



UGAIN

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

Garden:

Albergue Princesa Letizia



Internet links

- ✓ <https://santander.es/servicios-ciudadano/areas-tematicas/situaciones-emergencia-social/centro-acogida-princesa-leticia>

1. Introduction

Albergue Princesa Letizia is a publicly managed shelter for people at risk of social exclusion located in Santander.

The gardens of 'Princess Letizia' were launched in 2011 to promote the employment of users of the center with low qualifications, limited work experience and difficulties in accessing a job.

With this program, they acquire basic skills that facilitate their social interaction and work skills, and obtain knowledge to develop themselves.

The purpose of Princesa Letizia is twofold: the main objective is to provide accommodation for people in transit for a short period of time. Additionally, the secondary objective includes planning personalised long-term itineraries for people at risk of social exclusion and who usually reside in the Albergue Princesa Letizia.



"This is a Project with a slow start, which requires specific technicians and the money that allows us to afford basic expenses, but in addition it must have fixed some objectives clear and assessable in the short and long terms."

Manager

"Acquire new knowledge and opt for new employment opportunities."

"Grow and consume my own products and participate in the new projects that have been developed in the center."

"Sign up and participate in the projects!!"

Migrants

2. Garden data

Location - coordinates: This garden has two different spaces:

Avenida Candina 31. 39001 Santander.

Finca Mataleñas, Av del Faro 12, pol 11, Parc 140. 39012 Santander.

Garden description: Hostel Princess Letizia is a private law organisation that is dependent on the local administration. The urban garden that is in the Shelter is coordinated by the foundation for the promotion of spaces and social activities of the City of Santander (Fundación para la promoción de centros y actividades sociales del ayuntamiento de Santander). The garden is owned by the municipality of Santander. The urban garden began in 2011 and is supported by public funding.

The garden and the activities that are developed in it are a part of all the activities that are carried out in the centre and whose purpose is the full social and work integration of the hostel's users. The garden has a total area of 350 m² and is divided into 11 individual parcels of land of varying sizes between 15 and 20 m² and a greenhouse on the Mataleñas estate of 150 m².

The beneficiaries of the gardens are the users of the centre who currently live in the shelter or who have lived there in the past and are evaluated by the technical team to determine that an activity such as this can help them in social integration or help them in their daily diet.

The annual number of gardeners taking part is around 32, which includes 11 migrant people or asylum seekers.

The main production is focused on organic vegetables as well as the production of edible flowers.

The users also have all the necessary materials to develop the activities: a green house, a tool house, toilets as well as kitchen, a lunchroom, a multipurpose gym, offices, a computer room. etc. At this moment there are two technicians working in organic agriculture, nine shelter workers, one volunteer and two interns.

The technical workers in organic agriculture teach the users the different techniques that they will use throughout the program.

Lastly, it's important to highlight the work that is done in the acquisition of social skills and the recovery of skill sets that may have been underutilised or undervalued.

3. Social integration and empowerment of migrants



Details of initiative: Currently in Spain, the social integration of migrants is still a pending issue for local government and has an impact on the social resources of the country.

Albergue Princesa Letizia isn't oblivious to this reality and that is why they are trying to develop this initiative of urban gardens to respond to a social demand.

This project aims to provide training to people who live at the centre or who have participated in programs and who are working towards social incorporation.

It's important to highlight that the activities run by the shelter are open to everybody regardless of their nationality. These activities are aimed at achieving the full social integration, while increasing the employability of these people through the support of social workers as social integrators and as educators.

In this urban garden they work with the commitment of the participants in the project to get the migrants to ensure the project becomes their own and they are part of the learning and personal development. In addition, urban gardens facilitate the knowledge of the characteristics of the culture of origin, the interests, uncertainties and life prospects of migrants.

It is important to highlight the idea of personalised journeys for each user, looking for the best ways to achieve the empowerment of the people.

With the creation of these professional journeys they try to provide social and work opportunities in order to achieve a balance in the person's experience.

Chances/Opportunities: In the case of migrant people, thanks to these initiatives, greater social integration of migrants is achieved by providing them with resources and tools that in most cases they didn't acquire in their own country or they have forgotten. They are given the opportunity to undertake professional training and recruitment that motivates new learning. This stimulates their development and encourages or recover skills that may be useful in the process of social reintegration.

It also works to achieve a multicultural environment and the acceptance of all, creating an environment of mutual support.

The recognition of this is essential to achieve this desired integration.

Threats /Challenges: On a daily basis the shelter encounters several users' profiles which are varied not only in the cultural or social field; but also within the important context of the legal status within Spain.

The availability of the documentation legally required by the Spanish administration is the decisive point to be able to access to formal training.

In addition, they look at other factors that will have an influence on the empowerment of these users.

These factors are very varied and the shelter can potentially encounter problems with drug addiction, mental illness, family displacement, chronic unemployment, a breakdown of relationships and a long list of other issues that could contribute to the situation of both the Spanish or migrant person.

Given the profile of the users and their vulnerability, it can sometimes be difficult to motivate them to adapt to the project. One of the main threats is the difficulty of motivating people in processes of change, incorporating them, getting them to participate and working as a team.

General Consideration: The main success factor is to get a group of participants to feel that the project is their own and part of their learning and personal development.

The main benefit in working with migrants is multicultural enrichment and the promotion of tolerance. Full integration is an agreed objective with the users themselves. In many cases the consensual personal plans are followed till the end, but in others for different reasons, personal breaches of the commitment acquired with the project are not finalised or the agreed objectives are not reached

Knowledge/Attitudes/Skills/Training: Social and personal skills, technical knowledge in the field and an attitude of tolerance, acceptance and adaptation, as well as predisposition to learning and teamwork are important.

Training in organic farming and, in the case of the technicians of the reception centre, social training as technicians and integrators.



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