Wild Garden

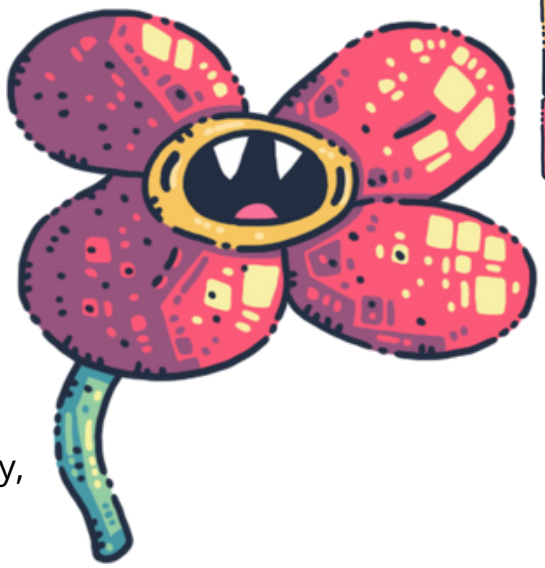
Urban Planning: Maximizing Green Spaces in Cities

Keywords:

Wild Gardens, Urban Planning, Green Spaces, Biodiversity, Environmental Conservation

Target group:

Students aged 10, Educators, Urban Planners



Objectives:

The LEGO - Wild Garden - Urban Planning: Maximizing Green Spaces in Cities activity aims to engage students in exploring sustainable urban planning strategies by creatively integrating wild green spaces into functional city designs. Using LEGO bricks, participants will develop projects that balance built and natural areas, emphasizing biodiversity, human well-being, and the harmony between infrastructure and ecosystems.

General Guideline on Time Allocation:

The duration needed to carry out this activity may vary depending on the specific group of children. Teachers are encouraged to adapt the implementation according to the needs, interests, and dynamics of the group.

In the preparatory phase, teachers may use a variety of activities to introduce and contextualize the chosen topic. These can include discussions, videos, drawings, storytelling, or even a field trip, depending on the age and background knowledge of the children.

The main construction phase, during which children plan and build their urban element using LEGO bricks, should typically not exceed 45 to 60 minutes. However, this phase often stimulates further curiosity and questions among the children, potentially leading to extended engagement or follow-up activities. For more detailed instructions and pedagogical support on how to implement activities of INNO–kids project, please download the Teacher's Methodological Guide.

Materials and Resources Needed:

- LEGO baseplates for city grids
- LEGO bricks (buildings, roads, green spaces, trees, animals)
- Wild garden elements (water features, meadows, pollinators)
- Planning tools: Printed guidelines, sketch paper, markers

Introduction:

To begin, discuss why green spaces are essential in urban environments. Show students real-world examples through photos or slides featuring: urban parks, green rooftops, and biodiversity corridors. Highlight how these spaces support wildlife, improve air quality, and enhance residents' well-being.
Then, pose two key questions to spark reflection:

- 'Where do you notice nature in our own city?'
- 'How could we expand or improve these natural spaces?'

Encourage brief group sharing. This discussion will ground the activity in real-life challenges and inspire creative solutions during the LEGO design phase.

Procedure:

Preparation

- Provide each student or group with a large flat LEGO grid.
- Define specific LEGO block sizes to represent different types of urban elements (e.g., 1x2 for houses, 2x2 for businesses, and special blocks for wild gardens).
- Explain the objectives of the activity: to design cities that maximize the integration of wild garden spaces while maintaining functionality and aesthetics.

Construction

- Encourage students to brainstorm and sketch their city layouts, considering the strategic placement of wild gardens to maximize their impact on biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- Using LEGO blocks, students will construct buildings, roads, and infrastructure while allocating sufficient space for wild gardens within their city designs.
- Emphasize the importance of balancing built-up areas with green spaces to create sustainable and livable urban environments.

Reflection and Presentation

- After completing their city designs, students will reflect on their decision-making process and the challenges encountered in maximizing wild garden spaces.
- Each group will present their city designs to the class, explaining their rationale behind the placement and design of wild gardens and discussing the potential benefits for urban residents and ecosystems.

Tips:

After students complete their LEGO city designs, use these guiding questions to spark meaningful reflection and debate:

- "What positive impacts could wild gardens have on your city? Think about air quality, mental health, or community spaces."
- "How did your team's design help local species? Could butterflies, birds, or insects thrive there?"
- "What problems might cities face when adding wild gardens? How could your design overcome them?"
- "How could urban planners work with residents to create these spaces? What might people worry about (e.g., safety, aesthetics)?"

Additional Considerations:

Differentiation:
Provide additional support or simplified instructions for pupils who may require extra assistance. For advanced pupils, offer extension tasks such as researching further sustainable practices or designing more complex models.

Assessment:
Assess pupils based on their participation and engagement during discussions and hands-on activities. Evaluate the creativity, effort, collaboration, depth of understanding demonstrated in their models, critical thinking, ability to provide constructive feedback and presentation skills.

Extension Activities:

- Collaboratively plan a day where pupils and residents could transform a neglected space into a small wild garden using local plants and natural materials.
- Visit the neighbourhood and create a map showing where nature is present (e.g. trees, grass, flowers, abandoned green patches). Identify places where wild gardens could be added.

Curriculum Connections:

Environmental Studies *(urban biodiversity, sustainable city planning, benefits of green infrastructure, air quality, wildlife support, and climate resilience)*
Citizenship Education *(awareness of environmental responsibility, the role of citizens in urban sustainability, and inclusive community design)*
Social Skills *(collaborative problem-solving, active listening, negotiation of ideas, and empathy)*

SDG Connections:

- **SDG 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities – Pupils explore the importance of green spaces and wild gardens in urban planning to create inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities.
- **SDG 15:** Life on Land – Pupils learn how wild gardens help preserve and restore terrestrial ecosystems, promoting biodiversity conservation and combating habitat loss in urban environments.

Note: You can consult the link below on the subject
https://catalystlearningcurricula.com/tips-and-tricks/lego-activities-teach-urban-sustainability/

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