As mentioned earlier, the invitation letter was sent out to the beneficiaries by a staff member at the district. Together, we decided that this was the most ideal solution, as the beneficiaries knew this person from beforehand, lending me some credibility compared to if I had reached out by myself. This also seemed to be the least invasive way of recruiting. Since the recipients saw that it was a large group email, they should not have felt pressured to respond if they were not interested. The only informants contacted directly were public/business-related projects with a Facebook page or contact email, as well as the district staff informants.

4.3.1 Ethical Considerations during Interviews

Another step that was taken to respect the privacy of the informants, was allowing them to decide the interview locations. The beneficiaries who had an ongoing project usually invited me to the site, and those who had participated in completed projects generally suggested meeting at a café. I found these to be good settings for conducting informal interviews. In these situations, the focus is placed on building trust and creating spaces for open communication. The style is casual and relaxed, and often done in informal settings (O'Leary 2017, 240).

When meeting up with the informants, I first gave them a briefing of the study. I brought along a copy of the invitation letter that the informants had already received via e-mail to give them a further chance to read through and ask any potential questions before starting. I also brought two copies of the consent form (see Appendix B). In these forms, the informants were assured that the study was voluntary and anonymous, that they had the right to withdraw their consent at any time, and that the interview would be recorded. This is the most effective strategy as to not miss any information, as it preserves raw material for later review. Before starting, the consent forms were signed by the informants, and we each kept one copy.

It is important to ease the informants into the interview situations, and I made sure to start the meetings with some light-hearted conversation. I started by asking the most general and easy questions, and then moved on to the main section where the informants came to the heart of their experiences. Here, I was mindful of using prompts to get the informants to share as much detail as possible. When all the relevant themes had been covered, I rounded off by asking if there was anything else they wanted to add, clarify, or ask. Finally, I thanked them for their time and offered to send them a final report at the end of the project.

4.4 Analysing the Material

Following the interviews, the files from the voice recorder were imported to a computer. What followed was transcription of the material, and the 11 hours of recorded interviews culminated in a total of 111 pages. To analyse the material, the transcriptions were imported into NVivo,⁴ a qualitative data analysis tool. Organising and analysing qualitative data are time-consuming tasks, but using NVivo, I was able to efficiently do this more efficiently. This coding approach makes it easier to refine, seek out, and add new themes during the process of analysis.

I highlighted material from the interviews and associated it with the appropriate categories, (nodes) that were used to create links between different ideas, patterns, and trends. I created nodes with sub-categories before



Figure 3: Nodes in NVivo in Norwegian

⁴NVivo is a registered trademark of QSR International. www.qsrinternational.com

and during the analysis to encode as much of the material as possible. Figure 3 on page 41 shows some of the nodes that were created. To easily compare the material, I avoided encoding the same pieces of material into several nodes, although some material did apply to more than one theme. Therefore, to not miss any important information, some material was placed into several nodes. For instance, the topic of turnover was relevant both in terms of turnover of residents in Sagene, as well as participant drop-out, and was thus placed in two different nodes. After all relevant material had been encoded, I could easily see how many quotes appeared within each node and get an overview of all the associated material.

Although several researchers begin their path of study with a conceptual or theoretical context in mind, this was not the case in my research. As for the relationship between theory and material, I used an inductive approach for content analysis. This means that the researcher keeps an open mind about the specific themes that can be discovered, and theory is identified from and emerges from the material (Bryman 2012, 12). Thus, when the material had been coded, it was used to discover theoretical themes and previous research that fit the themes of the empirical material. For instance, as I discovered that turnover was a common theme, I began researching relevant literature on turnover in voluntary work that could be used to explain the results.

As qualitative research focuses on beliefs, experiences, and social structures, it rarely produces hard facts and is less controlled than quantitative studies (Brink 1993, 35). As such, qualitative studies are always interpretive. Because of this, it is important to be aware of how the researcher's understanding and interpretations influence how the data is analysed. The foundation of analysis is the extraction of findings and inputs into theoretical and empirical frameworks, which are inevitably shaped by the researcher's perspectives (O'Leary 2017, 148). An example of this, was the process of interpreting results. All interviews, apart from one, were conducted and transcribed in Norwegian, and quotations were later translated to English. When conducting bilingual research, it is important to be conscious of how this influences the results, as it can lead to meaning being 'lost in translation'. It is often difficult to 'map' the ideas of informants into another language,

and because of this, the researcher has to be critical and reflexive in trying to translate meaning from one context to another (Smith 2016, 164).

The quotations that will be included in this thesis are, alas, not the informants' exact words, but the aim was rather to capture the essence and translate the meaning into English. To do so, I tried to preserve the tone and style of speech as close to how I understood the original statement. For the same reason, I have left some Norwegian terms untranslated in the text and explained them in footnotes in an attempt to capture the Norwegian cultural context. Moving on to Chapter 5, I will now provide the reader with some relevant background information on District Sagene and the Green Funds.

5 A Green Initiative in Oslo

In this chapter, I will present the political, demographic, and social contexts of District Sagene that I consider relevant for understanding how the Green Fund scheme originated. Following the description of Sagene, the case and background of the Green Funds will be introduced, as well as statistical data on applications, the categories the different applicants are placed in, and the distribution of funds allocated to different types of projects.

5.1 Norwegian Context and Policy

Norway consists of two levels of sub-national government; counties and municipalities, both of which are governed by elected officials (Kasa, Westskog and Rose 2018, 99). This small country with a population of 5.3 million has eleven counties and 356 municipalities as of 2020 (Kartverket 2020). Municipalities vary significantly in sizes and populations: The smallest one has a population of less than 300, while the largest has about 680k inhabitants, the latter being Oslo. 55% of the municipalities have fewer than 5k inhabitants (Kasa, Westskog and Rose 2018, 100). A great deal of responsibility is assigned to both levels of sub-national governments, where municipalities are responsible for education, health care, roads, waste management, and water supply, social services, and environmental policies, among other affairs. Additionally, municipalities are free to undertake other tasks and have a considerable degree of autonomy (Kasa, Westskog and Rose 2018, 100).

In 2009, the Ministry of Climate and Environment (*Klima- og miljødepartementet*) issued a Guideline on Climate and Energy Planning, which stated that municipalities and counties should be responsible for the national climate mitigation policy. This was, however, a soft policy measure, as there were no consequences in the event of local authorities failing to fulfill their obligations. Despite the efforts, it remains uncertain whether this guideline has led municipalities to being effective actors in climate mitigation policies (Aall, Halvorsen, Heiberg, and Tonnesen 2009, Harvold and Risan 2010, Kasa et. al. 2012, as cited in Kasa, Westskog and Rose 2018, 100).

5.2 Overview of Sagene - a District in Oslo

Sagene is an administrative district on the northeast side of the inner city of Oslo, with the river Akerselva running on both sides. The district consists of the smaller areas Iladalen, Sagene, and Bjølsen on the west side of the river, with Åsen, Torshov, and Sandaker on the east side, as seen from this map.

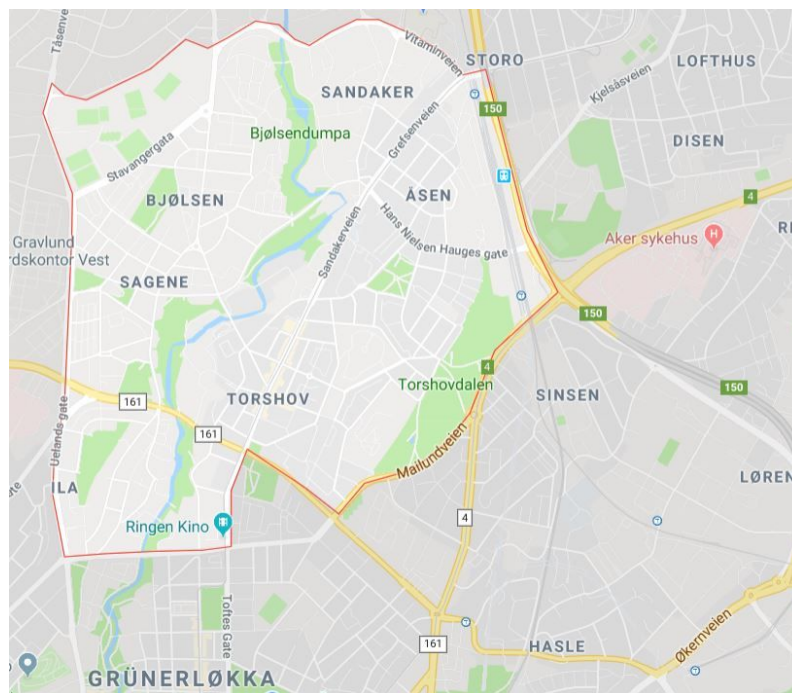


Figure 4: Map of District Sagene (Google Maps 2020)

5.2.1 Political Climate in Sagene

Historically, Sagene has been a pronounced industrial area with a significant amount of working-class residents. In connection to this, *Arbeiderpartiet* (The Labour Party) has been the largest party for many years (Thorsnæs and Tvedt 2019). However, significant changes occurred in the municipal election of 2019. *Arbeiderpartiet* lost 12.5 percentage points compared to the previous election, and lost their position as the largest party in the district for the very first time. The party that saw the biggest growth was *Miljøpartiet de Grønne* (The Green Party), which gained 10.6 percentage points (NRK 2019). Sagene was, in fact, the district in Oslo where *Miljøpartiet de Grønne* received the highest number

of votes (22%) (Skybakmoen 2019).

5.2.2 Demography and Housing

Oslo is, as already mentioned, the largest municipality in Norway; and Sagene is the smallest district within it. The area is only 3.1 square kilometers in size, and yet, it represents the most densely populated district in Oslo with almost 44k inhabitants (Høilund 2019). The typical living situation in Sagene is in one of the district's many apartment buildings. The majority of the apartments are fairly small, most of which contain two bedrooms. Large apartments are rare, with those containing six bedrooms accounting for only 0.5% of the total amount (Høilund 2019). While small, they are also expensive. In 2019, the average price per square metre in an apartment building in Sagene was over 80k NOK, while the average price in Oslo overall was significantly lower, with a price per square metre of approximately 70k NOK (Oslo Kommune n.d).

Between 2001 and 2014, the population of Sagene increased by a significant 40%. In comparison, the overall increase in Oslo overall in the same time frame was only 25% (Farstad 2015). While the number of inhabitants continues to expand, the area, naturally, does not. This densification has led to a great deal of use of the outdoor areas in the district, as because people living in small apartments without personal backyards or close access to nature require common areas for their outdoor recreation (Høilund 2019). The same sentiment was expressed by my informant Thomas at the District Sagene administration:

”There are many small apartments and dense settlements, so the parks are an extension of people’s living rooms. This is a local environmental dimension that’s more important here than in western districts where people have larger living spaces, and there are many detached houses with gardens.”

Oslo is also the county in Norway with the highest percentage of immigrants, accounting for 25% of the population in 2019. This does not include people with immigrant backgrounds, in which case the number increases to 32%. In comparison, the average amount in Norway overall is 14% (Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet n.d). The districts of

Oslo vary greatly in the number of immigrants, from 16% to 55%. Compared to this, Sagene has quite an average level with 25% (Høydahl 2015).

Additionally, District Sagene has the highest number of public housing units in the Oslo Municipality; 2,1k units in 2017. This means that the smallest district of Oslo contains 20% of all public housing units in the city (Haga 2017). This description indicates that District Sagene is home to a largely left-liberal, environmentally conscious population. Most of these people live in small housing units with limited personal outdoor space, which means that public outdoor areas are particularly important for their well-being. It was in this urban environment that the Green Fund scheme was initiated and implemented.

5.3 Green Funds: Background and Projects

The staff of the Department of Health, Environment, and Safety in District Sagene have been working for several years towards a systematic and collaborative organisation of external, public, and private actors and resources in the area, characterised by limited bureaucracy. This is referred to as local area commitment (*lokal områdesatsing*). The idea of local area commitment is presented in the report '*Et levende nærmiljø*' by Oslo Municipality, District Sagene (Guerra 2018, 7):

“Doing things together has stimulated excitement for everyone involved, created knowledge and motivation for the development of new ideas and initiatives aimed towards sustainable urban development.”

Local environmental consultants work at *Sagene Samfunnshus* (Community Centre), which is run by the District Sagene Unit for Culture and Local Environment. In addition to being an office space, the centre serves many other functions. As well as housing a café and a yoga school; courses, talks, networking meetings, and cultural events are also arranged. Over 2,8k events take place every year, and the centre is estimated to have approximately 170k annual visits, mainly from local residents (Sagene Samfunnshus n.d.).

One of the measures that has been created to facilitate participation in sustainable activities is the object of my study, the Green Funds. It all originated in 2012, when the

District Committee decided to allocate money to green initiatives. The first measure was to create an environmental consultancy position to work on environmental issues within the district. The second task was to draw up a grant scheme to promote environmental measures and projects; the Green Funds. This scheme was created by The Sagene District Committee on Environment, Culture, and Urban Planning (*Sagene Bydelsutvalgs Miljø-, kultur- og byutviklingskomite*), and authorised by the District Council (*Bydelsutvalget*) (Haugli 2017). My informant Linnea was at the time a member of the District Committee, and recalled that the scheme was proposed by *Miljøpartiet de Grønne* and supported by *Arbeiderpartiet*, *Sosialistisk Venstreparti*, and *Rødt* (all left-wing parties).

Another informant of mine, Elias, was the one who ended up in the position as the environmental consultant. The District Committee outlined examples of measures that could be supported by the Green Funds, which amounted to 600k NOK that year. Elias set the scheme to life and produced guidelines, set up the application process, helped develop project ideas, and evaluated applications. Since then, the Sagene Green Fund guidelines have been used as the main source of inspiration for Green Fund schemes in many other districts in Oslo.

Over the years, the sum of the Green Funds has varied depending on the district's overall budgets, but there has been a general increase. In 2020, the allocated amount is 850k (Kjelstrup 2020). The Green Funds are called out early each year to allow enough time to plan and carry out the many projects that will take place in the spring and summer months. Potential beneficiaries are required to fill out an online application form containing a description of the project they wish to create. The district staff at Sagene also offer guidance on the creation of successful applications and projects. It is then submitted via the Oslo Municipality District Sagene website, and evaluated by the same staff members at Sagene who manage the Green Funds.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will present statistical data about the Green Funds that provide an overview of the amount of engagement, the categories of applicants who

engage, and the types of initiatives that have been created. ⁵ Figure 5 shows the number of applications and applications granted, where we can see that both values have increased over the years. However, in light of the significant amounts of rejected applications, we can see that the possibility of securing funds is quite competitive.

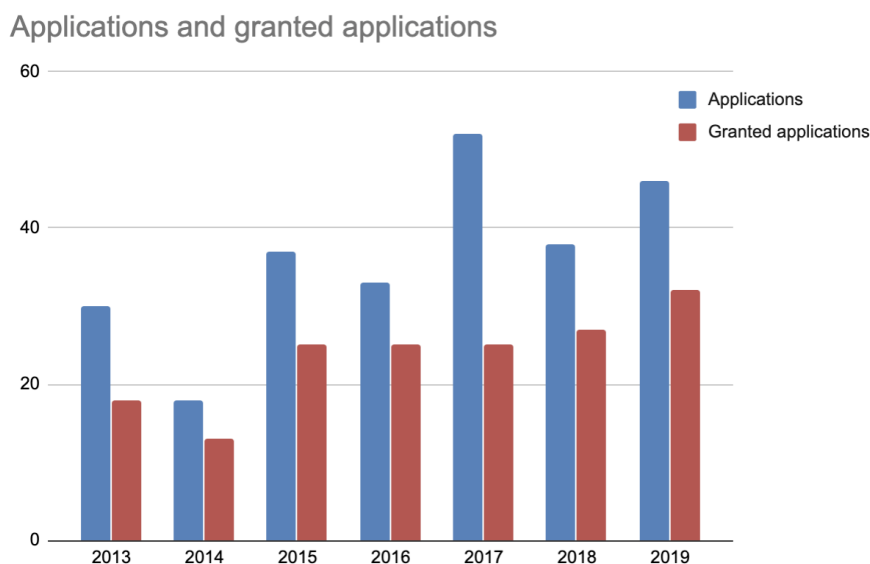


Figure 5: Green Fund applications 2013-2019.

