

# National Report

## Community Gardens and Climate Change in the Czech Republic

A review of Community Gardens' activities in climate change adaptation, environmental education and their potential for future climate strategies.

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## 1. Introduction

In the modern history of the Czech Republic, community gardens have been a trend for at least the last 10 years. In 2012, one of the first two community gardens opened in Prague; social company Kokoza was also involved with various partners from municipalities, non-profit organizations and businesses.

According to data from the map named “Mapko.cz”, there are 137 community gardens in the whole Czech Republic, and 68 are in the capital of Prague. Although from Kokoza's experiences, there are around 200 community gardens in the Czech Republic which are not listed on the online map. Since 2014, anybody can access and find the nearest community garden.

### 1.1. Social and ecological perspective of community gardens

In 2018, Kokoza prepared a document called Mapping, a trend analysis of urban community gardens for the City of Prague. There were 24 active community gardens at that time. According to outcomes of mapping and meetings with community garden coordinators, as well as with district operators, it appears that there is a demand for new ground that could be used for community gardening. The social benefit – meeting with neighbours – is proving to be a key motivation for people to get involved. The mapping also shows that each community garden has a different character that reflects its founder, although some elements are common. The social function of community gardens prevails, and it is also one of the primary motivators for participating in community gardens.

Following the Smart Cities strategies, the next step could be to set key indicators that will make it possible to more accurately measure and define the functioning of community gardens, both from a community and ecological point of view. Community gardens can significantly prevent future waste (composting organic material from households).

Climate change is not a priority topic in community gardens in the Czech Republic for their founders and members, so far there are social and local issues being perceived as more important. But, according to the findings of the document named *Platforma pro modrou a zelenou infrastrukturu* (Platform for blue and green infrastructure), community gardens are:

- One of the elements of green and blue infrastructure, which urban dwellers bring a wide range of benefits. They represent an opportunity to support the development of urban greenery.
- They can be built temporarily on unused land, brownfields, school premises, gaps or even as part of Green roofs. The community contributes to improvement.
- an essential part of urban adaptation to climate change. Gardening is beneficial not only for its members.
- Not just about growing, they create space for leisure and a place for natural meetings. Gardens encourage participation in social engagement.
- Most community gardens are established by motivated individuals or groups of people. It makes sense to support their further development by the municipality.

Therefore climate change started to be addressed by authorities and supported by systems with higher levels of priority.

## 1.2. Organizations and supporters of community gardens

Community gardens and their support are part of the grant proposals from the City of Prague and other municipalities around the Czech Republic. Also the private sector such as Via Foundation, dm-drogerie markt GmbH & Co, Kaufland or TESCO support community gardeners both financially and expertly.

Although we don't have any kind of association to help and gather community gardens in our country, the social company Kokoza is a key organization in this field in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The impact-driven organization Kokoza is offering services such as consultations or direct education to urban gardens and their founders. They can help with the initial

phase in different fields of knowledge, such as community management, finances, growing and composting and others. They are able to provide gardens even with growing beds, composters and other tools. Kokoza also holds regular meetings called *Oddénky* (Rhizomes) where community garden managers and other people involved in the community garden movement can meet and learn about news in this field. Kokoza holds the database of contacts and communication.

Climate change and solutions to this problem are part of the projects social companies develop together with partners from municipalities or private companies, but there are not any special climate change education and programs just for community gardens yet. Kokoza's work is based on delivering solutions to specific environmental problems directly impacting climate change: *"Lots of organic material in cities ends up on dump neo incinerators and no more is used (40 % of the mixed volume)."* (Plán odpadového hospodářství České republiky pro období 2015–2024, 2021) Organic material is perceived as waste.

## 2. Current Situation in the Respective Country

### 2.1. Adaptation to Climate change

Community gardeners definitely observe changes due to climate change. More than 70 % have noticed a longer period of drought, and more than 30 % realized more pests and diseases and an earlier beginning of the season. Strong wind and spring frosts were also observed.

According to the questionnaire, most of the gardens are using at least some of the garden techniques for climate change adaptation, the biggest part of them is already composting, most of the gardens do not use any synthetic fertilizers and some of them support using green fertilizing. According to rainwater management, most gardens use mulch and do active rainwater collection. Some of the gardens use drip irrigation or do not water at all.

