

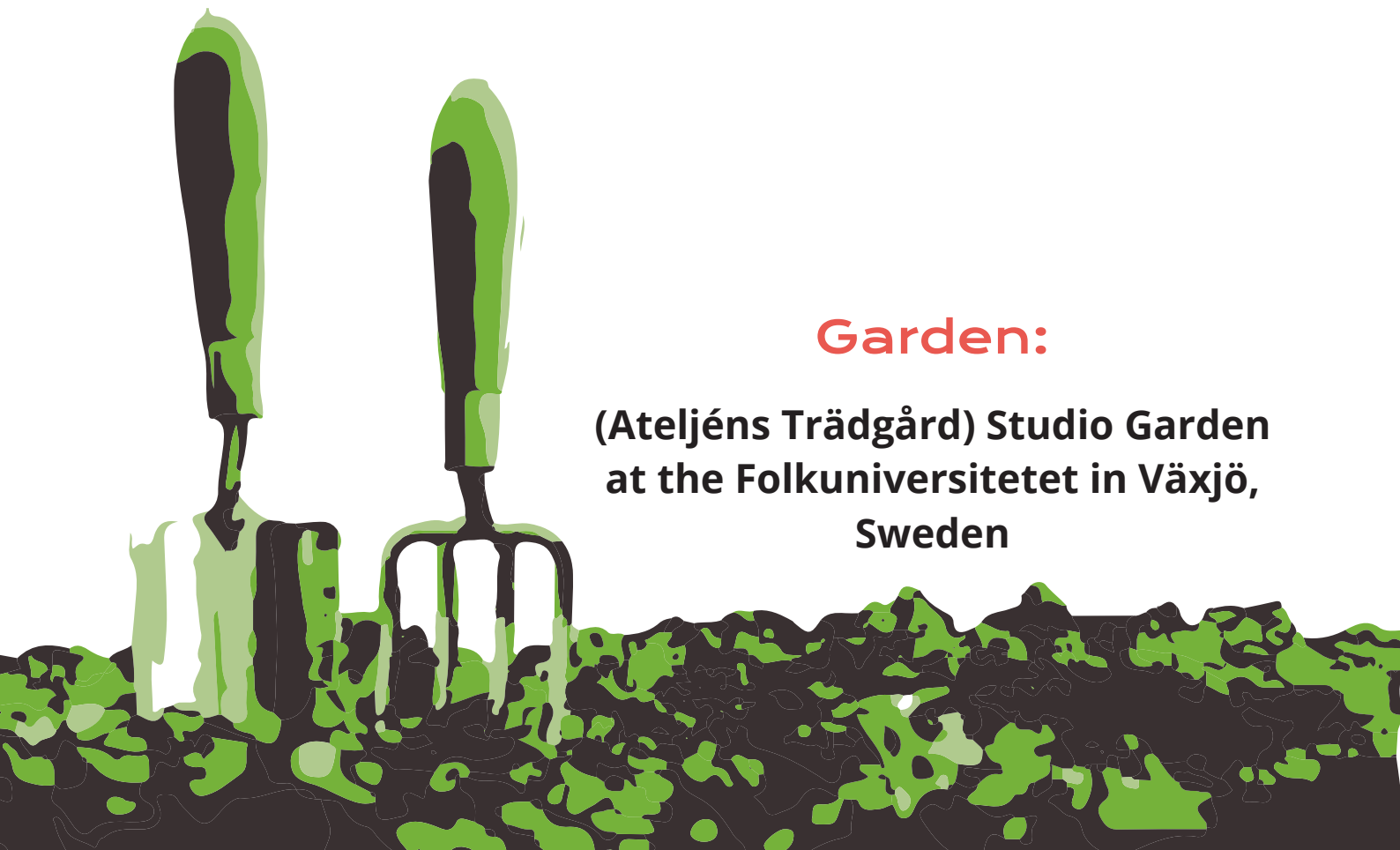


UGAIN

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

Garden:

(Ateljéns Trädgård) Studio Garden
at the Folkuniversitetet in Växjö,
Sweden



Internet links

- ✓ folkuniversitetet.se/ateljen-i-vaxjo/

1. Introduction

Folkuniversitetet garden in Växjö has a good mix of people from different cultures and the garden has been used as a rehabilitation site for several years. In the Studio garden in Växjö there is a Swedish gardener who is employed by Folkuniversitetet, but no migrant is employed as a gardener. The migrants have rehabilitation places in the garden studio. Over the past two years, it has become a good meeting place for migrants who need to learn Swedish and learn more about Swedish society and Swedish culture. It has been shown that it is a good concept to have a mixed group of Swedes and migrants. The garden has become an attractive place, and many come to studio visits from other organisations from southern Sweden.



"When I, as a newly arrived refugee, came to Sweden and had the opportunity to undertake rehabilitation in the studio, I had the opportunity to learn how to grow within the Swedish climate. In the garden we do not have a large area to grow on and then all spaces must be used in the best way. We have created various steps in learning cultivation. This is because we will learn the different ways of doing this. But also, because we should learn the words that are included in crops and plants, so that we can train the Swedish in words and sentences."

