

URBAN GARDENING

The Urban Gardening Role in Improving of Adults' Skills and Community Growth

Krakowskie Centrum Zarzadzania i Administracji Sp. z o.o.

HELLAS FOR US

PRISM

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EPLEFPA

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CHAPTER 2
**TOOLS - FOR NGOS, SOCIAL
ACTIVISTS AND PROFESSIONALS**



**URBAN
GARDENING**

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Community Growth

ERASMUS+ KA2

Cooperation for Innovation and the exchange of Good Practices
Strategic partnership for adult education

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SUMMARY



The work of NGOs, social activists and professionals is one of the strongest points in the Urban Gardening project, that's why we have dedicated a specific part of the Toolkit to this target group. Within the "Tools - for NGOs, social activists and professionals" are presented tangible instruments to use urban gardens as spaces of social development. A series of logical/practical process are suggested in order to achieve a concrete social impact through the creation of an Urban Garden. These tools are suitable with the work of NGOs and all other social workers interested in this field. The Tool is divided in 6 sections with paragraph designed to support NGOs, social activists and professionals with technical and organizational aspects.

A BASIC TIPS FOR WORKING IN ENVIRONMENTAL SECTOR

“The beauty of the environmental sector is you meet people who are all out to achieve a common goal, yet are all approaching the goal from a different motive, background, perspective and are faced by different challenges. It’s important to be aware of as many of these factors as possible. In this section it will be possible to understand the basic steps needed from NGOs, social activists and professionals, to promote and encourage environmental and friendly attitude in people from local communities.

INTRODUCTION TO ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION.

Environmental education is a process that allows individuals to explore environmental issues, engage in problem solving, and take action to improve themselves and the environment. As a result, individuals develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues and have the skills to make informed and responsible decisions.

The components of environmental education are:

- Awareness and sensitivity to the environment and environmental challenges
- Knowledge and understanding of the environment and environmental challenges
- Attitudes of concern for the environment and motivation to improve or maintain environmental quality
- Skills to identify and help resolve environmental challenges
- Participation in activities that lead to the resolution of environmental challenges

Environmental Education is neither environmental advocacy nor environmental



information; rather, Environmental Education is a varied and diverse field that focuses on the educational process that has to remain neutral by teaching individuals critical thinking and enhancing their own problem-solving and decision-making skills in a participatory approach.

Environmental Education can be taught formally in schools, classrooms, colleges and universities, or it can take place in informal learning contexts through NGOs, businesses, and the media. Besides, Environmental Education takes place in various non-formal education programs such as experiential outdoor education, workshops, outreach programs and community education. Environmental problems such as climate change jeopardise our prosperity and our economic development. We all contribute to environmental problems and, as a result, we can only solve them on the basis of cooperative action. Environmental education, like education for sustainable development, is based on building awareness and identification with personal living environments. It is therefore not merely the conveyance of knowledge, but a process of learning about the concept of social action.

WHICH ARE THE MAIN ADVANTAGES FOR NGOS, SOCIAL ACTIVISTS AND PROFESSIONALS, TO UNDERTAKE A PATH IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION?

The modern world has witnessed a dramatic growth in organized volunteer activities, such as the emergence of non-profit organizations with the goal of meeting the demands of social services, preventing environmental degradation, defending civil rights and seeking to fulfill many other unmet social aspirations that are under the responsibility of the State.

Environmental education practiced by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) presents itself as a new teaching method directed at changing habits, attitudes and social practices

- seeking solutions for the social-environmental degradation afflicting the contemporary world.

- NGOs, social activist and professionals have played an important role in the processing of growth and expansion regarding environmental education actions in the non-formal field, which complement and oftentimes motivate governmental initiatives and give support to private initiative organizations interested in the development of projects within the area. One of the main advantages of NGOs is the capacity to unite around shared agendas. A huge leap in the quality of environmental educational activities has been provided by NGOs and community organizations, with the development of an extensive list of non-formal actions, indicative of innovative practices, concerned with developing the co-responsibility of people and social groups regarding the importance of forming citizens that are increasingly more committed to environmental issues. Another advantage is the organizational singularity of NGOs, that provides them with a malleability allowing to meet the demands of different audiences, working with a large diversity of themes and objectives, which can be increased based on new demands.

- According to the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), NGOs play “an indispensable role . . . in identifying risks, in assessing environmental impacts and designing and implementing measures to deal with them, and in maintaining the high degree of public and political interest required as a basis for action”. There are countless NGOs worldwide, and these organizations have played a significant role in social development, sustainable community development, and promoting sustainable consumption. Businesses that wish to reach out to all their stakeholders can benefit from a productive relationship with NGOs.

- The emergence of NGOs represents an

organised response by civil society especially in those areas in which the state has either failed to reach or done so inadequately. The importance of public awareness and NGOs involvement in environmental protection is acknowledged worldwide. NGOs can make the following Contributions:

- Conducting education and citizen awareness programmes in the field of environment
- Fact – finding and analysis
- Innovation and experimenting in areas which are difficult for government agencies to make changes in
- Providing expertise and policy analysis
- Providing factual and reliable information with a network of professional expert staff
- Remaining independent while passing relevant information to the public and governmental bodies
- Solidarity and support to environmental defenders

In the field of environmental issues, the problems and solutions, as well as the costs and benefits, involve different actors and require coordination between the public, private and civil society sector, through their various organizations. It is a reality that demands a new educational scenario in which NGOs present themselves as key players for their expertise and profile for the development of non-formal environmental education processes.