The Green Funds are distributed annually between different voluntary groups, non-profit organisations, housing cooperatives, etc. that wish to develop sustainable projects within the district. The full list of applicant categories is shown in Figure 6 on page 50. When applications are evaluated by the administrative staff responsible for the distribution of funds, six types of projects are prioritised according to the Green Fund guidelines: 1). Projects focusing on youth, the elderly, and other marginalised groups, 2). Projects aimed at residents in general rather than private groups, 3). Innovative and original projects, 4). Projects that have a positive impact on the local environment as a whole, 5). Projects with some degree of self-financing, and finally 6). Projects that can demonstrate a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

⁵This information has been provided to me directly by the staff at District Sagene, and will thus not be included in the list of references.

The main requirement is that the initiative described in the application must involve, first and foremost, local residents of District Sagene (Bydel Sagene 2016). Emphasis is also placed on the promotion of social entrepreneurship, which, according to District Sagene, differs from regular entrepreneurship in the sense that it is not geared towards profits and returns, but rather towards social, cultural and environmental change (Bydel Sagene 2016).

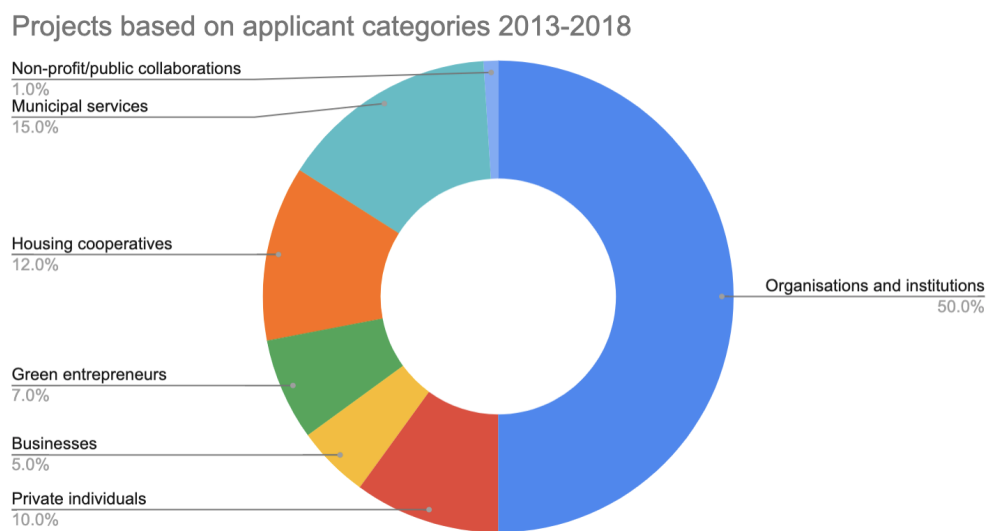


Figure 6: Chart of Green Fund applicant categories.

Examples of activities organised with support from the Green Funds include repair workshops, local food production, sustainable transport and commerce projects, gardening, improved waste management, and school children’s activities. The Green Funds aim to promote environmental participation in the district by providing financial resources for green projects, as well as social activity and inclusion. This initiative is a combination of overarching policy incentives to facilitate sustainable urban projects, as well as a method of encouraging local communities to participate in social activities (Bydel Sagene 2016). District Sagene organises the participating projects into five main categories: Urban farming/biodiversity, Environmental information/theatre/networking, Repair and reuse/renovation, Sustainable food culture, and Green mobility.

One of these categories, Urban farming/biodiversity, has received significantly more funding than other categories. Projects in this category have received more than double the amount of what projects in the second-largest category has. The distribution is shown in Figure 7. As mentioned in the Methods chapter, this category is also where the majority

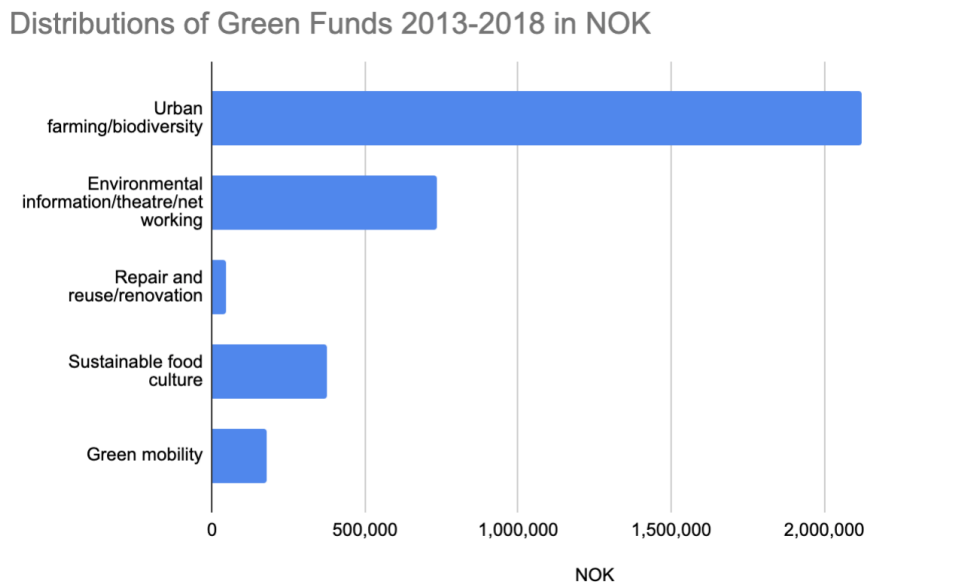


Figure 7: Distribution of Green Funds 2013-2018.

of my beneficiary informants belong. Now that we have a general overview of the scheme and its history, let us move onto investigating the experiences of some of the actors who have been involved.

6 Findings

It's a morning in August of 2019, and I'm on my way to my first interview and field visit at a communal gardening project in Sagene. The sky is gray, and the air is humid after a long night of rain. I get off the crowded bus along one of Oslo's most trafficked roads. After a couple of minutes of walking, I arrive at a brown apartment building covered in scaffolding with loud construction work being done outside. No garden in sight, I start to wonder if I have got the address wrong. I look around and reluctantly turn a corner into what appears to be a private entryway, unprepared for the sight that would meet me. As if suddenly removed from the bustling life of the city, I find myself in a large, lush garden. I'm hit by the fresh smell of nature after pouring rain and notice a variety of fruit trees, flowers, and herbs growing in abundance. Birds, bees, and butterflies are flying around. Still, in awe of finding this beautiful garden in the middle of the city, I'm removed from my thoughts by my informant coming to greet me. "Hi! Welcome to our garden!"

In this chapter, I will present the findings of my empirical research; semi-structured interviews with 17 informants. The informants consist of two groups: Green Fund beneficiaries and administrative staff. The findings from the groups will be presented separately. This chapter is structured according to the first three research sub-questions. First, I will present findings relating to the sub-question: *What characterises and motivates beneficiaries involved in Green Funds-supported projects?* Secondly, the more challenging aspect of participation will be presented, connected to the sub-question *What do the beneficiaries consider to be the challenges of their projects*



Figure 8: Flowers. Photo courtesy of informant

and the Green Funds? Finally, the chapter ends with a presentation of the administrative staff's perspectives, relating to the sub-question *What are the District Sagene staff's expectations for the scheme, and what have been their challenges in managing it?*

The findings indicate that while there are several heterogeneous responses among the two groups relating to benefits of the scheme, what types of people that engage, and its' potential for positive effects, there are also several areas where expectations diverge. This was not only the case between beneficiaries and staff members, but among staff members as well. If urban sustainability initiatives are to be successful, it may be useful to have a clear and coordinated approach to reduce misunderstandings and problems. While the Green Funds appear to have potential for benefits both in terms of social development and awareness-raising, the projects have also met challenges related to social diversity, project management, and different expectations for the scheme.

6.1 Beneficiaries' Views of Sagene and Motivations

This section will first describe some of the key characteristics of the Green Fund beneficiaries and Sagene overall that I consider as relevant for the context of their participation. Following these characteristics, I will present the motivational factors behind their participation.

6.1.1 'A Progressive Area' with Middle-Class Participants

To my knowledge, at least nine of the 13 Green Fund beneficiaries have completed degrees in higher education. In one of the group interviews, I decided not to stretch out the time by asking the informants about their education levels and occupations. Alas, the information is missing from four informants. The lowest reported level of completed education was a bachelor's degree. This was just the case with two of the informants, as shown in Figure 9 on page 54. Even then, one of the informants had degrees in different fields, while and the other one was pursuing a master's degree.

The informants mentioned several pre-existing conditions that had facilitated the cre-

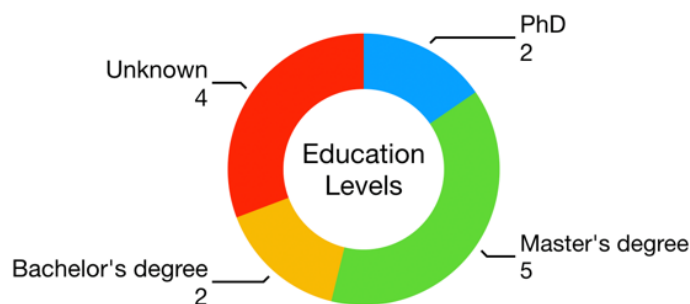


Figure 9: Education levels of the Green Fund beneficiary informants

ation of Green Fund projects. First off, the district has a large amount of open green areas that allow for these kinds of projects, especially compared to other districts in inner Oslo. They also believed that Sagene has a village-like environment with a ‘progressive population’ that value green initiatives.

“The population here is very progressive, I think, who is more engaged than in other districts, and who seek a sense of community.” (Eirin)

”There’s some kind of gentrification going on in Sagene, and it has almost a village-like aura, so this green stuff fits very well into that picture.” (Sverre)

Although this was the consensus among most informants, there were also some different impressions expressed. Nora stated that she does not think residents in Sagene are more environmentally conscious in than elsewhere. Instead, she believed the Green Fund scheme’s success is due to the district staff’s facilitation, and also thanks to a few dedicated individuals. This comment also sheds some light on how the Green Fund beneficiaries view the District Sagene administration, whom received praise from all 13 beneficiaries. Examples include the following:

“They’re very present and easy to contact, to talk to if you want something. And they have a very clear green agenda.” (Lise)

“I think the district administration is a big part of the reason that this works, that they do a good job.” (Nora)

“It’s been really exciting to work with the district because they have allowed me to have ideas and given me a green light.” (Anniken)

While most informants expressed that Sagene has a certain social and natural environment that has enabled green initiatives to take place, they also pointed out that the people who participate often share certain sociodemographic qualities. When asked about what kinds of people participate in activities financed by Green Funds, there was a strong consensus among the beneficiaries. The people involved are often highly educated and resourceful with both time, money, and energy to spare to pursue sustainability initiatives in their free time.

“There’s particular demography that, what should I say... *cares*, about these types of political issues when it comes to sustainability and the local environment.” (Caroline)

“The focus on the environment is maybe tied to the wealthier, who have money in their wallets, drive electric cars, and all that, so I think the environmental engagement is mainly driven by an educated middle-class group.” (Sverre)

There was only one beneficiary who expressed a different impression. In the initiatives that Lise had been involved in, she had experienced that the people involved were quite mixed concerning sociodemographic factors. She described common participants to be students who wanted to try new things and save money, elders who came to meet others and liked to garden, as well as less affluent residents who had shown up to repair cafés to learn how to fix their items as they could not afford to replace them.

Overall, the general impression was that the typical Green Fund participants are a fairly homogeneous group of people. This was evident both from the registered levels of education of the informants, as well as from the information they provided. The success of Green Funds was believed to be due to its location in a ‘gentrified’ and ‘progressive’ area, and also to good facilitation by the District Sagene staff.

6.1.2 Generating Fun, Beauty and Awareness

Another theme where the responses were quite homogenous, was when the informants discussed what they thought about the Green Fund scheme. While most informants also

shared challenges and difficulties that will be presented later, they all concluded that they were generally satisfied. When talking about Green Funds, the beneficiaries described it as a booster, an opportunity to get things started, and a generator:

“It’s just a great scheme, and I think it makes it a little more fun to live here when you can get support for cute and strange projects that make the area nicer with some recycling stations, pop-up events, and support for local entrepreneurs.” (Sverre)

Nora stated that Green Funds is a fantastic scheme. She maintained that although it is difficult to document behavioural change, it is evident that attitudes are moving in the right direction towards more sustainable actions.

“All you have to do is send in a simple application. There’s not much bureaucracy around the scheme, and I think it’s well-organised compared to many other financing schemes.” (Nora)

Lise stated that the biggest challenge for sustainability projects is that it costs money and that one does not have the resources to get started. The Green Funds enable people who want to try out new initiatives to think creatively and brainstorm. For those dedicated individuals who want to create a green project, money should at least not be an obstacle. Two of the housing community gardening groups said that they would have gone ahead with the creation of gardens regardless of the Green Funds, but described the scheme as a booster that motivated them to get started. Seven informants stated that while the funding had helped to create their respective projects, they have had little expectation for profitability. In addition to the funds, some had also paid extra money out of pocket. There is also a greater likelihood of receiving Green Funds if the initiator can provide some degree of self-financing.

“The goal is to create a better community for everyone. Test out innovative solutions. We’re not trying to make money off of this. Most of us are actually paying out of pocket in addition to the funding. This is for people who are really passionate.” (Elias)⁶

⁶While Elias is first and foremost a district staff informant, he had also been involved in a number of

“It’s quite a bit of work and it’s definitely not profitable. But suddenly you see that someone has managed to grow corn, and you start to realise that it’s possible to make food locally. And maybe you get more willing to pay when you realise that it’s actually not all that easy to grow vegetables.” (Jenny)

After receiving the funds, Jenny and her group made their first attempts at gardening. When they were successful and watched the garden come to life, they were also motivated to do more. They set up a Facebook group where they share events, and several of them have taken part in other urban farming/biodiversity initiatives around the city. Other informants also expressed a strong passion for the Green Fund projects. Eva described the sense of well-being that is created when she is surrounded by the garden she is involved in:

“It doesn’t have to just be a load grass and a couple of trees - it can actually be something that engages all your senses. We had about 50 butterflies emerge a couple of weeks ago, and it was amazing to sit there and see. We have five species of butterflies; we have three or four species of bumblebees. And to just sit and enjoy those, I think is a treasure in a city. I’ve never known a city that had a space like this. In my experience, I’ve never seen a community take on something like that where you plant the ground and are part of it.”

