



Guidelines and Didactic Concept for Training at the “Learning Place Bio-Farm”

These guidelines will support users for the preparation and implementation of visits at the “Learning Place Bio-Farm” and give instructions for the use of the e-learning course and online portal.

(PDF for download and print)

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1. Information about the Project

The strategic partnership has developed the e-learning course and interactive online portal titled “Learning place Bio-Farm”. It offers online resources for teachers, farmers, coordinating agencies, NGO staff and any other individuals involved in delivering educational activities on organic farms.

Farm visit and learning opportunities

Educational farm visits provide an alternative and innovative space that enables formal and informal learning to take place alongside the more conventional school learning environment.

During these visits, groups of children and young people are able to spend time on the farm undertaking interactive and practical activities. Such activities allow participants to learn about the realities and challenges of food production first-hand. The farm visits can also complement learning carried out back in the school environment, by embedding knowledge acquired on the farm into subjects such as biology, geography, economics, ecology and sustainability.



Integration of disadvantaged youth

Going on a visit to an organic farm offers particular benefits to those individuals who sometimes struggle in mainstream education. Groups of children and young people with special educational needs; such as those with learning disabilities or those at risk of exclusion from mainstream education, can often benefit from learning in a new environment. One of the core aims of these visits is to re-engage young people by providing alternative experiences to mainstream schooling and to approach learning from a broader perspective. Such experiences have included opportunities to engage through a range of practical activities whilst on the farm. In a number of cases where practical farm-based activities have been offered, teaching staff and education officers have identified profound improvements in physical and mental health, as well as educational development.

Integration of refugee children

Over the last few years, European countries have had to face the challenge of integrating large numbers of refugees into their societies. A special focus of this project will be upon helping refugee children and their families to integrate into their new countries of residence. The “Learning place Bio-Farm” project will offer refugees new perspectives on life outside the refugee camps that many have lived in. Visiting the countryside will also provide refugees with an insight into European life and its associated food culture. Refugees will have the opportunity to ask questions about society, whilst at the same time providing incentives to learn new vocabulary that is connected with the countryside, agriculture and food communities. Farm workshops can also help to minimize language barriers by offering opportunities to communicate through practical, hands-on activities.

Additionally, organic farming is a growing economic sector that needs young and motivated young people to work in it. Farm visits provide refugees with an insight into future job opportunities (organic farmer, baker, butcher, shop keeper, etc) in the industry.

Training Organic Farming educators

Currently, there are very limited existing training offers which are linked to learning on organic farms. This project intends to develop a comprehensive European training course and portal with various interactive tools and learning resources for organic farming educators. The course will support teachers, farmers and other stakeholders in familiarizing themselves with the practicalities and technicalities of hosting farm visits.



It will also mean that educators can gain better knowledge of a school's requirements when visiting the farm. This will help them to link activities to the school curriculum and identify any health and safety requirements specific to a school visit. The course will also provide educators with the knowledge and skills that they need in order to ensure that the needs of disadvantaged pupils and refugee children are considered.

Project results and outputs

- Guidelines and Didactic Concept for training
- English pilot e-learning course “Learning place Bio-Farm”
- E-learning course “Learning place Bio-Farm”, adapted to all partner countries and languages in seven versions
- An educational online portal
- An international Network
- Dissemination workshops



Target groups and partners

The target groups for the course include a wide range of stakeholders including farmers and farm guides, educational staff and their associated educational institutions, NGO staff members, coordinating agencies, trainers and public administration representatives.

The partnerships consists of eight partner organisations from seven countries – Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Poland and the United Kingdom. Between them, the eight partner organisations are able to contribute to the project, a wealth of first-hand experiences and competencies associated with outdoor learning and organic farming.

2. Information about the e-learning course “Learning Place Bio-Farm”

Content of the e-learning course for training on “Learning Place Bio-Farm”:

Module 1: Introduction to learning on the organic farm

Welcome to the online site for Learning Place Bio-Farm! This site aims to help teachers, parents, students, administrators and farmers find inspiration and practical advice for using organic farms as learning arenas. The authors of this online guide are researchers and educators from six different European countries that have worked with schools and kindergartens as well as other educational institutions and public administration to make experience on organic farms available. We hope this guide can help you find possibilities for farm visits and prepare for learning about sustainable food production and environmental solutions for responsible agriculture.