PREPARING LOCAL ACTIVITIES PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY ATTITUDES AND HABITS.

Today, the necessity of environmental awareness and enforcement is more demanding and urgent than ever before. Every person, organisation and institution has an obligation and duty to protect it. Environmental protection encompasses not only pollution but also sustainable development and conservation of natural resources and the ecosystem. Environmental non-governmental

organizations, in recent years, have grown in size and in number as a result of governmental negligence towards the environmental crisis. NGOs have grown in importance to a point where they act as key arbitrating agents within the field of environmental policy. By interrelating global and local concerns, NGOs find themselves able to not only emphasize important ecological issues, but also raise consciousness about the environment. In the next paragraph we are going to present which kinds of activities are more suitable with the work of NGOs, social activists and professionals.

Which kinds of activities are more suitable with the work of NGOs, social activists and professional?

NGOs, social activist and professionals can play a crucial role in helping to plug gaps by conducting research to facilitate policy development, building institutional capacity, and facilitating independent dialogue with civil society to help people live more sustainable lifestyles. While some of the barriers are beginning to be lifted, there are still many areas which require further reform and support in order to assist NGOs to conduct their work.

These areas include: the need for a legal framework to recognize NGOs and enable them to access more diverse funding sources; high-level support/endorsement from local figureheads; and engaging NGOs in policy development and implementation.

NGO's have been taking a number of steps to promote discussion and debate about environmental issues, outside the broad spheres of popular media and the educational system. Advocacy and awareness are the main activities in promoting concepts such as sustainable development, natural resource conservation and the restoration of ecosystems. NGOs can sensitize policy makers about the local needs and priorities. They can often intimate the policy

B HOW TO SET UP URBAN GARDENS FOR SOCIAL PURPOSE

“People of all social groups, ages and ethnicities can understand the language of gardening: planting, growing, watering, caring for the soil and harvesting are tasks every gardener has to do. Doing these things in a community or neighbourhood garden almost automatically causes people to exchange their knowledge. They can work as a sort of ‘future lab’ and contribute to creating the fresh minds which are needed to create urban communities that cross economic, educational and cultural divides. Following the instructions contained in this section your organization will have the possibility to implement a series of practical steps to set up an Urban Garden for social purpose”.

SETTING UP THE PROJECT'S AIMS: BENEFICIARIES' AND USERS' NEEDS, OVERALL AND OPERATIONAL AIMS.

A good needs assessment is vital for the success of a project and develop a sustainable urban garden. This activity will support NGOs to conduct a needs assessment and set up coherent project's aims that addresses the actual problems of the beneficiaries in the targeted community. Beneficiaries and other stakeholders participate in the analysis in order to ensure relevance, sustainability and feasibility of the community garden. A community leader should educate community members on how to communicate and express each other, to analyze and understand the context where they live, to address the problems they face and to change the reality. A community leader does not transfer contents, does not impose solutions from top to down. The community leader is an expert in the art of questioning, creating conditions in which each person can learn how to express him/herself and research

within a group and facilitate a process of common analysis and planning. The analysis is presented in a diagram form showing the effects of a problem on top and its causes underneath.

Guidelines for the trainer:

1. Introduce the “problem tree” and forms groups of 3-4 participants.
2. As a starting point, invite each group and participants to identify and state the core problem in the targeted community they want to address.
3. Invite each group to brainstorm and analyze all problems that are related to the core problem. Each identified problem should be written on a card.
4. Invite each group to establish hierarchy of cause and effects: problems which are directly causing the core problem are put below; problems which are direct effects of the core problem are put above.
5. Invite each group to connect the problems with cause-effect arrows. The links of causes and effects should be clear and make a logical sense. Participants should review the diagram and verify its validity and completeness. Once complete, the problem tree represents a summary of the existing negative situation.
6. Invite each group to present the final results and all participants to provide common feedback.

NATURAL GARDENING TECHNIQUES

The benefits of community-based gardening projects likely extend beyond food security, as gardens provide fresh vegetables, and the process of gardening involves physical exercise. Family and social relationships can also be strengthened through community gardening, since community members provide advice and support to help overcome challenges and all receive the benefits the gardening project offers. Immigration issues can lead to the loss of these essential social networks, and may leave migrant families feeling isolated.

- In order to do gardening NGOs need to use few techniques to grow plants. Some of them are natural resources like, water, landscape, soil, sunshine, and many things like this. Using these resources smartly is a part of sustainable gardening. This way we can make it even more healthy and green. Now there are few techniques which you can use for sustainable gardening. This is very simple. We can use less water and can use organic things to grow plants as well. These are the basic sustainable measures. To do so we need to have proper knowledge about gardening and its requirement so that we can use proper resources without wasting any of them. To do so we can research about the plants we want to grow. Only then we can use proper quantity of water and can design the landscape as per requirement. Here are few measures:

- Oscillating Sprinklers are not a great option always. You can use soaker hoses so that you do not waste any water.
- You can try to store rain water so that you can use them for gardening. Rain water harvesting is a great sustainable measure.
- Try use less energy driven devices for gardening and if you use any like a lawn mower, try to have it serviced on a regular basis.
- Avoid using plastics in any form while gardening. Plastics are not good for us and our environment.
- Select your plants smartly. If you have lesser space, then choose your plants accordingly.
- You can reuse the leaves from your garden to compost them.
- Don't use the waste from your garden for land filling. Instead send them for recycling to your local waste recycling program.

