



UGAIN

Urban **G**Ardens for the social
INtegration of migrants

Garden:

Intercultural Garden AnnaLinde-Leipzig



Internet links

✓ <https://annalinde-leipzig.de/de/projects/interkultureller-garten/>

1. Introduction

The Annalinde Community Garden is a social urban agriculture project in Leipzig. The project consists of community supported agriculture, a community garden and a meadow orchard. The community garden is in the west of Leipzig and has, since 2016, hosted an intercultural garden group which meets every week. The intercultural garden group has 7-10 members with a migrant and refugee background. The group size is usually bigger during summer time. Currently the garden is managed by two payed female employees, who support the members with gardening, organisation, authority visits and paper work.



"Contact and trust are important. You need a person you trust, if you come to a place that you do not know yet."

Employee 1

"Preparation is important, but even more so evaluation. It's an important point where you can connect. What did we do to learn and how? You need to advertise yourself, describe and make beautiful pictures. We used blog posts and facebook posts. Again, think about follow-up communication in the form of public relations."

Employee 2

"Be attentive with respect to regulation for public fund. Some exclude each other, and things are not as easy as you would think. This is part of our job, get access to new pots of funding."

Employee 1

2. Garden data



Location - coordinates: Zschochersche Straße 12, 04229Leipzig, Germany

Garden description: The garden is centrally located in the west of Leipzig and is easily reached by public transport. It is located in-between a public library and a supermarket. The garden was initially a piece of fallow land which was cultivated by volunteers, neighbours and activists. Fifty raised beds are available to grow vegetables, fruits and herbs from all over the world. Furthermore, there is a summer kitchen, a fireplace with benches, a tree house, a storage container, a beehive, a bandstand and a greenhouse for the gardeners available. The garden is accessible for its members but opens its gates for the public. The garden is owned by the city of Leipzig and the project started with a one-year contract. With time and appreciation of the garden the contract was extended for 5 years, which provides security to members and organisers. The garden is financed through public grants, donations, small events and the support of the umbrella organisation.

3. Social integration and empowerment of migrants



Details of the initiative: The garden was founded as a community garden but included an intercultural gardening group. The intention is to allow refugees and migrants in Leipzig to get in touch with local citizens and to create an open space where people feel welcome and at home. The encounter is facilitated through horticultural production and social activities. The group is open to anyone who wishes to participate; they have no restriction with respect to the membership. The current group meets once a week and would be happy to include further female members into their group. The intercultural group receives support and is led by two female employees, which are hired as project employees until 2019. In addition to the coordination task, the employees help with authority visits and paper work. The garden groups cooperate with a language school, offering German courses to people in Leipzig with an international background, which also includes refugees and migrants. Once every summer, students of the school visit the garden as a class activity. The students get an opportunity to get to know the group, the garden, and an opportunity to practice German. The garden groups usually offer a tour and produce from the garden. Approximately 2 students join the group every year. The cooperation is perceived as fruitful and does not bring any problems.

Chances / Opportunities: The garden offers various learning opportunities. This includes gaining horticultural and environmental knowledge, practicing constructing and language skills, as well as exchanging experiences and culture. The garden helps build friendships and gets access to the wider community. Accordingly, the garden also facilitates networking. In the garden group, participation is essential. Sometimes members find themselves as a learner, sometimes a teacher. Bringing in skills and sharing them is appreciated.

As the garden group is open to anyone, experiencing and learning from diversity is a further opportunity the garden provides. The members of the group support each other, but there are no traumatized

people. However, the garden is still a place of recreation, therapy and inclusion, as the garden is open to people from a retirement home, or to unemployed people who seek to establish routines in their life.

Threats/Challenges: Within the garden group, individuals faced challenges in terms of social inclusion. This is related to paperwork, trouble with the authorities, or seeking employment or opportunities for apprenticeships. There has not been significant interpersonal tension within the group. Being open to each other is seen as the way to interact with each other. Within the group, people translate for each other; use different communication channels emails, text and oral communication. Imperfections with respect to the language is not a reason for not taking part in the group.

During the winter there is usually a decline in engagement and motivation within the group. There are not as many people present as in summer. Still, the group meets regularly for other indoor activities. This includes meals and conversation, which facilitates positive group dynamics in the community.

General considerations: An important point is the need to frequently invite people from outside the group so that the members can be integrated into society and society becomes aware of the garden. To achieve this both advanced planning and organisation is important. The two employees, who oversee the group, coordinate tasks, structures and organisation.

The main success factors of the initiative are:

- An open-minded intercultural group which makes itself known to the public
- Mutual respect among group members
- Extremely committed employees and volunteers

The intercultural group is in the fortunate situation that employees are very committed to their job, and are skilful organisers and networkers. Furthermore, they have a strong organisational background, which includes further urban agricultural project. This is a big advantage for the project in terms of finance, human resources and social support.



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