Data shows that most of the gardens already use the most climate-friendly gardening techniques such as natural flora and wild insect corners and gardens without any synthetic fertilizers. Almost half of the gardens don't use peat, do not do digging and use only surface soil treatment and use ecological plants and seeds. There were other

gardening techniques mentioned such as different types of composting (including human manure in composting toilets), horse manure fertilizing, growing in raised beds or sector mowing, beehives in the garden, olla irrigation vessels, care and consistent restoration of the trees, growing perennial, self-seeding and low-demanding vegetables, cooperation with forest kindergarten, planting of meadow flowers, seed production for local collection Semínkovna or green roof

Other non-growing opportunities were mentioned such as using hands or accessibility when gardeners can commute on foot or by bike, not networked land - wood heating only. Sharing ideas about natural gardening on the notice board or using ideas from the FB group.

Some of the gardens have plans for the future, most of the plans are concerned with rainwater management or the implementation of new nature-friendly growing techniques. Few gardens mentioned that they do not have any plans because of internal capacities or public interest or problems with neighbours.

6 gardens didn't have any climate change-friendly activities in the past, other gardens did have a wide range of activities such as less frequent mowing of the lawn or having a part with no mowing at all, one mentioned mulching. Other gardens mentioned cladding of the iron structure - a collection of rainwater and at the same time providing a shaded area. There was mentioned also gazebo as a source of rainwater, drainage for moisturizing, separation toilet, planting a large number of trees and shrubs, water abstraction from the Vltava riverbed, drought-loving plants, restoration of the old well, installation of the pump, bio-corridor for small wild animals, hen breeding, willow constructions, replacement of roofing and extension of the pergola, planting of a hedge for shading. Beehives in the garden or even operation of an environmentally friendly forest club for preschool children

All community garden coordinators (participants Focus Group) claim that they already understood that contribution of community gardens against climate change is limited, however *"it is great to do at least something"*.

There are two ways of contributing. The first thing is recultivation and building green infrastructure in the town. *"Recultivation is one of the most important things. We moved our garden three times already and we always have some concrete*

*brownfield...*" (participant Focus Group) It is well known that green infrastructure helps to lower the temperature in the city and has other positive impacts. Moreover, community gardens can serve as a place to spend time, relax, have barbecues with friends, etc. in general – "it is improving the quality of life of locals." (participant Focus Group) It was mentioned that *"community gardens can become even a part of brownfield recultivation"* (participant Focus Group) – in this specific case, CG was a part of the project for a new park in the city. Also, creating a community garden can reopen some parks/orchards that used to be closed to the public. *"Our community garden is using an old orchard that was closed to the public. Now, everyone can go there and use this piece of nature within the city structure..."* (participant Focus Group)

The second way of contribution is strongly connected with sustainable behaviour and specific ways of growing widely used within the community gardens. People attracted by the idea of growing in the city structures/close to cities are usually those who are aware of climate change and related topics. Therefore, principles used in the community gardens are almost always climate/nature-friendly – that is the direct impact – no fertilizers, composting, rainwater, etc. The indirect impact is much more important – involves people's much better understanding of principles of growth, a better understanding of the "value" of natural products, and often changes the perception of their own consumption, waste management, etc. In this case, the community garden stimulates the interest of people in environmental topics even without any specific events/direct activities. Those would only fasten and strengthen the process of being educated.

## 2.2. Environmental education

75 % of questionnaire participants see a very high potential of CG as a place for environmental education. More than 75 % of the questionnaire participants also mention that they already use non-formal education activities such as learning by observation or learning through interaction between participants. For example, gardeners consult each other - workshops take place spontaneously or exchange of experience takes place naturally at work or during subsequent rest/meal (by the fire).

Sometimes, one of the gardeners did a workshop for others and the public when it came to a topic that took more time.

Only approximately one-quarter of participants say that they organize meetings or workshops and even fewer gardens invite external experts or have cooperation with local educational and other environmental educational organizations. But the good news is that almost half of them are planning to invite external experts or establish cooperation with educational organizations in the future.