Module 2: Preparing for your farm experience

Learning first-hand from a farmer about the realities and challenges of food production is an important formative experience, improving knowledge and building interest in the consumption of healthy and fresh produce. Often a school trip may be the first time many pupils have been on a farm visit. Detailed preparation and planning will ensure each visit to a farm successfully reaches your educational goals. The main stages are listed below:



Pre-visit planning: How to use a pre-visit to the farm to discuss timings, activities, costs, suitable clothing etc. with the farmer.

Planning and structuring a farm visit: Plan and prepare the specifics of a farm visit, including the length of activities, as well as pre- and post-visit activities for the classroom.

Health and Safety on the farm: Give teachers the necessary knowledge to maintain the safety of visitors during their visit.

Module 3: Undertaking your farm experience

Organic farms are a great place for teaching. Groups of children and young people are able to spend their day on farm learning in a wide range of practical way. The program of activities will depend upon the capacity and type of farm. Activities should be prepared in accordance with natural rhythms of nature and adapted to the age and the needs and interests of visiting groups.

The activities can also support the school curriculum and are an ideal practical complement to the knowledge acquired in the schools (environment, biology, geography, economics, ecology and environmental protection).

Module 4: Integration of refugee youth and participants with special needs

Attending a farm visit can bring particular benefits for teachers who educate pupils with difficulties in mainstream learning systems. Classes which include children and young people with specific needs (e.g. refugees, children with migrant backgrounds and children with developmental disorders, learning disabilities or social problems) can gain intensive and new experiences that are different from the more conventional methods of learning in the classroom. Visits to a Bio-farm can also support teachers in helping to integrate these children and young people.

Farm officers, teachers and the staff of service agencies who work with refugee children and disabled pupils must have a basic knowledge about intercultural behaviours and communication, as well as dealing with the needs of different disabilities. The module will give practical hints and tools for farm visits with these target groups and present best practice examples of how the experiences and learning opportunities for different refugee target groups and disabled participants can be organised to support their special needs.

Module 5: Promoting farm visits

This module will give inputs about different ways to reach target groups and stakeholders. Information about visits to farms should go directly to interested groups (schools and kindergartens in the region) in the form of leaflets or through the web-pages of organisations participating in the project. Additionally, pre-visit meetings with teachers, parents and farmers can be arranged on farm or in school to promote and discuss the aims of the visits.



Furthermore local authorities, agricultural agencies, agricultural advisory services and non-governmental organisations dealing with the promotion of ecology, health, healthy lifestyle etc.

and local media (newspapers, TV and radio) should be directly contacted and informed about farm visits. This module will also look at social media (Facebook, Twitter and YouTube) as a means of promoting farm visits.

Module 6: Funding and business models

This module will look at the costs to farms and schools that are associated with farm visits. It will identify which different aspects of the farm visit will cost money, both in terms of the visit itself and transport to and from the farm. The module will then explore the various funding streams that may be available, together with options for saving costs and raising money to pay for visits.

3. Instructions how to use the e-learning platform

The project offers an e-learning course and interactive online portal titled “Learning place Bio-Farm” with online resources for teachers, farmers, coordinating agencies, NGO staff and any other individuals involved in delivering educational activities on organic farms.

The online portal can be found here: <http://www.learningonbiofarm.eu>

The portal presents an English pilot e-learning course “Learning place Bio-Farm” and 6 adapted national versions of the course in all partner languages – Austrian, Czech, German, Danish, Norwegian and Polish.

The course contains a curriculum with Learning Outcomes, defined according to EQF and NQF requirements. The course will comprise 6 modules divided into 18 learning units. Each unit contains several chapters.

Learners’ navigation

For learners the online course content is reachable from the main web menu, item “E-learning”: <http://www.learningonbiofarm.eu/e-learning>.

