

TEMPLATE FOR THE DESIGN OF A SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT*

1.- PROJECT TITLE

“Green Outing Experience“: Therapeutic Garden and Community

2. PROJECT SUMMARY *(brief description 300 to 500 words)*

According to AHTA (American Horticultural Therapy Association), a therapeutic garden should promote current practices such as universal design, features modified to improve accessibility, scheduled and programmed activities to allow people-plant interactions, benign and supportive conditions in order to provide a secure and comfortable environment for people.

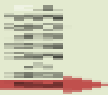
The idea has emerged as a “green” response to the restrictions on social interaction imposed by the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

Students with and with SEN (special educational needs) from Romanian middle schools were selected to join common activities designed to foster communication, interpersonal exchange of opinions, ideas, values, and feelings, mutual supportive behaviors, and basic knowledge of gardening practice and plant life characteristics.

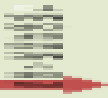
This approach includes some of the Holmgren’s permaculture design principles such as: observe and interact, produce no waste, use and value diversity, integrate rather than segregate (Holmgren, 2013).

Gardening has been proven to be beneficial for students with disabilities offering various opportunities to learn, interact, experiment, practice, and enjoy outdoor activities. Gardening tasks may provide opportunities to develop certain skills and abilities. For example, planting seeds are great ways to develop gross and fine motor skills; teamwork is efficient to develop social skills and become comfortable with social interactions; viewing and listening, touching and smelling may enhance the benefits of sensory education (Williams, Monaghan, Telg and Voelker, 2022).

In a nutshell, the project focuses on planting seeds of various plants (aromatic plants, decorative plants, and vegetables), nurture and care for them. University students and middle school students are encouraged to work together in a carefully designed environment toward a common goal. Plant life is studied, interacted with, and cared for within a larger environmental context including soils, water cycle, organic and synthetic nutrients, insect and worm benefits or detriments, weather patterns, Sun exposure and so on. Regular activity reports are completed and learning, communication, fine motor skills, and social interaction progress are monitored.



3.- TECHNICAL DATA	
Higher Education Institution or responsible entity:	University of Bucharest, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences (FPSE), Dept. of Special Psycho-pedagogy (Special Education Dept.)
Person in charge of the project in the HE Institution:	Teacher assistant Loredana Pătrășcoiu, PhD
Number of students participating in the project:	10 students from the Department
Course/age/gender of the participating students:	"Inclusive education" and "Occupational therapy" courses (second year students)
Number of final beneficiaries of the service:	20 regular middle school students 20 middle school students with intellectual disabilities
Project type: (face-to-face, virtual, mixed and/or international):	Physical interactions with some virtual communication and content
Do the students work with social entities or with final beneficiaries of the service?	The students do supervised work with the final beneficiaries of the service, part of their course graded requirements
4.- BACKGROUND (context in which it arises, if it has been carried out previously, if it is part of a project that already exists or the previous experience from the people involved)	
<p>Many good practices from Western countries provided successful inclusive models of peer agricultural activities for students with and without special needs. Permaculture is not only a better way to cultivate a land, but a sustainable and eco-resilient approach to the relationship between people and nature. Bringing this model into the education of children has a beneficial impact on their future attitude toward the environment as an essential component of our well-being. This project stems from a pilot initiative entitled "Therapeutic gardens and community" spearheaded by Ms. Loredana Pătrășcoiu from the Dept. of Special Psycho-pedagogy.</p>	
5.- GENERAL SOCIAL NEED FOR THE PROJECT (S-L addresses real needs in the community, it is significant and relevant for both students and community partners. Relevant topics related to civic, cultural, economic and political society are explored through the project.)	
<p>The involvement of university and middle school students in tending therapeutic gardens increases the degree of awareness of the need for a clean environment and the usefulness of plant culture for human life, and it contributes to keep a clean learning environment. It also provides opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities to learn useful, experiential knowledge and to enhance their fine and gross motor skills.</p>	



6.- SERVICE OBJECTIVES (what is the purpose of the project, what service will be provided to address the social need)

The purpose of the project is to enhance experiential learning, real life social interaction and communication, and to nurture well-being of students and tutors altogether.

7.- LEARNING OBJECTIVES (Specific contents and competences of academic subjects or academic degree, and/or transversal (generic) competences.

The university students will have the opportunity to learn by doing how to assess, adapt, and readjust their interaction with middle school students with and without intellectual disabilities in real life situations focusing on gardening topics and tasks.

