

Trainers Manual



Equip yourself with
competencies in urban
gardening and work
with youth



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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Welcome to the URBAN Trainers Manual

This document is intended to support you in your preparation to deliver **URBAN** Training Programme for the Youth. It also presents recommendations and practical information about the **URBAN** Training Programme for the Youth Trainers (You!). This manual is here to assist you in communicating with youth and find the best possible ways to actualise the **URBAN** training programmes as well as to increase the satisfaction of youth, who participate in the trainings you deliver.

URBAN training courses are intended to be inclusive, interactive and practical. Even though the modules are fully formed and developed, we encourage you to take ownership of the materials and adapt them to meet your needs. So if you already have a functioning garden where you deliver trainings, you may attune the training to your actual context.

URBAN trainings are formed in a way that experienced and less experienced youth trainers would be able to use the material. That is why we provide two different trainings: **URBAN** Training Programme for the Youth and **URBAN** Training Programme for the Youth Trainers. We encourage you to take both, however, if you feel very confident you are welcome to use the **URBAN** Training Programme for the Youth without attending **URBAN** Training Programme for the Youth Trainers.

Nonetheless, we encourage to take the **URBAN** Training for the Youth Trainers, since not only, it will provide extra knowledge for you from both sides (urban gardening and delivering trainings), but it will also equip you with extra useful bits how to use certain practices with youth (we call them “Transfer units”).

We hope that our **URBAN** trainings are a useful resource and invite you to provide feedback, share your experiences and let us know how **URBAN** trainings has worked for you.

About URBAN

The URBAN Project is a 2-year project funded by the Erasmus+ programme, 2019-2021. The main goal of **URBAN** is to encourage active participation and education of the local community members – including disfavoured and threatened with exclusion youth people and local youth e.g. migrants, long-term unemployed people – through setting up and maintaining the urban gardens.

URBAN aims at:

—
Developing training and learning resources, which support the professional development of new and existing practitioners and educators in the field of adult teaching.

—
Actively involving local young people threatened of marginalization.

—
Developing a training method, programme and methodology, including the training module, based on activities connected with setting up and maintaining urban gardens.

The training programme for youth trainers gives participants the opportunity to learn about urban gardening on the one hand and increase facilitation competencies on the other. There are four modules in each training and they are set in a way that would lead from understanding of the fundamental ideas such as system thinking and causal loops to very practical ones how to maintain a (newly) established garden. Throughout the programme, participants should look in their own work and try to apply a newly learned methods.

The **URBAN** training is open source and is available on the website as well as in the application (Android, iOS).

Visit our website for more information about the Erasmus+ project Engaging youth with Urban Gardening Activities.



Why it is important to involve youth in urban gardening activities

First of all, gardening is a perfect tool for informal education. If we think from the ecological point of view, it gives the opportunity to:



Nonetheless, the cultural and social perspective plays a very strong role as well, since urban gardens:

- Help young people acquire practical skills for their own life
- Help young people acquire practical skills for labour market
- Empower young people
- Can build a community around it by bringing new people into this community
- Can improve the footprint on the urban ecosystems

As it is elegantly shown by E. Eizenberg in her article *Actually Existing Commons: Three Moments of Space of Community Gardens in New York City* (2011), urban gardens are very important in community formation as well as actual examples of urban commons. Urban gardens demonstrate the possibility to create own material environment according to group's own culture, history, desire and vision. This turns into actual constructed community. It is important that gardeners develop new representations of space that rely on critical examinations of notions of neighborhoods, communities, the city.

This part is also important having in mind that youth is becoming more and more active in political realm, fighting for the right future considering the impacts of the climate change. Thus, it is important to involve youth in urban gardening activities for them to create premises for their communities and

ideas to form and actualize. Our **URBAN** research has shown that majority of the youth has never participated in urban gardening activities, even though they value urban gardening positively. Positive perception about urban gardening has different motives such as learning how to grow organic food; doing something that has environmental benefits; spending more time outdoors; socializing with other people with similar interests; gaining financial benefits; learning about environment, ecosystems and climate change. Moreover, experts expressed their concerns on the abolishment of school gardens: “We have generations that do not know anything about growing vegetables”.

Thus, we arrived at the contradiction when we have active climate fighters, but passive urban gardeners. Here we wish to create more active urban gardeners, who will be able to lead the youth on the climate battles as well.

Why should you use URBAN programme

A. Programme for youth trainers

This programme is twofold, which means that it will increase your knowledge about urban gardening as well as your competencies in facilitation and work with youth. The programme is constructed to cover fundamental narrative on system thinking and how it is related to urban gardening, later you will learn about the basics of soils and ecology, the third module is dedicated to urban gardens and the process of establishing them. Last but not least, you will learn and will receive tips on urban gardening maintenance. All these modules have “Transfer units” that are dedicated to enable you to apply what you have learned in your work with youth.

