

Yard4All - Using the school's yard for ALL child's wellbeing and

development

-a step closer to a more inclusive education-



Dear members of the Yard4All network, we would like to introduce to you the Newsletter no. 2, December 2020.

All the activities during the Yard4All project are concentrated around the aim of bringing together actors from the private sector, the NGO sector, and the educational system with the common belief that inclusive education for sustainability is the foundation of a much-needed hope for a better tomorrow.

Briefly, permaculture can be defined as a growth of agricultural ecosystem in a sustainable way, and introducing permaculture in schools and kids activities bring a lot of benefits: physical and emotional health, rises awareness regarding the planet's problems, learning of new skills (leadership, teamwork), gaining respect for the environment and can provide children with practical experience of sustainable production means, different from traditional horticulture. Further, permaculture gardens represent a rich environment to explore ecological interactions between man and the environment – and thereby explore the science curriculum.

Short-term joint staff training event: How to set-up an inclusive school vegetable garden

For one week (12th November - 16th November 2020) an online training about organic gardening was available for primary teachers/educators, trainers, community professionals, coordinators/directors, other professionals that work directly with children in schools, organizations, associations, communities, and for the partners of the project.

This training was focused on how to build school gardens, what materials are needed, what is necessary to pay

attention to, what are the best seeds and when to seed, good practices, and tips. It aims to give the learner the basic knowledge and skills for them to start their own garden in their schools. Below you can read more about the impressions of the participants, their ideas, feelings, and teachings.

Project duration: 3 years [01.09.2019 - 31.08.2022]

Project coordinator: [Agrupamento Escolas D. Carlos I](https://www.yard4all-project.org/)

To feed your curiosity...

<https://www.yard4all-project.org/>



How was your experience in the Yard4All training?

“To give this permaculture training in the garden was amazing. Everyone was so interested and collaborative. My passion is to think that this will be spread through many schools and countries. This fact makes me very happy because this is one of my purposes in life. Thanks to all of you!” (Isabel Castanheira, Trainer, Portugal)

Isabel Castanheira, established in Sintra in 2007, Quinta dos 7 Nomes was born with no money, but counting on the community generosity and will to create a more sustainable way of living. It all started with a small organic production, but the land was immediately converted to a Permaculture system, according to our permaculture teacher’s design, during the first Introduction Course in Quinta.

Nowadays, Quinta dos 7 Nomes is more than just a farm, an eco-grocery shop, or a learning centre: it's a place where community members get together and share their ideas for a better world, for a more sustainable life, for a happier living.

Isabel Castanheira first studied Philosophy in College and taught in high-schools for many years. Then spent some time in publicity and advertising business and being part of that frantic world was probably one of the reasons that made her change her life to a simpler one in such a definitive way. Twenty years ago she started learning about organic agriculture with David Rilhas, one of the first organic farmers in Portugal. Since then, working towards a more sustainable life for the people and for the planet has been her main goal. Besides being a member of the board of directors and the founder of Quinta dos 7 Nomes ecological cooperative, Isabel is also a teacher for Organic Agriculture Courses.

"The idea of starting an urban garden that is based on the principles of permaculture is very fascinating. Not only the students can learn the basic principles of permaculture, but also they have the opportunity to put into practice what they've learned."

(Scoică Ghiorghita, Romania)

I've learned the basic notions regarding permaculture and the essential steps for starting an urban garden. We even tried to make worm compost and we also made a plan for the garden. We asked the students to bring at school all the organic materials (such as potato, apple, carrots peel, pepper with no seeds) that they could carry from their houses. The brown and green material was collected from the school's garden. The compost looks good, but it is not ready yet due to the fact there only has been almost 30 days since we started this project.

"We met a kind, enthusiastic, helpful team in the online space, it was a pleasure to participate in that useful training which had a magical atmosphere."

(Nikolett Gulya, Hungary)

Primarily, we learned a kind of holistic approach, the fact that the garden is a system where every little detail, a tiny creature has a role. The same goes for the learning by drawing course, if we observe the small details and deal with them enough, our works of art will get better and better. The other thing that I had learned and have been practising ever since, is to do more things that make us happy.

"What I liked most about the training, was the adaptability of the trainers and how the small impediments were solved. It was an intense training, full of useful information presented in a balanced way, combining both theoretical and practical aspects."

(Surdica Mădălina, Romania)

We learned many useful things about what permaculture really is, how to recognize the different types of soil and how to take advantage of its properties, how to make compost (warm and cold compost) and how long it takes to transform into good earth. We also learned how to make the beds according to the Sun's position and where the North Pole is. Important aspects that we had/have to take into consideration in preparing our garden. Another

interesting part of the training was the lesson about drawing and how important it is in teaching-learning different subjects and developing students' creativity.

"My experience in the Yard4All training has been amazing. At the beginning of the training, I was frightened because I didn't know anything about the organic garden. Now, I can say that I know something about it."

([Antonia Madrid Olmo](#), Spain)

I learned about the process of preparing the garden, and the first thing that we did was to recover the soil with animal manure and green manure (clovers and legumes as green fertilizer). Then, we built a worm compost. We used an old bathtub and students brought raw residues from their homes.

"Very enriching training, despite the context. Good dynamic of the speakers who managed to overcome the difficulties of a distance learning course. I appreciate the motivation of the speakers despite the distance.

Congratulations!"

([Clément Carpentier](#), France)

"The workshop was a gratifying experience for me as it was the first time that we had discussed with teachers from the countries involved in the peer-to-peer support model."

(Joana Dias Alexandre, Portugal)

