



UGAIN

Urban GARDens for the
social INtegration of
migrants

Project N°: 2017-1-DE02-KA204-004151

Workshop Report

Duration:

01.12.2017 – 30.05.2020

Project-Framework

Erasmus + Staregic Partnerships

In December 2017, the project consortium met for their kick-off meeting at the Freising campus of the Technical University of Munich. The consortium consists of seven partners from five countries, who are described in the following. At the kick-off meeting, European situation on urban gardens and social integration for migrants was discussed. The present situation for each country was presented in a seminar session.

Germany

Technical University of Munich

The Technical University of Munich (TUM) is a university with campuses in Munich, Garching and Freising-Weihenstephan. The chair Economics of Horticulture and Landscaping under Prof. Dr. Vera Bitsch, which is located in Freising is in charge of the project coordination. The chair delivers research dedicated to questions of management tasks and economic choices within horticulture, landscaping, and the broader frame of agriculture and societal institutions. Stefan Mair and Meike Rombach are the representatives of TUM in the consortium.

Stiftungsgemeinschaft Anstiftung & Ertomis

Stiftungsgemeinschaft Anstiftung & Ertomis (SAEG) is the leading German networking platform and research foundation for intercultural community gardens, open labs and repair cafes. SAEG is located in Munich and executes research dedicated to do it yourself and sustainable regionalization. SAEG advises groups, initiatives and organizations, but also local authorities, on questions about building up successfully an intercultural garden/ community garden. SAEG cooperates with hundreds of community gardens in Germany, provides them with support and access to networking. Gudrun Walesch and Christa Müller are the representatives of SAEG within the consortium



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Current situation

In Germany, urban gardening is becoming increasingly popular. At present there are approximately 635 urban gardens existing. These include garden projects, community gardens and intercultural gardens spread all over the country. The intercultural garden movement established in the mid-1990s. At the time, Bosnian refugees were hosted in Goettingen, awaiting the end of the Balkan war. As the refugees were unaccustomed to their current situation and the German lifestyle, and were missing their home gardens, intercultural gardens were born. In cooperation with an Agricultural engineer from Ethiopia, the first project had been established.

Intercultural gardens bring together German citizens, migrants, and refugees and are built on the following principles: concern for others, strengthening diversity and participation and resource orientation. Within German community and intercultural gardens a variety of activities are offered, which include crop cultivation, seed swap and exchange of recipes. Establishing facilities together, small wooden houses, fire places and play grounds, as these activities foster social interaction. The gardening work (planting, maintaining plots and harvesting) allows migrants and refugees to connect to their new living environment. In the winter months, where the German climate does not necessarily allow cultivation, language courses, computer courses, crafts, sport, theatre workshops, intercultural environmental education, education in nutrition and gardening, tours and field trips are offered for the garden members. Besides the many offers, that are valuable and supportive for migrants and refugees, the gardens are attractive to migrant women in particular, as they provide a safe environment, they learn to socialize, and to reduce language and cultural barriers.



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Figure 1: Intercultural garden in Hanover-Germany

Source: Anstiftung

Spain

OnProjects

OnProjects offers a comprehensive consultancy service in project management. OnProjects was born as an idea of Iacopo Benedetti. Iacopo Benedetti and Raquel Molina are the representatives of OnProjects for UGAIN.

Asociacion Cantabria Acoge

Asociacion Cantabria Acoge (ACA) is a non-governmental organization which mission is to welcome and socially integrate refugees and migrants reaching the Cantabria region in Spain. ACA is an independent and autonomous association, acting as the umbrella organization of 18 member associations. ACA's work is dedicated to labor and social integration of migrants and other people facing the risk of social exclusion. The staff involved in the project belongs to ACA labor integration department and manages the urban garden. Luca Fischetto and Javier



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Lastra Diaz are the representatives of ACA in the consortium and are knowledgeable about the problems related to social integration and career guidance of migrants and have a wide experience in providing them assistance, training and guidance.

Current situation

Cantabria is an autonomous community in Spain. It has 581477 inhabitants and an immigration rate of 5,2 %. Even though the gross domestic product is 5,2 Million Euros, the unemployment rate is 12,7%. In Santander, the capital of Cantabria, urban gardening movement started in 2010. At the time approximately 54 gardens were existing, however until 2017 the number of urban gardens doubled, and there 119 gardens in the city. In Santander a total 7355m² is dedicated to urban gardens. 2907m² are used for cultivation and each spot is 30m². Usually elderly people, on average 60 years old, actively participate in the communicate gardens.

