

Walkable floor map event in Aarhus, Denmark

By/ Signe Iversen (Aarhus Municipality). Translation: Sally Anderson (AU). REGREEN News, April 2022

A blue and green Aarhus



Last Tuesday on 29.3, researchers from Aarhus University (environmental sciences, pedagogy, education) and UFZ (Helmholtz-Zentrum für Umweltforschung) in Leipzig, along with Aarhus Municipality's Department of Construction and Environment – presented a large walkable floor map (4 x 7 meters) to colleagues and heads of departments at Blixen. The map, showing an aerial photograph of blue and green space connections and areas of development in Aarhus municipality, reflects political visions for the city's future. The connections shown demonstrate how creating links between nature, green areas and waterways may, strengthen nature and biodiversity, create better access for citizens to green areas, and secure the city center from flooding by the Aarhus river.

REGREEN has also developed area-specific walkable maps for Aarhus teacher's college (VIA) to use for training future geography teachers. On Wednesday, teachers in training at VIA University College explored the walkable maps, discussing how to design teacher guides, lesson plans and hands-on exercises that would make use of the maps as pedagogical tools for working geographically in comprehensive schools. Similar area-specific maps have been created for use in geography and nature education in two local comprehensive schools (Beder, Skæring). As noted by Jeppe Læssøe, professor emeritus at the Danish School of Education, Aarhus University, the large walkable maps 'allow pupils to experience and understand their local areas in new ways. The maps can also enhance local democracy, by offering schoolchildren a tangible way of entering into dialogue with politicians regarding their plans for developing the areas where children's lives unfold.'

The maps were very well received by employees and heads in the Department of Construction and Environment, as well as by teachers and teachers-in-training at VIA. In all workshops, they clearly proved their worth as tools for enhancing joint reflection and dialogue. Aarhus' Department of Construction and Environment sees many beneficial uses of the maps, both for involving citizens and for creating dialogue with and among politicians, as the city moves toward realizing its vision for a blue and green Aarhus.