- In today's busy life we don't get much time to get in tune with our environment. Gardening gives us a chance to do so. NGOs in this way can help to create a healthier environment too. From producing oxygen to creating some

more greenery, gardening always helps.

IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL IN THE EXISTING URBAN GARDEN USING CRITICAL THINKING. ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY'S NEEDS.

Many of the modern urban developments built in the second half of the twentieth century were conceived aiming to over-determine functions and uses of public space. As a result, many of the open spaces of these urban areas do not encourage spontaneous use of public space or support sociability. The issue of delivering better public spaces is seen here first through the prism of planning because planners have a critical role to play in the creation and shaping of public spaces; a role that manifests itself in two distinct ways. First, planners are often the initiators of public space projects, for example, recognising the need and potential for new or regenerated public spaces in particular locations through the auspices of proactive site or area-based plans, frameworks and briefs, or otherwise encouraging them in policy. Second, planners are the guardians of how public spaces come into being through the regulatory processes of development management. Critical thinking involves critical implication and discussion, which has a crucial role in activating problem solving and decision making processes (Chaffee, 1994).

Critical thinking is a constructivist analysis process to examine what is going on in the environment. This analysis system can be used to define problems, take actions towards an aim, make decisions and conduct retrospective evaluations. In order to define, describe, measure and evaluate the critical thinking process, it is necessary to understand indicators of critical thinking skills. Educators recognize the importance of gaining the skill of thinking critically. However, the crucial question is how to teach critical thinking; directly for instance as a core course or indirectly such as structuring

- the teaching and learning process in a way
- that those instructional activities enable the
- learners to employ their higher order cognitive
- processes.
- The quality of NGO work is hugely dependent
- on the quality of critical thinking and analysis
- of environmental issues among all levels of
- staff. In particular, the quality of the work in
- the field – at partner and community levels –
- depends on an understanding of development
- processes and on strong facilitation skills, both
- of which rely on strong levels of critical thinking.
- While these are innately present in almost
- everyone, rote learning in education systems
- and patriarchal and top-down power structures
- often impede their development. The following
- sessions suggests some practical means by
- which development agencies can develop
- strong analytical thinking and strong facilitation
- skills among their staff in using green spaces
- for social purpose.



C

PRACTICAL STEPS FOR URBAN GARDENS' CREATION

“Are you looking to start an urban garden this spring and not sure where to start? This isn't a magical formula that is going to allow you to grow 25 kg of tomatoes or 300 cucumbers; but a series of practical advices that will support you to utilize and maximize your limited space”. If you are a social worker and if you're interested in learning how to grow your own plants and vegetables, then this section is a very practical way to get you started on growing your own rich, bountiful urban garden, right in your own town.

THE DIFFERENT KINDS AND SHAPES OF GARDENS.

Community gardens vary in several ways: they are cultivated by different kinds of communities in various locations, entail individual or communal plots and the extent of active participation (e.g. gardening) differs. Therefore, community gardens contribute to the development of social cohesion – even if people are not particularly driven by social motivations. Moreover, while participants who are motivated by the social aspects of gardening naturally show a higher level of appreciation for them, these social aspects also bring added value for those participants who are motivated primarily by growing vegetables. At the most fundamental level, through interactions at social events and every day gardening activities, urban gardens serve as a convivial space for gardeners and non-gardeners alike. Everyday activities and occasional social events strengthen social ties and facilitate interactions among both gardeners and non-gardeners. They make the gardens function more as social spaces, rather than just garden plots. Through these interactions, urban gardening engages a wider audience beyond the gardeners,



resulting in greater community benefits as well as greater support for urban gardening. Besides social events and activities, gardening itself can be a form of social activity and facilitates social interactions. For immigrants and refugees in particular, urban gardens provide important opportunities for continuing traditional cultural practices. The gardens are also used as sites for a variety of ethnic social events and cultural practices. As such, urban gardens function as a cultural space for specific communities and as a site for the expression of cultural identities and belonging as sites for a variety of ethnic social events and cultural practices. As such, urban gardens function as a cultural space for specific communities and as a site for the expression of cultural identities and belonging. In their study of community gardens in New York City, Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny (2004) found that the gardens provide a connection between immigrants and their cultural heritage. Particularly, the Latino gardens seemed to be particularly important as sites for maintaining Puerto Rican farming culture in an urban environment (Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny 2004: 409). In Seattle, Hou et al. (2009) examined several cases of community gardens and found them to serve also as important venues for continued cultural practices. Other examples of people supporting primarily gardeners from ethnic communities, let the gardens provide important opportunities for continuing the agrarian traditions and knowledge of immigrant and refugee gardens in particular. The gardens enable them to grow ethnic vegetables that could not be easily found in grocery markets. Growing and consuming these vegetables are part of important cultural practices for ethnic communities. The garden can serve particularly as a space for cross-cultural interactions and learning as well as building of social ties across ethnic and cultural boundaries. These occur through both the act of gardening as well as the social and community events occurring on the site. Through collective decision-making and sharing of responsibilities, garden can serve as a space for democratic

practices. Internally, community gardens can serve as a medium through which democratic values are practiced and reproduced. Finally, urban gardens can serve as a community safety net in the face of calamity as well as economic despair. Through building of networks and social ties, and through the production of food, urban gardening can contribute to the resilience of a community in time of crisis.