After opening the menu, learners can directly browse the modules and choose which module to start with. No registration or login is necessary. All modules are available online, as well as offline – the modules can be downloaded as PDF documents for offline study. To strengthen the learning process, test questions have been created for each Module. The tests are available at a separate menu item called tests.

More detailed information and links to other documents related to the topics of individual modules, the learner will find in the resources menu item.

Administrator navigation

Each teacher or administrator has the ability to use the secure content management system at <http://www.learningonbiofarm.eu/admin>: create new units or chapters, upload new content, documents, photos, videos, or links to external websites. Text can be edited thanks standard content formatting features. Thanks to the File manager all documents and photos are readily available online and can be linked to the course content. The system contains all language versions of the course and administrators can easily browse through them.

4. The didactic advantages of learning sessions on farm

The didactics of learning through direct experience on a farm has many advantages for learning, as well as for health. With an appeal to all of the senses and bodily participation, learning makes long lasting impressions and encourages personal engagement. Health is an issue where physical work and coordination is involved in doing useful tasks, not just physical exercises. In addition, learners are exposed to a wide range of vegetables, fruits and animal products, which opens up for changing eating habits.

Farm visits are local excursions in nature and a welcome change from learning in the classroom. The agro-ecological principals of organic farms create an arena where ecology can be taught and learned through direct observation and experience. For example, the carbon cycle, where carbon dioxide is taken up by the plants through photosynthesis, transported through the plant as carbohydrates and exuded into the soil as nourishment for bacteria and fungus, is especially important on organic farms for building soil health. In contrast to conventional farms that buy artificial fertilizer from industry, organic farms use green fertilizer with legumes, humus building through composting, and crop rotation to replenish soils. While artificial fertilizer uses enormous amounts of energy and releases corresponding amounts of CO₂, organic farms bind carbon in the soil through biological processes, thus contributing significantly to the climate challenge. The connection between carbon, soil and climate becomes transparent and comprehensible.



Perhaps more important than what can be learned at the farm, is how learning can be facilitated at the farm. If we as adults reflect on an important learning experience, we often see a situation where we were eager to do something we had observed, probably with a certain person we looked up to. A spark of interest, a connection was ignited, we were initiated into how something could be done and we got a chance to try it ourselves.

Often, this type of learning can become a passion. As children, we found sources and learned all we could because we wanted to know more. This is quite different than the traditional school learning. Of course, the farmer must show and explain, but the opportunity for hands-on learning should be emphasized. Motivated by the tasks in which they can participate, the learning process gets a pang start. Tasks such as feeding the animals, taking in a harvest from the field or garden, cooking food from the products on the farm are often immediately meaningful. When students experience that they can contribute to a necessary task, this strengthens the learner's feeling of mastery and capability. If the tasks are meaningful and the learner can contribute, then the urge to learn and exceed also benefits the more theoretical work in the classroom. Teachers are often amazed at how the students write and tell about their experiences after the farm visits. Where many pupils have difficulties finding something to write about in language assignments, the concrete events at the farm inspire them and give them a wealth of things they want to convey to others.

Source: "How do Children and Youth learn through Farm-school Cooperation?" Linda Jolly, Erling Krogh, Norwegian University of Life Sciences

5. Introduction to Organic Farming

Organic farming is an agricultural system that seeks to provide the consumer, with fresh, tasty and authentic food while respecting natural life-cycle systems. To achieve this, organic farming relies on a number of objectives and principles, as well as common practices designed to minimize the human impact on the environment, while ensuring the agricultural system operates as naturally as possible.

The farm is where the organic process starts. For organic farmers a fertile soil and respect for the environment are of crucial importance for humans and animals. Organic farmers try to stay close to nature, sourcing materials from their own farm wherever possible.



One example is using manure and compost to improve the soil, which also prevents erosion and the loss of nutrients and water. In addition, they try to conserve nature by using low-impact techniques, such as mechanical weeding instead of herbicides. They also apply contemporary scientific knowledge, for example by monitoring nutrient levels to ensure optimum growth.