If it comes to activities already performed in the gardens, these were mentioned in our questionnaire: panel discussion on Living landscape AFO 57, workshops about permaculture and composting, environmental education for local schools and kindergartens, sharing how to compost correctly, beekeeping, sharing the seeds, plant reproduction, educational materials available in the garden, swap of seeds and plants, excursions with a tasting of edible weeds, screening of movies focused on climate change, collecting knowledge from gardeners, excursions for children from suburban camps as well as for foreigners, market during Earth Day, lectures about herbs and other edible plants, discussion with neighbours.

Besides the growing and climate change-related topics, some gardens also organized other educational activities like sociocracy and Dragon Dreaming or recycling and upcycling and self-sufficiency in general.

30 % of gardens already organize environmental educational events for schools and kindergartens, 5 gardens also organize education for companies, more than 50 % of gardens organize open door events for the public and some of the gardens accept internships and volunteers.

Great is that more than 60 % of participants of the questionnaire would like to run more educational activities. Almost 70 % of them would like to have financial support, almost half demand consulting and some of the participants would like to have training. A reason why the rest don't want to run more educational activities is mostly that the gardens don't have a professional background and it's more or less free time activity. In two cases there is no public interest and one of the gardens is not public.

Almost half of the participants mentioned the biggest barrier to more educational activities was the lack of time for the members. Approximately one-third mentioned a lack of partners, low public interest and missing support from the municipality.

When considering setting up a community garden, the participants of the questionnaire see it as the most important available land and financial support. Most helpful in transforming community gardens into environmental and climate change education centers is according to our participant's legal environment and public support on different levels, public interest and PR of CG, two participants mentioned coordinator with enough time and finances for coordination and two participants mentioned greater involvement of children and schools and teaching children the gardening and cultivation methods from early childhood. There were also other suggestions such as stronger links with organizations which already perform such activities or specific equipment such as a summer house and base for educational activities or people for accounting.

The community gardeners (participants Focus Group) have only limited experience with any kind of educational activities conducted in their community gardens – currently, it is not a common approach even if it is perceived to be very aspirational. Coordinators are rather focused on more “down-to-earth” activities like coordination, taking care of standard processes of community gardens, etc.

Respondents (participants Focus Group) can divide educational activities of community gardens into several groups – active–opened, active–closed, and passive.

By **active-opened activities**, we mean activities focused on active education e.g. seminars that are opened to the public, not only members of the garden. These activities can cover a wide portfolio of topics, e.g., correct ways of gardening. Respondents (participants Focus Group) also mentioned visits of children from kindergartens, when children can observe the garden, get some information about growing, taste naturally grown vegetables, etc. – CG in this sense shows that fruits and vegetables are not grown in the supermarket. However, these active-opened activities quite often suffer from a lack of propagation and low interest from the public.

**Active-closed activities** are focused just on the members of the community garden itself. It is much more personal and usually focused on onboarding. CG coordinator or

someone experienced usually explains the rules of the CG and advises how to use the soil in an efficient way. This “onboarding” usually also covers the basic rules of sustainability and climate-sensitive behaviour (which are an inseparable part of CGs). Respondents also mentioned sharing experience and knowledge among community garden members – those more experienced often work as “lectors” for those inexperienced and help them behave and grow efficiently. This is informal, but a very efficient and spontaneous way of education.

**Passive activities** seem to be used in the majority of community gardens. Basically, we talk about using the ways of sustainable behaviour and climate-friendly things – e.g., using rainwater, composting, etc. Community gardens usually add some information about these things and the reasons why they are done in this way – so that everyone (not only members) can just walk through and be informed – CG serves as a kind of sustainable behaviour museum.

All respondents (participants Focus Group) agreed that community gardens are suitable places to start with environmental education. This fact is closely connected with the perceived mission of community gardens – to offer people the possibility to go back to their roots and live in a little bit more sustainable way by growing their own food. As the space for growing is usually very limited, people are pushed to use it in an intense way. That stimulates their need to look for new ways, efficient, sustainable ways of growing. It was mentioned that sometimes it happens, that after one or two years, members just go to another community garden that offers more space for growing.