Most beneficiaries believed that the projects have had both social benefits and possibilities for increasing environmental awareness. In general, they gave the impression that while their projects or the Green Fund scheme probably cannot lead to any drastic transformations towards sustainability, most people felt like the green projects and the funding was a small step in the right direction: “I don’t have faith in one very large measure, but the many little ones, and it’s clear that every single Green Fund project will count.” (Nora)

Monica emphasised her thought process behind participating in her project, and the social components that she regarded as key ingredients for making people more aware of their day-to-day practices that influence the environment. She believed that engaging local voluntary sustainability initiatives. Because of this, I have included quotations about his experiences in voluntary work in the beneficiary results.

idents in small scale, easily accessible, and fun projects could lead to a new awareness for sustainability. Monica maintained that in the process of trying to encourage eco-friendly behaviour, it makes no sense to do so in an aggressive and moralising manner: "You can't remove a flaw from a community. You can only add stronger elements, other positive elements."

People do not appreciate being told what to do, and this negativity leads to resignation and hopelessness. Participating in a social group, on the other hand, learning about nature, and seeing the results of your work leads to empowerment. Monica described it as a victory in an activist sense: That you, as a community member, can influence your immediate surroundings, get along with others, do something positive, and take care of nature. While at the same time being careful to convey these core values in a peaceful, friendly, and playful way:

"People realise that what they do actually matters! Saying "I participated in that, and I planted this, and look how big it's grown!" It gives me goosebumps. (...) You can feel the hope, and see your work physically materialising in front of your eyes, and its endlessly beautiful." (Monica)

Monica was the most enthusiastic about the potential of the Green Fund projects to raise awareness. On the other side of the spectrum, Sverre appeared to be more sceptical of whether Green Fund- sponsored projects could increase sustainability awareness. He thought that it was positive to make use out of areas of the district that are a bit run down, and to create more biological diversity in the green areas. However, he was unsure whether the Green Fund projects could have any widespread effects:

"Of course, you can say that this is also part of responding to the challenge of making cities more sustainable, but it's doubtful whether growing three potatoes here and there is going to help that much, though."

All in all, the beneficiaries praised the Green Funds. They shared that their Green Fund projects had, to one extent or another, contributed to the improvement of their respective areas. Commonly mentioned benefits included creating beautiful spaces, working towards spreading environmental awareness, and overall improving Sagene. While the amount

of enthusiasm expressed regarding the ability of Green Funds projects to achieve such objectives varied, the general agreement was that the scheme and the projects were at least a step in the right direction.

6.1.3 Strengthening Social Ties and Engaging Children

We are now moving onto the social benefits of the projects, which was the most commonly cited reason for wanting to get involved. In one of the gardening groups, they had experienced that increasing numbers of people in the housing cooperative were interested in joining, creating a more social environment where it was easier to get to know the neighbours:

“You might be a little hesitant in the beginning and want to see how things unfold, but we learn from each other and help the newcomers. And when you have something to do outside, it makes it much easier to get out! More people are using the courtyard now than before, precisely because you have a reason to be down here.” (Jenny)

Jenny also mentioned that all of a sudden, it was possible to meet people who had been living in the housing block for several years, who she had never even seen before. In addition to doing outdoor gardening activities together, one of the housing cooperative gardening groups had also begun to throw parties in the courtyard for everyone living in the cooperative. At these parties, which had taken place a few times each year, some 20-30 residents had come together to share food and drinks they had made using vegetables, herbs, fruits, and berries from the garden.

Another important source of motivation for ten of the informants was using the projects as measures for engaging children in green activities. This was particularly the case in urban farming/biodiversity projects. They stated that it was important to teach children about nature and ecosystems, where food comes from, and how local, healthy food can be grown within the city:

“I’d like to think that it’s valuable for the kids who grow up in the city to get to see that you can pick raspberries, or you can grow herbs in the garden, or

bake a cake with apples from outside your window.” (Caroline)



Figure 10: *Dugnad*. Photo courtesy of informant

Another reason for wanting to include children, was that the beneficiaries believed it to be a good opportunity for children to socialise and get to know both adults and other children in the area. The informants also shared stories of how the children had been excited to participate in voluntary work. Green entrepreneur Anniken had created several activities for children, intending to raise awareness among children that humans are a part of nature:

“One girl said that the trees take care of us. And another boy said that each time a tree is cut down, the world becomes a little bit worse for humans. (...) And I ask the children what they think the trees want, and it turns out that we want many of the same things.”

Sverre initiated a parent-led gardening project at a local primary school and, on behalf of the rest of the parents, he applied for the Green Funds to build a greener schoolyard. At this school, flowers were planted, vegetables were grown, and insect hotels were made. However, how useful the learning outcomes will be, depend on how well the teachers will include the courtyard in the teaching.

“Ripple effects are an all-around effect of this (the Green Funds). But it’s not like I have experienced that my son comes home and has suddenly learned a lot because of this project. But that’s the intention, of course, of including gardening in home economics in particular, as well as the natural sciences. That they can learn about photosynthesis, pollinators, and those kinds of things. But it’s up to how the school manages to take advantage of the opportunity.”



Figure 11: Children doing garden work. Photo courtesy of informant

Overall, an important motivation for participating in Green Fund projects was coming together with people in the area, learning together and helping each other, as well as being able to involve children in the activities. Through including children, beneficiaries hoped that they can gain a better understanding of nature, although it is unclear how great the learning takeaway is.

6.2 Beneficiaries' Challenges in Their Projects

While all of the Green Fund beneficiaries responded that they were generally satisfied with the Green Funds, most beneficiaries had also encountered various problems with their projects, or even had critical reflections around the scheme. These challenges can be divided into two categories: The lack of social diversity, and the lack of micro institutionalisation. The projects depend on the efforts of dedicated individuals, meaning that there is a lack of rules or norms that influence actions within the projects. In practice, this is seen through issues related to project maintenance, ensuring sufficient participation, and conflicts with other stakeholders.

6.2.1 Lack of Social Diversity

It was mentioned in Chapter 5 that both the Oslo Municipality at large and District Sagene are culturally diverse areas, as approximately 25% of the population in Sagene are immigrants (Høydahl 2015). What is interesting to note, however, is that this cultural diversity in the district does not correspond with the backgrounds of my informants, all of whom had western, mainly Norwegian, backgrounds.

When asked what kinds of people are involved with Green funds, there was a consensus that there is a fairly homogenous group of people involved. As Eva put it; “the only lower-income participation is that sometimes I find people sleeping in the garden or using drugs”. As already mentioned, it is mainly Norwegian middle-class residents who are involved in green initiatives. This seems to be related to the expensive and small apartments in Sagene, which Jenny stated puts a constrain on what kinds of people can live there and be involved in the garden. She alluded to the fact that no immigrant families live in their apartment building, who often have larger families. Nine out of 13 informants had experienced that there were low levels of non-western participation, and six of them expressed concern and/or had attempted to create more a diverse group of volunteers.

“I am very passionate about social inclusion, reaching out to those who don’t necessarily buy organic food from before, those who don’t necessarily believe that they have any interest in what sprouts and grows.” (Monica)

When Eva was asked about the cultural diversity in Sagene and what kind of people are involved in the garden, I was told that they had been trying to figure out how to create a more diverse group. However, she did not know how to reach out to and include the large Muslim population in the area.

Sverre was asked if he believed that the Green Funds were known to many different social groups in the community. He only thought that this was the case for the people who have children in school, or are otherwise engaged in something in the local community. Interestingly, when describing parental participation at the primary school, he pointed out that the lack of participation among the immigrant population does not imply that they are avoiding it. Rather, he thought that it had to do with the complexity and formality of the tasks. This point will become relevant in later discussions.

“To take on formal positions, to attend meetings, and write summaries, maybe immigrants participate less, proportionately, than to what their share of the population would imply. But when it comes to *dugnad*⁷ like bringing food, baking a cake, this group is very involved.”

⁷The term *dugnad*, (as defined in Chapter 3), will be used in a somewhat interchangeable manner with

A common theme mentioned, was the necessity to have extra life capacity to engage in green initiatives. Sverre said that both time, energy, and money to spare is needed to get involved, and that it is usually the less affluent residents and immigrants who, unfortunately, do not have this capacity.

When asked about how the beneficiaries had experienced the formal aspect of creating and submitting a funding application, they all agreed that it had been a reasonably easy and straightforward process. However, two informants also noted that the application process may not be as intuitive for different social groups as it had been for them. Nora pointed out that a certain level of experience is needed to create a solid application. Sverre also mentioned that while the application process is quite simple, a selection process is already taking place from the start because of it.

“When you have the experience and know-how to submit a realistic application, there’s a much greater chance of getting a good result. If you apply for something that’s completely out of the blue and is very difficult to implement in practice, you probably won’t get any funding.” (Nora)

“In my job, all I do is send out applications for funding. So that wasn’t an obstacle to me, but it might be for others. (...) Of course, when you apply for a funding scheme you have to create an application, report back, and have someone to control the money – this may require some experience with such things.” (Sverre)

Building on his previous comment about immigrant parents’ participation in different activities at school, Sverre stated that some social groups might not be comfortable with the formalisation of the application process. He did not believe that lack of participation was the result of a lack of will:

“If the goal is to recruit a more diverse group of people, I think that personal recruitment, information, and networking meetings are key. It’s not really about making the application process ‘easier’, because I actually think it’s easy enough as it is.” (Sverre)

voluntary work.

We can see that some of the beneficiaries believed that the lack of social diversity in Green Fund projects was a negative aspect. While Sagene has a large amount of public housing, all of the informants involved in gardening initiatives live in the more affluent areas of the district, meaning that minority groups are difficult to involve. The beneficiaries also pointed out that less affluent and minority groups have less time, energy, and money to devote for sustainability initiatives, and that the formal aspects of the Green Funds had set a threshold for those not used to creating applications and projects.

6.2.2 Project Management and Financial Constraints

Five of the beneficiary informants had initiated their respective projects, and the remaining six were members of groups with shared responsibilities. As a result, many informants had much information to share regarding the challenges of maintaining their projects in terms of distributing workloads, and managing the projects in terms of finance.

Lise stated that while volunteering is fantastic, it entails a lot more than just showing up for *dugnad*: “It’s writing applications, it’s commenting and responding to emails, it’s like a typical office job. Which is very much behind the scenes.” It appeared that the most dedicated individuals with large amounts of responsibility spend just as much time planning and administering the projects as doing practical work. This is something that several beneficiaries had found to be demotivating.

“It comes down to time and coordination of people. Because it takes a lot of time to coordinate people you don’t know. And when you have to spend a lot of time managing people in your spare time.” (Anna)

“It’s not just the office work part that’s so freaking interesting. The question is, how can ownership and accountability be distributed so that projects can be self-sustaining? Participation, in other words. I think that’s something that a scheme like the Green Funds should have an understanding of.” (Monica)

Sverre had experiences with project management that was slightly different from the voluntary group informants. On behalf of a large group of parents who did not know about the project in advance, he applied for the Green Funds, and it was paramount that the

other parents would participate in *dugnad*. Sverre emphasised that he would not claim that engaging the other parents had been a challenge per se, but that inviting such a large group to participate requires quite a lot of planning and coordination. He believed that his situation differed from many other beneficiaries of the Green Funds, where small groups of dedicated participants had been involved from the outset. Sverre said that to sustain the project long-term, the intention was that the project would mainly be maintained by the teachers rather than relying on the efforts of the body of parents that changes annually.

Another key issue that was raised concerning project management, was the fact that money from the Green Funds could only be used for tools and equipment needed to create the projects, and that it was not permitted to use the money for salary or operating costs. When relying on the skills of volunteers in different areas (such as project management, office work, and organisational tasks, not being able to receive compensation for the time spent, or hire professional assistance), there was instability regarding the potential long-term survival of the projects.

“If we try to zoom out a bit, there’s little research on projects of this kind that are more than three years old. Why do you think that is? It’s because these projects usually don’t get older than three years because people get burned out! Money is given to soil and fertiliser, but nothing is given to project management - and that’s not sustainable at all.” (Monica)

“Voluntary initiatives are great, but to make them sustainable long-term, and to make them really good, you have to pay. You’ve got to hire people to come in and do good jobs, to bring in professionals who can arrange cultivation or bike repair courses. You can’t just organise an event and hope that a professional will drop by and help. That makes for very low-scale activities, where we can’t accomplish much, and everyone ends up being disappointed. But when money enters the picture - that’s what it takes to get predictability.” (Elias)

The issue of not being able to receive money for operational support was of particular concern to beneficiaries in the category of green entrepreneurs. Green entrepreneurs are

the third smallest applicant category (7%) to apply for Green Funds 2013-2018, as shown in Figure 6 in Chapter 5. Two of my informants belong to this category.

Anniken lives in another district of Oslo. However, her applications for Green Funds in that district had been denied because she was seeking money for herself as a salary for the development of green projects. She is 70% self-employed, and securing income is a continuous task. While Anniken had devoted many unpaid working hours, she needed economical compensation: “Of course, voluntary work is important – but in my case, I actually depend on receiving money for my time and efforts.”

It has been previously mentioned that the Green Funds should not be directed towards salaries, but this guideline appears to be more geared toward voluntary groups, as Anniken had received funding to pay her directly for the development of projects. She shared that in her Green Fund applications, she wrote that the money would be spent on equipment and materials, not salaries. She described it as having found a loophole in the system.

Another issue raised by some beneficiaries was that the Green Fund guidelines state that the projects should be innovative, meaning that the same project cannot receive funding several years in a row unless a significant innovative change is made. As a result, when the projects had been created and the funds had been spent, maintenance without money for the following year had proved to be a challenge in several of the projects. Anniken had worked with various Green Fund projects in Sagene for several years. To get funding, she had to come up with different projects each year or add new spins to the previous ones, which was something that the administrative staff of District Sagene had helped her with.

On another note, Anniken said that there is a great deal of focus on gardening projects in the Green Funds, which she believed to be negative since when entrepreneurs are supported, completely different types of projects can be created. The other green entrepreneur informant, Linnea, made a similar statement:

“I wish there was more diversity in the types of projects. There’s been much focus on urban cultivation, and maybe that makes sense since that’s the easiest

kind of project for individuals and housing cooperatives to do. Companies, businesses, and entrepreneurs – it requires a lot more from the applicant.”

While Sagene appears to be more supportive of entrepreneurs than other districts, according to Anniken, she was also under the impression that the administration is not encouraging entrepreneurs to apply, and she believed that they seemed to be moving away from it.

Linnea shared her backstory about why she started her business. She credits this to lessons learned from her involvement in *Omstilling Sagene*, the environmental group that was introduced in Chapter 3. The group is based upon the principles of the Transition Town network. Here, it is emphasised that while voluntary initiatives are valuable, they are also very vulnerable as they depend on members having time, money, and energy to spare for the projects. Linnea witnessed this in *Omstilling Sagene*, where there had not been much activity the past few years after key members were burned out or had moved away. That is why it is paramount to create projects that have an economical foundation. As she wanted to create a sustainable project with a long-term vision and stability, she created her business.

“Perhaps the challenge for the Green Funds is that it’s supposed to cover so much, and there are relatively few funds in total. So maybe there should be a separate amount of money for entrepreneurs, to encourage that in the district.

How the scheme is set up now, it’s hard to create something long-lasting.”

In this section, I have presented challenges to the Green Fund projects related to project management and financial constraints. What these challenges have in common is that they are linked to attempts to keep projects up and running for an extended time. While these are valid concerns for the beneficiaries who devote their time and efforts to the creation of the projects, we will later see that these challenges can be attributed to a clash between the expectations that beneficiaries have for the scheme, and the criteria and guidelines the district staff must adhere to when distributing the funds.

