

# **Public involvement in Danish municipal green space management**

## **Rationale**

In today's highly urbanised societies, urban green spaces make important contributions to the quality of life and environment in cities and towns. Although the planning and management of most parks and other green areas in cities is the responsibility municipal authorities, the international policy discourse has called for giving local residents a greater say in decisions about their own living environment. Agreements such as Local Agenda 21 and the Aarhus Convention stress the role of the participatory democracy as supplement to the traditional democracy.

A number of studies have analysed public involvement in decision-making about existing and new green spaces. However, there has been less attention for public involvement in the actual management of municipal green spaces. It has been argued that much could be gained from public involvement in management, for example in terms of awareness raising, developing local 'ownership' of green spaces, and better relationships between residents and green space managers. Moreover, resident involvement could help municipalities in a time when public budgets are under pressure.

## **Objective**

The proposed PhD-study aims to analyse the present status of public involvement in municipal green space management in Denmark. Based on Danish and international examples, it will identify good practices and success and failure factors in ongoing involvement programmes and activities.

## **Research questions:**

- How do (Danish) municipalities involve residents in the management/maintenance of their urban green spaces?
- What can we learn from international and Danish experiences with public involvement in municipal green space maintenance? Which good practices and success and failure factors can be identified?
- Based on the above: is there potential to develop this type of involvement in Danish municipalities? What can Danish municipalities gain?
- How can public involvement in municipal park maintenance in Denmark best be realised? How can public involvement be implemented and facilitated?

## **Methods**

The study will comprise the following elements:

- Literature survey (international and Denmark), as well as contact with experts
- Survey among Danish municipalities to identify the status of public involvement and green space maintenance
- Analysis of promising Danish cases, consisting of e.g. in-depth interviews with key stakeholders (supplemented by international cases).
- Testing of public involvement 'tools' in one or several Danish cases.

## **Organisation**

Strategic PhD-project connected to the new professor in Green Space Management at Skov & Landskab, LIFE. Collaboration with a number of Danish municipalities, as well as with leading international research institutions, will be an important element of the study.