



XXI Adults

**Adaptation of the adult educational
system to the XXI Century**

The Good Practices Template



INSTITUTE for
ROMA and
MINORITIES
INCLUSION



**DIPUTACIÓN
DE VALLADOLID**



E-SCHOOL
EDUCATIONAL GROUP



EMPODERAR
DESENVOLVIMENTO ORGANIZACIONAL, SOCIAL, PROFISSIONAL E PESSOAL



Co-funded by
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Name of the Good Practice

“Learning Garden – Hands-on Environmental Education for Social Inclusion”. Implemented by Natur Freunde Bildungswerke.V., Berlin

Summary of the Practice

Brief, easy-to-understand summary: What is the practice, for whom, and for what purpose?

The “Learning Garden” is a nature-based education practice designed to support the **social** inclusion of marginalized adults, including refugees, low-income families, and people with disabilities. By engaging participants in hands-on gardening, environmental education, and group activities in a community garden, the program fosters social connection, ecological awareness, and personal empowerment. The goal is to provide a safe, inclusive, and calming space where participants can learn by doing, reconnect with nature, and build self-confidence while developing sustainable habits and social bonds.

Description of the Practice – min. 2000 characters

1) Context / Background

What was the initial need or problem?

Who was the target group?

Was it part of a larger programme or project?

In urban areas like Berlin, many socially disadvantaged adults, including migrants, unemployed individuals, and people with mental health conditions, face social isolation, lack of purpose, and low engagement with formal education. Traditional classroom-based learning often fails to attract or retain these learners. There was a growing need for **alternative, low-threshold learning spaces** where participants could connect, build confidence, and develop competences in a hands-on and supportive environment.

Target Group:

- Adults with low qualifications or long-term unemployment
- Refugees and migrants with limited formal education experience
- People with mental health issues or recovering from psychosocial crises
- Seniors and adults with social anxiety or isolation

Yes, it was part of the wider “**BildungtrifftNatur**” (**Education Meets Nature**) initiative by NaturFreunde Deutschland, supported by the Berlin Senate for Integration, Labour and Social Services.

2) Objectives

What were the goals of the practice?

What did it aim to improve or change?





- Use nature-based education to foster self-efficacy, social skills, and sustainable awareness among marginalized adults
- Create inclusive and therapeutic outdoor learning spaces that promote well-being and reduce stress
- Develop practical skills in organic gardening, environmental stewardship, and teamwork
- Improve employability through transferable soft skills (timekeeping, responsibility, collaboration)

3) Implementation / Methodology

How was the practice carried out step by step?

What activities or methods were used?

How long did it take?

Step-by-Step Implementation:

1. **Space Setup:** Vacant land near the NaturFreunde center was converted into an accessible learning garden with raised beds, rainwater tanks, seating areas, and a small outdoor classroom.
2. **Participant Outreach:** Referrals came through local social workers, job centers, and neighborhood projects. No previous knowledge or literacy was required.
3. **Weekly Sessions:** Participants joined small group sessions (2–3 hours/week) over 12–16 weeks, led by trained garden educators and social pedagogues.
4. **Thematic Learning Modules:** Topics included composting, soil care, seasonal planting, biodiversity, nutrition, and community-building.
5. **Reflection & Social Integration:** Sessions always ended with a group reflection circle. Participants shared meals with herbs and vegetables they grew, promoting belonging and cultural exchange.
6. **Community Events:** The garden hosted harvest festivals, open days, and workshops for families, increasing visibility and local engagement.

Methods Used:

- Experiential, nature-based learning
- Groupwork and storytelling
- Tactile and sensory activities (e.g., planting, cooking, harvesting)
- Non-verbal learning formats (ideal for low-literacy participants)

4) Results / Outcomes

What were the concrete results?

How did the practice impact the participants?





Concrete Results:

- Over 150 adults completed the Learning Garden cycle since 2020.
- 75% continued to engage in further education or volunteering activities.
- Several participants went on to join urban agriculture or sustainability training programs.
- Strengthened community ties and reduced feelings of isolation and anxiety among participants.

Impact on Participants:

- Participants gained confidence, routine, and a sense of agency
- Improved physical and mental health, especially for those with long-term unemployment or trauma
- The learning process promoted intercultural exchange and peer learning

5) Participants' Stories – optional

Short quotes, personal reflections or experiences shared by participant

6) Success Factors

What made the practice effective or innovative?

Were there any unique or creative elements?

What Made the Practice Effective or Innovative:

- Low-threshold, non-digital format accessible to all adults regardless of literacy or language
- Use of nature and gardening as therapeutic and educational tools
- Learner-centered, informal, and trauma-sensitive approach
- Cross-sector collaboration between educators, social workers, and gardeners

Unique or Creative Elements:

- Learning through nature—plants, soil, and seasons became “teachers”
- “Harvest & share” meals made learning tangible and nourishing
- Use of reflection circles and storytelling rather than formal assessments

7) Transferability / Recommendations

Can the practice be used elsewhere?

What conditions are needed for successful implementation?





Yes. This model can be adapted to many urban or rural contexts. Any organization with access to a small green space or community plot could replicate it.

Conditions for Successful Implementation:

- Outdoor space with basic infrastructure (raised beds, shelter, water access)
- Trainers familiar with inclusive pedagogy and environmental education
- Partnerships with local health, employment, or social services for outreach
- Flexible schedule and ongoing feedback loop from participants

8) Tips / Implementation Advice – optional

Checklists, lessons, or advice for those wishing to implement the practice.

- Avoid overly structured curricula—**let the garden and seasons guide the learning**
- Design with **accessibility in mind** (wide paths, raised beds, quiet corners)
- Include informal social time (tea, meals, conversations) to build trust
- Use observation and journals (visual or verbal) to track progress

9) Lessons Learned - optional

Biggest surprises, obstacles or key takeaways during implementation.

10) Photos illustrating the described practice

Please attach at least 3 photos related to the described good practice

PRACTICE PROFILE – CLASSIFICATION CHECKLIST

Please tick all categories that apply to your described practice. You may choose more than one.

TYPE OF THE PRACTICE





- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ☒ | Administrative staff |
| ☒ | School / Centre management |
| ☒ | Policy makers / Public administration |
| ☒ | NGOs / Community organizations |
| ☐ | Other (specify): |





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