

Interreg



EUROPEAN UNION

North-West Europe

IMAGINE

European Regional Development Fund

THEMATIC PRIORITY



INNOVATION





IMAGINE

Inclusive Market **AG**riculture
Incubator in **N**orth-west **E**urope

THE **P**ROJECT

IMAGINE aims to tackle youth unemployment by providing sustainable job prospects in the horticulture sector, more specifically for young people (15-34 years old) who are NEET - Not in Education, Employment or Training - in (peri-) urban areas of North-West Europe.

In these places, horticulture, urban agriculture and short food supply chains are growing rapidly and require considerable low-skilled labour. However, job entry rates post-training are currently only 20%. Indeed, significant barriers remain, including lack of access to land and weak NEETs empowerment.

Local organisations can help to overcome these issues by facilitating free access to their vacant land and by involving young people using an innovative co-production methodology.

IMAGINE will therefore support the development, testing and implementation of different social incubation models (access to land and support) for young people in urban and peri-urban horticulture on the outskirts of London, in central Belgium, in Paris, in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg and in Eindhoven.

The objective is to create a transnational network of those working on social innovation issues in urban and peri-urban horticulture to ensure long-term results and help other organisations to replicate the model. The transnational approach is necessary to build on diverse experiences in different contexts. It will enable us to compare the results, evaluate them and draw conclusions.

The proportion of NEETs varies from 9% (in The Netherlands and Luxembourg) to 14% in the United Kingdom, 16% in Belgium and 18% in France. At the same time, job opportunities exist for low-skilled people in a growing horticulture sector often as part of short food supply chains. Since 2012, the number of entrepreneurs in this sector has increased by 500%. Moreover, in horticulture, the density of jobs per surface unit is 10 to 20 times higher than in traditional agriculture.

Between 2013 and 2017, the amount of land dedicated to horticulture has increased by 5% per year. Moreover, five times as many people undertook training in horticulture as compared to 2012. Despite the obvious potential for new and more jobs in the horticultural sector, the proportion of those completing training and entering work remains as low as 20% as already stated. This can be explained by several factors:

1. Young people are sometimes passive recipients of training which does not empower them to achieve sustainable integration on the job market. Indeed, most public services, are top-down in nature. A negative impact of this approach can be the lack of recognition and utilisation of the value and skills of NEETs.
2. Most of the current training offer is targeted at future managers of horticultural SME's and not horticultural workers. However, NEETs are often low-skilled, so they need training and job offers adapted to their profile.
3. Even though horticulture is a high-potential labour-intensive sector, SMEs in the sector face difficulties in recruitment. Indeed, in North-West Europe, and notably in peri-urban areas, horticultural SMEs often struggle to expand because of the very high pressure on arable land due to increasing urbanisation. The price of land has multiplied three- or four-fold over the last 15 years. Unused publicly owned land can be made available to meet this demand, whilst at the same time meeting multiple policy objectives of local authorities (e.g. creating local job opportunities for NEETs, local food supply, community development etc.).



THE OBJECTIVES

Our overall objective is to improve the situation of young NEETs and to work with them to overcome the obstacles they face.

The approach is structured into 3 aspects :

1. As the usual training offer for NEETs does not match their needs, IMAGINE proposes an innovative model based on a co-production approach, making it possible to respond more effectively to the needs of young people. It strongly involves young people and strengthens their skills, competences and talents.
2. This methodology is applied in 6 pilot projects, representing three different social incubation models, involving public and private actors. "Incubation" means that diverse actors with complementary knowledge and expertise work together. The interaction of these actors from different sectors promotes the emergence of the social innovation process. Here are the models that will be applied :
 - a. Public-private partnership – Applied in Namur (Belgium) and in Moussy-le-Neuf (France).
 - b. Social enterprise – Applied in Eindhoven (Netherlands) and in Luxembourg.
 - c. 100% public – Applied in Surrey (United Kingdom) and in Paris (France).

Through the six pilot projects (Namur, Moussy-le-Neuf, Eindhoven, Luxembourg, Surrey and Paris), IMAGINE will combine the expertise and know-how of local authorities, employment support services, horticulture companies and experts in network building.

3. Project partners will develop a series of tools to enable interested organisations to replicate the IMAGINE model on their land. In addition, a transnational network focused on social innovation issues in the urban and peri-urban horticulture will be created to maximise the multiplier effect and provide recommendations at different policy levels.



THE PARTNERS

Regional and local authorities



Bureau économique de la Province de Namur (BE)

Provision of land in business parks and experience of European projects.

➔ www.bep.be

Lead partner



Moussy-Le-Neuf (FR)

Peri-urban municipality – experience in organic market gardening to supply the school canteen.

➔ www.moussy-le-neuf.fr



Surrey County Council (UK)

Regional authority - development and recognized expertise of the co-production model Organisations, businesses and local associations dedicated to supporting job seekers.

➔ www.surreycc.gov.uk

Organisations, businesses and local associations dedicated to job seeking support



Paysans - Artisans (BE)

Cooperative and citizen movement that brings together farmers, small processors and consumers around a shared vision of agriculture and short food circuits.

➔ www.paysans-artisans.be



FOREM (BE)

Expertise in employment policy, training (including in horticulture) and continued support to job seekers.

➔ www.leforem.be



Association Action & Transition (FR)

Recognised expertise in addressing youth unemployment as a service delivery arm of the municipality with relation to food production and distribution.

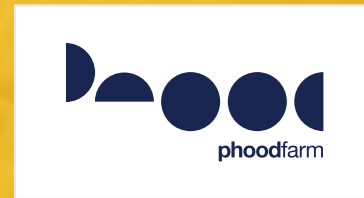
➔ www.action-et-transition.org



Forum pour l'emploi (LU)

Recognised expertise in training and supporting jobseekers, in particular with the organic market gardening social enterprise “am Gaertchen”.

➔ www.fpe.lu



Phood Farm(NL)

Social enterprise and expertise in combining vocational rehabilitation with horticulture.

➔ www.phoodfarm.org



Lycée Technique Agricole Ettelbruck (LU)

Recognised expertise in agronomics and horticulture with a pedagogical concept based on linking schools to horticultural businesses.

➔ www.lta.lu

Partner specialised in collaborative organisational models



Association PALME (FR)

Expertise in the creation and coordination of transnational networks.

➔ www.palme-asso.eu

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

We want to expand our network so that as many organizations as possible can apply IMAGINE model on their territory. If you are interested, we would be happy to discuss with you.

Feel free to contact us for more information.

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