

# Gardening Communities

Agriculture for social change

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EGIO, GREECE



# What is it?

Social agriculture is a practice which strives to preserve the environment while improving the employability of vulnerable individuals who tend to be excluded by the conventional labor market.

This project will enable a positive exchange of knowledge, practices and ideas among young disadvantaged people and different generations of farmers.

Young participants will be shadowed by experienced young farmers who established their own business or older farmers who dramatically lost their job as consequence of the economic crisis.

The group will have the chance to reflect on the extraordinary importance of agriculture in our societies as the main pillar of our food system and to learn more about sustainable farming methods like organic agriculture and permaculture.

Moreover, the participants will learn more about social agriculture and will explore the possibility of creating successful and innovative projects by combining the social field with the agricultural one.

All the participants will be actively involved in the design and construction of a small community garden in the village, which will be in fact a small-scale social agriculture project. The construction garden will include the following steps: identifying the ideal plot and designing it, cleaning the terrain and preparing the soil, building some raised beds and setting up an efficient watering mechanism (by harvesting rain-water and/or by using wicking beds), leaving a small space dedicated to children so that they can explore the gardening process at their own pace, creating a space for composting that can be used by the inhabitants of the village, setting up a relax corner where people can relax in the green of the garden and building a garden tool shelter, planting the seedlings following the companion planting practice, writing down the rules of the community garden together with the beneficiaries of the projects. The aim of the garden is to bring people of different ages and backgrounds together and teach them a culture of sharing and caring through the communal care of the space and the communion of its yield.



## Methods

Non-formal interactive methods include activities and workshops on:

- Teambuilding in Nature
- Arts and nature
- Vision documentaries and discussions
- Practical activities in the fields: construction of a small-scale community garden
- Discussion, sharing, exchange of experience and reflection.

## Objectives

- Reconsider the role of agriculture in our contemporary societies and reflect on its fundamental importance as a major influential factor that can drive positive change into our communities,
- Become familiar with non-conventional agricultural techniques like organic agriculture and permaculture,
- Discover the possibilities that agriculture offer to positively impact communities and bring this new awareness into the work done within their own communities,
- Re-connect with nature and with food production,
- Explore the potentials of agriculture as a way for self-discovery, creativity, empowerment, resilience,
- Build a small-scale social agriculture project (community garden) in the village that can benefit and serve the local community.





# Participants' Profile

The project will allow young people to reflect on the role of agriculture, to become familiar with non-conventional agriculture methods, discover the possibilities agriculture offers to transform the society and bringing together people from different cultures, explore the potential of agriculture as a way of self-discovery, creativity, empowerment, resilience and develop their critical thinking, recognise their emotions, know what to do with them, and thus establish a solid foundation for maintaining a healthy, positive life-style.

Young Participants are people between 18-25 years old volunteers or learners in the organizations. Participants' needs and learning objectives revolve around improving and developing their skills to build sustainable green communities, effectively organize social agriculture activities through creative methods and Non Formal Learning and help youth develop their skills in this regard, and how to deal with potential obstacles.

A total of 25 participants (4 youngsters between 18 and 25 and 1 group leader per country) will participate.

Participants should have the following:

- Motivation to attend the exchange and to act as multiplier for the future.
- Good English level to follow the activities.
- Capacity to attend all the activities during the event.
- Be fewer opportunities. At least 50% of the participants must be fewer opportunities (due to social and cultural obstacles, economic obstacles, geographical obstacles or educational obstacles).



## Practical Information

Board and Lodging are covered by the project.

Travel costs will be 100% reimbursed by the maximum limit of:

Estonia: 360€

Italy: 275€

Armenia: 275€

Spain: 360€

Participants' contribution: 30€.