

SMARTLAND - Presentation narrative

- - -

Bogi is the initiator **of the “SMARTLAND/We learn to farm project”** but she is also a **user**.

- - -

Bogi studied human ecology, which is a multi- and interdisciplinary study of the interactions between humans and their natural environment. She believes that an **informed** and **well-networked** civil society has the **potential to improve both urban and rural livelihoods**.

So, Bogi believes that in order to live in cities that we want to live in, it is necessary to know **the critical mass, the positive human capital** of Bratislava as well as the **unused/abandoned spaces** where their activities could be materialised.

- - -

Bogi is an urban activist, a gardener and also member of the Slovak Rural platform. It took her almost two years of non-profit volunteering to start a community garden in Bratislava. During those two years she was searching for the right location, sorting out ownership rights, looking for advice from people with similar experiences and finding like-minded urban enthusiasts.

Momentum: why now?

Insurgence and cooperation of grassroots rural initiatives like the Slovak Rural Platform (<http://vidieckaplatforma.sk>), which is committed to improve and secure healthy and prosperous rural and regional livelihoods.

Insurgence of urban placemaking and revitalisation initiatives like Vnútroklok or Mestské zásahy- according to the informal survey of active bottom-up urban networks (a dataset that we expanded on during the hackathon), there were approximately 19 initiatives in Bratislava in 2000, whereas in 2014 there were already 69 Bratislava based initiatives aiming to better our urban environment.

- - -

Over the past few years groups of Bratislava based **new active citizens** came together to exercise their right to the city and proved that **there is a strong willingness and commitment to improve their surroundings**: e.i. to transform unused urban areas that lively gardens, community centres or cultural venues.

Proof:

Example 1: The initiative to transform the abandoned Filiálka Train Station building into a community centre¹

¹ However due to unclear property and usage rights the project has been halted (SMARTLAND should offer transparent information in order to avoid such complications)

Example 2: The initiative to give a temporary use to an abandoned vacant lot on Sasinkova street to a community garden

Example 3: To revitalise the empty rooftop terrace of the Slovak National Radio and turn it into a community garden and cultural venue

- - -

Problem:

It takes an incredible amount of patience and time to turn these ideas into a reality.

In Slovakia, there is a tendency to say that sustainable and good bottom-up projects are almost impossible to implement; that there will most likely to something/ someone (be it and individual, institution or a bureaucratic restriction) that will make the transformation to “better” impossible.

1. In Slovakia, it is increasingly hard to easily access transparent up to date information regarding available unused/uncultivated land.
2. In an ideal situation, we would need a SMART (reciprocal, equal and transparent) cooperation between the public and the administrator of the unused land they would like to toil.
3. The SMARTLAND website could offer a strong starting point.
4. The website would present the unused/untoiled/abandoned areas in the city
5. Provide transparent information regarding the owners of such areas
6. Provide information regarding the type of the property (land quality, biodiversity, environmental hazards, zoning information)
7. Provide information regarding active initiative in the neighbourhood (based on their location)
8. Combined with the type of activities they are pursuing: be it architectural, urbanist, community or environmentally focused projects/ project that have been physically implemented and projects that are still in a conceptual phase (still to be implemented)
9. Who is our target group? Who would benefit? The curious public, looking for information regarding Bratislava-based initiatives/ Groups that are looking to implement their own projects/ Groups and individuals that are looking for best-practices etc.

- - -

User benefits:

- Relevant up to date information about land offers in the neighbourhood
- Relevant up to date information regarding active urban networks
- Relevant up to date information about new opportunities (workshops, grant schemes etc)

Datasets used

1. Danube reference data and service infrastructure —> Urban Atlas Bratislava —> land use, focusing primarily land without current use
2. Soil Science and Conservation Research Institute —> Soil map —> data was automatically vektorizované/ turned into a vector map
3. Vectorization process using Jáchym Čepický's magic in GRASS
4. data.gov.sk / portál otvorených dát provided by National Agency for Network and Electronic Services
we used address points, which were imported into the PostgreSQL database, connected and published
5. Obtaining information from the Geodetic and Cartographic Institute Mapka application and from the Cadastral portal
6. We were creating datasets on the spot. We extended Mgr. Milota Sidorová's dataset of "Active City networks," which is a list of committed, activist formal and informal non-governmental organizations, initiatives, platforms which have been active in March 2015 - focusing on the positive development of Bratislava - on urban gardens, architecture, urbanism and community life which demonstrate the qualities of activities, positive urban development and public good.
+ Using my Bogi's knowledge combined with the consulting placemaking and participatory planning expertise of Mgr. Art. Dominika Belanská

Our only limitation was time, but we managed to create some basic prototypes (sourcefiles attached to this email)

We have created a framework for what is considered an Urban map. **We were focusing on Bratislava, acting locally but of course, thinking globally :)**

The cool thing is that SMARTLAND is scalable and applicable to the whole country. By combining **more datasets with more time for hacking and coding**, we can turn SMARTLAND into a viable Rural app that would benefit small, young, family and ecological farmers and bottom-up farmers initiatives.

Why do a rural app and why support small-scale agriculture?

Small farms have time and again been labeled as backward, unproductive and inefficient —an obstacle to be overcome in the process of economic development. Small farmers— or "peasants"—have been expected to go the way of the dinosaurs, and rightly so, according to conventional wisdom. Yet small farms have **multiple functions which benefit both society and the biosphere**, and which contribute far more than just a

particular commodity²—though there is ample evidence that a small farm model for agricultural development could produce far more food than a large farm pattern ever could. **They are stewards of natural resources, conserving biodiversity and safeguarding the future sustainability of agricultural production.**³

The Slovak Rural Platform is trying to address the needs of these marginalised farmers by assessing their needs (through regional meetings, conferences and surveys) and creating educational opportunities and practical trainings.

- - -

SMARTLAND visions for the future

We would like to integrate the datasets of:

- The Registry of the Agricultural Land Ownership Transfer
- The Slovak Land Trust
- and with the Database of relevant farmers organisations

combined with a

+ Mobile app and a specialized newsfeed providing up-to-date information from the relevant stakeholders that Spinque.com have started to developing for SMARTLAND
+ User registration - Functions for users looking for land and users offering land/ looking for advice and offering advice

>>>

The Rural app can benefit small, young, family and ecological farmers

- to gain relevant information regarding available land
- to gain customised/ specialised information for these farmers regarding relevant training, networking and financing opportunities

- - -

And of course, THANK YOU:

Core team members: Boglárka Ivanegová, Ladislav Morávek, Michal Dolník, Boris Kruzliak

special thanks to Jachym Čepický Anna Ulahelová, Michiel Hilderbrand, Wouter Alink, Mikuláš Kresánek, Michala Hrnčiarová, Dominika Belanská, Milota Sidorová, Sandra Štasselová, David Vereš and Dušan Martinčok

² Bogi's comment: this is an important point, because as opposed to other neighbouring countries that consider and protect land as part of the national wealth, land in Slovakia is classified as a commodity.

³ Quoting ROSSET, Peter M. The Multiple Functions and Benefits of Small Farm Agriculture in the Context of Global Trade Negotiations. Institute for Food and Development Policy. 1999. Available at www.foodfirst.org.