Organic farming practices include:

- wide crop rotation as a prerequisite for an efficient use of on-site resources;
- very strict limits on chemical synthetic pesticide and synthetic fertiliser use, livestock antibiotics, food additives and processing aids and other inputs;
- total prohibition of the use of genetically modified organisms;
- taking advantage of on-site resources, such as livestock manure for fertiliser or feed produced on the farm;
- choosing plant and animal species that are resistant to disease and adapted to local conditions;
- raising livestock in free-range, open-air systems and providing them with organic feed;
- using animal husbandry practices appropriate to different livestock species.

Organic farmers rely on long-standing agricultural practices such as keeping livestock healthy through regular exercise and free-range access to pasture. Organic farmers respect animals through:

- promoting animal health and welfare,
- meeting the specific behavioral needs of animals.

Organic farmers respect the environment through:

- responsible use of energy and natural resources
- maintenance of biodiversity,,
- maintenance of regional ecological balances,
- enhancement of soil fertility,
- maintenance of water quality.

Organic farming is part of an extensive supply chain, which also includes food processing, distribution and retailing. Each link in this chain aims to deliver the benefits of organic food production in terms of:

- consumer confidence and what the logo guarantees
- environmental protection
- food quality,
- animal welfare.

Organic processors, marketers and food distributors have the same goals as organic farmers – that is the provision of fresh and authentic processed food designed to respect nature and its systems. Important principles for the processing of organic products include the:

- strict restriction of which additives and processing aids can be used,
- strict restriction of chemically synthesised inputs,
- prohibition of the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs).

The distribution of organic products to consumers occurs through a diverse range of ways. Typical distribution channels include:

- local and specialised organic markets,
- specialised organic shops in rural or metropolitan areas,
- roadside stalls in rural areas,
- directly sale from the farm where the food was produced,
- delivered to consumer's door or a collection point through web-based home delivery and/or box scheme.



The European Union has developed comprehensive rules on organic production, processing, distribution, labelling and controls.

EU legislation ensures that 'organic' means the same for consumers and producers all over the EU. Legislation concerning organic produce is developed with the participation of Member States and the assistance of advisory and technical committees and expert bodies.

The EU regulation on organic farming stipulates that organic farmers are to maintain and enhance soil fertility and biological activity within the soil by rotating crops - including legumes and other green manure crops - over a number of years, and by applying manure or organic material, preferably composted, from organic production.

Under EU rules individual farmers are free to decide, using their practical knowledge and skills, which method or combination of methods is best for improving soil fertility. Whichever approach they take, it must work in harmony with nature and be beneficial to the environment. The principles of organic farming also apply to the feed given to livestock. The regulations state that feed for organic livestock must be organically produced, although part of it may come from holdings that are switching to organic farming.

All organic farms in the EU are inspected at least once a year to ensure they meet the legal requirements. If approved, they can market their products as organic and use the EU organic logo.

The logo and the labelling rules are an important part of the organic regulations. The main objective of the European logo is to make organic products easier to be identified by the consumers. Furthermore it gives a visual identity to the organic farming sector and thus contributes to ensure overall coherence and a proper functioning of the internal market in this field. The use of the logo and correct labelling is obligatory for all organic pre-packaged food produced within the European Union.



Examples of foods produced to specific organic standards which can be enjoyed in natural or processed form include:

- grains such as wheat, rye, oats and barley
- vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers and carrots
- fruits such as strawberries, apples and cherries
- milk from cows, goats and sheep
- eggs from chickens, quails, ducks or other poultry
- meat such as chicken, pork, beef and lamb.

6. Target Groups

The target groups of the European training course and online portal “Learning place Bio-Farm” include a wide range of stakeholders.

Bio-Farm Guides

None of the existing training offers are aimed at supporting those people from outside the farming industry e.g. teacher; nor are there any training packages available for the staff of coordinating agencies. Thus the European training course and portal will support Bio-Farm guides with various interactive tools and learning materials to educate them.

The course will aid the development of Bio-Farm guides and support them in gaining familiarity with the practicalities and technicalities of hosting farm visits, such as planning and undertaking the visit, as well as the consideration of the health and safety needs of visitors. They will gain a better knowledge of the requirements of schools that wish to visit a farm. They will also become familiar with school curriculum and will thereby be able to relate the farm visit directly to the school curriculum and integrate this into their visit. Guides will also acquire intercultural and social competences for the integration of disadvantage pupils and refugee children.