BASIC KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS IN ORGANIC PRODUCTIVE GARDENING. KNOWING AND CARRYING THE SOIL.

The purpose of this Session is to provide the basic knowledge of the soil that is needed for the construction of urban gardens, and for the efficient management of activities with social purpose. A fundamental knowledge of soil science is a prerequisite to meeting the many natural resource challenges that will face humanity in the 21st Century. It is also true that the study of soils can be both fascinating and intellectually satisfying. It is in the soils that we are able to observe all of the principles of biology, chemistry, and physics at work. Soil is a complex mixture of living organisms, organic matter, minerals, water and air. Take a handful of soil and look at it closely. You can see that it is a mixture of many different kinds of small particles. Soils have four major components: (a) mineral matter, (b) organic matter, (c) air, and (d) water. Air and water occupy the pore spaces in soils. Pore spaces are the voids between the soil particles. Air and/or water occupy approximately half the volume of soil. Fine-textured soils have more total pore space than coarse-textured soils. As soils absorb water, the air space decreases. Generally speaking, it is desirable to have a soil which, when well drained, will have about half or its pore spaces filled with water. A soil is a three-dimensional natural body in the same sense that a hill, valley, or mountain has three dimensions. By digging a hole in the soil, you may retrieve some soil material, and, you can take this sample of

soil material into the laboratory and analyze its contents, but you must go into the field to study a soil as a natural body. Soils occur on landscapes and are delineated on aerial photographs by trained soil scientists. These delineations are called polygons or polypedons, and they represent soil areas that are similar with regard to the intended uses of that soil. Today's urban gardeners don't just grow food to eat; they also see urban agriculture as a way of increasing the diversity of plants and animals in the city, bringing people from different backgrounds and age groups together, improving mental and physical health and regenerating derelict neighbourhoods. Hydroponic systems were engineered as a highly space and resource efficient form of "urban-farming". Today, they represent a considerable source of industrially grown produce; one estimate suggests that, in 2016, the hydroponic vegetable market was worth about US\$6.9 billion worldwide. The potential to grow food in small spaces, under any environmental conditions, are certainly big advantages in an urban context. But these technologies also mean that the time spent outdoors, weathering the natural cycles of the seasons, is lost. Also, hydroponic systems require nutrients that are often synthesised chemically – although organic nutrients are now becoming available. Many urban farmers grow their food following organic principles, partly because the excessive use of chemical fertilisers is damaging soil fertility and polluting groundwater.

THE COMPONENTS OF A GARDEN'S LAYOUT. DESIGN OF AN ECOLOGICAL GARDEN. BIODIVERSITY IN THE GARDEN. UNDERSTANDING OF THE GARDEN'S LIFE AND HOW TO ATTRACT THE BIODIVERSITY. GARDEN WASTE.

It's easy to support biodiversity by supplying staples such as water, food and shelter. With habitat loss being the greatest threat to biodiversity in the world, urban gardens and

- neighbourhood habitats are crucial pieces holding together an increasingly fragmented natural landscape. Here you will find some methods of making your urban gardens supportive of biodiversity:

- **Naturalize your lawn:** Lawns are unnatural habitats. Creating a naturalized area in your yard will reduce the size of your lawn and decrease the amount of mowing and watering required. Start with the sections that are not well suited for grass, such as shady areas. Plant a variety of vegetation types (grasses, flowers, shrubs, trees, etc.) and group them in clusters to attract insects, birds, butterflies, hummingbirds and other animals. If you would like to attract a certain species to your garden you will need to provide for their unique food, water, and shelter needs.

- **Create a pond:** Ponds provide habitat for a variety of species ranging from insects to frogs and fish. If you are concerned about mosquitoes there are numerous natural predators which can be introduced to your pond, including native back swimmers and water boat-men.

- **Create other types of habitats:** Supply wild food by planting perennials such as fruit and nut trees, nectar-producing flowers and berry bushes. The trees and bushes also provide natural shelter. Dead trees are an important habitat for birds, insects, squirrels, chipmunks and other mammals; they can become a unique element of your yard if left standing. Rock, log, mulch and compost piles provide places for rabbits, shrews, mice, snakes and salamanders to lay their eggs and raise their young.

- **Plant native species:** Regardless of whether you have a flower, vegetable, rock or natural garden, native species are an important element of biodiversity which create a natural habitat for local wildlife. They also require less water and maintenance and fewer chemicals than exotic species as they are adapted to the

specific conditions of the local environment. For more information on native plants in your area visit your local arboretum or native plant society.

- **Remove exotic plants:** Plants that are not native to an area, such as purple loosestrife, can become invasive and take over your garden and surrounding natural areas, threatening the survival of native species. Their removal will create space for native plants which have developed as part of the local ecosystem and provide habitat for other species.