It is observed that community garden members develop themselves as well. It is not a formal, driven process, but going to the community garden, talking to other members, and seeing the advantages of growing slowly “educates” people and shifts their perception towards sustainability and being environmentally friendly. *“I can already see this happening. Our members get more and more involved..just by being members of our garden, talking to others, etc.”* (participant Focus Group) However, respondents also admit that community gardens most probably attract people who are already “in category” – open to adopting this kind of behaviour.

All the respondents feel that this potential should be used in a sensitive way – not too pushy. The people/members should not be pushed to follow the rules, use specifically

set ways of growing. *“I can imagine, when you try to push the rules, many people can feel uncomfortable and reject whole idea...”* (participant Focus Group) They should rather see the advantages of these nature-friendly things and start behaving like that on their own.

In general, coordinators are rather open to a kind of non-formal education by using current community garden structures. Any significant changes in terms of seating and technical equipment are not necessary. The aspirational idea is to use the current setting and advantages of community gardens and turn those into strengths.

To become a place for this kind of education, community gardens must overcome the barriers mentioned in the next topic (next page). However, in general, they must:

- Find ways how to stabilize the routine of community gardens – have a stable member base, lower the fluctuation
- Find ways how to efficiently motivate volunteers in the team – so that their added value is higher and stable
- Have a possibility to share experience and get advice or to cooperate more with other community gardens within the same region
- Find experts in the field of environment, sustainability, growing, climate change, etc.
- Find people experienced in the field of coordination and propagation. All educational activities would significantly increase the amount of work connected with preparation and organising.

There are no specific needs regarding technical equipment. Coordinators mentioned, that they can get what they need for any one-off event. The only thing mentioned (across all respondents) was some shading – so that they can have some calmer place to talk, sit, rest – that would be suitable even for kindergarten excursions, etc.

### **2.2.1. Potential obstacles to environmental education**

There are various obstacles that make the educational initiatives quite difficult:

**Situation of community gardens is not stable.** Coordinators are usually people who are employed full-time and CG is just their volunteer part-time job. Therefore, they cannot be fully focused on CG development. The same issue relates to the members of CGs – it is extremely difficult to motivate them to do anything “on top” – to support the CG, etc.

**Fluctuation** – CG members' base is not stable at all. Some people stay for one year, some people stay longer. However, for the coordinators this can be a serious issue – they are pushed to keep looking for new members (to be able to keep the cash flow of the community garden) and therefore they do not have time enough to develop other things and activities.

**Missing coordination** – already mentioned before. Coordinators would appreciate a kind of organisation or platform to share their experience, look for advice or share some activities. It is obvious, that e.g., educational activities could be shared among more community gardens.

**Lack of knowledge** – is one of the most serious barriers to educational activities. Coordinators are usually not experts on the topic of environmental education and therefore need someone who is an expert in the field. And if there is someone like this, it is very difficult to motivate him/her to be active in a community garden (and for free in the best-case scenario). Therefore, the case of paid “experts” who would share the experience with more CGs is welcomed.

**Lack of capacity for coordination** – regular educational activities would be something “on top” of all the activities done and currently, the coordinators do not have enough time to add one more activity. *“If you want me to start educating, just give me some expert in the field and someone who might organise everything. I am already busy with the garden...”* (participant Focus Group)

**Propagation** – community gardens in the Czech Republic, in general, suffer from low propagation and public communication. *“We tried to use Facebook, we tried to have some fliers...but we are amateurs in this field...so our garden is not well known...”* (participant Focus Group) This is mostly caused by a lack of marketing/PR knowledge of the coordinators and insufficient funds dedicated to this area.

## 2.3. Cooperations with NGOs and decision makers

According to data from our questionnaire, only 25 % of the gardens are involved in formal or informal cooperation with other organizations dealing with climate change. These organizations were in contact with Kokoza, AMPI, other community gardens, Permakultura (org.), Institute of Circular Economics, Environmental education centre ENVIC, PULec, z.s., Farmer's school and Association of social responsibility.