Comments from the participants

2. Garden data



Location - coordinates: Folkuniversitetet, Linebornsplan 11 Växjö, Sweden (VRM6+89 Växjö)

Garden description: The studio is in an area near the centre of Växjö. The infrastructure of this garden arose with a need for rehabilitation. This is a garden for people who are on long term sick leave, or unemployment. We discovered that our migrants who had had traumatic experiences from the escape from their home countries had a great need for rehabilitation in the form of gardening as well. The garden is like a villa garden and they are growing in about 25 m². They have greenhouses and raised beds where they grow their crops. In addition to cultivation, they create different parts in the garden where there are different themes like growing soft fruits and a herb garden. In another part of the garden creative craft is also enjoyed and unites the people with the environment. In the studio it started with Swedes being placed outside the labour market and who needed rehabilitation to create a social life so they can return to work again. There are small oases in the garden with sofas and tables, so they can enjoy their lunch outside in the summer. The costs for building the garden were paid by Folkuniversitetet together with the Swedish Social Insurance Agency and the employment office. The costs are 10 000 euro per year.

There are paid for places for rehabilitation of people who are on sick leave and who should return to work after their rehabilitation. Folkuniversitetet owns the garden and the building in Växjö.

The garden is used by 15 people per week. The groups that have participated have been evenly distributed between men and women. They come from various migrant groups and the countries that are currently represented are the Balkans, China, and many countries with Arabic backgrounds.

What we have also found is that those with a migrant background have good growing and horticultural knowledge that they have already acquired at an early age. They have naturally taken part in the family's cultures and learned what the different crops can be used for.

3. Social integration and empowerment of migrants



The initiative that Ateljen has a group of people who have undergone a long period of trauma. They were contacted by Folkuniversitetet and by the Swedish Social Insurance Agency in Växjö.

They wanted rehabilitation for these people and for them to be able to return to working life.

The Ateljen has previously provided rehabilitation for people on long term sick leave, and they were helped with rehabilitation. They also wanted to help migrants use this form of rehabilitation.

In 2015 we had many migrants coming to Sweden and many who came had traumatic experiences of their escape. Ateljén was a good place to come to and undertake rehabilitation. Together with the staff,

they made an individual study plan, where they included lessons with the Swedish language teaching and gardening as a form of rehabilitation.

In the Ateljé we have the same values regardless of whether you have another ethnic background, gender, religion or political orientation. We want to see the human as a whole and therefore we give them an opportunity to participate in conveying their knowledge in gardening or if they have any other knowledge that can be used like cooking of the harvested crops or if there is knowledge about herbs 'different uses, both within cooking but also as alternative medicines. Together in the garden group, the participants have gained knowledge from each other and together they create a sense of security that is shared through multicultural experiences.

Some migrants have drafted together a book about herbs and their uses.

This is one of the projects that makes them feel more established in their new host country. In the group that participated in the garden, the Swedish language has been the key to better integration, as they have come from different countries and have not been able to speak each other's language so it has come naturally to train in Swedish as much as possible. Self-confidence strengthens them to speak Swedish, and then they feel confident to speak Swedish in other contexts and thus they learn the language faster.

The studio is a meeting place where you can get extra support to get good skills which can be used in work or, or go back to work. Through vocational training, or rehabilitation in the studio's creative environment they also get the opportunity to develop new skills as well as personal coaching and stress management.



Chances and opportunities: The Ateljén offers supervision of experienced and committed supervisors in a variety of techniques in the arts, crafts and gardening. They also work with exhibitions and cultural events together with various public groups where you get to try to work with marketing and networking.

The supervisors start from where the clients are today and where they want to be tomorrow. Together they list their strengths, knowledge and experiences that can lead to future jobs and studies. Some of the different courses that they do in the studio are textile crafts and painting, sculpture and concrete casting.

They do study visits to different companies to make inquiries as to whether it is possible to have an internship with them. They also receive study visits to the studio to showcase their business.

In the Studio they work in the garden's, undertaking different kind of tasks like seed sowing, raised bed cultivation and general gardening. They have digital imaging and photography to document what they do in the Studio.

They are working on expanding their networks so that you can get better contacts when you are looking for work.

They have a good cooperation with local people the municipality and exchange experiences with each other.

They have personal coaching talks, to be able to give the participants individual goals for the future. They have stress management discussion with people individually and in groups.

The migrants get the opportunity to develop themselves, learn Swedish and Swedish culture at their own pace. The garden as a form of rehabilitation, works towards healing and they feel better when they use their hands to work and dig in the soil and they become relaxed by planting different crops in the garden.

The group also has an herb garden, where a Syrian has taught her knowledge of herbs, translating between different languages as well as started projects with the layout of a cookbook.

Challenges/Threats: The biggest threat to being in an environment where people feel safe can be a disadvantage of wanting to take the next step into society.

In Sweden there is a compensation system, which means that if a person is on sick leave or has a disability pension, they have compensation from the state.

This means that even if they come out to work and receive a salary, the compensation is the same. This means that many want to stay in the rehabilitation phase.

Therefore, a time-limited period has been created for these participants to be in the studio, and after this period they will apply for another activity / job to move on.

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