Farmers

Many farmers are interested in “Learning place Bio-Farm”. In representative surveys farmers state, that “social services” like school visits or green care-activities can be well integrated into farm work. They see the opportunity to qualify themselves in the field of pedagogic, didactics, social pe-



dagogy or to cooperate with trainers, teachers, educators, social workers etc. Coordinating agencies state that more and more farmers are looking for extra support in leading farm visits, but this support is only offered in certain areas. The trend to use farm education as one strategy for farm diversification has been pushed in some regions and has shown to preserve and / or generate jobs in those regions. Additionally, farmers who are part of a network of educational farms, can also use their work as an opportunity to promote their organic products and to expand the sales market.

Educational institutions and their educational staff (schools of different types)

Visits to organic farms offer special opportunities for teachers and educators. For the children that visit, experiences on farms can help to build up know how and motivation, as well as helping with the development of motor skills, creative abilities, boosting self confidence and helping to develop many transferable skills. Attending a farm visit offers particular benefits for teachers or educators who care for and educate pupils with difficulties in mainstream learning systems. Classes of children with special needs (e.g. refugees, children with migrant background, children with developmental disorders, learning disabilities or social problems) can get intensive and new experiences that are different from those competencies learnt in the classrooms.

The e-learning course and online portal provide a methodological approach and innovative learning offer for teachers and educators. Schools and their staff will have access to a learning instrument with various interactive tools and learning resources for organic farming educators. The course will support teachers in familiarising themselves



with the practicalities and technicalities of visiting farms. This will help them to link activities to the school curriculum and identify any health and safety requirements specific to a school visit.

NGOs, Coordinating Agencies and staff

Coordinating agencies and other NGOs connect farmers and teachers/educators (schools, authorities). To bring these two groups together, agencies will need a broad knowledge of the factors involved in setting up visits. The coordinating agency should be able to clarify the needs of a school and the needs of a farmer so that both sides are satisfied with the content, the duration and the methods of the farm visits. Agencies can also help to organise additional money to finance the work of the farm guides.

Through the use of the comprehensive European training course and portal “Learning place Bio-Farm”, NGOs will get access to a learning offer with various interactive tools and learning resources for organic farming educators. The course will support them in familiarising themselves with the practicalities and technicalities of hosting farm visits. This will help them to link activities to the school curriculum and identify any health and safety requirements specific to a school visit.

The course will also provide educators with the knowledge and skills that they need in order to ensure that the needs of disadvantaged pupils and refugee children are considered.

In some countries there are no coordinating agencies, with established structures yet to be developed. For these countries, the e-learning course will be a guide to help countries acquire the required knowledge to support farm visits.

In those countries where coordinating agencies are already active, the portal and course can be used to advise local farms and schools.



Public administration representatives

Decision makers in policy and public administration can help in supporting schools and kindergartens to set up farm visits. Depending upon the country, these representatives can often be the first point of contact that schools or farms have when looking for funding to support farm visits. National governments sometimes support these activities through specific funding. EU funds may also be available in certain circumstances. The finance module of the e-learning course will assist course users in acquiring financial.

These target groups

- can organize and establish a system of financial support of education on organic farms.
- can provide information and supporting the organic farming model in the local area and to a wider public.
- can promote organic food in the canteens of schools, public offices and health facilities.



7. Groups with special needs and refugee children

Education of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is an integral part of the education system in most of the European countries.

Support for SEN children aims at stimulating pupils' psychological and physical development and enhancing the effectiveness of learning. Such support is intended to correct disorders and eliminate the causes and symptoms of disorders, including behavioural disorders. It is crucial to prepare children and young people for life as full members of society (within the family, local community and labour market) by ensuring, through special methods, the most comprehensive development of a pupils potential.

In order to ensure the effectiveness of psychological and educational support, it is necessary first to identify properly the pupil's needs and then to provide the most suitable types and methods of support which will indeed bring the expected effects.