- **Grow heritage varieties & save seeds:** Planting heirloom varieties which are rare or endangered is crucial to maintaining the diversity of species and preserving their genetic resources for the future. Heritage species are threatened by the current focus on producing a very narrow selection of species, and by recent progress in biotechnology and the development of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). They often have unique qualities such as unusual flavours, shapes and colours which you won't find in the grocery store.

- **Don't use chemicals!** (fertilizers, insecticides, herbicides and pesticides): The chemicals used on our lawns and gardens are harmful to us as well as the environment. They contaminate the soil and water in addition to poisoning insects, birds and fish.

- **Garden Organically:** Organic gardening maximizes soil, plant, animal and human health by using sustainable agronomic practices and non-chemical, natural ways to control pests and weeds. It involves building healthy soil which will grow strong plants that can successfully compete with weeds, discourage pest infestations, and resist disease without the use of petrochemicals. Soil is improved through such methods as incorporating compost and planting cover crops.

- **Compost:** Rather than using chemical fertilizers,

- compost your fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grinds, tea bags, egg shells, leaves and grass clippings to create decomposed organic matter (compost). Adding compost to your garden will enrich your soil by encouraging microorganisms and worms to thrive, improving soil drainage, increasing the soil's ability to hold moisture, and providing nutrients for plant growth. This is also a great way to reduce the amount you send to the landfill.

• THE MANAGEMENT OF THE NEGLECTED GARDEN. CREATIVE THINKING.

- There are many reasons why a garden can become neglected. Despite the state they may be in, there are various ways to restore them to their original striking appeal. A step-by-step approach, dividing the land into manageable sections, will foster a sense of achievement and recognisable progress that will spur you on. However, remember that a well-maintained tree can really benefit the appearance of any garden, as well as being a perfect habitat for a range of wildlife. Also, trees may have preservation orders to prevent them from being felled, so check with the planning department of your local authority.

- It does not matter whether the garden has overgrown hedges, long lawns or weeds, the garden can be restored with some attention from you. With patience, a proper plan and effort, you can rejuvenate a neglected garden by following the tips below.

- a. Proper planning

- Getting the garden to its former glory usually takes time. Prior to even digging, having a laid down step-by-step approach on how to restore the garden is needed. This will involve dividing the land into small manageable portions from which progress can be tracked. This will enable you to get a boost from the achievement that will be making. You can opt to begin from near the house or from the roadside to make the curb more appealing.

- b. Adequate pruning

Thorough pruning should be done for shrubs and bushes, no matter how small they may seem. This will create more space in the garden which will lead to other plants rejuvenating and growing healthier in the future. For speed and a clean cut, ensure to use a hedge trimmer to get rid of overgrown and unkempt hedges which affect the garden boundary lines. With continued pruning, the garden will immediately show that there is a sense of care and nurture being given to it.

c. Appeal of trees

Even with overgrown trees which are blocking out sunlight, completely removing the trees is not advisable no matter how tempting it may be. All that is needed is to ensure proper maintenance, which will improve the appearance of the garden. This will create a good habitat for a variety of wildlife species. You should also check with the planning authority for any existing preservation orders of trees that may be in place which trees from being felled.

d. Give emphasis to lines and boundaries

Panels and fences always add an aesthetic appeal to a garden. When the garden overgrows, maintaining boundaries tends to be difficult. Hence, rotten fences need to be restored and a coat of creosote applied to all wooden boundaries. Painting of the concrete posts should also be done which will lead to a striking result.

To accentuate the garden lines, the borders and lawns should have edges installed. Alternatively, purchasing a variety of products such as wooden log rolls can be used which are long-lasting and entirely natural.

e. Lawn revival

Manicured lawns can transform any neglected garden. This will be achieved by cutting the grass to a level at which it can be easy to mow, watering it and leaving it for a few days. Thereafter, cutting it with a conventional lawnmower and scarifying the entire lawn to remove the weeds should follow. Finally, ensure to apply fertilizer following instructions. In time, the lawn will be healthy, attractive and free from

weeds and moss.

Revitalizing a neglected garden is a delicate process. The processes involved should never be rushed without proper planning. This is the reason why garden maintenance often requires the help of professionals to produce the most brilliant results.

D INVOLVEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS IN URBAN GARDENS' ACTIVITIES

“The legacy of our generation is not already chosen and we have the freedom to choose what we want our communities, our countries and our world to look like. It is only when people step up and step forward that we can make change happen. Each hour spent volunteering for a cause is not just a vote for change, but an opportunity to the shape the world we live in.” In this section will be presented several aspects in order to involve volunteers in urban gardens’ activities and increase their commitments in this sector”.

GENERAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ASPECTS OF INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS IN WORK IN URBAN GARDENS.

Urban gardening can be seen as one of the most powerful tools for building communities, teaching participative and active citizenship, fostering creativity, developing entrepreneurial skills, taking one of the most basic needs - food supply - in our own hands. Gardening can be a perfect tool for non-formal education. It gives the opportunity to explore healthy lifestyle choices, learn about the origins of food and understand natural processes. Moreover, gardening is a means to empower young people, to help them acquire practical skills for their own life and labour market, to explore possibilities for improving the footprint on the urban ecosystems, and building a community around it by bringing new people into this community. In this framework, volunteering activities can be crucial to develop bottom- up approaches and practices, to promote inclusive growth, healthy lifestyles, and young people’s participation into society. In the following sessions, you will discover some activities carried out to know new ideas and tools for developing educational activities on



gardening at local and transnational level. First of all, use the principles of strategic planning. Strategic planning is a process of determining how to get from “here” (where we are now) to “there” (where things ought to be). But planning for the involvement of volunteers will have important steps of its own. These steps are listed below. These are especially applicable for organizations having the resources and need for a comprehensive program for volunteer involvement. Smaller organizations, or organizations that rely less heavily on the use of volunteers, may want to adapt the plan suggested below, or might simply pick the parts which make most sense for their organization.

