



# UGAIN

Urban **G**Ardens for the social  
**I**Ntegration of migrants

**Garden:**

(Boendebasen)  
Kristianstad municipality.  
Kristianstad



## Internet links

✓ <http://www.kristianstad.se>

# 1. Introduction

The housing base is an institution that takes care of people with problems with drug abuse. They receive treatment and housing, and the municipality creates employment that can lead to work. The garden started in Nosaby on a plot that also includes accommodation. To get the clients in some form of meaningful employment, they decided to try to start with a small garden.

The project has been running for 1.5 years. A treatment assistant goes in as a supervisor for this. There is currently no guarantee that this will continue. Boendebasen pay for this completely with the budget they have for their clients. They look for different funds to be able to get a budget to expand the gardening business.



*"Try to get a garden started where everyone can feel involved, because even if it is on a small scale, it can still be a great joy for those people who are given the opportunity to participate."*

**Organiser**

*"The best thing that has happened to me since I came to Sweden and got help with my addiction was to spend time in the garden. I have learned so much about plants and care of the garden but also learned the Swedish language in the meantime. I really hope we can have the garden for the future."*

**Participants**

## 2. Garden data



**Location - coordinates:** Boendebasen, Östra Storgatan 2, Kristianstad

**Garden description:** The garden is like a villa plot and they have grown about 30 m<sup>2</sup>. The cultivation started on a small scale and expanded gradually. They started by taking up the lawn and growing potatoes among other plants. Gradually, the clients wanted to do more. They built a greenhouse for growing spices and other plants. This winter they have used the time to run Christmas projects and the clients have done activities such as creating candles and bound wreaths. The idea is that next year they will be able to make jams and marmalades of the berries they cultivated.

They have also had a site outside on another building within the town within a courtyard of another accommodation. There is a volunteer who has great experience in gardening but is not trained. There are 8 clients participating in the garden who are both Swedes and migrants.

## 3. Social integration and empowerment of migrants



**Details of the initiative:** Everything started by involving several departments in this project. In these groups there are adults with drug addiction problems/ psychiatric patients who have been disrespected for many years, often with mental illnesses. There are currently patients who are Swedish, but more and more people have received patients from other countries. They work to increase their interest in horticulture.

The migrants who live there have had traumatic experiences and ended up being abused. They treat them and involve them in the garden. Gardening provides them with employment, and they can also get internships in Kristianstad municipality's park management. Some have knowledge of gardening and others practice learning the basics.

Some may, after treatment for their drug abuse and their psychosocial disorders, gain a functioning "normal life". Their knowledge of the Swedish language is developed with other patients who are Swedish and they learn about Swedish culture and how Swedish society works. The infrastructure in this garden arose with a need for a rehabilitating garden for people who are on long-term sick leave or unemployment.

They discovered that migrants who had had traumatic experiences from the escape from their home countries had a need for rehabilitation in the form of gardening. This has made the garden a place that can help those who live in the accommodation base.

**Chances and opportunities:** The goal of starting a gardening business at the Living Base was to find an activity where clients with substance abuse problems could do something together.

They have understood through conversational therapies that many had a need for a garden. This made them start planning for this activity in the various departments they have in the accommodation.

In the garden, the clients want a sanctuary, where they can work with their hands in their own pace. Many of them find a calm place working in the garden. They forget their problems for a while.

The opportunities in this project are the opportunity to be able to carry out so much benefit and joy with a garden for these clients who are without family and are starting to leave abuse behind them. Together they can learn how to take care of the garden and create a community in the group that is involved. If the garden can get funding to further develop the garden and hire a gardener, this will be a great help to continue with the business.

**Threats and challenges:** The biggest challenge in this project is that the budget is too low, which means they cannot hire any staff and it is difficult to purchase plants, seeds and gear. If there had been a gardener with training, the planning of the garden would have been different. The staff that existed today could also have devoted more to each individual client with support and teaching in the Swedish language.

There are different situations that can arise that can create uncertainty between the client. Many clients think that the garden should only be for those who work in it. It means a lot of discourse and mediation is needed to adapt between those who live in the housing base.

There may also be disagreements about the crops that are grown in the garden, who they belong to and who may eat from them.

One way that might reduce the problems with this can be to try to get everyone in the housing base to actively participate in the garden. But it is not always easy to unite this category of people.

The greatest threat is that the municipality does not provide a budget that can run the business.

The project with the garden is already established and the clients who have been involved without this important employment and rehabilitation will no longer receive this. Regardless of whether the gardening project continues or not, it has created great importance for the clients who have been involved. They have found their sanctuary in this and feel a great benefit in getting to work in a garden.

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## Project Website

[www.ugain.online](http://www.ugain.online)



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

UGAIN: Urban GARDens for the social INtegration of migrants  
Project Number: 2017-1-DE02-KA204-004151