

INVESTIGATING THE POTENTIAL OF COMMUNITY GARDENS TO FOSTER SHARED OWNERSHIP OF PUBLIC GREEN SPACES IN MALTA

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Built Environment, University of Malta in
part fulfilment of the requirements for the attainment of the Master of Architecture
(Architecture and Urban Design)

June 2025



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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Scheiber, my dissertation advisor, for her invaluable guidance, expertise, and insightful feedback, all of which were instrumental to the successful completion of this research. I am also sincerely thankful to other members of the academic staff, including Dr. Mifsud, Dr. Zammit, Perit Borg Barthet and Architect Gatt whose support and encouragement have greatly contributed to my academic journey at the University of Malta.

I extend my deep appreciation to my partner for her unwavering support and assistance throughout this endeavour. I am also immensely grateful to Mrs. Cassar for her meticulous proofreading and helpful suggestions. Lastly, I would like to express my profound thanks to my parents for their constant encouragement and steadfast support, without which this achievement would not have been possible.

Abstract

This dissertation explores the potential of community gardens as a tool for promoting sustainable urban living within the Maltese context. In light of increased urbanisation, limited green spaces, and growing environmental concerns, this study investigates the willingness of Maltese citizens to participate in the co-creation, maintenance, and aftercare of community gardens. A mixed methods approach was employed, combining quantitative survey data from the general public, with qualitative insights gathered through participatory gardening workshops at the University of Malta. The study aimed to assess motivations, barriers, and willingness to engage in community gardening, as well as public perceptions of shared green spaces.

Findings reveal that environmental sustainability is the primary motivator for participation, with personal growth and community well-being also playing important roles. However, lack of time, limited gardening knowledge, and concerns over group collaboration emerged as key barriers. Workshop participants, having experienced community gardening first-hand, demonstrated a significantly higher willingness to invest time and continue their involvement compared to the general public. The results suggest that awareness, education, and hands-on experience are critical in fostering long-term engagement.

The study concludes with recommendations for local councils, NGOs, and policymakers to support grassroots initiatives, provide accessible green spaces, and implement community-driven strategies aimed at enhancing urban resilience and quality of life in Malta.

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Glossary

Abbreviation	Meaning
CGs	Community Gardens
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FOEM	Friends of the Earth Malta
GI	Green Infrastructure
LGs	Local Governments
MAFA	Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights
MEYR	Ministry for Education, Sports, Youths, Research and Innovation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NSO	National Statistics Office
NUA	New Urban Agenda
PUGS	Public Urban Green Spaces
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UoM	University of Malta
USA	United States of America
USD	Urban Sustainable Development
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The 21st century started with several global issues including climate change and urbanisation. Environmental pollution, vehicular congestion, and the absence of green open spaces in urban areas are global issues that cities have been trying to mitigate for years (United Nations - Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2018; Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2018; European Environmental Agency, 2018). Fast forward twenty years and these issues have increased and will continue to do so if the world remains idle. As urbanisation and the rapid increase of urban population put enormous pressure on infrastructure with governments trying to mitigate such repercussions by building more affordable social housing and upgrading road infrastructure (Abu Kasim & Mohd Yusof & Shafri, 2018). This rapid urbanisation can be seen in many countries, particularly, developing ones, where vacant land is under pressure to be developed into housing, resulting in the loss of green open spaces (Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur, 2004; Marin et al., 2021;). This is also evident in Europe, specifically in the East (Marin et al., 2021).