6.2.3 Insufficient Participation, Turnover and Burnout

Another challenge to sustain the projects had been engaging enough regularly active participants. This was, in particular, a common theme among the informants who had been involved in garden groups. Turnover in garden groups was often high, and the informants also reported that the recruitment of new members was often challenging. The groups use Facebook to advertise, but have found it difficult to get new people involved. In describing the lack of continuity in participation, Eva described it as follows: “Each year is like a garden - it changes.”

This lack of continuity in participation meant that maintenance of the gardens was a challenge. While the beneficiaries were satisfied with the funds received and the things they had managed to accomplish with it, the work of keeping the areas neat was a different story. Informants claimed that although many people had been interested in participating, they did not have time to put in the work when it came down to it. The housing cooperatives often consist of more than 100 apartments, with the number of garden group members ranging from four to 30 members. These garden groups take responsibility for the maintenance of the entire outdoor areas, and the state of the courtyards lie in the hands of a few dedicated participants. This sentiment was shared by all the informants involved in community gardening initiatives. They agreed enough people in the housing cooperatives must participate and share the workload for the gardens to stand the test of time.



Figure 12: Garden work. Photo courtesy of informant

“The intention is there, but the capacity for implementation is not always as

good. There are lots of busy parents with young children living here, so it comes down to time.” (Eirin)

Issues with insufficient participation and turnover appear to have a consequence that is as unfortunate as it is inevitable: Burnout. The topic of burnout was not initially one that I had considered when designing the interview guide. However, this proved to be an important issue, as indicated by the informants themselves in six out of nine beneficiary interviews. Another term that also came up when discussing burnout, was ‘*ildsjel*’. This may be translated into a dedicated individual or an individual with a driving force. The consensus local green initiatives cannot be seen through without the efforts of eager and dedicated people who take responsibility to initiate projects, spread information, and engage others. The problem was that these dedicated individuals tended to take on too much responsibility and burn out, meaning that the projects eventually would collapse.

“It’s fun, but at the same time, if the workload gets too big, I think people can get tired of it, and you can start to feel like things are literally growing over your head.” (Anna)

Lise stated that it required large amounts of time to organise Green Fund projects and that Oslo Municipality relies heavily on volunteers. While Green Funds pay for the required materials, beneficiaries cannot get any compensation for the time put in:

“And I’ve spent *a lot of time* doing different things, hehe! And several people have been involved in projects who almost burned out, and that’s very sad. You have an idea, and it seems fun, and it works, but the actual execution takes a lot more time and effort than you had imagined. You might come to lose some spark.”

The findings indicate that insufficient participation, turnover, and burnout are challenges that often go hand in hand. Turnover, in District Sagene as well as in the voluntary groups in general is characteristic, and endangers the stability of the structures. When too few volunteers are involved, the survival of the projects depend on a few people who often eventually tire and quit.

6.2.4 Dominating Narratives on Nature's Aesthetics vs. a Pile of Sticks

The Green Fund beneficiary informants have been involved in eight different projects. Seven of these had received barely any or no critique, according to the informants, who reported that the Sagene community's responses had been overwhelmingly positive. The exception was one of the gardening groups. All three informants involved in this project expressed that there had been several conflicts between them and other residents, as well as with a segment of the municipal sector. Both conflicts were related to the fact that the garden was designed with a specific framework in mind.⁸ The aim was to design an ecological garden by working with nature and caring for the land and its inhabitants. Using this framework meant that the garden was not always neatly maintained, but rather the focus was rather on promoting a healthy ecosystem. While the relationship with neighbours had improved over time, the conflict with the public sector continued to represent the greatest challenge.

The garden in question is situated on a communal land area owned by *Bymiljøetaten* (The City Environmental Agency), an agency within Oslo Municipality. While satisfied with the work of District Sagene and the communication with the staff there, the gardening group had gone through many issues in entering agreements and managing the demands of *Bymiljøetaten*. This agency had different ideas than them concerning how the communal area should look and be managed. Eva described it as being dictated:

“Instead of coming to look at the garden... we're just a number. We're not real. We're the people behind it, and the fact is that we've done a lot of work, and we're trying our best. They just want the entire area to be devoid of anything. I've found them to be very unhelpful.”

When Monica discussed these issues, she described the Oslo Municipality as ‘a multi-headed troll’, meaning that there were too many layers of bureaucracy, with a multitude of different agencies and people to deal with. When the group was first granted permission to garden the area, Monica recounted that they had been asked to sign a contract under some worrying conditions. According to her, *Bymiljøetaten* stated that ‘the municipality

⁸The framework will remain unnamed due to protection of anonymity.

may cancel the contract at any given time and without further notice, and the area will immediately be restored to its' original state'. "And I said this is crazy, there's no way we're signing this!" The conflicts reached a point where *Bymiljøetaten* threatened that unless they managed to keep the garden in a neater condition, in line with the traditional idea of how polished a garden should look, they would lose their permission to cultivate the area.

I was told a story about how the garden members had made a stick pile following the principles of their framework, which functions as a good habitat for birds and insects. However, *Bymiljøetaten* did not approve of it being there as it appeared messy, and the group was asked to remove it. In the end, the two parties agreed that they could keep the stick pile if a sign was put up explaining why it was there. However, when *Bymiljøetaten* came to install the sign, they ended up accidentally digging up a small cherry tree that had just been planted due to a misunderstanding. This story exemplified the participants' experience of the relationship with 'the multi-headed troll'. Lise attributed this difficult relationship to lack of goodwill on the part of *Bymiljøetaten*, as well as insufficient communication from both sides.

The fact that the area in question is a community garden in a public space with other residents living nearby had also represented its challenges. This meant that the garden members needed to collaborate with other residents who had different ideas about the communal area and how it should look, described by the members as a territorial dispute. Like *Bymiljøetaten*, the neighbours did not understand the idea behind it. Lise said that there were people in the housing community around the garden who initially did not agree that the garden should be built using the ideals of their framework, but should rather be an ordinary grass park. The garden has a rough and rustic look, which the informants said is likely to appeal more to young people. Monica claimed that there are a lot of feelings associated with nature's aesthetics and how it should look. According to her, there is a 1950s paradigm that is still very present in society, especially among older people, that gardens should be kept neat and free from weeds.

Monica stated that if you forget to ask and provide information, people might turn against you. She admitted that they had made mistakes on the way by not informing and spending enough time talking to the neighbours. She also admitted that this lack of communication could be detrimental to the survival of a project like this. The relationship had, however, improved over time by focusing more on communication with the community, and the scepticism the project was met with at the beginning had diminished over time. When the garden became more established and the community saw how nice it turned out, they also became more positive towards it.

Diving into this particular case has demonstrated several challenges that may arise in the context of voluntary sustainability initiatives. This includes negotiating boundaries at the meeting point between voluntary work and the municipal sector, lack of sufficient communication, territorial disputes in a common area, as well as different understandings regarding nature's aesthetics.

6.3 Green Funds as Perceived by the District Staff

In this final section, I will present findings from the interviews I conducted with the District Sagene administrative staff who have created the scheme, managed it in the past, and those who are currently managing it. We will explore the responses of the administrators to the main challenges raised by the beneficiaries. Within this group, as well as the Green Fund beneficiary group, I noticed that the answers given were quite similar concerning appreciation of the Green Funds and what types of people typically engage. However, as will be seen from the upcoming material, several of the responses in this section diverged from what the beneficiaries stated concerning social inclusivity, project management, financing, and participation.

6.3.1 The Aims of the Scheme and the Staff's Approach

Like many of the beneficiaries, the staff also described Sagene residents as being more conscious of environmental issues than what is average in Oslo. As we can recall, several beneficiaries also reported that they had experienced the District Sagene staff as being

supportive, helpful, and easy to speak to. Henriette had found that this element of trust between them and the residents is useful for creating engagement:

“In Sagene, people feel like they’re part of ‘The Environmental District’ (*Miljøbydelen*). Both those working in the administration, as well as the people living here. And having created that feeling, I think is important. Because then you get a kind of community feeling, that we are lifting this burden together, which I think motivates people to get involved in environmental issues. It also creates trust between the municipality, the district, and the residents, and this feeling is important both for the neighbourhood effect and the environmental impact.”

Amanda elaborated further on this approach. She stated that local society development is not a task that the municipality usually takes on, but that District Sagene has worked with this for a long time thanks to a few key individuals. Those who started the Community Centre in the 2000s concentrated heavily on participation, which she believed has helped to shape the district. She speculated that being part of that collective attitude could be the reason why there is a lot of attention around green projects in Sagene. Henriette shared information on the training she received when she started working at District Sagene, which shed light on the approach the district staff for community engagement:

“When I started working for Sagene, the way I was trained was that if someone takes the step and reaches out to us wanting support to get something started, we help them as best as we can. That these people are the most important actors for positive change in the local society. In other districts, this is not necessarily a pronounced thing that they do, because they don’t have the same approach. While at Sagene, we stress that if someone raises their hand, we should take it and lead them in the right direction.”

In an attempt to understand what the staff members believed the goals of the Green Funds were, I asked Thomas how he would compare the environmental and the social aspects of the scheme, and what he believed to be the most important. He explained that it lies within the name itself that the main intention is to promote sustainable management of resources and the local environment. However, the scheme was designed precisely to attract

more people into environmental initiatives, which is where the social aspects come into play. Another factor is the educational aspects and identifying what kind of initiatives are suitable for mobilising and letting people contribute with knowledge and expertise. According to Thomas, community participation becomes an instrument along the way and is a part of the strategy to create a more environmentally friendly district.

Amanda hoped that the Green Funds could act as a starting booster, and that the beneficiaries would eventually be able to carry on the projects themselves. The guidelines state that the funds are project-based, thus not intended for long-term operation. This is rooted in the vision is that Green Fund projects should be innovative and original, and as a result, they are unable to provide funding for the same projects multiple times. That means, according to Henriette, that if beneficiaries wish to keep their projects alive for an extended time, the Green Funds might not be the most ideal solution:

“As I see it, the Green Funds are a catalyst for getting things started. To put seeds in the soil. But now, we are seeing that people receiving Green Funds rely on them to keep the projects going. So perhaps we need to re-evaluate what role we are playing, and what role we should play. Maybe keeping the projects running is good. But at the same time, does that really align with the intentions of the Green Funds?”

The district also provides Volunteer Funds that are geared towards more permanent support. Green Funds, however, were intended to generate *new* measures. If that money is used for the operating costs of old projects, there will be less money for new ones. Both Henriette and Amanda shared that they understood that many beneficiaries had concerns regarding this. Because of this, the staff had helped applicants create new twists to their projects so that they could continue to meet the criteria of innovation.

After the projects have been completed, the beneficiaries are required to submit a final report documenting how the funds were spent. Henriette admitted that she sometimes realised from the report that money had gone to operation, but was called something else by the beneficiaries. We remember this is what Anniken said she did, although she seemed to have come to an understanding with the staff. The beneficiaries wanted money to hire

employees to manage everything that was put into action, instead of just equipment. Henriette expressed compassion for the beneficiaries that find themselves in this situation. That being said, when public funds are not spent properly, she can get stern. She believed every penny should be accounted for, and that if someone has received 8k NOK, and submits a report with receipts documenting 7,5k NOK spent, she did not think that was sufficient. Indeed, Henriette admitted that facilitating voluntary workers' needs while administering public funds is a balancing act:

“It’s such a complex role to have. Because you are in one way a guardian, and at the same time, you are the facilitator. You have to wear both hats.”

When asked whether it was challenging to evaluate applications and decide who are to receive funding, there were different sentiments expressed. Amanda maintained that it was very difficult, as they have several guidelines to follow. She found it particularly challenging to accommodate the guideline about facilitating innovative projects, as this is hard to measure. They also receive applications for many different types of projects which are hard to compare. There are also a lot more applications than they can accommodate, so they have to make tough choices. Contrarily, Henriette said that it is not difficult, as they have quite clear criteria against which the projects can be measured.

I asked the staff why they thought urban farming and biodiversity projects were so popular. This is the category that most applicants apply for, and that the highest amount of funds has been granted to (see Figures 5 and 7 in Chapter 5). Amanda said that this category is easy to support as it is concrete and visible, it benefits many, and it is easy to include all sorts of people. Gardening and biodiversity projects, therefore, meet many of the guidelines. In a similar vein, I asked why they believed there were few applications for, and few funds granted, to green entrepreneurs. Thomas replied that entrepreneurs may know that they do not provide operational support, so they may be looking for schemes where funding can be obtained over an extended period. It might also be because the Green Funds are such a modest amount of money that they do not think that it is worth the effort to apply. He also stated that a lack of marketing could have resulted in potential entrepreneurs not being reached. It appears from those statements that Thomas had no

reservations about supporting green entrepreneurs. On the contrary, Henriette and Elias explained that supporting this group of applicants was not a priority to them:

“Is it right for the municipality to provide entrepreneurial funding? After all, they’ve got to come up with a business model that makes them self-sufficient on their own. It may not be the role of the municipality to ensure their operation. I don’t know, it depends on how you want to work as a municipality.”
(Henriette)

According to Elias, this goes back to the guidelines, as with several of the other challenges the beneficiaries raised. He stated that they need to consider how many people they can reach through the projects - if they help an entrepreneur to develop a product, they reach very few people compared to a cultivation course, for instance, where the application specifies that 20 people will participate: “How many people we reach out to has contributed heavily in assessing who should receive funds. And that’s how it should be.”

We can see that the staff believed their approach to involving and helping residents had helped to create a sense of community and to spread awareness about environmental issues. The Green Funds aim to generate new and innovative project-based measures that reach many different social groups and are positive for the environment. The guidelines seem to have created problems for both voluntary groups that want to keep their projects running for several years, as well as for entrepreneurs whose work might not involve sufficient amounts of people.

6.3.2 Awareness, Social Diversity, and Inclusion

I wondered if the staff believed that the general population could become more aware of environmental issues as a result of the Green Funds. To investigate this, I asked Thomas what he believed the community thinks about the green initiatives around the district. Amongst the staff, he appeared to be the least optimistic about the potential effects of the Green Funds:

“If people think it’s for the aesthetic purposes of bringing flowers and bees and life to the parks, or if the audience thinks “Oh, they’ve done this be-

cause of the pollinators” or ”This must be because they want to draw attention to the fact that Norwegian agricultural policy needs to focus more on self-preservation from a global perspective” - I hardly think it’s the latter. But people may have different interpretations of why we do this. Some well-educated people may realise that this can serve many purposes, but I don’t think I want to exaggerate the environmental awareness that it spreads.”

The other informants seemed slightly more optimistic about the Green Funds’ potential. Elias maintained that how much the Green Fund projects can influence residents of Sagene depends on how good the beneficiaries are at creating projects. He stated that if you have knowledgeable people who are good at arranging, promoting, disseminating, and documenting, lots of people can be influenced. Henriette said that the snowball effect is relevant. She believed that if you involve yourself in one case, there is a greater likelihood that you will engage in another and that the third follows. Amanda also thought the funds could spread awareness:

“I think this is one of the most positive ways of doing it as well. Just to show people that it’s possible to do small pleasant things in everyday life that make their lives better, not worse.”

With some variances in how hopeful the administrative staff seemed about the scheme’s potential to spread awareness, it appears that the staff members are, to an extent, on the same page. They maintained that the Green Funds scheme is not intended to undertake any major transformations on its own, but is rather one measure among many, addressing social and environmental issues and solutions.