50 % of gardens are involved in formal or non-formal cooperation with local people with decision-making power. 3 gardens mentioned land rental directly from the municipality, other 3 gardens got another support regarding the land, for example, support when searching for land, 7 gardens got financial support from their municipality, one of them got EU funding support, 6 gardens mentioned various contact or support from their municipality. One of the participants is both coordinator of the community garden and municipal representative, due to being in opposition to the leading party, it's seen as a disadvantage. There is another garden having their municipal contact in opposition and one of the gardens even members from the municipality.

We observed several examples of cooperation between community gardens as well as between CG and NGOs, however, this cooperation is usually local – the neighbourhood and being close is the key – *“There is no national cooperation.”* (participant Focus Group) Also based on the results of the Round Table, *“cooperation between community gardens and the public is basically non-existing”* (participant Round Table). Most of the current CGs were founded by a group of devoted people with designated funds at the beginning.

The most often mentioned cooperation is about sharing the information about rules and legislation needed to found a community garden. As there is no national organisation focused on supporting CGs, the easiest way to look for some advice is to ask for a community garden that already works. As the coordinators and members of CGs are proud of the ideas of CGs, they are always willing and open to help and share their knowledge with “beginners”. *“It happens that someone asks us for help, and we are happy to help. However even our knowledge is limited, and we would appreciate the help as well...”* (participant Focus Group)

Second way of cooperation is more material. Community gardens that are not far away from each other can easily share capacities or use some shared services. E.g., when there are some changes in one garden, the second can temporarily offer its place to store some things or gardens can order compost or some natural fertilizers in bigger amounts and share the costs. *“It is great when you can share the costs, e.g. pay the transportation of something just once – you can do this with CGs that are close to you.”* (participant Focus Group) Respondents (participants Focus Group) also mentioned the possibility of exchanging the plants.

The case of NGOs is slightly different. There are some “friendly” NGOs that use community gardens as a part/place for some activities – education of children, venue for some outdoor NGO activity, etc. However, cooperation is not frequent. In some cases, NGOs can be a direct part of the community garden structure (especially from the legislative point of view). Moreover, the number of NGOs that use CGs for their therapeutic and environmental activities has risen. *“In the Czech Republic, it is worth mentioning institutions such as Rubikon, Elpida, and Ěčko.”* (participant Round Table)

Barriers to cooperation are quite clear – missing national structure/organisation that would help with connections and information exchange. Community gardens would also appreciate a kind of discussion board/information storage that would offer a variety of advice about different topics – legislation, growing, sustainability, fundraising, motivation of volunteers, etc.

Even though CGs are included in the strategic documents, their support remains on the theoretical level and is, in reality, very low and unsystematic. Given these hindrances, one of the possible institutions, with which CGs could develop further cooperation, could be schools. Schools have the Environmental Education Strategy that allows community gardens to use school grounds for their activities or that schools can apply in collaboration with an already existing community garden in the neighbourhood in order to provide environmental activities for students.

To encourage public involvement in community gardening and underline the role of community gardens as future development projects, cooperation with universities would be also beneficial. For example, *“the issue of community gardens could become*

*part of the curriculum for majors, e.g. architecture, landscape architecture, civil engineering, or design.” (participant Round Table)*

### 3. Future Strategies

*“Strategies already exist and are used practically only at the moment when a person seeks finance for his own project and thus serve as support points, not as practical offers of solutions, and it is thus generally perceived as correct.” (participant Round Table)* The primary documents are the **National adaptation strategy** (Fakta o klimatu, 2021) and **Climate plan Prague 2030**, (Pražská mise, nulová emise, 2021), which include broader concepts including forestry and agriculture. Other grant options to support community gardens are existing grants to support **Environmental Education** and the **Action Plan for Organic Agriculture** (Akční plán pro rozvoj ekologického zemědělství 2021 – 2027, 2021). Community gardens can be included in grant applications even if they are not mentioned directly. *“In general, a recommendation for the spatial plan of cities would be useful (so far it has appeared only in a few cities).” (participant Round Table)*

Ordinary people can't get to these strategic documents and it needs to be made easier for them to access with an easier translation. Prague has the ambition to provide free consultancy on the adaptation strategy in inner blocks. In total, there are few investment grants for community gardens from cities and municipalities, ordinary applicants have difficulty writing applications that would be supported.