ESSENTIAL STEPS OF AN EFFECTIVE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM:

- Have reasons and a rationale for wanting volunteers
- Develop job descriptions
- Recruit volunteers
- Screen potential volunteers
- Conduct orientation of volunteers
- Train volunteers
- Supervise volunteers
- Retain volunteers
- Evaluate volunteers
- Recognize efforts and achievements

SHAPING VOLUNTEERS' IDENTITY CONNECTED WITH WORK IN URBAN GARDENS – FACTORS OF INVOLVEMENT, FACILITATING RELATIONS BUILDING.

Volunteers play such an important role within an organisation: a resource that for many organisations couldn't do without however they are a resource that needs to be looked after, managed and nurtured. If you want help to find the right people, to support and manage them effectively to ensure they have a positive experience with you and help your organisation get the best from volunteering, here you will find

- useful advices:
- Mutual interview; The word ‘interview’ can be very daunting and while we all know this is what’s happening it doesn’t need to be intimidating for the applicant. When call a volunteer to come in for an interview, the formality could be achieved by saying, “This is a chance for me to share about our volunteer program and also to learn what type of volunteer position you are looking for”.
- Orientation; Every volunteer who comes into your organisation needs an orientation. In addition to learning about the organisation’s formalities, this is a great chance to get to know each other better. Orientation is scheduled at the volunteer’s convenience and although are better small groups. Orientation should be done as soon as possible so the applicant doesn’t lose interest.
- Buddy sessions; New volunteers have really enjoyed being linked with ‘seasoned’ volunteers. This provides an opportunity to observe (not do) the assignment being considered to see if the work is appealing; especially for environmental areas. After attending orientation a volunteer is linked with a buddy on different days and times. This doesn’t replace training, it merely provides an opportunity for the new volunteer to observe the assignment and feel welcome to say if they would prefer something else.
- Training; Training to the task is essential – regardless of what the assignment involves or how qualified the volunteer. This is an opportunity for volunteers to ask questions and staff to share their expectations. Training doesn’t always need to be lengthy and volunteers receive a written position description that clearly delineates the tasks and contact person.
- First day; It doesn’t matter what day or time I always greet a new volunteer and introduce them to staff. By contacting staff prior the volunteer receives a warm welcome to their new assignment and I can be sure that everyone is

connected and happy. If they aren't, then I'm there to fix it!

In closing, the above is all about communication. If we are effective listeners and develop opportunities for new volunteers to share their thoughts then retention is increased. Some volunteers find their niche right away while others may try several different.

ACTIVITIES AND DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE URBAN GARDEN'S TEAM.

Effective teamwork is important in running an NGOs in environmental sector. In a leadership role, you need to be able to assign tasks and delegate work to your colleagues/volunteers. However, the way you distribute tasks should be fair and well thought out. If you rely on one employee too much, they may get burnt out and decide to leave. If you don't utilize an employee's unique skills, they may feel undervalued and unmotivated to succeed. Develop a delegation strategy so that the distribution of work in a team helps your business, and your employees, succeed. Task distribution in a team always needs to consider upcoming deadlines or important project milestones. The priority of the task is the first deciding factor that affects how it should be distributed. When you review the tasks on your list, prioritize them so you have an understanding of which ones are the most important and need to be completed first. Next, review your employees' availability. You'll need to match the priority tasks with those employees who have the availability to take them on. Be careful not to overload one employee with urgent tasks as that can cause stress and overwhelm them.

The distribution of work in a team is also dependent on the skills your employees bring to your NGO. It's important to consider each employee's unique strengths and how they benefit the task at hand. When you consider their skill sets, you set employees up to succeed. If the task matches their skills, you'll have a

• higher chance of it being completed accurately
• and with greater efficiency. If you have two
• employees who are available to complete a
• seed plantations task, but only one employee
• brings strong experience on soil management
• and seeds, it makes sense to assign them
• that task. That way, you can rest assured
• that your customers will be well taken care
• of by an employee who is good at explaining
• instructions, expressing issues and resolving
• conflicts through good communication. Part
• of being a leader involves helping employees
• master new skills, learn new areas of the
• business and advance along their career track.
• In order to do that, you need to help employees
• take on tasks that they may find challenging.
• By doing so, employees can improve their
• weaknesses and develop new strengths,
• which benefit both them and the business. For
• example, if you have any employee that lacks
• harvesting skills, you can assign simple
• harvesting tasks to them in order to help
• them learn more about that area of the urban
• gardening. It's wise to not assign high-stakes
• or urgent harvesting tasks right away, as the
• employee needs time to learn, make mistakes
• and grow their knowledge. Once you've seen
• an improvement in their skills, you can start
• assigning them more responsibility in that
• area. In the distribution of work in a team, it's
• critical to ensure employees are aware of what
• their roles are and what is expected of them
• in the workplace. When employees have a
• clear understanding of their job description,
• they will be able to take initiative and assign
• tasks to themselves that fall within their role.
• They will also have a sense of investment in
• ensuring the tasks that are under their purview
• are completed properly and on time. The target
• group of a project of community gardening is
• mainly the local people who live in the urban
• area. People of different ages, genders and
• ethnicities garden together and each individual
• plays a role in making the garden successful.
• The garden brings together people who are
• looking for a green space to relax and cultivate