Moving on from the topic of whether awareness is created, it is also relevant to investigate *what kinds of people* this awareness might be created amongst. It has already been established that the beneficiary informants believe there is a low amount of non-Western participation in the Green Fund activities. However, an interesting finding was that the administrators appeared to have different beliefs about whether this lack of diversity among the participants involved represented a problem. While Amanda had not carried out a thorough analysis of the applicants, she had the impression that those who apply for the

Green Funds were amongst the more privileged segments of the population. Still, she believed that while the applicants and initiators may be a fairly homogenous group, the projects are still available for, and enjoyed by, more social groups who are not necessarily visible from my material:

“The important thing is that the projects are done. Our hope is, and what we are trying to achieve with the guidelines, is that the projects will benefit all kinds of people. Even if someone hasn’t applied for funds or been involved, anyone can walk past a park with edible growths and pick and taste from it.”

The same sentiment was expressed by Elias. He claimed that social inclusion was ensured by following the guidelines: “Although the project initiator is a white middle-class person with a bachelor’s degree or whatever, I don’t know how important it is to have diversity among the applicants”. He stated that it is difficult to cover everything, and while projects involving vulnerable and minority groups are indeed prioritised, it is still a challenge to get them involved. However, Elias maintained that this was never the main objective of Green Funds. The focus was something entirely different: sustainability, green action, and locally engaging open events. “If you measure me by something that wasn’t part of the order, then, of course, I’ll get a bad score.” This is also reminiscent of Thomas’ statement; that the original intention was to promote sustainable resource management and the local environment. While this is the point of focus, according to Thomas, he also shared stories about how the administration had worked with facilitating projects aimed at the inclusion of marginalised groups.

Interestingly, Henriette expressed quite a different stance on the lack of diversity compared to the other staff members. This was a subject that she raised early in the interview and was eager to talk about. She stated that lack of diversity is a weakness of all application schemes; they reach a relatively narrow section of the population. Because of this, she had focused on making a more diverse pool of people apply. She thought that the Green Funds needed to reach out to more social groups and that this can be achieved by working more purposefully by getting out of the office, seeking out people and talking to them. Henriette believed that they need to facilitate marginalised groups differently than those who typically submit applications. Green Fund beneficiary Sverre also made a

similar statement. Henriette maintained that, fortunately, the district has a contact surface with people who often do not seek out Green Funds by themselves:

“Us working in the municipal districts have a pretty unique position; we have contact with a fairly large part of the population who may not usually feel like they are part of the green shift.”

Because of this unique position, they can work purposefully to reach out to more people by using the networks that already exist within the municipal districts. This may include institutions such as social services, childcare services, retirement homes, public housing, as well as children’s and youth clubs. Henriette shared a story about how collaboration across municipal sectors could engage excluded groups:

The staff was contacted by two men from public housing who wanted Green Funds to set up cultivation boxes and improve the green spaces outside. The men were asked to submit an application, but did not have the capacity to fill it out. However, the district staff contacted and cooperated with *Bomiljøtjenesten* (The Residential Environment Services), who knew the public housing blocks quite well. *Bomiljøtjenesten* then applied for the Green Funds, so that they could distribute money to the residents in the blocks, who could then provide requisitions for the plant store. If someone wanted to buy a wheelbarrow, a water hose, and some seeds, they could simply go there and get the materials without any major application processes. Additionally, the men who initially contacted the district staff were pretty dominant forces in the housing block, and there were some kinds of power struggles happening. Women there wanted to garden and did not want the men to go shopping as they wanted the project to be their own. *Bomiljøtjenesten* were aware of this and better equipped to deal with the social dynamics of the situation than the staff involved with Green Funds. This way, collaborating with this other agency facilitated the integration of marginalised groups.

These findings indicate that while the Green Fund guidelines do state that projects involving marginalised groups are prioritised when distributing funds, the staff members have different interpretations of how this guideline should be fulfilled. Amanda, Elias, and Thomas maintained that as long as the projects are created, it was not that important

who the initiators were, as the projects were still open and available to all. That being said, the inclusion of marginalised groups is not the main intention of Green Funds either, but rather sustainability. Henriette, on the other hand, appeared to take the aspect of inclusion very seriously and was committed to working purposefully to create projects for and with marginalised groups.

6.3.3 Turnover and Burnout

I told the staff that the Green Fund beneficiaries had expressed concerns regarding turnover and burnout, and asked the staff to share their reflections around these issues. Only Elias expressed concern about turnover, which he believed could jeopardise the projects. It should also be noted that Elias is the staff member with the most extensive background in voluntary work, as far as I am able to tell. This appears to have influenced how he experienced challenges in the field of voluntary work, having a more thorough insiders' perspective:

“In Sagene, about 20% (of people) come and go each year. And this is a challenge for all voluntary groups. Turnover over time is a burden, but that's just what happens in a city. This is not the case in small transition towns in the country, where people have roots and long-lasting relationships. But in Oslo? Boom – new job, new boyfriend, education, study abroad. And when people have kids, they need more space. There aren't many apartments with more than two bedrooms in Sagene. And before you know it, the person with the driving force is gone. Then what?”

The other staff members believed turnover to be an inevitable fact, but maintained that the projects could still have positive effects elsewhere, even after they end. Thomas said that when people move out of the district, they may take the ideas and measures with them to the new area to which they move. This way, the ripple effects of such measures can last for a long time after the actual work ceases. Amanda also stated that Sagene is a district with a fairly high population turnover every year. Many people move away when they have children, as the apartments are small and expensive. However, this also means that new people move into the district, and these young new idealists are ready to undertake

sustainability projects.

According to Thomas, the amount of turnover depends on the setting of the project. Housing cooperatives, for instance, often have stable structures. There is a responsible board, and even when people are replaced, a project will persist if there is proper infrastructure in place. He compared this to voluntary youth groups, where turnover is much more characteristic. In these groups, they find that turnover makes the projects dwindle, but that this is something that is to be expected. When the staff was asked about burnout, however, there was a higher sense of concern than what was expressed when discussing turnover:

“They’re dedicated idealists. And when they break (because eventually, they do), the whole project collapses. And that’s really sad, especially when it comes to gardening projects. Because having a dysfunctional, ugly garden is worse than having no garden at all. And then the legitimacy of urban farming, in general, is undermined.” (Henriette)

“Sometimes with voluntary work, stuff just collapses. That key people can no longer bother, and so on. Then we’re often left with the projects in our lap. But that’s got to be the district’s responsibility to deal with. If we have said yes to that thing being built in our park, it’s our problem if the volunteers quit.” (Amanda)

Responses differed as to whether the prevention of burnout among volunteers was a task for which the administration should take responsibility. While cleaning up areas after the initiatives have been abandoned is one thing, spending working hours trying to prevent and micro-manage burnout is yet another. Thomas said that although it is possible to have conversations about how to better distribute responsibility, it is difficult to try to slow down people who are enthusiastic and eager. They should be allowed to go ahead with what they enjoy, after all. At the same time, Thomas maintained that there is a clear downside to putting participants in charge of project management; when people are burned out, personal conflicts are more likely to occur. Also, when things do not go according to plan, it is easy to blame it on others who do not take their fair share of responsibility. This observation was also the case with one of the gardening groups.

“The world of volunteering kind of lives its’ own life. We can contribute with some repair measures, but it mainly has to be their responsibility.” (Thomas)

“That meeting point between voluntary work and bureaucracy is never easy. It doesn’t always work, though we try to do our best.” (Amanda)

Henriette had a different opinion on whether they should intervene in cases of burnout, and seemed more inclined towards it. She said that the volunteer groups might need more help in sharing knowledge and managing projects, and that this is something that the staff might need to discuss more. She proposed an idea that maybe they could arrange a network meeting about how to take care of yourself as a volunteer.

Two out of four staff members emphasised that they had put in a great deal of effort into helping both potential applicants and following up on the beneficiaries. According to Elias, the degree to which people are capable of writing good applications varies considerably. Because of this, the staff members ensure that potential applicants know that the staff is available to assist them. He said that sending out half-thought out applications are a waste of everyone’s time - what is required is to identify and correct the weaknesses. Over the years, he had spent large amounts of time helping people developing applications, projects, documenting effects, accounting, finance, and set up board meetings. Without this assistance, he maintained that there is a good chance that the projects would not be successful, or even created in the first place:

“I remember this gardener I used to know; he was a great guy. But he could hardly write. Could hardly put together a sentence. But he was amazing with people and children. Many people have great ideas but are unable to write them down. And I don’t want that to be the thing that stops the projects from seeing the light of day.” (Elias)

In this final section, I have presented the two interrelated issues of turnover and burnout. When it comes to turnover, three of the staff members believed that it is an inevitable part of involving participants in a big city. Elias, however, who had first-hand experience of the matter, seemed more concerned than the others. Burnout, on the other hand, appeared

to be perceived as a more serious issue, as this is something that could potentially harm the personal well-being and relationships of the people involved. However, responses varied regarding whether the administrators believed that they should take action to prevent burnout.

6.4 Summary

This chapter has demonstrated that while all the informants appreciate Green Funds and believe it to be a good scheme, several issues should be addressed to improve it in regard to social diversity and project management. Most importantly, it appears that the beneficiaries and the administrators have somewhat different expectations of what the Green Funds scheme is, and what it should be. It seems like the guidelines could be conveyed more explicitly to manage expectations for both groups. Moving on, I will now discuss the results in relation to the conceptual framework, previous research, and the research questions of the study.

7 Discussion

In this chapter, I will analyse and discuss the empirical data in relation to the reviewed literature on transformation theory and answer the research questions. The conceptual framework that guides this study is the three spheres of transformation by O'Brien and Sygna (2013) and O'Brien (2018). Additional research will also be used, including the main themes of voluntary work, participation, and local government. Like the previous chapter, the discussion is structured around the first three research sub-questions, and the themes are presented in the following order: The characterisations and motivations of beneficiaries, the challenges of their projects and the Green Funds, and the experiences of the administrative staff members. The final sub-question will be woven into each section, and will also be used to conclude the discussion: *How can the case of the Green Funds be understood in the light of transformation theory?* To finish, I reflect on the potentials of the scheme to create sustainable transformations and contribute with suggestions for future practice.

7.1 Personal Commitments to Transformation

7.1.1 Celebrating Shared Values and Enjoying the Fruits of Labour

The Green Fund scheme is appreciated by all of my 17 interviewees, who generally believed that the successes of the scheme are rooted in particular characteristics of the population and aura in Sagene, and the staff's approach for facilitation. Nearly all informants agreed that the residents have a high level of public acceptance for sustainability measures, shared beliefs, and collective norms regarding environmentally friendly behaviour. Both beneficiaries and administrative staff described Sagene as having a 'village-like aura' with a 'progressive population' that is more aware of environmental issues than what is the average in other districts.

In Chapter 2, a common trend in the previous research was that sustainability initiatives depend on public identification to succeed. This is, in turn, closely tied to shared beliefs, social norms, and a sense of community (Magnaghten and Jacobs 1997, Hopkins 2008, Grinstein and Riefler 2015). These themes are referred to as the personal sphere in the

three spheres of transformation tool by O'Brien and Sygna (2013) and O'Brien (2018). This sphere, as we recall, relates to socio-cultural and individual factors that affect the willingness to identify with and participate in sustainable transformations. If many community residents share common values, beliefs, and worldviews, there is a much greater likelihood that sustainable transformations may occur. O'Brien (2018, 156) argues that worldviews, beliefs, and values are perhaps the most effective drivers of change, as the contents of this sphere are what translates into practical action. The personal sphere also includes the social dimensions that shape understandings of the world.

The social dimension was also a very relevant factor for participants in the Green Fund projects. When beneficiaries were asked about what motivated them, they more often referred to social aspects than their concern for environmental sustainability, although the latter may have been a less articulated premise, in line with the stated shared environmental values that were just discussed. The social dimension is also a key component for engaging others, facilitating knowledge exchange and learning together, which, in turn, can improve the projects. As informant Eirin said; "You might be a little hesitant in the beginning and want to see how things unfold, but we learn from each other and help the newcomers". Networking and meeting others were perhaps the motivational factors most commonly mentioned. Through the projects, the participants had been able to meet new people in the area and their housing communities, socialise during *dugnad*, create a social arena for children and organise parties with neighbours where they enjoyed, quite literally, the fruits of their labour.

The beneficiaries also described a desire to improve Sagene and/or their communal outdoor areas. This included methods like testing out innovative solutions, spreading environmental awareness, and making the areas more enjoyable. Gaining and sharing skills and knowledge were also common reasons stated, as many informants said that they had enjoyed learning about gardening, growing vegetables, helping newcomers, and including children in the learning process. Stowe (2013, 47-49) stated that some of the most common motivation sources for volunteering include a wish to contribute to the community, gain new knowledge, put skills to use, and to meet other people, which is very much in

line with the beneficiaries' reports.

Using the terms of Fuertes and Jiménez (2000, 79), it appears that both other-oriented motivational factors (community concerns and values) and self-oriented factors (personal development, knowledge, and personal relationships) are common. This research can, however, not be applied directly to my findings, as it is based on psychological research, and also makes a quite rigid distinction between the factors. In reality, this often overlaps. However, Fuertes and Jiménez (2000, 79) argue that both sets of factors are essential for maintaining engagement, and in light of this, it seems as the motivational factors of the beneficiaries are well-balanced.

Changing beliefs and values is another key component of the transformation process (O'Brien 2018, 156). Another of the commonly cited reasons for wanting to participate in the Green Fund projects was environmental awareness-raising. Informant Monica claimed that negativity and shaming people for their actions only lead to resignation and hopelessness. However, people can be motivated by seeing that it is possible to do immediate and positive actions for the local environment and community, while having fun and being social at the same time. Similarly, O'Brien (2018, 156) states that changing worldviews can only come about through willingness, and cannot be imposed from the outside. With openness to change, however, they can be altered over time if one is willing to change their beliefs. Based on the necessary conditions for social change according to transformation literature, it seems like the Green Fund scheme is tapping into many necessary components in the personal sphere to engage people and create sustainable changes.

To answer sub-question one of what motivates beneficiaries involved in Green Funds-supported projects, it appears that shared qualities in the personal sphere have led to a common idea of values, beliefs, and worldviews and that their understanding of District Sagene has encouraged participation. Motivational sources include personal development, increasing knowledge, social aspects, improving the community, and the environment. Dedication in the personal sphere is, however, not only relevant for the beneficiaries. It also relates to the personal commitment of the policymakers in the political

sphere, seen through the dedication of the staff at District Sagene, the local politicians who enabled the scheme's existence, and the general trend towards environmentalism in Oslo as seen through receiving the award of European Green Capital 2019. We will now move on to the analysis of what characterises participants in the Green Funds projects, while simultaneously progressing to the second research question regarding challenges in the projects and scheme.

7.1.2 Middle-Class Voluntarism and Groups on the Outside of Transformation

Sagene is a highly diverse area, and projects involving marginalised groups are prioritised in the distribution of the Green Funds. However, few findings indicate that these groups were included to a satisfactory extent. Stowe (2013) found that those who spent the most time volunteering are the majority ethnic groups of a population. There was consensus that the people who get involved follow a clear pattern of being highly educated, fairly affluent, middle-class Norwegians. This was observed by the educational levels of the beneficiaries, their statements about who they had experienced to be involved, as well as the fact that many had paid additional money out of pocket to supplement the funding. Informant Sverre also stated that there is gentrification happening in Sagene.

