

Community Gardening for Refugees:

Organizing Volunteer Support in Hildesheim (Germany)

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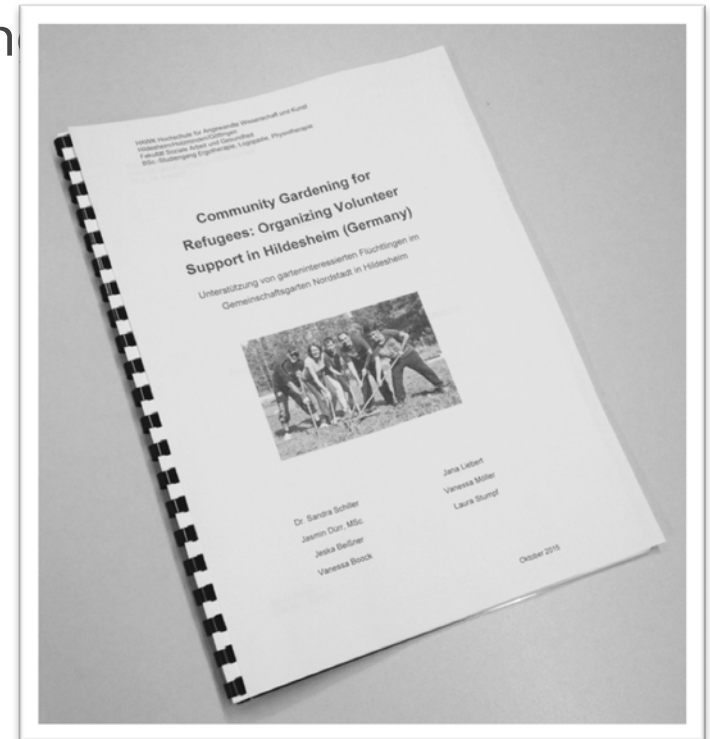
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[s] Structure

- General information
- Background information on Hildesheim
- Community Garden Nordstadt in Hildesheim
- Occupation and social health with the focus on gardening
- Possibilities for implementation
- Reflection of the project group

[S] General information

- Aim of the concept: to act like an interface between the mentioned community garden and refugees in Hildesheim interested in gardening
- primarily written for volunteers



[s] General information

- how can refugees be integrated into the garden?
- which occupational opportunities does the community garden offer and how can social contacts be established for the refugees?
- format of the concept: a booklet clearly structured into various sections (33 pages)

[S] General information

- the community garden and the volunteer networks will distribute the booklet
- information is given about the current situation, laws and asylum procedures
- it explains the connection between occupation, social health and gardeners
- important contacts and web pages are listed, so that the concept can be implemented immediately

[s] Background information



Picture: Homepage Pro Asyl

- Europe → increasing number of refugees
 - Hildesheim → 102,584 citizens
 - 1,400 refugees living in Hildesheim

 - Common problems in country of refuge:
 - language issues
 - new rules
 - different laws
 - fears
- } negative consequences for health
- occupational deprivation, occupational inequality

[S] Background information

Housing Situation for refugees in Hildesheim

- three big refugee shelters
 - the first for refugees allocated to the city → 190 people
 - the second shelter opened in 2014 → 150
 - the third shelter opened in early October 2015 → 500
- current housing concept for refugees in Hildesheim → moving into decentralized housing after three months in the shelter
- currently 260 refugees live in their own flats
- situation of refugees → many people and high fluctuation in the shelters
- decentralized accommodation → support integration, but refugees are more difficult to reach

(Asyl e.V. & Flüchtlingsrat Niedersachsen, 2014)

[s] Background information



Picture: http://www.hildesheimer-allgemeine.de/fileadmin/_processe_d/_csm_Fluechtlingsinitiati_462392_9604c77ec5.jpg

Social networks in Hildesheim

- **Asyl e.V.** → advise on legal issues & asylum application
 - **neighbourhood help associations** → organized by the church
 - **Flux** → support by leisure activities & help with clothing donations
 - **Pangea** → run by students, support in daily activities
- benefit from our concept



Picture: Flux-
hildesheim.de



Picture:
<https://iqhildesheimdotcom.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/pangea.png>



Picture:
https://pbs.twimg.com/profile_images/473837771619315712/klACdyqJ_400x400.png

[s] Community garden



- initiated by another student group, who presented their work at the ENOTHE meeting in York in 2013
- located in Hildesheim Nordstadt, which is a district with a low socioeconomic status
- the garden is approximately 400 to 500 square meters
- two raised garden beds and several round-scale garden beds
- the garden can be used to run diverse workshops



Pictures: Volunteer association „city blooming e.V.“

[s] Occupation and social health with the focus on gardening

- The different problems of refugees can negatively influence their health
- Findings from research into horticulture would suggest that gardening may be a beneficial occupation for refugees
- More research is required



Picture:

http://www.shz.de/img/kiel/crop7803076/9366139952-cv16_9-h335/23-59737856-23-64722330-1411920289.jpg

(Bishop & Purcell, 2013, Liebig 2014)

[s] Occupation and social health with the focus on gardening

Benefits of gardening activities:

- Facilitate the development of social networks and friendship
- Opportunity to learn and share ideas
- Promote an intercultural and peaceful communication
- Improve the participants' language-skills

[s] Occupation and social health with the focus on gardening

Benefits of gardening activities:

- Promote a sense of connectedness
- Promote participation and integration
- Relate to the resources of refugees



Picture: http://www.kreiszeitung-wochenblatt.de/resources/mediadb/2015/08/25/77704_preview.jpg?1440492977

(Nosetti, 2009, Baier 2013)

[s] Occupation and social health with the focus on gardening

Benefits of gardening activities:

- Is reminiscent of home → can grow crops that are native to their home country
- An activity they engage in for enjoyment or relaxation
- Offer a structure of the day, a sense of self-confidence and self-efficacy

Picture: Homepage Pro Asyl



(Nosetti, 2009, p. 5-6 & Bishop & Purcell, 2013, p. 266)

[s] Occupation and social health with the focus on gardening

Benefits of gardening activities:

- Can forget about their problems and can switch off their minds
 - Can provide a buffer to stressors
 - Important for refugees to be able to take care of themselves
- Horticulture can be viewed as a purposeful and goal-orientated activity for refugees with a positive impact on their social health

Possibilities for the implementation

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implementation with only volunteers	implementation as a concept supported by OTs
+ no funding required	- funding required
+ huge willingness to help in various organisations and individuals in Hildesheim	+ huge willingness to help in various organisations and individuals in Hildesheim
+integration of people who suffer from occupational deprivation	+integration of people who suffer from occupational deprivation
+ the integration process can be supported	+ the integration process can be supported
- specialized therapeutic knowledge is missing in the voluntary work	+ Occupational therapists can use their specialist knowledge →focus on occupation →integration of the environmental context → empathetic relationship building →knowledge about psychiatric symptoms and traumata
+ volunteers do not need extensive specific training	+ volunteers could be trained by occupational therapists (see above) and work more effectively

[S] Possibilities for implementation

- **Financing**: There are various possibilities to obtain financial support for an OT-run implementation, which we described in detail in our concept
- The implementation guided by OTs would be the optimal support of the refugees – but funding needs to be secured for it

Reflection of the group

[s]

-Positive experiences-

- exchange with many people
- theoretical basis for working with refugees in the garden
- concept can be adapted and used in different settings
- visiting other intercultural gardens → positive effect of gardening
- personal contact with refugees → need for projects

-Challenges-

- different expectations by people → expected practical work
- difficult to work out the organisational basis → the community garden is still evolving

[s] Sources

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[S] Thank you for your attention!

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