8.- SUBJECTS/CURRICULAR AREAS INVOLVED (curricular subjects/courses?, a specific S-L course?, program?, etc.)

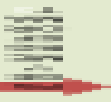
“Inclusive education”
 “Education of students with intellectual disabilities”
 “Developmental psychology”
 “Occupational therapy”

9.- ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE THE PROJECT OBJECTIVES (both inside and outside the classroom. Activities that deal with the preparation, implementation, closing and evaluation of the project.)

Preparing the beds
 Planting the seeds
 Caring for plants
 Hands on activities on topics such as gardening techniques, insect and garden worm life, water cycle, nutrients and Sun benefits.

10.- LINK TO THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND TARGETS (Go to: <http://sdg.humanrights.dk/es/goals-and-targets>)

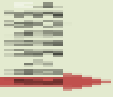
SDG	TARGETS
4. Quality education: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities	4a. Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent,



for all.	inclusive and effective learning environments for all
11.- HOW IS THE GENDER PERSPECTIVE INCORPORATED INTO THIS SERVICE-LEARNING EXPERIENCE (Equitable distribution of tasks among man and women; use of non-sexist language and images; recognizing and value the existence of multiple gender identities)	
equitable distribution of tasks among male and female students; using person first language to deemphasize stereotypes on intellectual disability use of non-sexist language and images	
12.- ENTITIES PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECT (social entities, Public Administrations, educational centers, etc.)	
Department of Special Psycho-pedagogy, Middle school from Bucharest, Special School "Sf. Nicolae" from Bucharest, (potential) NGO (TBD)	
13.- REFLECTION ACTIVITIES (Outline how reflection will be carried out with S-L participants: Reflection about what; when and through what means the reflection will take place. Analysis of different perspectives related to the problem that is being faced, and link of the S-L experiences to the theoretical and methodological framework of the academic subject/curriculum)	
Reflection time-out activities related to plant life, gardening skills, garden experiences, teamwork interaction experiences.	
14.- EVALUATION (who evaluates, what is to be evaluated, when will the evaluation take place, and through what means will the evaluation be conducted)	
Indicators of impact on learning (evidence of the learning): students can identify the main characteristics of students with intellectual disabilities psychological profiles and select the most appropriate teaching method	
Indicators of impact on learning	Indicators of social impact



15.- CELEBRATION OF THE PROJECT AND ITS RESULTS (diploma award ceremony, party, meetings, etc.)	
June, 15: follow up meeting, diploma award ceremony, garden party	
16.- COMMUNICATION AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES (use of social media, internet, YouTube, publications, conference presentation, etc.)	
Dissemination of relevant information and experiences on dedicated sites on Facebook and University and partner schools' websites. Awareness campaign on supportive media outlets (radio/TV stations, newspapers, podcasts on YouTube) Fundraising on supportive sites (e.g. https://www.bursabinelui.ro/BursaBinelui/Proiecte/GRADINI-TERAPEUTICE-COMUNITARIA)	
17.- CALENDAR (timeline of the project activities)	
March to July before: finding partners, apply for funding, locate proper site, design of the therapeutic garden and landscaping, hiring personnel (horticulturist, occupational therapist, caretaker etc.) on "as need it" basis September: Institutional contacts and protocols, site admission clearances First week of October: start of the project (orientation and administrative tasks) October to November (3 on-site meetings, 2 on-line meetings) First week of November: mid-term assessment of the project March to June (6 on-site meetings, 2 or 3 on-line meetings) First week of June: assessment of the project	
18.- HUMAN AND MATERIAL RESOURCES NEEDED TO CARRY OUT THE PROJECT (teachers, students, administrative staff; teaching resources, furniture, etc.)	
Personnel: Teacher assistant Loredana Pătrășcoiu, PhD (project leader) 2 teacher assistants from the Dept. of Psycho-pedagogy 2 special education teachers from the Special School "Sf. Nicolae" from Bucharest 1 regular teacher from a nearby middle school from Bucharest 10 undergraduate students from the Dept. of Psycho-pedagogy 20 regular middle school students 20 middle school students with intellectual disabilities	
19.- BUDGET (income, expenses and co-financing)	



TBD

Sponsorship and European funding might be available

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*Reviewed by the Subcommittee of the Technical Commission of S-L in the Public Universities and the City Council of Madrid.