Recommendations for the organisation of one-day events for the co-creation of multisensorial gardens
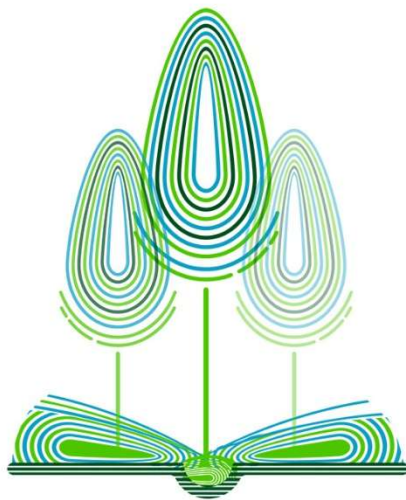
CO-EDUCATION IN GREEN

Intellectual Output 3

Activity 3

Developed by Open Europe

July 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

Most people enjoy green areas either actively or passively, as a place for reflection, reminisce, or simply to look out onto. A green space should be an integral, interesting part of the shared environment, no matter how small the available area. To allow people of all ages and abilities to participate and enjoy basic amenities without requiring adaptations, the concept of inclusive design should also apply to outdoor spaces.

The goal of multisensory gardens is to stimulate all senses of sight, smell, touch, hearing, and taste. Such gardens encourage exploration and interaction with objects; therefore, principles of inclusive design should be followed, e.g., beds should be small and accessible from multiple sides to facilitate access. Sensory gardens can be focused on one sense - for example, a fragrance garden - have several separate sections that target specific senses, or the entire area can be multisensory.

This is a guide with recommendations for organising one-day events following the establishment of multisensory gardens. In it, you will find a number of tips so that once you have established a sensory garden, you can organise an event to publicise it or simply share it with your community.

2. HOW TO CREATE A MULTISENSORIAL GARDEN

The concept of multisensorial garden is very broad. It can be a large outdoor space where there are different areas for all the senses, but it can also be a small area, even indoors, where only one sense is addressed. The most important thing is to give people the opportunity to experience something they can not find in normal parks/public spaces.

To read our Methodology for the creation of shared green spaces and implementation procedures, "Hitchhiker's guide to shared green spaces in urban areas", click on the link below:

https://www.coeducationingreen.eu/docs/en/IO1_1.pdf

Here you can find the *Manual on how to create multisensorial gardens.* This manual is addressed to adult educators and educational centers and it provides information and guidelines for the required processes for the creation of accessible multisensory gardens.

https://coeducationingreen.eu/docs/en/IO3_Manual.pdf

In our *Database for green shared spaces in urban areas,* you will find an innovative package of existing examples, references, effective practices, and tools, on how to transform shared spaces in urban areas, into green environmentally friendly areas. You can navigate to the Database by selecting one of the following sections:

- Legislation
- Protection
- Accessibility
- Transformation

- Environmental Education
- Added Value

or you can find the information you need by choosing one of the countries (Lithuania, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Portugal and Italy):

https://database.coeducationingreen.eu/

3. EVENT

3.1. Identify your resources/budget

The budget for organising an event is one of the first steps you need to take when planning an event. First, you need to list all the needs and anticipate the scale of the event.

The first step of the budget for organising an event is to define the goals and purposes. List the most common expenses and revenues and keep an eye on cash flow. It is impossible to predict all expenses. Remember that some items may change as the project progresses.

In the section "Planning and objectives of the shared green area transformation" of our *Online Training Kit*, guidance to define the different steps in assessing economic and human resources per each of the steps of the planning/creation/adaptation of a shared urban green area. Find it in the link below:

https://www.coeducationingreen.eu/en/train/m/4

3.2. Promote the event

The entire advocacy strategy should have a cause. A good cause is a great opportunity to bring the local community together. The key points to keep in mind when promoting the event are as follows:

- Keep the goal in mind. If you focus on the goal, you can focus on the expense.
- Find the audience. The target audience depends on the event.
  In the section "Community networking and engagement" of our *Online Training Kit*, you will find out more about how to involve the community in your project. Find it in the link below:
  https://www.coeducationingreen.eu/en/train/m/3
- Create a banner/poster that explains what you are offering and for what purpose. It is important that the information is accurate and as brief as possible. If you share the poster

on social media, you can always give more detailed information via a link or in the screenshot itself.

3.3. Activities

A sensorial garden is a place where people can just wander around and enjoy themselves. There are brief explanations of each area, so visitors do not need guidance when visiting. However, for an event, it would be important to prepare some activities to make the experience even greater.

Below are some examples of activities that can be done at such an event:

Activity 1. Presentation of the garden and background.
What was the motivation for this project? Why does it follow this structure? What're the senses in each area and how can they be explored? All of these questions may come up, especially with visitors who're not familiar with the subject. An explanation that answers these questions is a good way to start the visit.

To know more about the reasoning behind the creation of a garden, check our *Manual on how to create multisensorial gardens*:
https://coeducationingreen.eu/docs/en/IO3_Manual.pdf

Activity 2. First hand experience.

What better way to understand how it works than to experience it firsthand? We suggest inviting the visitors to try out the different options in our garden:
- Walk barefoot and blindfolded along a path of leaves. They can guess what they step on: Type of leaf, texture, shape...
- While blindfolded, smell flowers/herbs and try to guess what they are.

Activity 3. Brainstorming.
Is there anything else you would like to try? Brainstorming where participants can let their imaginations run wild could be fun and give you ideas for the next event or even how to engage participants in the space.

You can end the day with some food. Everyone likes to chat over a snack, and it's a good day to end a nice event. It is also an opportunity for people who met during the activities to share their thoughts, and for you to find out what they thought of the whole experience.

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3.4. Follow-up

The event is over, and it went really well. All the careful preparation and creative advertising paid off. But just because the event is over does not mean there's nothing left for you to do. This is the perfect opportunity to thank everyone involved, get their feedback, and maybe even collect some visuals for the next event.

What can you do now?

- Conduct a post-event wrap-up. Sit down with your team for a debrief and discuss how the event went. Consider inviting at least some of the volunteers. First, these volunteers are sure to provide valuable input. Second, you will likely want to ask them for help in the future. The main purpose of this meeting is to talk about how it went and what could be improved.
- Ask for feedback. Get feedback from attendees while the event is still fresh in their minds. This will give you a treasure trove of information about what went well and how you can plan even better events. The easiest way to do this is to send out an email link to a survey that attendees can fill out online.
- Track the results on social media. While it's fresh, people will be more willing to share information about you. Creating reels on Instagram is very trendy right now.
- Customise your "ideal guest" profile. At the beginning, we said that it's important to have a clear picture of your target audience. Now you should know much more about who actually comes to your events. Furthermore, if you have been diligently collecting feedback during and after your event, you'll have a wealth of information about your guests' interests, their likes and dislikes, and their expectations for future events.
- What about starting to plan the next event? The event management cycle has now come full circle. Hopefully, you have gained new insights, a better understanding of what works, more knowledge about your attendees, and good ideas for next steps.