Much previous research echoes my findings. Cannon and Schipper (2014, 108) describe 'elite capture' as a process in which resources intended for a large group are controlled by a privileged few. Similarly, Rosol, Béal and Mössner (2017, 1713-1714) claim that sustainability initiatives are often socio-spatially selective, created by and for upper-middle-class groups with benefits not reaching disadvantaged groups, called 'eco-gentrification'

There appear to be several reasons behind the lack of marginalised groups' participation in the Green Fund projects, many of which relate to different forms of capital. First off, as Grinstein and Riefler (2015, 697) note, low-income earners usually have less time to spare for recreational activities due to financial constraints. Additionally, a higher socio-economic status tends to increase awareness of environmental issues. Both of these sentiments were expressed by the informants. Some informants also noted that the lack of diversity among participants may be linked to the application process. Wilson and Musick

(1997, 709-711) argue that people with higher socio-economic status have better reading, writing, and communication skills, which facilitate participation. Similarly, Sverre speculated that the lack of minority groups could be due to the formalisation of the application process, not a lack of motivation.

Using the term of Alloun and Alexander (2014, 11), it does indeed appear as if we are witnessing a case of ‘middle-class voluntarism’ with the Green Funds. Although the scheme and many of the projects are open and accessible to all, this does not mean that many different types of people engage. Several beneficiaries wished to see greater social diversity in the projects. As we can recall, the only staff member who expressed a strong opinion on this matter was Henriette, who elaborated on her approach to include more diverse participants. However, the other staff members maintained that while they wanted marginalised groups to be involved, sustainability is the main objective of this scheme, not social inclusion. Also, while the pool of applicants may be limited, staff members believed that the projects can still reach many more than those who are visible through the overview of official beneficiaries, and the participants in my study. This will be discussed further in the upcoming section 7.3 about the staff’s experiences with the scheme and the political sphere.

In terms of personal sphere and reasons to engage, my research shows that it is mainly Norwegian middle-class residents who are drawn to this scheme, and who experience strengthening their social networks and meeting people who share their values. However, other social groups are not engaged, which means that the scheme might contribute to creating stronger divisions and more segregation between different social groups.

7.2 Handling the Practical Realm

7.2.1 Participant Drop-Out

The challenges of the Green Fund scheme and projects are largely caused by practical issues, and the specifics of the guidelines appear to be the main reason behind them. The scheme is organised in such a way that the beneficiaries are responsible for administering

the projects, and funds cannot be allocated to project management. The responsibility thus lies in the hands of a few dedicated participants who take on time-consuming practical and administrative tasks, which means that the spark can easily disappear. Participant drop-out, caused by turnover and burnout, is an identified challenge in sustainability initiatives. When the interviewees discussed turnover, it became evident that this is closely linked to the fact that Sagene has a high annual number of turnover in residents. This is because the apartments are small and expensive, and many people move when they have children as a result.

While no informants explicitly stated that they had quitted due to lack of motivation, this is also a factor that can contribute to turnover in voluntary initiatives. Cox (2011, 1), for instance, claims that turnover is often caused by the disappearance of motivation. This resonates partly with my findings, but only in the context of burnout. Cox (2011, 11-15) describes several factors that can cause burnout: Lack of immediate results, external recognition, resources, as well as personal conflicts. From this list of possible reasons, only the latter two were mentioned by my informants. While only one person had dropped out due to personal conflicts, many beneficiaries mentioned that lack of time and money had caused large workloads. Despite this, many remained engaged over long periods and were not discouraged by these challenges to the point of quitting. However, some informants mentioned another point that Cox did not propose as a possible reason behind drop-out; lack of internal recognition. Some beneficiaries were dissatisfied that not enough people were participating sufficiently, and they felt like others assumed that they would take responsibility for maintenance.

While insufficient participation, turnover, and burnout was a concern to many of the beneficiaries involved, it appeared that the staff considered this to be quite inevitable for voluntary groups – especially when located in an area with a high turnover rate of residents. Several beneficiaries requested additional assistance to deal with project management to prevent burnout and turnover. While the staff does provide this to some extent, they had varying beliefs about how much assistance should be provided. We will return to this in section 7.3.3. In sum, project management is essentially the responsibility of the benefi-

ciaries.

To answer the second research sub-question, we can conclude that there are two main challenges for Green Fund beneficiaries in their projects and with the scheme at large. The most prominent findings are the practical issues related to having enough time and resources for project management and recruiting enough participants. Turnover and burnout led some of the initiators with the highest levels of responsibility to be demotivated. The second and less cited reason relates to the social inclusion of marginalised groups and a homogenous group of participants. This lack of social diversity was a point which also is echoed in much of the previous research on voluntary-based sustainability initiatives. The findings are thus consistent with O'Brien and Sygna's (2013, 5) argument that while practical transformations have the potential to encourage changes in the personal and political spheres, they are also often challenging to implement due to difficulties in coordinating efforts with the structures and standards set in the other two spheres. Building on these challenges, we will now move on to discuss how Green Fund projects compare sustainability initiatives where there are *no* regulations.

7.2.2 Comparing Green Fund Projects to Self-Regulatory Sustainability Initiatives

There are several similarities between the transition town movement, ecovillages (see Chapter 3), and the Green Fund initiatives in terms of norms and values (personal sphere), challenges in alignment with other actors (political sphere), and issues in the execution of the initiatives (practical sphere). They are indeed of different natures: The Green Funds is a municipal funding scheme, and in that sense, not an independent grassroots activity. However, there are still lessons to be learned from self-regulatory initiatives that may be useful in understanding the challenges of the Green Funds. Where I believe transition towns and ecovillages are most divergent from the Green Funds, is that the scheme has a strong advantage in being a structured political initiative.

First off, let us return to the definition of sustainable grassroots initiatives by Seyfang and Smith (2007, 585): "Innovative networks of activists and organizations that lead bottom-up solutions for sustainable development; solutions that respond to the local situation and

the interests and values of the communities involved”. While the scheme is a political initiative, it is clear from the findings that Green Fund initiatives match Seyfang and Smith’s criteria. The informants also described their motivations for participation using the same type of wording; they tested innovative solutions; they were members of a community; they created empowerment; and they spread awareness.

The findings indicate that the scheme has allowed people to come together, receive help in developing sustainable initiatives, and carry out activities that are both positive and fun for the community. Similarly, Hopkins (2008, 91) claims that the transition town movement can create sustainable transformations by sharing ideas, raising awareness while inspiring and enthusing people, and having fun along the way. Many interviewees described Sagene as being a village-like area with a progressive population, with a higher awareness of environmental issues. While these descriptions cannot be accepted as objective facts, they are indicative of how the Green Funds beneficiaries view the area, and thus influences how they relate to it. Spaces impact feelings, identities, and self-awareness that shape how people view and react to the environmental conditions of a place (Tørnblad, Westskog and Rose 2014, 38).

O’Toole, Wallis, and Mitchell (2006, 39) argue that it is difficult to unite different people in an area as there are different interests at play, and people often lack a group mentality and common understanding. This was also the case for one of the gardens in Sagene, which was based on a specific framework that created a rustic look which was ill-received by nearby residents. Thus, the garden members had difficulties keeping their principles in line while being considerate of others. Similarly, Westskog, Winther, and Aasen (2018, 17) claim that the success of an ecovillage is highly dependent on whether the villagers can harmonise and communicate with people who not part of their movement. The ecovillagers had to find a balance between protecting their common identity and staying true to their values, while at the same time attempt to gain acceptance from mainstream society. As with Hurdal Ecovillage, the interviewees from the controversial garden also shared that the difficulties with neighbours had improved over time by focusing on communication.

Self-regulatory movements have been criticised for not being able to extend beyond the lives of a few engaged participants (Trainer 2018). This is also relevant to the Green Funds. Like the transition town movement, the Green Funds also has a vision of including different social groups. The staff members prioritise projects involving minority and marginalised groups, but as already discussed, the beneficiaries do not feel like they are sufficiently involved (cf. section 7.1.2). Another question is whether transition towns and ecovillages can bring about transformations, or if they are simply feel-good activities. In the context of the Green Funds, we can conclude from the statements made by the administrators that major changes are not the aim, but rather to inspire and engage the local community, as the findings indicate that the scheme has.

Returning to the environmental group *Omstilling Sagene* (as mentioned in Chapter 3 and 6), formally part of the transition town movement, it was mentioned that the group has had less activity recently than it did at the onset as key members had quit either due to turnover or burnout. Also, as informant Linnea stated, it is essential to have some form of economic stability and security for these types of projects to be able to continue. What appears to be missing from this initiative is a proper structure. While Hopkins (2008, 91) emphasises having a clear approach, Trainer (2018) critiques social movements for sustainability precisely for a lack thereof. He claims they are uncoordinated, aimless and unstructured, and that without political power, their ideas will never create significant changes unless backed by powerful actors and policies. This is reflected in Morse's (2008, 347) statement that some degree of top-down regulation is needed to create well-organised and stable initiatives, as self-regulatory movements face many challenges to their long-term success.

Contrarily, Green Funds is supported by political actors. The money comes from the Municipality and funding is secured, there is a proper structure with applications, documentation, reporting, and staff members who can facilitate. While Green Fund projects have also faced similar challenges as the self-regulatory movements, it could be argued that without the scheme, they would likely not even exist in the first place.

7.3 The Political Sphere: When Voluntary Work Meets Bureaucracy

We are now moving onto research sub-question three, where the objective is to find out what the district staff's expectations are for the scheme, and what their challenges have been in managing it. We will now discuss transformations in the political sphere in relation to the district's staff experiences with the Green Funds.

7.3.1 Considering Local Context

Local government sustainability initiatives are becoming increasingly widespread in the context of local action to mitigate climate change (Saha 2009, 39), and this can also be witnessed in Oslo. Since the Green Funds were established in Sagene in 2012, it has been incorporated into 9 of Oslo's 15 districts. The scheme was created and is operated within a particular institutional structure.⁹

Without these institutional structures, there would be few possibilities to establish coordinated, environmental initiatives (as compared to self-regulatory initiatives). In addition to these structures, the political sphere also contains power in society (O'Brien 2018, 157). This includes the actors involved in local politics in Sagene, dominated by the left-wing political parties *Miljøpartiet de Grønne*, *Arbeiderpartiet*, *Sosialistisk Venstreparti*, and *Rødt*. We may assume that the individual political actors (though not interviewed in this study) are personally motivated to initiate sustainable transformations (cf. section 7.1.1). These actors formed parts of the committees and councils and, jointly, they constituted the political driving force behind the proposal, support, and creation of the scheme.

The Green Funds administrative staff emphasised that District Sagene works strategically to build trust and collaboration between them and the residents. Local contexts include both geographical locations and common identities and values (cf. personal sphere, section 7.1.1), both of which need to be taken into account when developing sustainability

⁹Green Funds was created and is funded by The Sagene District Committee on Environment, Culture, and Urban Planning, and was authorised in the District Council (Haugli, 2017). The District Sagene Unit for Culture and Local Environment, located at the Community Centre, is where the local environmental consultants administer the Green Funds.

policies. This has played out in several ways. For instance, Sagene is Oslo's most densely populated district, with many small apartments, and a large number of green areas. Taking this into consideration, the district staff have focused on improving the parks and making them a place for recreation, as this is more important in Sagene than in other districts, according to staff informant Thomas.

At what I would describe as the intersection between politics and social structures, is the process of creating a 'green mentality' and facilitating participation since the establishment of the Community Centre in the early 2000s. Since then, the district has worked with participatory measures. District Sagene refers to this as a 'local area commitment', where the local government has worked towards a comprehensive organisation of different actors in the region, focusing on minimal bureaucracy, and fostering a community of active and local participation (Guerra 2018, 7). While the environmental consultants and staff in similar positions are not politicians, the work is indeed political, as the incentives come from the District Committees, Councils, and Oslo Municipality. This is reminiscent of Bregon et. al's argument (2015, 1) that the strengths of local governments, and within them, municipal districts, are that they are closely linked to local residents. As a result, they can recognise and adapt to the particular cultural context of the region and develop policies that resonate with the residents.

Social structures are also very relevant, as the administrative staff managing the Green Funds have an approach that has inspired participation, enthused and engaged local residents who want to create projects for the community, according to the informants. Staff informants Amanda and Henriette described how the residents in Sagene feel that they are apart of the 'Environmental District', and that there is a strong sense of community. They believed that the district administration has created trust among the residents who feel that everyone is 'lifting the burden together'. The development of a community with common values and identities is said to have been an important success factor behind the Green Funds, hence emphasis had been placed on strengthening transformative actions through the personal sphere. The findings are consistent with the assertions of Tørnblad, Westskog and Rose (2014, 51); that knowing local contexts and common identities are

crucial to the creation of successful initiatives that resonate with the public.

Trust is also important to engage people, which has been achieved through close co-operation with those who are interested in creating projects, helping to develop them, and organising networking meetings. We remember the beneficiaries describing the district staff as helpful, approachable, and easy to work with, which, together with the scheme itself, relates to the practical sphere. This is in line with Uphoff's argument (1992, 2), that community norms and consensus influences behaviour and O'Brien's claim (2018, 157) that shared values and beliefs affect what is considered desirable, and in turn, shapes practical behaviours and responses.

Judging by the statements of my informants, it appears that district Sagene has succeeded in creating a sense of unity among the residents in the area. However, we can only speculate to what extent this community feeling exists outside of these select informants. It has been established that both beneficiaries and staff agree that the Green Funds scheme is dominated by middle-class voluntarism, meaning social groups are standing on the outside of transformation (albeit not intentionally). While Guerra (2018, 7) points out that District Sagene works towards the social inclusion of different actors and active participation, it seems that the idea is more prominent in theory than in practice, at least in the case of the Green Funds.¹⁰

One informant stated that she does not believe that residents in Sagene are any more environmentally aware than elsewhere, but that she rather believed the popularity of the Green Funds is due to the efforts of the administrative staff. It seems that the popularity can to a high extent be attributed to the staff, both past, and present, who have worked at the Community Centre to facilitate participation through a local area commitment. Conversely, the projects are the responsibility of dedicated individuals who spend their spare time, energy (and at times also money) creating initiatives, and many other informants stated that they feel that Sagene residents are more concerned with the environment than

¹⁰District Sagene has several other initiatives aimed at participation and social inclusion. This analysis is based solely on research on one of their initiatives.

what is average. Saha (2009, 46) claims that it is difficult to evaluate whether successful sustainability initiatives mean that local government responds to or has internalised the political culture of the population. I agree with Saha's statement; it is indeed challenging to pinpoint which direction this development has gone in, and the question does probably not have a straight-forward answer. This analysis demonstrates that the personal, practical, and political spheres are overlapping, interacting, and influencing each other over time, and has enabled transformations in Sagene.

7.3.2 Conflicting Political Goals and Problems Created by Lack of Precision

The Green Funds scheme is based upon voluntary participation, and hence reminiscent of soft policy measures (Koutalakis et. al. 2010, 330, as cited in Kasa, Westskog and Rose 2018, 99). While soft policies are a less invasive way to implement sustainability measures in a political context compared to hard policies, there are several issues related to the management of soft policy measures. They are described as lacking immediate, uniformly binding and direct effects, precision, dispute settlements, and enforcement authorities (Kasa, Westskog and Rose 2018, 99).

The definition of a soft policy is only partially applicable to the Green Funds. Differing from the definition, the results are immediate, with projects being completed within a few months after the money has been provided. The district staff contributes in dispute settlements, for example by acting as a mediator between the controversial garden and *Bymiljøetaten*. The scheme also has enforcement authority, as they follow up and make sure that the funds are spent properly. There are, however, many aspects where the scheme is consistent with the definition of soft measures. The projects are not uniformly binding (there appear to be exceptions to the guidelines), the direct effects are unclear (some have high hopes for Green Funds' ability to spread environmental awareness while others are more sceptical), and it lacks precision (the staff does not seem to be well-coordinated in terms of their roles and responsibilities dealing with diversity, entrepreneurs and burnout).

