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MAY 22 • ISSUE NO. 1

HEALING gardener

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One of our first steps was to meet and discuss about how to organize the work to be done



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WORDS FROM THE EDITOR



We are irretrievably linked to nature. Although we might think that life in the cities has diluted the bond, that magical and vibrant connection is still there. There are many studies that support that surrounding ourselves with nature brings us benefits, both physically and mentally. We, the Healing Gardener team, firmly think so, being this initiative a clear example of the benefits that we can enjoy just carrying a more natural life.

Nature forces us to slow down our frenetic day to day, makes us see the world from another perspective, slower pace, where everything has its time to be. It helps us to accept reality as it is, but encourages us to work to keep on improving it.

This has been the inspiration for the birth of the Healing Gardener project.

WHAT IS HEALING GARDENER?

Healing Gardener is a European project co-financed by the Erasmus+ program (Agreement number: 2021-1-ES01-KA220-ADU-000030259) which started this year and that will last until the end of 2023. With this initiative we are going to design an educative program to train people with different types of disabilities, so that they are able to establish and maintain a therapeutic garden.

The students will learn the key points of the Biophilic design (integration of natural elements in our daily life to improve well-being) through the "learn by doing" methodology: during a complete year, they will work to establish a therapeutic garden that the partners will use for therapeutic purposes and to promote health and wellness. Thus, the participants in the course will have a unique opportunity to help other people also with special needs by creating a useful and innovative green care tool that will remain at partners' facilities for long.

Nature is an important part of us





The visits will not only be face-to-face but also virtual: the course participants will design and implement some virtual tours to the gardens, so anyone can enjoy them, no matter where they are!

We hope that more and more people get familiar with the Biophilic design, increasing the awareness about the benefits that nature brings us, learning that we all must take care of it, because it is the only way we will take care of our future.

For the Healing Gardener team, green is not only a colour but an attitude to life!



The COVID pandemic, apart from many other changes, has provoked a new need: to offer open training and therapeutic environments where the safety of the participants can be ensured. Let's take advantage of this opportunity to create a new concept of "classroom", a meeting point, that offers a new horizon to students and services' users, motivating them to advance in the achievement of their objectives. In addition, we are going to write a user guide to learn how to make the most of the garden as a source of wellness.

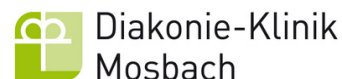
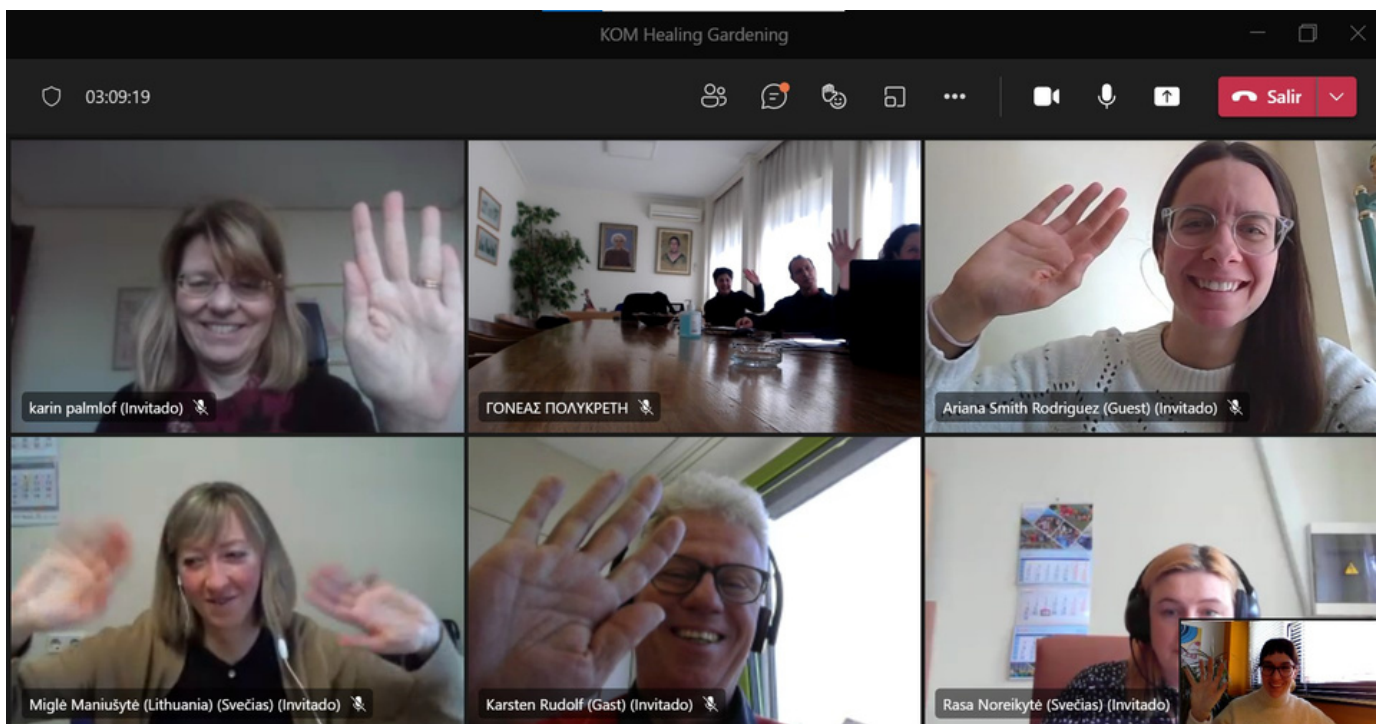
We are five organizations from Spain, Germany, Greece and Lithuania working together to reach the same aim: offer an appealing and useful training offer to adults with special needs. Continuing with the European spirit, we are going to establish a European network of therapeutic gardeners, so they can keep in touch and promote new sustainable and positive initiatives from the social, economic and environmental point of view.

In order to be able to enjoy the benefits of nature even indoors, we plan to develop a portfolio with proposals to integrate the Biophilic design principles in our homes, hospitals, healthcare centres, workplaces, etc. Moreover, the students will receive training to become official guides of the gardens, being the best possible ambassadors to give visibility to this innovative tool.

MEETING THE HEALING GARDENER TEAM

On 23rd February 2022, we had our first meeting, done online due to covid travelling restrictions. For the Healing Gardener team, it was an excellent opportunity to know each other and exchange expectations and questions about the work to do together.

The group is coordinated by the Spanish organization **Fundación INTRAS**, working mainly with people with severe and prolonged mental health challenges. **Jardines Terapéuticos Palmlöf** is an organization also from Spain, being the experts on therapeutic gardening that are designing the Healing Gardener training program. **Theotokos Foundation**, an experienced welfare organization, is the partner from Greece, being specialised in people with developmental intellectual disabilities and autism spectrum disorders. **Diakonie-Klinik Mosbach**, the partner from Germany, is a clinic offering psychiatry, psychotherapy, neuropsychiatry and psychotherapy. The last organization in joining our consortium is **Valakupiai Rehabilitation Centre**, a public entity from Lithuania offering medical, vocational and social rehabilitation services to people with disabilities.





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