

## Gardens of Possibilities – inclusion through urban gardening (Gardens)



Programme Priority: P4 Skilled and socially inclusive region

Programme Specific Objective: 4.1. More people benefiting from stronger Central Baltic communities

Sub-programme: Archipelago and Islands

Duration: 01.01.2018 - 31.12.2019

Total funding: 280.000 EUR

ERDF funding: 210.000 EUR ERDF

Project Summary:

Gardens of Possibilities is an urban gardening project, where rehabilitation, education and job training are combined. The target group is long term unemployed persons at risk of lifelong exclusion, as well as a group of unrecorded, not registered unemployed persons, so called NEETS (Not in Education, Employment, or Training).

The objective is to prevent and break social exclusion by giving the target group new competences and new possibilities on the labour market and in the society in general. The objective is reached through horticultural therapy, skills development, individual support and practical work. By participating in the project, the participants prepare for employment or education and get a better living situation. An individual mapping clarifies the participant's current situation, after which a plan with concrete goals is drawn up. In practice, the participants will work with cultivation of flowers and vegetables. The opportunity and challenge is to include people who are (under risk of being) socially marginalized into the society. The project will result in increased social coherence, social security and equal opportunities.

## Map of Partners

## Partners

Lead Partner

### Emmaus Åland r.f.

Country: FI

[www.emmaus.ax](http://www.emmaus.ax) [1]

**Partner budget:** 167.250 EUR

**Amount of ERDF funding:** 125.438 EUR ERDF

Project Partners

### Valdemarsviks kommun

Country: SE

<http://www.valdemarsvik.se/> [2]

**Partner budget:** 112.750 EUR

**Amount of ERDF funding:** 84.563 EUR ERDF

Associated Partners

### Region Östergötland

Country: SE

### Försäkringskassan

Country: SE

## Results

### Expected results

### Achieved results

Project result in category - Improved community

## Both people and vegetables grew in the Gardens of possibilities

The project wanted to offer persons in risk of lifelong exclusion to take part in gardening activities. Through practical work in the garden together with individual counselling, you can get new competences and new possibilities on the labour market and in the society in general. Cultivation and horticulture have proven to be a good method as you see clear results of your own work, and the work gives you a sense of belonging and connection.

Within the project, the two partner organisations developed a method for integration and well-being of people far from the labour market and threatened by lifelong exclusion. The method includes horticultural therapy, skills development, individual support, and practical work in the garden.

It is based on the idea that everyone can work with the right support. The method must be adapted to the specific needs of each individual. For some it is important to work in a group, for some it is important to work individually. For some, it is important to have clear instructions while others want to do as they please. "One size does not fit all".

The project working methods have been shared with both trainees and professional social workers in the regions.

The goal was to have 150 participants in the project taking part in the activities for at least ten hours (75 in Valdemarsvik and 75 in Åland), The result was only 84. There were challenges in reaching the target groups and getting the individuals to come, as everything was voluntary. The project team tried to visit various organisations and authorities, and information was spread in radio, newspapers and social media. This outreaching model took longer time but worked well, and the target group was also broadened to marginalized older people.

Many participants participated much more than ten hours. Many of the participants were still involved in the activities after the project end. For most people, the combination of work and support and interaction with other people have been of great importance. Many participants have, after some time in the project, been diverted to other organisations and to labour market initiatives and internships.

The investment in greenhouses was important for the project. Thanks to the greenhouses, the cultivation season was longer. The greenhouses also served as the project's face outwards.

The activities were integrated into the regular operations in the partner organisations, which means that people under risk of social exclusion can continue to take part in what the project offered. This low-threshold activity has proven to be very important for people who otherwise find it difficult to find employment. Gardens of Possibilities are maintained and available to the public and to organisations and groups wanting to work with green care. People can stay in the gardens with their own supervisors or ask for help of the partner organisations.

Target group examples:

- Addict: The project offers work, social interaction and new friendships. In addition, the project provides certificates of work experience that are good to have when applying for work.
- Mentally ill: Through the project, the person is given routines and important tasks that contribute to increased self-confidence and increased well-being, which in turn leads to readiness to participate in labour market projects that can eventually lead to a job.
- Immigrant: participating in course in Swedish, but with no practical work experience in the new home country. The person is interested in cultivation – and the work in the garden is also a way to the Swedish language. Through practical language training and work experience, the person approaches the labour market.

The cross-border cooperation within the project worked fine on equal terms and with equal contribution to planning and implementation.

## At a glance

- Investments in two urban gardens
- 84 participants (expected 150)
- Challenges in reaching the right target group
- Method includes horticultural therapy, skills development, individual support, practical work in the garden
- Method shared in the regions
- Activities continue in partner organisations

## Tags

[More people benefiting from stronger Central Baltic communities](#) [4]

[Labour market and employment](#) [5]

[Social inclusion and equal opportunities](#) [6]

## Project Visibility

### Social media links

[Facebook](#) [7]

[Project information Lead Partner website](#) [8]

### Other media visibility

[Radio in Swedish. Del av Lunchronden 03.07.2018](#) [9]

[Sweden Fixar daglig verksamhet i ny trädgård](#) [10]

[Åland 75 arbetslösa ska få jobb i odlingsprojekt](#) [11]

[Sweden Trädgårdsprojekt skapar sysselsättning](#) [12]

[Mariehamn City Bees mår gott och förökar sig \(video 2019\)](#) [13]

[Video from FB in Swedish \(2019\)](#) [14]

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### Links

[1] <http://www.emmaus.ax> [2] <http://www.valdemarsvik.se/> [3] <https://database.centralbaltic.eu/project/71> [4] <https://database.centralbaltic.eu/tags/more-people-benefiting-stronger-central-baltic-communities> [5] <https://database.centralbaltic.eu/tags/labour-market-and-employment> [6] <https://database.centralbaltic.eu/tags/social-inclusion-and-equal-opportunities> [7] <https://www.facebook.com/Gardens-of-Possibilities-209556766266935/> [8] <https://www.emmaus.ax/emmaus-stadsodling> [9] <https://files.fm/u/hkdnqdca> [10] <https://vision.se/Medlem/tidningen-vision/arkiv/2018/april/fixar-daglig-verksamhet-i-ny-tradgard/> [11] <http://www.nyan.ax/nyheter/en-oas-som-arbetsplats/> [12] <http://www.ivaldemarsvik.se/web/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/VB20180126.pdf> [13] <https://www.facebook.com/209556766266935/videos/2215940302069198> [14] <https://www.facebook.com/209556766266935/videos/435216447226485>