Studies show that there will be fewer Public Urban Green Spaces (PUGS) by 2030, as highlighted in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); “Access to open spaces in cities” (Ritchie et al., 2018). Public Urban Green Spaces (PUGS) are accessible public spaces owned by the public that are found within urban and peri-urban areas (Conedera, 2015; Hadavi & Kaplan, 2016). These can be both man-made and natural public spaces and can have diverse characters (Wendel et al., 2012; Mahmoudi Farahani & Maller, 2018). Several rapidly growing third-world countries such as India have shown that the present provision for PUGS has diminished, and it is below the lowest standards advocated by the World Health Organization (WHO) (Jim & Chen, 2006). Moreover, in 2012, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) claimed that with the current population growth and the rapid increase in urbanisation, countries that control the market will need to search for primary resources elsewhere (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2012). These are alarming statements that are detrimental to both the environment and the well-being of the inhabitants. As Thompson (2002) said, “access to some form of nature is a fundamental need”, while Burgess et al. (1988) denote that, “Parks, gardens and open spaces are thus essential features of most cities”.

Access to PUGS brings several health benefits. Andersson et al. (2014) cited that involvement in these public green spaces not only benefit the environment but also help to restore the link between individuals and ecosystems. Furthermore, apart from the negative effects on the

environment, the economy can cause several health issues, especially in the United States of America and Europe (Kirby et al., 2021). Studies have shown that individuals coming from high-income regions tend to have higher levels of obesity (GBD 2015 Obesity Collaborators, 2017; Ataey et al., 2020), respiratory issues (Global Asthma Network, 2022) and even severe mental health issues (Ritchie et al., 2018). Due to urbanisation and the modern lifestyle particularly in urban areas, a decrease in participation in PUGS degrades community life and social interaction (Ujang et al., 2014). Therefore, it is evident that urbanisation is heavily impacting those living in urban areas by severely affecting their overall health (Chamhuri et al., 2016; ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, 2019).

The field of urban planning is continuously being pressured to promote resiliency and sustainability, while at the same time, trying its best to safeguard existing PUGS and promote their creation (Kabisch, 2019). With the creation of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) and the SDGs, the link between health, the environment and PUGS has been reinforced, and more pressure has been imposed on cities to rethink and redesign the way people live (Kabisch, 2019). Moreover, gardens found in urban areas need to be holistically integrated in Urban Sustainable Development (USD) to create strategic green networks (Sturiale et al., 2019).

Urban Agriculture has in recent years surfaced as the channel through which sustainable living and sustainable food production are promoted (Fusté-Forné, F. & Fusté Forné, M., 2021). In other words, it is the production and selling of food specifically within an urban context (de Zeeuw et al., 2011; Luehr et al., 2019; Mougeot, 2020). This not only promotes sustainable food practices but also creates eco-friendly and resilient food systems (Gaast et al., 2020). Likewise, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations identifies urban agriculture as the small areas within an urban setting that produce food (FAO, 1996). Studies have shown that this type of agriculture has countless benefits such as the increased quality of life (Aldous, 2017), improved connection between the urban and the rural (Wang et al., 2021) and enhancing green infrastructure (Newsome, 2020).

Urban agriculture can take various forms. The European Forum on Urban Agriculture has in fact moved away from conventional urban gardening and urban farming and instead, has categorised the main typologies into: “Urban Farms, Community Parks, DIY Gardens/Farms, Zero Acreage Farms, Community Gardens and Social Farms” (Müller et al., 2022). Other studies have shown that home gardens, commercial farms, rooftop gardens (Lin et al., 2015), greenhouses (Shamshiri et al., 2018) and vertical farming (Milestad et al., 2020) are also part of several types of urban agriculture models.

This research focuses on Community Gardens, due to their public nature in relation to the other typologies of urban agriculture. Community Gardens also occupy a small percentage of

all the typologies of Green Infrastructure (GI). The word GI is widely used as a term to define a vegetated area which includes trees and shrubs that are beneficial to the urban environment through their ecological, social and community benefits (Heckert & Rosan, 2016). This term includes both private and public spaces including, but not limited to, parks (Figure 1), gardens including community gardens (Figure 2) and allotment gardens, pocket parks (Figure 3), green roofs (Figure 4), cemeteries (Figure 5), woodlands (Figure 6), grasslands (Figure 7), and wetlands (Figure 8) (Cheshmehzangi & Griffiths, 2014).