their own food in a friendly environment. The different experiences of community gardening show that the investment of the volunteers is variable. Some of them come every day, others just for the week end, some of the members come to organize or participate in social events in the garden or to provide communication. They can also have different perceptions of the activity. Some gardeners just see it as a food resource and want to garden alone while others see the activity as a way to create social interaction and share the experience. Each garden can have its own management, the rules are deliberated and fixed by all the stakeholders regarding the management of the garden, animals, guests, schedules, etc. A garden president is in most of the cases, assigned to create clear and well-enforced garden rules to minimise misunderstandings.



E HOW TO INVOLVE STAKEHOLDER AND GENERAL PUBLIC

“This section considers why increasing and improving stakeholder involvement in urban gardening is so important and some of the ways in which stakeholder involvement can be enhanced and supported in practice. It pays particular attention to how general public can add value in this context and how they can be attracted by NGOs and professionals”.

PREPARING THE INFORMATION CAMPAIGN.

For a successful campaign, all you have to do is to communicate messages that resonate with your audience and inspire them to take action. When you're passionate about an issue, it can seem utterly baffling why other people aren't. Isn't it obvious why we must save endangered species, or why taking action on climate change is urgent? For some people, these issues simply aren't important. What's even more baffling is to try and understand why the people who do care about these issues are not taking action. You've got to be really informed on your topic. Really know your stuff so that you can inform the people you are looking to inform as well as go toe-to-toe with your opposition. Know what people are going to ask and have the answers to them. And if you don't have the answer, don't make one up, just be honest and say that you don't know. Before getting into your activism campaign be sure that you're right about it. Use logic, rational, and concrete knowledge rather than emotion before going out and telling the world. Use emotion too, but never just emotion. There's so much misinformation being spread around and we don't need any more of that. You want to have a place where your information is laid out so that when you have a captive audience you don't miss out. Having an online



platform (website, blog, social media, etc) is utterly important as it will work for you 24/7 365 days per year. It is your resource to send people to. And very importantly serves as your resume to anyone that you reach out to whether it is media, sponsors, potential volunteers, or just people in general. Ok, now you're all fired up and you are knowledgeable as well. It's time to bring some attention to this important environmental and social issue. But how? In the next session it will be possible to discover some opportunities related with the work of NGOs and social activist.

ORGANIZATION OF THE AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES AND INFORMATION CAMPAIGN.

The first advice is to do something new. It's probably never going to hurt to come up with something new. New seems to be more exciting. Start with the people around you to gain some momentum. A great tool for this is social media. Get the people around you excited about what you are doing and hopefully they will share what you are doing. Once they've shared it there's no knowing who might see it. Create content on social media that is truly worth viewing and sharing. That's the best way to get your word out online. Contact pages that share work similar to yours and let them know what you are up to. Many of these pages are searching for content and would love to have your campaign in their inbox. Send me a message on my Facebook page and tell me you came from this guide and maybe I'll share your activism campaign! It's a numbers game. That means the more people you reach out to, the more success that you are likely to have. Don't send spam though; rather, write personalized messages to increase your chances of getting support. Start with outlets that have an interest in what you are doing as well. So if you are creating community gardens, then find publications that write about gardening, food security, environmental friendly living, etc. You've already got at least a part of a foot in the

- door because you know they report on similar things to what you are doing. You also have at least a toe in the door with any local outlets because you live there. So definitely contact any local news stations, newspapers, blogs, etc. Always have a good reason for why that particular outlet would want to share your story.
- Once you've built up your resume of media with more "like minded" sources you'll be able to branch into other realms with your success.
- To mobilize broad-based support for social change, citizens cannot be treated as objects for manipulation. Rather, they should be treated as citizens involved in a mutual dialog. As argues, the core problem with the current environmental movement is the narrowing of the public sphere and a restricted understanding of the public interest. Hence, he calls for a public ecology that could engage citizens in a collective effort to rebalance the economic and social order with human and natural needs. Additionally, the messaging strategies need to be integrated into broader efforts to foster political mobilization in support of social change. Specifically, advocate a participatory communication model that involves developing an ongoing capability of people to act collectively in framing contests. This calls for a reorientation of environmental communication from identity campaigns to civic engagement.
- In one sentence you need to set out a clear campaign aim encapsulating the ultimate purpose of the campaign, the change you want to see and the impact you want to make. It should be easy to communicate and clear to understand. This campaign aim should be:
 - compelling and inspiring
 - targeted – identifying who or what needs to change
 - focusing on impact – articulating what real-world change will result
 - succinct.
- Aims are not the same as objectives, which are the changes you will need to see to contribute to achieving your overall aim. You may have

several objectives, each of them stepping stones on the path towards your aim, but you will only have one campaign aim.