Conflicts of interests were a common theme in the results. One example is the story of the stick pile in one of the gardens that created conflicts with *Bymiljøetaten*, which

was a telling example of environmental interests clashing with the patterns and narratives of mainstream opinions and structural power. As Amanda said, the meeting point between voluntary work and bureaucracy is never easy. Political processes and decisions are bound to meet resistance when different interests clash (O'Toole, Wallis, and Mitchell 2006, 39). Moreover, there appear to be differences in understandings of, or awareness over, the Green Fund guidelines on two levels: In addition to the beneficiaries having different ideas about how to create good projects that differ from some of the guidelines, it was also discovered that the staff members had different opinions compared to each other.

7.3.3 Negotiating Expectations: Enduring Operation vs. Innovation

There were different opinions expressed by the beneficiaries and staff when discussing the short-termed nature of the projects, as the Green Funds provide project-based financial support. Beneficiaries often wished to maintain and operate their projects for more than one season, and disliked that they were unable to keep the projects operating when they had put great efforts into establishing them. This wish does, however, not align with the main idea behind the Green Funds. The scheme was developed within the context of local district politics, where it was decided how the scheme should function. Policy decisions shape narratives (Rosol, Béal and Mössner 2017, 1713-1714). The explicit goal is to generate new and innovative measures, not to finance the enduring operation of existing ones. Or as informant Henriette phrased it; to put seeds in the soil. This statement can be interpreted both practically and metaphorically: If all the funds go towards the enduring operation of existing initiatives, there will be less funding for new ones, and, alas, the original purpose will be defeated.

Another issue where there were disagreements between beneficiaries and staff, was the extent to which the funds should be allocated to green entrepreneurs. There are several reasons why there are relatively few funds have been allocated to this category of applicants. First off, this category only represents 7% of the total amount of applicants (as shown in Figure 6, Distribution of applicant categories, Chapter 5). It is therefore only logical that there have been few funds allocated to this category. Secondly, as staff informant Thomas speculated, entrepreneurs who wish to create initiatives typically need

more funds than the scheme can accommodate, which may explain the lack of applicants. Moreover, the scheme cannot provide funding for operational costs, and the projects may not reach sufficient amounts of people. Additionally, Henriette believed that businesses should come up with a model that can make them sustainable on their own. Conversely, it is also important to consider how sustainable initiatives can be maintained. Entrepreneur informant Linnea, through her experiences from voluntary work, learned that these types of initiatives are vulnerable as they depend on people's goodwill and that they have time, money, and energy to spare. That is why it is important to have an economical foundation to ensure long-term success.

7.3.4 Being the Facilitator and the Guardian

We will now move onto the issues where there are differences of opinions between the administrative staff members. What makes this particularly interesting is that all the four staff informants emphasised and followed the Green Fund guidelines. It seems, however, that they did not interpret them equally, or that they had the same priorities. This surfaced in several themes relating to the assessment of different types of applicants, projects, how they should be monitored, and how involved they should be in the process. This included the importance of encouraging minority groups to join, whether entrepreneurs should be prioritised (or even included), whether they should take actions to prevent burnout, and to which extent they should help the beneficiaries with project management.

In addition to having different perspectives on these topics, it was also stated that administering the scheme is a complex role to play. While recruiting interested participants through information meetings, putting people in contact with each other, helping to develop project ideas and applications, they also need to turn down requests from the same people, decline continued financial support, and follow up to confirm that the funds are being spent properly. We are witnessing a case of conflicting roles, with different expectations tied to their positions. Henriette phrased it succinctly; finding it difficult to 'wear both hats', being both a facilitator and a guardian at the same time.

To answer research sub-question three, the expectations of the administrative staff for

the Green Funds are that the scheme can be used to engage the local community in small-scale sustainability initiatives. Close cooperation between residents and the staff is an important element in this regard, and they consider the local context and encourage participation to the best of their abilities. Their challenges in managing the scheme are that there are difficulties in dealing with the expectations of beneficiaries when expectations diverge from the Green Fund guidelines. Also, while not recognised by the staff informants, they have different opinions on several topics, meaning that their approaches are not fully consistent.

7.4 Answering the Research Questions

I will now synthesise the findings in a final discussion relating to the fourth research sub-question; how transformation theory can be used to understand the case of the Green Funds in Sagene. According to this concept, transformations are needed across all spheres of society to have impact, including practical actions, systems, institutional structures, politics, social networks, and changes in beliefs and worldviews (Folke et. al 2010, 5). O'Brien and Sygna (2013) and O'Brien's (2018) approach for analysing changes in society are the three spheres of transformation. It includes the same components as Folke et. al. outline, structured into three main categories; the personal, political, and practical aspects. I will now analyse the Green Fund scheme from the most overarching levels, down to the practical aspects.

To begin, let us return to Shove's critique of the ABC model (2010, 1273-1274) to evaluate whether the findings are consistent with her notion that changing attitudes, behaviour, and choices alone are insufficient to promote sustainability. Informant Lise stated that money is the biggest obstacle for individuals to create sustainability initiatives, and we remember beneficiaries describing the Green Funds as a generator for getting things started. Thus, while the motivation from the personal sphere is present, it is challenging to complete practical initiatives without climate strategies from the political sphere. This means that politically induced incentives, i.e. the funding, enables attitudes, behaviour, and choices that could not have occurred in their absence. The findings are thus in line with Shove's criticism of the ABC model, and signal the relevance of a more comprehensive framework

for understanding change, which transition theory offers.

The findings indicate that collaboration between the three spheres is a prerequisite for the existence and successes of the Green Fund projects. The personal dimension includes values, beliefs, and worldviews. Participants' motivation to participate derived from a desire to contribute to the community and the environment, for personal growth and knowledge, for putting skills to use, social interaction, and the involvement of children. However, there are challenges regarding how to involve minority groups.

The political sphere is what enables the scheme – without political will and incentives, it is unlikely that many of these projects with concrete practical efforts would have been created in the first place. This is thanks to the actors who made the scheme possible, and to the municipal district staff who ensure its operation and facilitate the participants. Political initiatives can bring about change, but for soft policy measures to work, they need to consider local contexts and develop strategies that are responsive to the population, as we have seen from the Green Funds. Oppositely, while bottom-up initiatives can mobilise people and create engagement, they are unlikely to achieve significant transformations without coordination with mainstream society and policymakers (Rosol, Béal and Mössner 2017, 1714). In other words, the findings from the case of Green Funds in Sagene resonate with previous research that indicates that sustainability initiatives do indeed require a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies used together, which is also claimed by Morse (2008, 347). However, in politics, interests clash and create tension between people with contradictory goals.

This brings us over to the practical issues. These include differing opinions that largely originate in the beneficiaries and the staff's different understandings of or awareness over the guidelines. The beneficiaries want more help and funds to make their projects successful long-term. However, that is not the intention behind the scheme, but rather to generate new measures that can reach many people. That being said, we should be aware that these guidelines are necessary to ensure that public funds are spent wisely. If participants wish to create long-lasting projects, the Green Funds may not be the most appropriate solution.

7.4.1 A Successful Driver Towards Sustainable Transformations?

To conclude, this chapter will end with a discussion of the potential of the Green Funds to make sustainable transformations in Sagene. Discussing social movements for sustainability, Trainer (2018) asks: "By what mechanisms or chain of causes is developing more community gardens, etc. supposed to culminate someday in a society that is not run by and for the rich few, driven by market forces and geared to perpetual growth?" This is a good question indeed, and also one that was echoed by some informants. For instance, Sverre stated that "It is doubtful whether growing three potatoes here and there is going to help that much". Thomas also stated that while some people may realise that green initiatives in Sagene can serve many purposes, he does not want to exaggerate the awareness that it spreads.

However, the majority of the informants had slightly more optimistic views. Social benefits are possible, as well as environmental benefits, although this point is more difficult to document and there is less consensus around it. The general impression is that the Green Funds will not create any grand transformations, but are geared towards creating environmental awareness and facilitating community participation in a fun fun light-hearted way. As Monica stated, "You can't remove a flaw from a community. You can only add stronger elements, other positive elements." By creating projects and activities that can improve the quality of people's lives, the Green Funds make it possible to take small steps towards more sustainable actions.

While this research is not intended to be an evaluation of the Green Funds, it is relevant to assess how the experiences of the beneficiaries might be used to improve upon the scheme. After all, they have the first-hand experiences of what the challenges of their projects have been, and what is required to create successful projects. Top-down initiatives are usually led by local authorities and through selective opinions (Rosol, Béal and Mössner 2017, 1713-1714). Vasstrøm and Lysgård (2015, 137), however, claim that residents need to be active members, involved in decision making-contexts about relevant issues in their communities, and express their perspectives.

First off, the projects lack micro institutionalisation and depend on dedicated individuals. As Henriette proposed; it could be a possibility to arrange meetings about how to care for yourself as a volunteer, and how to better distribute responsibility. Dealing with participant drop-out, a possible solution that could alleviate this problem could be some sort of buddy-scheme, where beneficiaries could train others to take over the project in the case of turnover to make sure that the other participants are well-equipped to take over the responsibilities.

Most of the challenges raised by the beneficiaries are oriented towards long-term maintenance, but the scheme is not indented to produce long-term effects. While I do not necessarily consider the short-termed nature of the project as a negative aspect, I believe that this is something that should be communicated more clearly to the beneficiaries to avoid misguided expectations. Perhaps the question we should be asking is not how to make the projects long-lasting, but rather how to make them the best and most inclusive they can be for the short time that they last.

Also, there should be common understandings among the staff members regarding how they follow the guidelines so that they are more universally binding. This mainly relates to how much emphasis should be placed on how much time and resources should be allocated to helping develop projects and following up, whether the Green Funds are an appropriate funding source for entrepreneurs, and concerning the theme of inclusion of minority groups. Based on the different impressions among the staff, we cannot conclude whether or not the recruitment of diverse applicants is an important goal of the Green Funds. If this is the case, a possible strategy could be to hire someone with a minority background to manage the scheme, who might be better equipped to facilitate for minority groups. Finally, I need to emphasise that all the interviewees appreciated the scheme. This discussion has focused on its challenges, as critical examination is the only way to further improve its potential.

8 Conclusions

In this closing chapter, I shall first provide a summary of the most important findings. I address the potentials and challenges at the personal, political, and practical levels, and the extent to which the Green Funds scheme can be successful in bringing about sustainable transformations. After presenting the theoretical implications of the study, I conclude by discussing the limitations of the study and some key concerns in need of further research.

8.1 Main Takeaways

As cities around the world continue to increase populations, they will only continue to become increasingly relevant areas for testing possible solutions for sustainable transformations. In this thesis, I have investigated an initiative in Oslo that combines bottom-up and top-down approaches to sustainability and its potentials and challenges have been identified through the analysis of empirical material. The overarching research question was the following: *How can experiences from the Green Funds help to discover solutions for urban sustainability initiatives?*

To investigate this, the first theme that was explored was sub-question one; *What characterises and motivates beneficiaries involved in Green Funds-supported projects?* It was discovered that they are mainly white middle-class Norwegians with high education levels. This was seen both in the statements of the informants and in the characteristics of the beneficiaries interviewed. According to the informants' interpretations, this appears to be related to the fact that Sagene is also a 'gentrified area' with a 'progressive population' that appreciates green initiatives, and that this in turn linked is to the district staff's approach to facilitating participation. The beneficiaries are motivated by factors related to sustainability, doing things that are good for nature and improving their local community, as well as reasons such as having fun, developing skills, and being social.

The second sub-question was *What do the beneficiaries consider to be the challenges of their projects and the Green Funds?* I found that they are predominantly related to practical challenges. Initiators and board members often reported having to spend much time

and effort recruiting participants, dealing with participant drop-outs, organising activities, and doing voluntary work. Combining these tasks with the rest of life's responsibilities had been a challenge for many. Diverging from Cox's (2011) description of reasons behind participant burnout, I discovered that lack of internal recognition within the groups also represented a challenge for the sustainability of the projects. Several beneficiaries wanted more help in managing all of this, as well as more funding so that they could create projects that would stand the test of time. Additionally, some beneficiaries wanted more minority groups to be included, and some entrepreneurs wanted more funding to be allocated to their applicant category. However, these wishes are not in line with the intention of the scheme.

This brings us over to sub-question three, *What are the District Sagene staff's expectations for the scheme, and what have been their challenges in managing it?* It has been discovered that different expectations between the staff members and the beneficiaries had, to a large extent, created difficulties for the beneficiaries. While they wanted money for enduring operation, innovation is the aim of the scheme, and the funding is not indented for long-term initiatives. The projects are also meant to be largely the responsibility of the initiators, which is why they cannot get that much help with management.

Another challenge is that staff members also had different expectations among them. The four informants varied in their responses on how much assistance should be given, what types of projects should be financed, and how much emphasis should be placed on encouraging the participation of minority groups and entrepreneurs. They also found it difficult to be positioned at the meeting point between voluntary work and bureaucracy, as they had the dual roles of both facilitating applicants, making them apply, and helping to develop projects, while they at the same time had to evaluate their applications and make unpopular decisions.

In the final sub-question, I sought out to discover *How can the case of the Green Funds can be understood in the light of transformation theory?* I have displayed how the three spheres of transformation heuristic can be used to understand an empirical case, and dis-

covered experiences from the Green Funds have helped to discover effective solutions for urban, voluntary sustainability initiatives, where challenges have been identified that can further contribute more research on initiatives of this kind. I discovered that, in line with O'Brien's and Sygna's (2013) and O'Brien's (2018) notions, transformation must take place across all three spheres of society to gain a foothold; and in Sagene, it is the interaction between the three spheres that has allowed the Green Funds to take place.

The personal dimension includes community norms, shared understandings of the district, and motivations for participation, which are imperative for the participation of the beneficiaries, and also the personal dedication of the political actors behind it. Concrete responses and initiatives in the practical sphere are what have led to actions that have resulted in positive social effects, increased environmental awareness, but also practical challenges. It is challenging to complete practical initiatives without climate strategies from the political sphere, as they often face challenges due to being uncoordinated.

Systems and institutions in the political sphere are what enabled the projects. This includes the district and municipality, the politicians who implemented the scheme, and the staff who enable participation and ensure that there is some structure to the projects. The funding enables attitudes, behaviour, and choices in the personal sphere that might not have occurred without political incentives. These initiatives must consider local contexts and develop strategies that are responsive to the population, as we have seen from the Green Funds. The personal, practical, and political spheres have interacted and influenced each other and have enabled transformations in Sagene. In line with existing literature, I have discovered that there are many challenges to overcome in addressing both participatory and political approaches to sustainability. However, when used together, the spheres enrich each other mutually and benefit from coordination by alleviating each other's challenges.

This brings us back to the main research question of the study: *How can experiences from the Green Funds help to discover solutions for urban sustainability initiatives?* I have found that there are challenges connected to both participatory and politically induced

approaches to sustainability, but that these can benefit from being used in combination. As there are challenges related to voluntary initiatives such as project management, participant drop-out and social diversity, this can potentially be alleviated by coordinating projects with systems and structures that provide guidelines. Political incentives can also be difficult to implement due to lack of public acceptance, but this can be coordinated with the efforts dedicated individuals and with public actors working with and for the people in the community. In applying these findings to other urban sustainability initiatives, we can conclude that they may work even more efficiently to raise environmental awareness and promote social inclusion if the visions are communicated more clearly between the different actors involved. Since, benefits aside, lest we forget that several challenges may arise in the collaboration between voluntary work and bureaucracy. However, it is always difficult to negotiate boundaries and make sure that different actors on the same page. Interests are bound to clash, particularly in the fields of environmental issues and politics. This is universal, and also something that should be expected from the Green Fund scheme.