Figure 1: A typical example of a park - Central Park, New York City (The Central Park Conservancy, 2024)



Figure 2: A typical example of a community garden - East Hollywood Community Garden, Los Angeles (East Hollywood Community Garden, 2023)

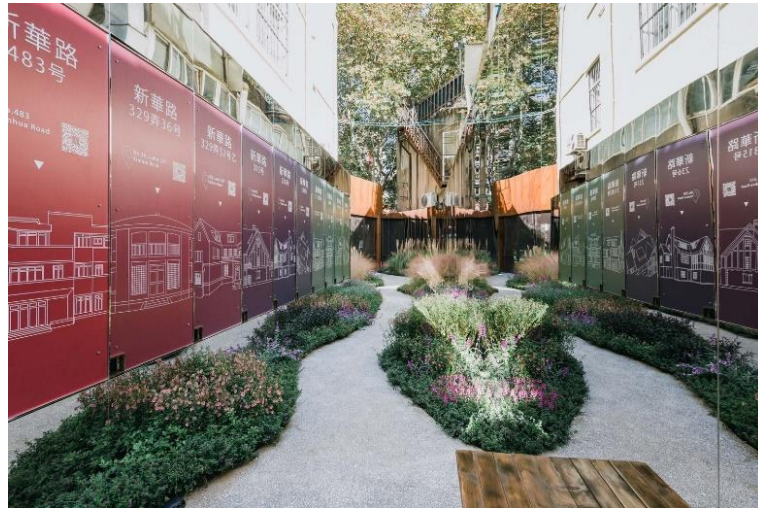


Figure 3: A typical example of a pocket park - Pocket Park on Xinhua Road, Shanghai (Chen, 2021)



Figure 4: A typical example of a green roof - City of Chicago City Hall - Green Roof, Illinois (The Cultural Landscape Foundation, n.d.)



Figure 5: A typical example of a cemetery - Skogskyrkogården Cemetery in Stockholm (Hobbs, M. & K., 2024)



Figure 6: A typical example of woodlands - Woodlands Town Park East in Singapore (National Parks, n.d.)



Figure 7: A typical example of a grassland - Flight 93 National Memorial Park in Pennsylvania (Reese, n.d.)



Figure 8: A typical example of a wetland - Constructed wetland in Gorla Maggiore, Italy (Elgar et al., 2019)

This underestimated form of urban agriculture has gained traction in recent years. The idea of community gardening has sparked interest in several countries because it alleviated countless global issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war where it highlighted the importance of food security and mental well-being (Nemes et al. 2021). By 2050, 68% of the global population will be living in an urban environment (United Nations, 2018). This increases pressure on agricultural land and resorting to other means of food production is a must. Apart from the food security and sustainability issues, the longevity of green spaces can be guaranteed by the gardeners in charge leading to a disaster-resilient community (Lee & Matarrita-Cascante, 2019).

1.2. Defining Community Gardens

Community Gardens (CGs) can be defined as public open spaces that are taken care of by volunteers (Rosol, 2010) who are part of the community, where food is produced for non-commercial uses and responsibilities and resources are shared equally (Mintz & McManus, 2014). Others define these places from a well-being perspective where they allow individuals to form relationships with one another by working for a common goal (Kurtz, 2001; Booth et al., 2017; Petrovic et al., 2019). Even though one can find this collective form of urban agriculture all over the globe, there is no approved definition for CGs (Baker, 2004). Kingsley et al. (2019) also define CGs as being parcels of land assigned to a group of individuals whose purpose is to create communal gardens of their choice. In addition to this, there are different models of community gardens around the world that serve various functions, as discussed further in Chapter 2. The focus of this research is on the first type of gardens: gardens found on publicly owned land, taken care of by community members on a voluntary basis, and administered by the local government. All the other types of CGs are not explored in this research.