Modules are interactive and practical with different methods and tasks for you. They can be done purely online, but we encourage you to take the tasks to your actual context and use them as a tool for advocating, building or maintaining urban gardens.

B. Programme for youth

This programme is meant to help you in your work with youth in urban gardens. It also has a twofold character: during the training youth is learning about urban gardening, but while enriching their knowledge in the ecology and agricultural field, the youth increase their social and cultural competencies. The training is formed to be interactive and engaging, so it is expected that you, as a youth trainer, will ensure good youth experience.

URBAN trainings have been designed as a flexible training that can be delivered purely online and theoretically, as well as in different actual environments, preferably urban garden sites or places with intended urban gardening activities. The materials provided give a significant amount of content and more importantly, opportunity to shape and adapt them to be appropriate and relevant for your participants.

The structure has been designed to make this easy and straightforward – whereby activities and content can be zoomed in on, or excluded, delivered interactively or presented as an example. We encourage you to go through the course and think about your local examples in advance as well as material that could be added or dismissed since it is less relevant in your certain situation.

Steps before delivering workshop to the youth

1

Participate in the URBAN training for youth trainers

2

Think about possible applications of our Transfer units

3

Before delivering modules for youth, go through the module yourself

4

Explore what activities and tasks can be applied and conducted in your circumstances

5

Adapt content to tailor individual training needs

6

Include your own case studies and examples

7

Do some extra reading about the topic if you feel that it would be useful for you.



Enrolling in URBAN for youth trainers and URBAN for youth delivery options

The 4 URBAN for youth modules are designed to be delivered as a full programme however, you may choose to deliver some modules or only some parts. We encourage you to do the full training to get the best results out of it.

Each module is designed to be delivered in 1,5-2 hours.

There are dependencies within the modules so ideally your youth participants will be present for all, however this can be overcome with planning. It is possible to select components from within modules to deliver a more condensed version. Again, this relies on preparation and your interpretation of the content for your audience.

The URBAN for youth trainers training follows the same rules: you may pick only certain modules, however, we encourage to take the full training. Moreover, we advise to follow our modules' timeline (starting from the first and finishing with the fourth).

MODULE 1	MODULE 2	MODULE 3	MODULE 4
System thinking (causal loops) - Understand Climate change, green footprint and importance of healthier diet.	Basics of ecology and soils - Learn about the qualities of soil and ecologies in the cities and how to enhance soil in different contexts.	Urban gardening 1: set up - Learn about the existing variety of urban gardening methods and places, different types of Urban Gardening and how to use them.	Urban gardening 2: Maintenance - Acquire general coaching skills on how to inform and animate the general public on potential training opportunities on urban gardening and motivate them to take part.



Practical Advice for Delivering URBAN for youth

Know your audience

It is essential to know your programme participants, understand why they are interested in your programme and what will make it a success for them. Take a good care of keeping the youth interested throughout the training. We hope that our practical examples and interactive tasks will help you with that.

Learn about the training in advance

Get familiar with the training material. Also, keep an eye on the learning objectives so you could look back and see if they were reached. Each module is underpinned by theory, includes practical learning activities and opportunities for youth to reflect on their own learning.

Preparation is important

You will need to spend time preparing and adapting provided learning content for your context – and as a starting point ensure that you read this guide! For example, whilst designed as a single programme, with modules delivered in sequence, you may want to deliver individual modules, or adapt the URBAN content and activities to complement your other learning programmes. You will also need to ensure that your workshops are relevant to your audience by including local case studies and best practice examples.

Learn and try

URBAN is structured with the ultimate goal to create more urban gardens while learning about them. So we encourage you through the training to work with youth on actual land plot and form at least a temporal urban gardens.

Build community

Build your URBAN cohort and network to encourage collaboration and peer-support throughout and beyond participation in the programme. It is helpful to have good communication beforehand, provide opportunities for the group to build good relationships during delivery, and provide follow-up and online activities to cement impact. So we encourage to go through the training for trainers first since you will have an opportunity to increase your network there as well.

Create welcoming environment

Since urban gardens are about creating new spaces and new representations of spaces and communities, it is important to have a space that is appropriate for the group activities. Also you should pursue to creating positive and safe environment for youth to come, learn and take a hands-on approach.

Ready to go!

We believe that as someone interested in our work and the **URBAN** trainings you will have the enthusiasm, desire and commitment to work with youth and support your fellow colleagues. You may have some experience of urban gardening or youth work, but there is no requirement, and our intention is that our trainings will help you to increase your competencies personally as well as will provide training material with your work with youth.

The training is workshop, rather than lecture based, and whilst it is underpinned by theory, you do not need to be expert in these.

Being confident in leading group work, you will successfully engage youth in urban gardening.

