

HOW TO START AND DEVELOP URBAN GARDENING PROJECTS COURSE GUIDE

CONTENTS

1. Course overview
2. Course objectives
3. Course learning outcomes
4. Target group
5. Timetable
6. Course content
7. Teaching Approach
8. Assessment & Evaluation
9. Teacher profiles
10. Resources

1. COURSE OVERVIEW

The course 'How To Start and Develop Urban Gardening Projects' aims to equip interested community members with the skills and confidence to start and run a food garden in their local neighbourhood. The first part of the course will focus on forming teams, group work, communication, how to get organised, how to work together and how to form working agreements with landowners, suppliers and so on, as well as designing the garden. The second part of the course, which will coincide with the start of the growing season, will focus on the practical aspects of preparing, working on and maintaining a community garden. This will be learned through setting up a real life community garden.

2. COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To create a simple pathway for socially less advantaged people to be included, involved and active in their local community
 2. To equip learners with the skills and tools to set up and run a community garden
 3. To set up an enriching and interactive community garden in a public area where it will be a visible example
 4. To put into practice and share a range of creative and inclusive teaching and learning techniques and approaches, which learners can also use in group work in the future
 5. To introduce and cultivate a culture of mutual exchange and support, through peer 2 peer learning and other non-hierarchical, inclusive approaches
 6. To build up a sense of empowerment and confidence in the learners and trainers.
-

3. COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learners will be able to:

1. Find and secure a suitable place to start a community food garden
 2. Find collaborators, network and communicate with other members of their community
 3. Organise themselves and their group in a non-hierarchical and inclusive way
 4. Design & plan a simple food garden using sustainable approaches
 5. Look after and maintain the garden together
 6. Generate ideas of how to raise funds, keep track of money and ensure that the garden can continue year after year.
-

4. TARGET GROUP

The course will be aimed at a mixed group of 16-20 long-term unemployed, lonely elders and excluded immigrants (particularly women). Learners will need to have a good understanding of Finnish or at least English. They will be local residents who live near each other and near the course garden that they will be setting up. They will also need to be willing and have enough time and energy to commit to the long term maintenance of the garden.

5. TIMETABLE (partners can choose the structure of their timetable according to their needs, etc. and this is also given as an example to grasp the general idea of how the timetable can be designed and this example/suggestion is based on the Finnish institution's needs)

Timetable structure:

- The course will take place on 7 different Saturdays, spread out over 6 months and in 2 parts. There will be a gap of almost 2 months in between the 2 parts. Learners will be given homework to complete during this period.
- The first day will be 2 hrs long, 12.00 - 14.00
12.00 - 12.45 Arrival, warm up & session 1
12.45 - 13.15 *Short lunch break (potluck)*
13.15 - 14.00 Session 2
- All remaining course days will be from 12.00 - 15.30, consisting of 3 sessions, structured as follows:
12.00 - 12.15 Arrival and warm up
12.15 - 13.00 Session 1
13.00 - 13.45 *Lunch & getting to know each other (potluck lunch)*
13.45 - 14.30 Session 2
14.30 - 14.45 *Break*
14.45 - 15.30 Session 3

Course Schedule:

PART 1:

22.02 - Day 1: Introduction to the course, to each other & assessing learner's needs - 2hrs

01.03 - Day 2: Getting organised - how to find group members & ways of working together

15.03 - Day 3: Choosing a location - finding a suitable spot & how to get permission

29.03 - Day 4: Designing & planning a sustainable community food garden

PART 2:

12.04 - Day 5: Preparing the garden (practical)

- 26.04 - Day 6: Starting the garden (practical) - building beds and other structures
10.05 - Day 7: Maintaining and developing the garden (also mention the next course which is
about the Harvest, and see who wants to continue)

The reason for scheduling course days once every 2 weeks is that both course leaders and learners are not available or able to commit to a number of Saturdays in row. With a 2 week gap in between sessions, learners and trainers have an opportunity to allow lessons to sink in as well as to do some self-directed study through simple homework tasks. It also doesn't demand too much from members of the community who might find it difficult to launch into a weekly commitment.

6. COURSE CONTENT (this is the recommended content of the course and the one described here may be used as a template, more topics may be added, etc.)