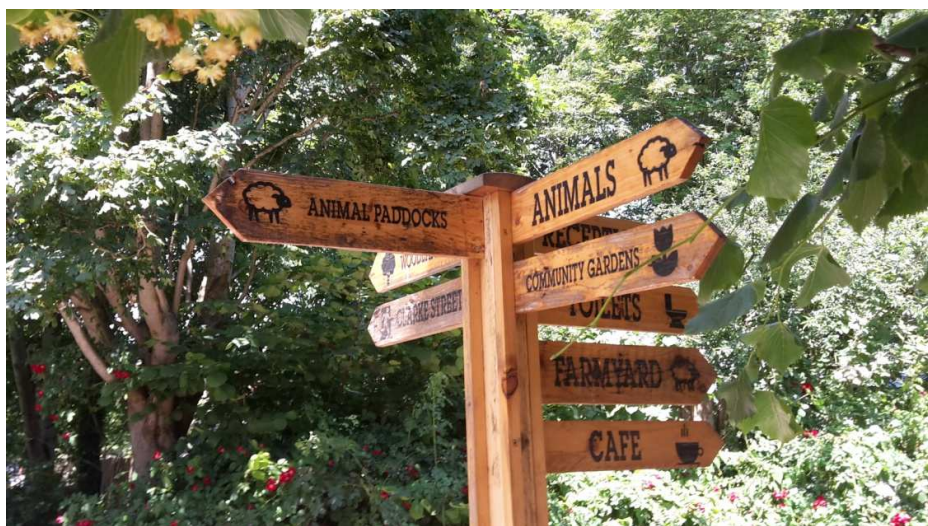
The following pupils and students are defined as those with special educational needs. They include those:

- with high abilities,
- with long-term illness,
- with disability,
- with specific learning difficulties (including dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and dysorthography),
- with speech impairment,
- with trauma-induced emotional and behavioural difficulties,
- who are experiencing repeated educational failures,
- who are experiencing community negligence relating to their family's welfare, quality of spare time activities and community socializing,
- who are experiencing adaptation difficulties resulting from cultural differences or a different educational background,
- who are socially excluded and at risk of being so.

All pupils who require assistance due to individually identified developmental and educational needs are eligible to receive support. Special education is intended for children and young people with disabilities (physically disabled, incl. aphasia, intellectually disabled, blind, visually impaired, deaf, hearing impaired, autistic, incl. Asperger syndrome, with multiple impairments), with social maladjustment or at risk of social maladjustment who require special organisation of teaching and learning processes and working methods. A need of special education is ascertained in a decision issued after a psychological and educational examination is carried out by specialists from guidance and counselling centres for youth and children.

In general, pupils with special educational needs learn together with other pupils either in mainstream schools/nursery schools, integration schools/nursery schools (where all classes/groups are integration classes/groups) or in integration classes in mainstream schools/nursery schools (where classes are either integration or mainstream classes).

Special schools (including residential schools), special education and care centres (with board-



ing facilities and extended rehabilitation programmes) and special sections in mainstream schools are established for pupils who have a written statement recommending special education and whose parents have decided in favour of attendance of this

type of school/section. Depending on the special educational needs and type of disability, pupils with disabilities attend special nursery schools, special primary schools, special lower secondary schools, basic vocational schools and schools preparing for employment, or special general and technical upper-secondary schools.

Special education applies the same teaching methods as mainstream education, although more emphasis is placed on individual work with each pupil. While teachers are free to choose specific methods and forms of work as well as teaching resources, they are required to apply some crucial principles of special education (e.g. the need to adjust teaching activities to abilities and needs of pupils and to existing circumstances, the need to increase the level of difficulty gradually, the need to use demonstration and example in the teaching process).

Bio-Farm visits can support the integration of disadvantaged youth. Attending a farm visit brings particular benefits for teachers, who educate pupils with difficulties in mainstream learning systems. Classes including children and youth with special needs (e.g. refugees, children with migrant background, and children with developmental disorders, learning disabilities or social problems) get intensive and new experience for the group apart from conventional patterns of learning and competing in classrooms. Visits on Bio-farms can support teachers in integrating those children and young people.