8.2 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The findings of this study must be seen in light of some limitations that affect both the validity and the generalisability of the findings. When conducting research, it is important to be aware of how the context and research methods influence the knowledge produced. How, why, where, and by whom things are said, affects what conclusions can be drawn. As mentioned, out of the 64 beneficiaries who were invited to participate, only seven volunteered. These included two group interviews, bringing the total number of self-recruited beneficiaries to eleven. The final number of informants after recruiting additional beneficiaries and the staff members is 17, so the sample size is relatively small. Also, the findings only represent reports from a small group of people who are already involved in sustainability measures, as well as the district staff who engage with these dedicated individuals and are also personally motivated.

We can thus assume that the informants who volunteered to participate in the study were more satisfied and engaged with the scheme, and had better experiences with their projects

than those who did not volunteer. The potential informants who ignored the invitation might have chosen not to participate, at least in part, because of this. It is therefore likely that this material represents the opinions of those most satisfied with the scheme, and is probably not representative of the opinions of all Green Fund beneficiaries. This also means that the ‘sense of community’ and their outlook on the district they described, cannot be claimed to be representative of the general population in Sagene. Had I been able to gather insights from those who did not participate, we can assume that the results would have been different. That way, I would have been able to get a more overarching impression of what beneficiaries at large think about the scheme, instead of just the most dedicated individuals.

It should also be noted that all the beneficiary informants were project initiators or members of a board, something that also shapes the results. Out of the 13 beneficiary informants, five of them had held the position of leader/initiator of their respective projects. The remaining six informants were members of groups with shared responsibilities, and there were no informants without any administrative duties. Due to this distribution, the informants had much to share when it came to challenges of maintaining and managing their Green Fund projects. This means that the material is skewed towards the experience of leading initiatives, in whole or in part, and represents findings of the most eager participants. As a result, the study is unable to shed light on the experience of ‘casual members’, e.g. those taking part in small amounts.

Additionally, it is important to note that all of my informants were highly educated people of Western backgrounds. As such, it must be emphasised that the opinions expressed in my findings are not representative of a wide range of opinions and experiences from different social groups. Sagene is a socially diverse area with a high level of immigration compared to Norway in general, and also contains a large part of all the public housing units in Oslo. However, this diversity is not apparent from my material. The backgrounds of the informants and experiences they have had, represents quite a specific context, location, and culture. Due to the homogeneity of the sample, the level of variability and confidence is low, which again results in a low level of generalisability. However, the

objective of qualitative research is not to be representative, but rather to dive deeply into a specific subject. So is the case for this thesis. For future research, it could be interesting to conduct a similar study in a different setting, for instance in another district of Oslo that uses the Green Funds. Would the responses from beneficiaries and staff have been different? Or would the informants have characterised their districts in the same way as Sagene residents did?

An unexpected finding that could also be researched further, was the extent to which staff members had different interpretations of the guidelines. It could further be investigated how this might be avoided, and how the situation compares to other districts in Oslo using the Green Funds. Finally, future research could also dive into another unanswered question that emerged from this thesis: Whether it is beneficial for the scheme to be designed in such a way that the projects are short-term. There are, as has been demonstrated, both advantages and disadvantages to this. While this design makes for a larger amount of projects and more innovation, it also makes it challenging to maintain the projects that are already in place.

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A Invitation Letter for Beneficiary Informants

Vil du delta i forskningsprosjektet «Erfaringer fra Grønne midler på Sagene»?

Formålet er å undersøke i hvilken grad Grønne midler har hatt en positiv innvirkning på nærmiljøet i Sagene. I dette skrivet gir vi deg informasjon om hva deltakelse vil innebære for deg. Prosjektet er en masteroppgave som vil leveres hos Senter for utvikling og miljø ved Universitetet i Oslo i juni 2020.

Om prosjektet

Bydel Sagene har et stort fokus på å styrke lokalmiljøet og utvikle bærekraftige løsninger. Et eksempel på dette er Grønne midler, en pengesum som deles ut til privatpersoner og grupper som ønsker å utvikle nye løsninger og prosjekter relatert til urban bærekraft. Målet med denne oppgaven er å undersøke følgende:

- På hvilke måter har lokalbefolkningen sett endringer når det kommer til egne og andres oppfatninger, forståelse og handlinger relatert til miljøvennlig adferd etter deltakelse i prosjekter sponset av Grønne midler?
- I hvilken grad mener de som har gjennomført prosjekter at ordningen har potensiale til å fremme sosial inkludering, lokal deltakelse, kunnskapsutveksling, gjøre folk oppmerksomme på eget forbruk og inspirere til miljøbevisste handlinger?

For å forske på dette vil det gjennomføres intervjuer med personer på Sagene som har mottatt Grønne midler. Gjennom å undersøke deres erfaringer og holdninger, er målet å avdekke i hvilken grad Grønne midler har hatt en positiv innvirkning på nærmiljøet - inkludert miljømessige, økonomiske, samfunnsmessige og sosiale effekter.

Hvorfor får du spørsmål om å delta?

Dette skjemaet sendes ut til personer som har arrangert aktiviteter, kurs, arrangementer o.l. som har vært sponset av Grønne midler i bydel Sagene i perioden 2015-2018 for å lære om deres erfaringer. Dette informasjonsskrivet har blitt utsendt av (informant) på vegne av masterstudent May Lene Smith Hove.

Hva innebærer det for deg å delta?

Hvis du velger å delta i prosjektet, innebærer det å gjennomføre et uformelt intervju. Her vil du bli spurt om å fortelle om ditt prosjekt sponset av Grønne midler, din erfaring med hvordan det påvirket nærmiljøet, og din opplevelse av hva som funker bra og dårlig med Grønne midler som helhet. Det vil bli tatt lydopptak og notater fra intervjuet.

Det er frivillig å delta

Det er frivillig og anonymt å delta i prosjektet. Hvis du velger å delta, kan du når som helst trekke samtykket tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. Alle opplysninger om deg vil da bli fjernet. Det vil ikke ha noen negative konsekvenser for deg hvis du ikke vil delta eller senere velger å trekke deg.

Ditt personvern – hvordan vi oppbevarer og bruker dine opplysninger

Vi vil bare bruke opplysningene om deg til formålene vi har fortalt om i dette skrevet. Vi behandler opplysningene konfidensielt og i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

- May Lene Smith Hove (student) og Tanja Winther (professor ved Senter for utvikling og miljø) vil ha tilgang til dine opplysninger.
- Deltakerne i prosjektet vil ikke kunne gjenkjennes i den ferdige publikasjonen.

Hva skjer med opplysningene dine når vi avslutter forskningsprosjektet? Prosjektet skal etter planen avsluttes juni 2020. Etter prosjektets slutt vil personopplysninger og opptak bli slettet.

Dine rettigheter

Underveis i arbeidet, har du rett til:

- innsyn i hvilke personopplysninger som er registrert om deg,
- å få rettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få slettet personopplysninger om deg,
- få utlevert en kopi av dine personopplysninger, og

- å sende klage til personvernombudet eller Datatilsynet om behandlingen av dine personopplysninger.

Hva gir oss rett til å behandle personopplysninger om deg?

Vi behandler opplysninger om deg basert på ditt samtykke. På oppdrag fra Universitetet i Oslo har NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS vurdert at behandlingen av personopplysninger i dette prosjektet er i samsvar med personvernregelverket.

Høres dette interessant ut?

Intervjuene vil avholdes høsten 2019. For å avtale et intervju, kontakt May Lene Smith Hove (kontaktinformasjon). Hvis du har spørsmål til studien, eller ønsker å benytte deg av dine rettigheter, ta kontakt med:

- May Lene Smith Hove
- Tanja Winther (veileder) (kontaktinformasjon)
- NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS (kontaktinformasjon)

B Consent Form

Samtykkeerklæring

Jeg har lest og forstått informasjonen om prosjektet *Erfaringer fra Grønne midler på Sagene*, og har fått muligheten til å stille spørsmål. Informasjonen som deles vil bli brukt i en masteroppgave som leveres ved Senter for utvikling og miljø ved Universitetet i Oslo. Jeg samtykker til følgende:

- Å delta i intervju
- At det gjøres opptak av intervjuet
- At det jeg sier kan bli sitert
- At alle personlige data anonymiseres og slettes etter prosjektets slutt, ca. juni 2020
- At jeg vil bli kontaktet på nytt dersom informasjon jeg har delt blir aktuell å bruke i et annet prosjekt enn denne oppgaven (rapport o.l.)
- At samtykket er frivillig, og kan når som helst trekkes tilbake uten å oppgi noen grunn. All informasjon jeg har delt vil da fjernes fra prosjektet.

Navn: _____

Sted: _____

Dato: _____

(Signert av prosjektdeltaker)

C Interview Guide for Green Fund Beneficiaries

Introduksjon

- Navn?
- Utdanning?
- Yrke?

Sagene

- Bor du på Sagene? Hva syns du om bydelen?
- Hva er ditt inntrykk av bydelens arbeid mot bærekraft?
- Sagene er kjent for å ha suksess med GM. Tror du det kommer av et politisk nivå (tilskuddene), eller fordi folk her er ekstra engasjert?

Prosjektet

- Fortell om aktiviteten/workshopen/hagen din
(Hva, hvor, når, hvordan, hvorfor)
- Hva motiverte deg til å engasjere deg?
- Hvor mye penger fikk dere tildelt?
Var det nok?
- Hva var dine oppgaver?
Tok de mye tid?
- Hvor mange deltakere var involvert i gjennomføringen av prosjektet?
- Hva skjedde etter at prosjektet var avsluttet/pengene var oppbrukt?
- Ble du mer motivert til å gjøre 'grønne endringer' etter ditt engasjement med GM?
- Hva var de største utfordringene i gjennomføringen av prosjektet?
(Hvordan) Ble de løst?

- Hva var de største gledene/suksessene?
- Tror du prosjektet påvirket deltakerne til å tenke mer over x i hverdagen?

Grønne midler

- Fra din oppfatning, hva er Oslo kommunes mål med GM?
- Hva syns du om selve søknadsprosessen?
- Hva var utfordrende/upraktisk med å være involvert i GM?

Hvorfor?

- Hva funket bra?

Hvorfor?

- Ville du ha gjennomført prosjektet/søkt om GM igjen?

Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

Kommunikasjon/sosialt

- Hvordan var kommunikasjonen innenfor gruppen din?
- Møtte du utfordringer når det kom til koordinering?
- Hvordan ble prosjektet mottatt av befolkningen?
- Var det lett eller vanskelig å få folk til å møte opp/engasjere seg?
- Brukte du sosiale medier, plakater, eller annet for å reklamere for x?

Hvordan fungerte det?

- Hvem viste interesse?
- Var det noen viste motstand/var kritisk?
- Hvem var målgruppen?

Ble den nådd?

- Var menneskene som involverte seg hvordan du hadde forutsett?
Var det stor spredning? (unge/innvandrere/rike/eldre/miljøaktivister?)
- Sagene er en bydel med stor spredning når det kommer til kultur og etnisitet. Hvordan tror du dette påvirker deltakelse i GM -prosjekter?
- Tror du GM kan bringe sammen mennesker og skaper nye former for samarbeid?
Eksempler?
- Har du inntrykk av at mange i bydelen vet om GM?
- Hvilke grupper tror du ikke kjenner til GM, og hvorfor ikke?

Bærekraft

- Hva er din forståelse av bærekraft?
- Hvilken del av GM er viktigst/mest relevant for deg: samfunnsmessig, sosialt, økonomisk, miljøeffekter?
- Har du inntrykk av at aktiviteten påvirket deltakerne til å tenke mer over bærekraft i etterkant?
- Har du merket noen forskjell på dine egne holdninger og/eller valg i hverdagen som resultat av ditt prosjekt/GM?
- På hvilke måter tror du GM har potensial til å fremme
Kunnskapsutveksling/samarbeid
Fremme «nabolagsånd»/lokal deltakelse
Gjøre folk oppmerksomme på egne forbruksvaner
Inspirere til handling for bærekraftige valg i hverdagen
- Tror du lokale handlinger, slik som prosjektet sponset av GM, har muligheten til å ha langstids-eller kortidseffekter for miljøet?
Tror du andre typer tiltak ville vært mer effektive?
- Alt i alt, er du fornøyd med GM?

D Interview Guide for Administrative Staff

Introduksjon

- Utdanning?
- Yrke?
- Bosted?

Bydelen

- Hva er ditt inntrykk av bydelens arbeid mot bærekraft?
- Sagene er kjent for å ha suksess med GM. Tror du det kommer av et politisk nivå (tilskuddene), eller fordi folk her er ekstra engasjert?
- Hva motiverer deg til å arbeide med GM, og hva tror du motiverer mottakerne?

Grønne midler

- Fra ditt ståsted, hva er målet med GM?
- Hva vektlegger dere når dere velger ut hvem som skal motta GM?
- Har det vært utfordringer om å bli enige om hvem som skal motta penger, og hvor mye?
- Har du sett tegn til spenninger eller konflikt når noen grupper får støtte og andre ikke?

F.eks. de som kanskje ikke engang vet om muligheten?

- Har dere mottatt noe kritikk/folk som er misfornøyd med ordningen?
- Hva slags arrangementer/prosjekter ser dere flest søknader til?

Hvorfor?

- Hva skjer med prosjektene etter pengene er brukt opp?

Har, eller kan ha prosjektene ha noen langtidseffekter?

- Sagene er en bydel med stor spredning når det kommer til kultur og etnisitet. Hvordan tror du dette påvirker deltakelse i GM? "
- Hvem er menneskene som søker/deltar på arrangementene?
Finnes det en typisk deltaker? (alder, kjønn, etnisitet)
- Hva slags tiltak gjør dere for at ulike samfunnsgrupper skal bli inkludert?
- Hva tilbyr dere av støtte og oppfølging til folk som trenger veiledning?

Kommunikasjon/sosialt

- Hvis du skulle gjettet, hvor stor andel av bydelens befolkning vet om GM?
- Hvordan markedsfører dere GM?
Tror du dere når alle gjennom markedsføringen?
- På hvilken måte bringer GM sammen mennesker i bydelen som vanligvis ikke ville samhandlet?
Finnes det dokumentasjon på dette, eksempler?
- På hvilke måter og i hvilken grad har GM potensiale til å gjøre folk klar over egne forbruksmønstre? (holdningsarbeid)
- På hvilke måter tror du GM har potensial til å fremme
Lokal deltakelse
Kunnskapsutveksling
Fremme «nabolagsånd»
Gjøre folk oppmerksomme på egne forbruksvaner
Inspirere til handling for bærekraftige valg i hverdagen
- Tror du lokale handlinger, slik som prosjektet sponset av GM, har muligheten til å ha større effekter for miljøet?
Tror du andre typer tiltak ville vært mer effektive for miljøet? Hvorfor?

- Synes du det er miljøside eller den sosiale side av GM som er viktigst?

- Hvis noe skulle ha vært forbedret med ordningen, hva hadde det vært?

Hvorfor?

- Hva fungerer bra?

Hvorfor?