To have a realistic aim you need to:

- understand the context and environment you are working in so you can develop the capacity to make change happen
- understand who holds the power to make change happen and power relations
- develop a theory of change – a pathway for how you think change will happen in your campaign.

If you're going to launch a compelling campaign, it is of the utmost importance to create a clear goal, solid plan and simple yet coherent narrative.

EFFECTIVE NEGOTIATIONS AND COMMUNICATION.

Project managers, social activist and NGOs workers have to be expert negotiators, able to forge agreements between people who often have competing agendas. Negotiating with stakeholders is tricky. They can be possessive of a project and pressured about its outcome. Because they have so much riding on its success, they can become prickly when issues challenge their assumptions or their comfort level. At the same time, their lack of technical expertise can make it difficult to understand the options that are viable for resolving an issue. And, of course, project managers can't unilaterally impose a solution. They have to rely on their negotiating skills to keep things moving forward. In the end, all participants want the same thing: a successful project that is complete in scope and delivered on-time and on-budget. For this reason, maintaining a perspective of partnership often pays the most dividends. In the following pages you'll find some tips to effectively negotiate and communicate with stakeholders and general public:

- Think About Their Point of View; Recognizing why your stakeholder approaches an issue in a certain way is as important as understanding what they're arguing for in the first place. For example, grasping the Sales department's considerations – their overall targets, the competitive pressure they face and the demands salespeople hear from customers – will allow you to have more effective discussions around their concerns about schedules or feature sets. Similarly, understanding the technical and logistical constraints of the development staff will lead to more meaningful conversations about delivery and quality control.
- Be Prepared; You can't go into a negotiation assuming you'll wing it, so anticipate your partner's concerns, and be ready to address them. If you know trade off will be required, outline the stakeholder's choices and explain the impact each will have on the project's scope, timeframe, and budget. In some cases, schedule is the overriding concern. In others, it might be cost. Bear those priorities in mind as you lead the discussion. It doesn't make sense to stress the schedule-related aspects of a problem when the stakeholder's mind is on how much money they're spending.
- Be honest; It's just as important for stakeholders to understand the challenges you face. So be proactive about sharing your perspective, and remember that the stakeholder's goals are impacted by many of the same things that influence yours: You all want the project to succeed, for example, and for your company to be well positioned in the market. Always be forthright in discussions about business outlook, project status and any difficulties you may anticipate. Not only will this provide a complete picture, it could help uncover solutions as the stakeholders weigh in with their own experience and ideas.
- Listen; In any negotiation, it's important that both sides be heard. Be sure to let the stakeholder outline their viewpoint and ask questions

when necessary to make sure you understand where they're coming from. As your discussion continues, address the issues they've raised or promise to research areas that you can't reply to on the spot. Too often, negotiations go off-track when one party believes their concerns are being given short shrift.

Of course, the situation is complicated by the unique place where PMs sit. Responsible for addressing everyone's concerns, they almost never have the pure authority to pursue a particular approach without building some kind of consensus. Even if they did, successful projects are rarely built by edict. The best project managers have a knack for getting all sides to understand the others' point of view and work cooperatively to attain the effort's overriding goals.

DIVERSITY

A community garden implemented in an urban area is so much more than a piece of land cultivated. Three main types of added values can be identified: social, individual and environmental outcomes. The gardening activity is not an end in itself but more a way to stimulate the local dynamic and create bonds in the community that recognizes the natural environment as playing an integral role. It helps to get to know each other in the neighbourhood, encouraging interactions and to include new people arriving, breaking the isolation without any criteria of age, ethnicity or wealth. Community gardening gives participants the opportunity to reflect upon the symbiotic relationship between humans and the non-human world as well as the basic principles of Deep Ecology which emphasizes that through experiences in nature one will identify with nature and therefore become empathetic towards it. Thus the empathy may "induce people to protect nature, not because they think they ought, but because they feel inclined to". The empathetic mentality developed through nature contact can be extended and integrated into positive practices of social inclusion and the overall local dynamic of the community. The practice

of community gardening is just one of many ways to raise awareness to the position of the natural world as an important and integral part of the local and global community. Gardening is often just a part of the activity, a lot of cultural, educative and social events are organized in the garden. It's a place of social inclusion and intercultural dialogue providing opportunities to meet different people. The garden also helps to connect the different parts of the local area (schools, retirement homes, cultural centres, etc.) giving an active and safer dynamic of life for all. The quality of life is improved and it can also create income opportunities to reduce family food budgets. The neighbourhood is embellished by green spaces and land is use in an useful way instead of being wasted. Working together in this kind of activity, people have to develop and learn collective working methods including listening the others, negotiating and communicating without violence, mutual sharing and understanding. They have to establish and follow common rules, encouraging the participation of the individuals and a collective management. Not to mention, gardening is a holistic physical activity promoting physical health and well-being through full body movement and direct nature contact.

To act as a responsible inhabitant means to socially and environmentally understand and manage the living area in a sustainable manner. Community gardens enhance a local social dynamic where the environment is considered an integral part of the community. Community gardens provide this opportunity for all community members gather at the point where many needs of nature meets the many needs of society. It is a resource of critical thinking and social development, skills acquisition, and overall sustainable practice. As citizens, the community managing this collective project can start to re-invest their living environment being pro-active in local participation, local council and policies, increasing their citizenship, etc.

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