1.3. The Maltese Context: Problem Definition and Research Justification

Malta's limited land area and dense population have resulted in a noticeable lack of accessible green space (Zammit, 2020), an issue worsened by the country's rapid infrastructural development and urbanisation. As a result, Malta has the largest proportion of artificial land cover among EU nations (European Commission, 2013), which puts further pressure on public open spaces. Even if the building sector has made a substantial contribution to the country's economic growth, it has also had a negative impact on the environment (Portelli et al., 2020) and the overall standard of living for its citizens (Zammit, 2014). Unfortunately, the remaining

open spaces, which are often neglected due to insufficient funding (Scheiber, 2020), end up in a state of disrepair.

Community gardens are seen as one of the possible solutions to combat these ongoing issues on a global level. This form of communal agriculture must be studied within the local context due to the potential benefits it has, bearing in mind that this term is quite unheard of in Malta. Even though there are several communal gardens in Malta which embrace this concept, there is a lack of awareness on what community gardening is and its benefits.

Several overgrown and dilapidated open spaces in Malta can be turned into gardens for the community. Indeed, two studies have already been done on how abandoned agriculture land can be turned into community allotment gardens (Pace Ricci, 2017 and Pace Ricci & Conrad, 2018). Another study explored aspects that may affect and facilitate the design and eventually the implementation of community gardens in Malta with an emphasis on the essential role of local councils (Mizzi, 2021). Cassar (2014) also explored the possibility of integrating community gardens within the Maltese urban landscape using food as a means of connecting people and green spaces.

While extensive research has explored the motivations and barriers to community gardening globally, there remains a notable gap in understanding these factors within the Maltese context. It is essential to examine whether individuals in Malta are willing to invest their time and energy in such initiatives, especially since these gardens rely on community involvement for their upkeep. Social, cultural, and environmental factors may influence participation differently than in other countries, making it important to gather context-specific data. Addressing this gap can contribute valuable insights to academic discourse and support more effective, community-driven policymaking.

1.4. Research Overview

The creation and integration of community gardens into the Maltese urban landscape is crucial to the development of sustainable urban environments, as discussed in Section 1.3. This also identified the primary research issue – the gap between community gardens and citizen's motivation to participate in such efforts. This gap led to the formulation of the following research aim:

To explore whether Maltese citizens are in favour of and interested in setting up community gardens and investigating how much time (if any) Maltese citizens are willing to invest in the creation and maintenance of such gardens.

Based on the research aim, the following research question was developed:

To what extent is the Maltese society willing to contribute to the co-creation, maintenance, and aftercare of green public spaces in Malta?

Accordingly, the following research objectives were then established:

- To review literature on community gardening models and understand why and how international communities participate in community gardening.
- To understand the key attractors for participating in co-creating and maintaining community gardens in international contexts.
- To identify key motivators for participation and barriers / challenges in relation to the user perspective which need to be addressed.