Community gardens are perceived by decision-makers and experts from the administration as marginal tools in the fight against climate change. Community gardens appear generally more in the composting theme than climate changes.

As part of the Round table, we selected specific activities with which community gardens fight against the climate. If it were possible to get them into strategic documents, it could lead to their greater support. Community gardens encompass many functions from environmental to socio-economic and can be financially efficient due to their many activities. From the point of view of climate change, community gardens help, for example, by cooling the space, retaining rainwater in the landscape,

they are a HUB for local composting, they increase the index of the blue-green infrastructure of the area, they reduce the carbon footprint when growing local food, and the use of composting toilet reduces the consumption of drinking water for toilet flushing.

Also, coordinators (participants Focus Group) mentioned that *“currently they are busy with basic activities needed to run the community gardens and education in terms of sustainability and climate change is just a side-product.”*

The key to building any strategy is to help community gardens strengthen their base and help them work smoothly, without any personal/legislative/financial troubles. This is closely connected with building a cooperative platform to exchange information, experience, etc. Also, people experienced in propagation, marketing, and PR are needed. This might help coordinators start focusing on other topics, like education and development in that direction.

Sustainability and climate change are perceived to be very important and “hot” topics that might be used as a strong argument in case of asking for grants or support from local companies or other authorities. However, the connection of this topic and CG suffers from low propagation and still lower knowledge among the population.

Their great contribution is also in supporting education about ongoing climate change. Members and visitors of community gardens gradually change their experience and relationship with the environment, which they carry into their lives. If the range of activities and diversity of the community garden space is diverse, local people like to spend their free time here even on weekends (mitigation effect). In several gardens, cultivation and gardening are combined with the breeding of small animals. In this regard, community chicken farming is currently the most widespread, which will attract more people interested in home eggs among members of community gardens.

An advantage for municipalities can be the merging of multiple functions in one place of public space or greenery and, for example, offering space for a community garden in the current park. Cities can select green as well as neglected areas and leave their care to the community when creating community gardens, either permanently or only

temporarily (e.g. Kuchyňka, Zálesí), which leads not only to the efficient use of areas but also to the reduction of their maintenance costs.

There are two ways that might help community gardens balance their current state and use their potential to grow in the intended way (educational). The first option is to connect to some local partner. We observed (participants Focus Group) the case of CG connected with supermarket Kaufland – it provides the place, supports the CG financially and the presence of a community garden just next to the supermarket creates the intended public traffic and increases the awareness and therefore the interest of people. The second thing that might help community gardens in their mission is to increase their visibility on social networks / dedicated websites. This way of communication is not widely used, CG can have its own website but currently, they do not feel they use it in an efficient way. A strong presence on e.g., Facebook can not only increase the awareness of CG itself but also provide a good platform to inform about environmental aspects and advantages that are offered by the community gardens. However, there is a lack of people who can (and are willing to) do this on the volunteer level.

A suitable aid for further work with decision-makers and experts from the administration is the continuous collection of data on the benefits of community gardens, the implementation of pilot projects were examples of what works can be seen in one place and the subsequent inclusion of these elements and experiences in existing strategies in a concrete form.

There is great potential in the possibility of more establishment of community gardens directly by various institutions or NGOs, but currently, they are not anchored in any funding strategy for community gardens. However, this model has been proven in practice, and its greater support from the state or municipalities could bring stable funding for the running of community gardens and, for example, a paid position of chief coordinator or other lecturers of educational activities. It is also necessary to emphasize that the financing of community gardens is not only problematic during their establishment, but also during their sustainable operation in the future, where taking over their management by a certain institution could lead to their greater stability.

