

### Garden Press Release Article for Users

The GARDEN Project – “Garden your educational life – a new learning environment and opportunity to access education and improve employability for young disadvantaged adults in Europe” - is a result of joint work of experts coming from many different countries, such as Germany, Austria, Iceland, Spain, Latvia and the UK in the co-funded EU GRUNDTVIG Multilateral projects’ programme. Together they have years of experience in working with young adults (16-25) who belong to the age group which is nowadays particularly feeling the blows of unemployment all over Europe. This is why it is very important to find new learning methods to help those who have maybe had frustrating experiences at school or with the traditional training methods. Learning skills in outdoor setting whilst taking advantage of what nature has to offer is seen as a better way of learning, developing and improving our skills and knowledge. This will, in turn, help open new doors and avenues to the labour market, improving employment chances and successes.

Nature is not only a wonderful setting in which to learn new skills and revisit those learnt some time ago but also a great teacher where basic skills such as reading, writing and numeracy can be improved on and where communication, personal and organisational skills can be worked on in a team with others who have similar goals, such as improving self-confidence and employment chances. Several materials have been developed, such as the *Garden Didactic Manual* helping teachers in their work, the *Garden Toolbox* offering ideas on how to improve communication and social skills and the *GARDEN Platform* ([www.garden-platform.eu](http://www.garden-platform.eu)) which is a great to exchange ideas and keep in touch with one another and the whole GARDEN community. Here is personal experience of one of our users:

#### *My GARDEN experience:*

*“At first, connecting learning and gardening or being outside seemed a little strange to me. However since I participated in an activity within the GARDEN project, I started to see that differently....It was very refreshing to be outside and to learn about maths and to use ICT in a “natural” environment in a relaxed way. It also was good to be with peers that are in similar circumstances...”*

All kinds of subjects and skills can be learned in this setting which not only offers a new way to learn, but also a new way to understand the learning process itself which does not always need to be connected to the traditional classroom setting. This in itself calls for creative teachers who take this into account when planning a class which is to take place outside, in nature. This way of learning is

very motivational for those taking part, increasing the chances of understanding and memorising what has been learnt. There is great cooperation between you – the user, the teacher, administration and the parents which also can improve the study success, whilst assessment methods are not of the traditional kind but are adapted to promote motivation and self-evaluation.

For more details please consult our website [www.garden-project.eu](http://www.garden-project.eu) or contact us.

**Project title:** Garden your educational life – a new learning environment and opportunity to access education and improve employability for young disadvantaged adults in Europe

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