PART ONE: Feb 2013 - Mar 2014

1. INTRODUCTION 2hrs

Session 1: INTRODUCTION TO COURSE

- Presenting the course, urban gardening, Dodo
- Brief Introduction to each other. Who everyone is and why we are here.
- Reasons for starting a community garden/farm garden/urban garden (health benefits, social, environmental, etc)
- Explaining how the course is going to be structured, how we are going to approach the teaching, the importance of active participation

Session 2: LEARNER PROFILES & NEEDS

- Getting to know our learners, their interests, their background
- Mapping learners existing skills and skills that they want to develop
- Hopes & concerns for the course (what learners are hoping to gain, anything that they are unsure or worried about)

2. GETTING ORGANISED

- Finding people and forming a group
- Structures for the group
- Choosing roles, who is responsible?
- Schedules: division of labour, meetings, etc
- Guidelines & tools for communication and meetings
- Group decision making, brainstorming
- Working together

3. CHOOSING A LOCATION

- Basic requirements of a space (sunlight, access to water, soil, security, easy access, etc)
- Different types of spaces & different types of growing (in the ground, in pots,

- hanging structures)
- Getting permissions
- Making an agreement
- Where to get help & advice

4. DESIGNING & PLANNING THE GARDEN (using permaculture)

- Looking at available resources
- Deciding on what needs the garden needs to fulfil
- Choosing what to plant and where
- Non-chemical pest control
- Companion planting
- How to use zoning and placement to create a sustainable garden
- Designing in water systems, compost, etc
- Structures within the garden (where to keep tools? etc)
- Different types of beds, containers

PART 2: Apr - May 2014

5. PREPARING THE GARDEN (PRACTICAL)

- Starting off seedlings if needed
- Building containers, beds
- Gathering materials
- Tools - what's needed, how to look after, where to store
- Seeds - what to choose
- Preparing the soil

6. STARTING THE GARDEN (PRACTICAL)

- Sowing some seeds
- When to sow, gardening timetable
- What kinds of plants need what kinds of conditions
- Where to get more info/advice (books, the internet)

7. MAINTAINING & DEVELOPING THE GARDEN (PRACTICAL)

- Sowing more seeds
- Protecting plants from frost
- Hardening off seedlings
- Ongoing pest control and weeding
- Mulching
- Composting
- When to harvest
- Events, activities and celebration
- Introduce that there will be a course on harvest & preserving the harvest which learners are welcome to sign up to.

7. TEACHING APPROACH (Methods of delivery)

A wide range of teaching and facilitation methods will be used to deliver the course. We will be transparent with the methods, naming them and explaining why we are using them, so

that learners may also be able to use them in future group work. Overall the style of teaching will be interactive and inclusive, taking into account that some learners may have language difficulties.

The more theory-based sessions in the first part of the course will use a mixture of games, visual exercises, peer 2 peer learning exercises, discussion. Material for these will be included in a glossary at the bottom of this document.

The second part of the course is practical and hands on. Learners will learn by doing.

EXAMPLES OF TEACHING APPROACHES

In sessions

- Minimal lectures
- Games
- Icebreakers
- Visual presentations - using photos, video
- Simple craft tasks using paper / basic modeling
- Timed paired discussions
- Smaller group activities
- Role play
- Interviewing
- Peer 2 peer learning
- Mindmaps
- Practical implementation
- Guest teacher - at least one new guest teacher to hold one session per each course day

In between sessions

- giving simple homework tasks at the end of each session. e.g. bringing a seed packet to the next session so that we can look at instructions together.

8. ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION STRATEGIES

Assessment: Ongoing, to check how learning is going and adjust approach if necessary

- **HOPES & CONCERNS** - Learners will be asked to express this from the beginning.
- **LEARNER DIARY** - Learners will be encouraged to keep a simple learner diary

- **FEEDBACK SESSIONS** - At the end of each day, we will have a brief 'Go-Round', asking each learner 3 short questions about what they have learned.

Evaluation: Final, to look at the final result and judge the quality and success of the course

- **INTERVIEWS** - with the learners. perhaps on video.
- **FORM/QUESTIONNAIRE** - a short, simple questionnaire that learners can complete within the session.

9. TEACHERS PROFILES (each partner will describe/ add information about adult trainers they will involve in the delivery of the course)

To be decided - but here will be a brief paragraph about each teacher.

10. RESOURCES

- books to read
- films/videos to watch
- links to useful websites
- PDFs of useful documents to be put on Google Drive in appropriate folder