Common barriers include the availability and high cost of membership in community gardens (demanding in terms of time, finances, and internal motivation to attend regularly). There is concern that one community garden is too small to make a real difference in the neighbourhood. The basic challenge of community gardens is the need to survive and there is no time, money, or space for other activities even in the area of climate change. Given the lack of systemic support from the state or cities, it would help to find a way to link finance or business to the core purpose (e.g. growing vegetables). Also, a barrier so far is the low frequency and interest in villages and smaller towns where people have different priorities. The lack of methodologies to pass on education, the lack of interest of the municipalities concerned, and the lack of passion of people who would actively support the creation of community gardens are also obstacles.

## 4. Conclusion

Community gardens in the Czech Republic seem to be a trend in the past 10 years mainly in the cities with more than 20,000 inhabitants. We have 60 cities and towns with more than 20,000 inhabitants here in the Czech Republic. According to our findings, the barrier to starting more community gardens so far is the low frequency and interest in villages and smaller towns where people have different priorities.

Climate change and solutions to this problem in the Czech Republic are part of some smaller scale projects social companies develop together with partners from municipalities or private companies, but there are not any special climate change education and programs just for community gardens yet.

Most of the gardens in the Czech Republic are using at least some of the garden techniques for climate change adaptation, the biggest part of them is already composting, most of the gardens do not use any synthetic fertilizers and some of them support using green fertilizing. The key to building any sustainable long-term strategy is to help community gardens strengthen their base and help them work smoothly,

without any personal/legislative/financial troubles. Also, people experienced in propagation, marketing, and PR are needed. This might help coordinators start focusing on other topics, like education and development in that direction.

There are also various potential challenges to solve when it comes to environmental education and community gardens. For example, the situation of CGs is not stable, quite big fluctuation, sometimes missing coordination, lack of knowledge or capacity for coordination or lack of propagation.

The great contribution of CGs is also in supporting education about ongoing climate change. Members and visitors of community gardens gradually change their experience and relationship with the environment, which they carry into their lives.

To encourage public involvement in community gardening and underline the role of community gardens as future development projects, cooperation with universities would be beneficial.

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## 6. Annex

### 6.1. Methodology

#### ONLINE QUESTIONNAIRE

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Period of data collection  | 28. 4. – 28. 5. 2022  |
| Number of gardens, that have participated                                | 39  |
| Number of gardeners represented (total)                                  | 137 community gardens according to the map (Mapko.cz), probably 200 community gardens in total in the Czech Republic. |
| Ways of reaching respondents   | email, direct email, FB post, personal call   |
| Response quote (to how many did you send out, how many did you get back) | asking per email on 120 email addresses of coordinators of CG   |

#### FOCUS GROUP

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Date                                   | 21. 7. 2022   |
| Number of participants                 | 6 (+ 2 facilitators)  |
| Field of expertise of the participants | community garden coordinators                                       |
| Relation between participants          | Some of the coordinators knew each other from our regular meetings. |
| Online or place                        | online  |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| How did you choose participants?          | Kokoza holds a database of 120 community garden coordinators and regular meetings called <i>Oddénky</i> (Rhizomes). We contact all the databases by direct mail and phone calls in some cases. |
| How easy or difficult was it to get them? | At first, it was way hard to find the right time and date, but when we have it   |

## ROUND TABLE

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Date   | 20. 7. 2022  |
| Number of participants   | 8 (+ 2 facilitators)   |
| Background of participants (politicians, administrative body, national/regional/local,...) | 1 senior specialist in CG (Kokoza)<br>1 NGO (AMPI)<br>1 University researcher in CG<br>3 employees of Prague´s municipality<br>2 coordinators of community gardens |
| Relation between participants  | Kokoza is in time-to-time contact with all of the participants. Some of them cooperate now or in the past with Kokoza.   |
| Online or place  | Hall 40, Pražská tržnice, Praha  |
| How did you choose participants?   | We invited people, who we have known for some time from other projects or cooperation in the past or we got recommendations from other                             |

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | participants.   |
| How easy or difficult was it to get them? | Due to the personal invitation and contact before, it was easy to get them for our round table. |

For the round table data collection, we used the World Café Method because of the great number of participants. *“The World Cafe is a method which makes use of an informal cafe setting for participants to explore an issue by discussing it in small table groups.”* (Involve, 2018) The discussion was held in four rounds of 15 minutes, with the refreshments to allow for more relaxed and open conversations to take place.