

Climate change as an opportunity

The way to the „green new deal“

It is in fact a bitter irony – on one hand gardening on a plot is very much in vogue. On the other hand rising real estate prices and the continued influx into the cities mean that allotment sites are increasingly threatened of being overbuilt. The allotment gardeners seem to be helpless compared to the interest in profits of the real estate



industry. What the allotment gardeners can do in order to react to that threat was explained by the sociologist Dr. Fritz Reusswig from the Potsdam institute for climate impact research during a meeting of various regional federations in Bremen.

Example Germany

Just how important the topic is was made clear by Reusswig right from the beginning: Since 2011 the number of allotment gardens has been dropping continuously and only 18% of all the sites are permanently protected by development plans. Especially in cities with increasing densification, the sites are threatened by overbuilding – according to the first results of the study, “allotments in transition” by the federal institute for building, urban and space planning (BBSR).

In this context it has to be mentioned that allotment gardening is changing: organic gardening is gaining in importance (according to the study 85% of all sites are laid out in a nature friendly way), there are increasingly new garden forms (community gardens) and new groups asking for allotments, such as families with children (85%), couples after the family phase (42%) and families with migration background (72%), said Reusswig.

How to act

Especially in the metropolitan areas the demand for allotments is increasing. In order to meet this demand and to react to the competition for available areas, the practical approaches used up to now are mainly the re-densification in the stock

(the division of gardens), the allocation of unsaved grounds or the creation of other gardening forms on allotment sites and common use.

However, these approaches are not transferable to all allotment sites. It is, therefore, important to be actively involved in urban planning. In the medium term, allotment gardeners have to promote the fact that the negative ecological consequences of a building development have to be taken into account in the city budget so that in the end there will be no “black”, but a “green zero”.

Decisive for reaching this aim is that the federations cooperate in scientific studies. The sociologist also recommends to form alliances, especially with “urban gardening”, projects that are an adequate offer for this.

Reusswig proposes at the end a “green new deal”. The allotment gardeners will get a permanent protection of their sites and they will assume social and ecological services.

With regard to the eco-system services of the allotment gardens, climate change is an opportunity for the allotment gardeners. Climate change will increase the importance of greenery in the city. This is not only a question of ecological, but also of social justice, since it is precisely the socially weaker people who have the least access to urban greenery and its relief functions. And so the threat could become a path to salvation. Consequently, the allotment gardeners are not helpless – but up to a “green new deal” it is still a long way, which they have to approach in the most active way possible.



This is so for all the allotment gardeners in Germany and all over Europe

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