

International Gardens Göttingen (registered association)

www.internationale-gaerten.de

The concept of the “International Gardens“, also called “Intercultural Gardens”, was born and put into practice for the first time in Göttingen, Germany, Lower Saxony, in 1996. This was made possible by the initiatives of war refugees and political refugees, migrants and German families in the Geismar district of Göttingen. The first groups of members of this project were from Afghanistan, Bosnia, Ethiopia, Germany, Iraq and Iran.

The central idea behind starting the initiative was to share solidarity with refugees and to help them to integrate into the German society with their own initiative and unique ways.

For some migrants, relocation means new social opportunities. For others, it could mean fear of the unknown future, resentments about personal loss or trauma. At the International Gardens each of them is provided with opportunities to learn and evolve, starting from his or her individual situation. New chances of active engagement within a safe space are made available, through garden-based and self-designed educational work. The concept of “empowerment” and “sharing” is at the core of this mutual integration network.

The gardens and the gardening activities aim to provide a shared platform, a meeting place for international understanding, mutual cooperation, interchanging ideas and help. The association aims to establish, sustain and develop a two-way-integration within its initiatives, so that every per-

son gets the opportunity to achieve new ways of self-expression. From this platform, newcomers can integrate and grow along with new social networks.

In 1997, project members from four garden projects from different regions of Germany formed a network of regional International Gardens.

In 1998, a formally registered association “Internationale Gärten e. V. Göttingen” / International Gardens Göttingen was born. Currently, the association has 65 members from 25 countries of origin, individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds and across all ages! Approximately 40% of them are local people.

With the help of committed members, many job opportunities have been facilitated. The project gardens are sites of local community networking. For its members – both immigrant and German, the International Gardens provide a platform for wider fields of civic engagement. A large number of social workers, disseminators and students from universities across the country have been involved through related projects in community service. The International Gardens in Göttingen has been the parent project and model for many intercultural gardens.

Since 1999, the popularity of the garden-based integration approach has led to the creation of more than 400 new intercultural gardens all across Germany. Besides, the concept of the Interna-

tional Gardens in Göttingen has been adopted by various federal projects, such as “Social City” or “Agenda 21” projects. The International Gardens as a concept, is increasingly gaining importance for the revitalization of neighbourhoods as green spaces and contributing to more peaceful neighbourhoods. Similar garden projects have been established in Austria and Switzerland as well!

As a nationwide recognized project of intercultural work and civic engagement, the International Gardens in Göttingen have had an important influence on many cities that host related garden projects – regarding ways of sustainable and self-empowering civil engagement. The association is a model initiative for peaceful cooperation amidst the social and cultural diversity of the host country, Germany.



20 Jahre Feier



Eröffnung Göttingen Geismar 1996



Garten Gemeinschaft 20 Jahre Feier 2018