Within the capital the Princess Letizia garden project, is very particular. The project includes eleven community gardens that work with people who are considered as vulnerable populations, people with addiction problems, mentally and physically challenged people, homeless people, as well as migrants and refugees. These groups are receiving employment and learn about environmental protection.



Figure 2: Vegetable production in the Princess Letizia garden project

Source: Asociacion Cantabria Acoge



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Austria

Gartenpolylog

Gartenpolylog (GP) is an Austrian association hosting a garden network. This includes community gardens, neighborhood gardens or intercultural community gardens. GP has a very strong focus on intercultural gardens and cooperates with different Austrian organization dedicated to the inclusion of migrants and refugees. In 2016, the association established a project dedicated to unite refugees and old established citizens through gardening. The project is focused on inclusion and education, and aims promote diversity and reduce barriers. Cordula Fötsch, David Stanzel and Ursula Taborsky are the representatives of GP within the consortium

Current situation

In Austria, there are 2700 registered urban gardening projects. At present there 37 intercultural gardens that are dedicated to the social inclusion of migrants and refugees. For such projects there is no general funding available, only a few regions provide financial support. The intercultural gardens offer learning and active leisure time. The gardens are usually related to charitable organization such as Caritas. Gardens for refugees are usually in the close proximity of their accommodation. The main challenges in Austrian intercultural gardens are conflicts among members, external support and finance.



Figure: Cultivating the garden together
Source: Gartenpolylog



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Sweden

Folksuniversitetet Stiftelsen Vid Lunds Universitet

Folksuniversitetet (FU) is an adult educational association that offers a wide range of adult education all over Sweden. The association consists of five foundations: the university extensions attached to the Universities of Stockholm, Uppsala, Goteborg, Lund and Umea. FU offers a broad open educational program in a variety of subjects. This includes courses on the upper secondary school level, courses in higher vocational education, courses for seniors and training, labor market education and further education and training for working life. FU is independent of political, religious and commercial interests. FU has a long experience working with refugees and migrants. The organization provides language training and activities to promote soft skills, as well as cooking and crafting activities to this target group, as the activities contribute to better integration. Ingmarie Rohdin and Asa Kajdsdotter are the representatives of FU within the consortium.

Current situation

Allotment gardens have a long tradition in Sweden. They were established after the Second World War to guarantee the populations food security. However, urban gardening in form of community and intercultural gardens is rather new development in Sweden. Similar to many other European countries, Sweden is also increasingly hosting refugees and migrants. There have been a few urban gardening initiatives in the Malmö-Lund area, which aimed to foster education, health and inclusion for migrants, however these projects were rather short term projects of one or two years. Currently there is not sufficient fund provided to sustain the projects long-term.



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Figure 4: Women involved in an urban gardening project in Märsta- Sweden are selling cut flowers and fresh produce

Source: Photo courtesy of Ingmarie Rhodin

United Kingdom

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens (FCFCG) is a registered charity which supports, represents and promotes community-managed farms, gardens, allotments and other green spaces in the United Kingdom. The non-governmental organization consists of 32 members of staff across the UK supporting over 200 city and school farms and nearly 1,000 community managed gardens. FCFCG works with these community groups to help empower local people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to build better communities. Their work often takes place in deprived areas, and helps to make a positive impact on the surrounding environment. Heidi Seary is the representative of FCFCG in the consortium.

Current situation

Community gardens are common in the UK. Similar to the Austrian situation, there is no central public fund available for community gardens available. Partially public fund is existing



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in areas of Wales, Scotland and Ireland; however, in Central England where the majority of gardens are exciting there is none. In the United Kingdom there had been a nationwide survey related to community gardens and social inclusion. The main barrier to working with refugees and migrants were funding, finding suitably educated staff members, language barriers, cultural problems and not being knowledgeable how to train migrants. In the United Kingdom staff members in community gardens reported that many refugees are very traumatized by war and that inclusion within the gardens takes time.



Figure: Community gardens in the United Kingdom
Source: Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

In a final discussion, the consortium members actively discussed the following aspects as they were of concern for all project members.

- Financing and Resources (Sweden and UK) and Self-sustainment (Germany and Austria)
- Language, learning and skills (Informal education)
- Cooperation with agencies and other parties
- Problems to involve women or men
- Commitment and contribution conflict (I contribute a lot, you contribute too little)
- Incentive Systems
- Communicate the concept of intercultural gardens



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