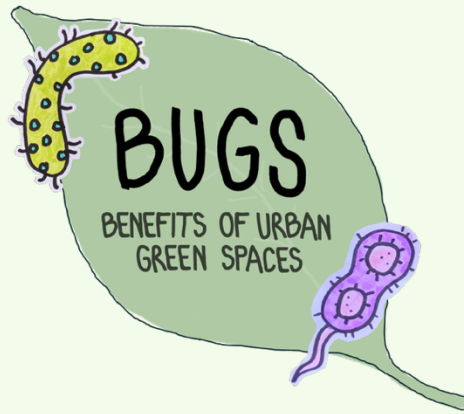




BUGS workshop

“Designing City Parks”

Children’s Session

2 July 2025



What did the children do?

During our workshop, the children explored the fascinating world of **microorganisms**. They were shown an interactive presentation, had the chance to ask questions, and shared their thoughts on what they had learned. Afterwards, they looked at photos of different parks and discussed whether they would like to visit them — and why (or why not). To round things off, each child designed their ideal park in a fun crafting activity.

What did we learn?

The children showed a **very solid basic understanding of microbes**. They knew that microorganisms are everywhere — even on their skin, in their mouths, and on their faces — and that some can make you sick. Opinions varied on whether bacteria are **good or bad**: some children saw them as positive, others as neutral or even negative. What was clear, however, is that the workshop **sparked their curiosity** and made them more aware of the invisible world of microorganisms.



When talking about parks, something stood out: the children clearly preferred **green, natural spaces** with lots of biodiversity. Their ideal park includes **animals and insects** such as bees, butterflies, and birds (kingfishers were a favourite!), **grass, trees, and flowers** — but also plenty of room to play and move:

swings, trampolines, bike paths, and sports fields. Some children also pointed out that a park should feel **safe and comfortable**. They expressed concerns about places where they could get hurt or become tired from walking too much. As one child nicely put it: *“If there’s no grass and you fall, it really hurts!”*.



What does this tell us?

The ideas shared by the children in this workshop offer valuable insight into how they experience and use city parks. Their preferences and concerns can help make parks **more child-friendly and appealing**.

Yet children are **often not actively involved** in the design of public spaces. Decisions are usually made by adults, even though they experience such places very differently. Scientific studies show that **adults tend to value peace and order**, whereas **children gravitate towards adventure, freedom of movement, and natural play elements**.

Although our group of participants is not representative of *all* children, our findings align well with this broader trend: the children in this workshop clearly favoured **green, biodiverse parks** with plenty of space to **play, explore, and be active**.