Bio-Farm visits can also support the integration of refugee children. The “Learning place Bio-Farm” has a big potential to offer refugee children new perspectives outside their living in refugee camps. Visiting the countryside offers an insight into the European culture and nutritional behaviour.

Farm visits can also address the needs of the wider refugee’s families. There are a lot of opportunities to learn new vocabulary that is connected with the countryside, agriculture and food systems. Furthermore the organic farm sector offers a wide range of working opportunities. This growing economic branch often needs motivated young people - drivers for the box delivery services, salesman, cooks, bakers etc. are all needed to run the farm. Farm visits that show the different working opportunities on the farm can be the first incentive for young refugees to think about organic farms as a working place.



However, to achieve this we require inspiring and equipped farm-educators who can get the messages across to their audience in an engaging way. There are a number of different persons who are involved in farm education and who may benefit from the training course and online portal. These include farmers who have never led visits before; farmers who have done visits before; farm education officers; external coordinators who link the schools and the farms together (often employees of an NGO) as well as school teachers who are involved with visiting farms.

8. Practical advices

Checklist for preparation of a BioFarm visit

- A written, binding confirmation of booking by the school is available, which also shows, that it is a school event.
- Media and material for the preparation of the content I have sent to the teacher or sent.
- My family / employees know about the attendance notice and the business process is coordinated.
- Do I have to organize the visit to the farm myself or are there other persons (eg honorary employees, free educators, employees from the regional environmental center, etc.) who know my company well and which I can entrust with the court visit?
- All necessary materials and equipment are prepared, copied and copied.
- I wondered what court rules are important to me, and it is written on cardboard.
- I know where the children / youngsters can leave their backpacks / school bags and jackets.
- I wondered which toilet the visitors could use.
- An alternative program for bad weather I have laid down.
- A space or space for the break or the snack is prepared.
- I have clarified with the teacher the question of the pauses or the lunch.
- I ordered dairy products from the dairy and dairy associations.
- A first aid kit is provided for cases.

Quelle: http://www.stadtundland-nrw.de/images/stul/pdf/2013_Sonstiges/leitfaden_lob_2013_web.pdf

Other practical advices: <http://www.stadtundland-nrw.de/index.php>

9. Good practice examples

Norway: A Garden for Everyone!

Norway has taken in many minors from different countries who have sought asylum alone, without accompanying adults. To accommodate these young people, mostly boys between the ages of 12 and 17, centers developed in different parts of the country. One of these is in the town of Hol, a mountain area in the county of Buskerud. Here a local farmer, Marit Torsrud Nerol, created an arena for them, integrated in her Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project.

The goal of the project is to create a safe and meaningful activity where the young people experience hope for the future, can use their resources, develop their skills, talents and social competency and gain confidence through mastery of tasks. It should strengthen their identity and contribute to their independence so that they can manage their own lives. There should also be possibilities for them to suggest changes and improvements and learn skills that they can take with them anywhere.

All of these goals were addressed through working together with the farmer and members of the CSA in the vegetable garden. One of the members of the CSA, Anne Marie Nerol, assisted the farmer as an instructor and organizer for the work with the refugee youth. The refugees were also involved in cooking meals together with the Norwegian participants. They did all types of garden work and learned skills of sowing, planting, weeding and harvesting, woven together with knowledge about nutrition and health.

All of the nine young people (6 boys and 3 girls) had a need for contact with adults and many still have contact after the year's project ended. In the original planning for the project, one hour of teaching each week was also to be a part of the activity. However, it was not easy to take them out of the practical tasks. Instead, the adults arranged a trip to the mountains with fishing and an overnight stay in tents where there was room for both conversation about the work on the farm and acquaintance with Norwegian customs and cultural heritage. They took vegetables from the farm with them and cooked meals over an open fire.

This project has shown that community supported biofarms are very valuable arenas for the needs of refugee youth. The youth are happy with the work, and value the informal situation for contact with the local residents and for learning about language and customs in the country.

Vant til å arbeid og samarbeide.



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