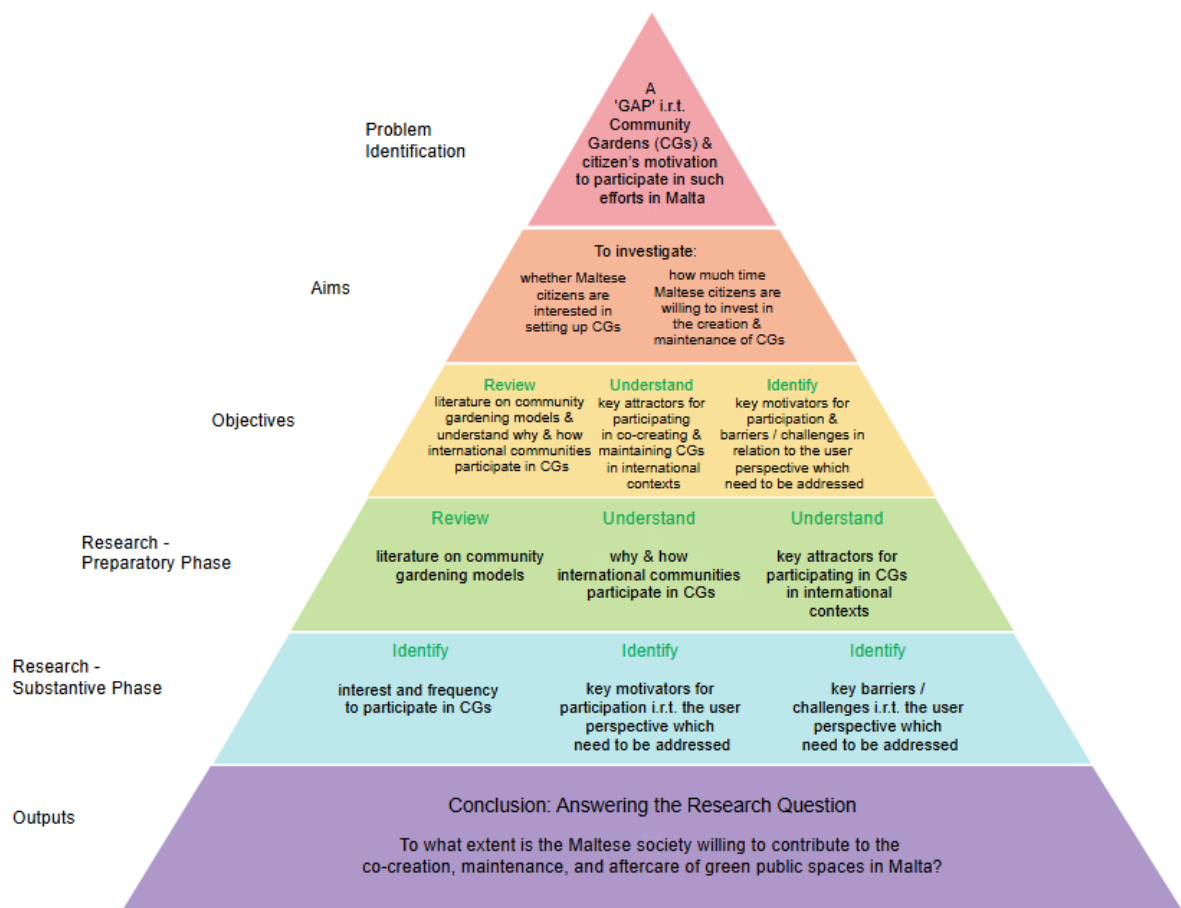


Figure 9: Research scope diagram highlighting: problem, aims, objectives, data collection and outputs

1.5. Dissertation Structure


Figure 9 above highlights the research scope which is divided into chapters. Chapter 1 starts by introducing the research topic, with a brief overview of the Maltese context and the research scope. Chapter 2 provides a literature review starting with the typologies of community gardens, followed by a detailed explanation of the motivations and barriers in joining a community garden; and finally gives an overview of the current community gardens in the local context. Following that, Chapter 3 goes over the mixed-method approach used as part of the methodology. Chapter 4 provides a detailed understanding of the results gathered from both data collection methods. Finally, Chapter 5 discusses the research findings derived from the results in accordance with the literature reviewed, research question and objectives.



2. Literature Review



2.1. Different Models of Communal Shared Gardens


The concept of community gardens emerged as a reaction to the 1890's crises when these were promoted as a means of food production during the Industrial Revolution (Hanna & Oh, 2000; Twiss et al., 2003; Draper & Freedman, 2010). This idea continued to gain importance throughout the Great Depression and the Second World War when urban gardens reached their peak of popularity (Armstrong, 2000; Martinho da Silva et al., 2016). Urban gardens have, nowadays, evolved. There are several typologies such as the German Allotment Gardens, also known as Schrebergarten (Rosol, 2010; Mints and McManus, 2014), the North American community gardens (Baker, 2004; Meyer-Renschhausen, 2004; Saldivar-Tanaka & Krasny, 2004; Mints and McManus, 2014), School Gardens (Mints and McManus, 2014; Drake & Lawson, 2015; Kingsley et al, 2019), Therapeutic Gardens (Kordon et al., 2022), Verge Gardens (Mints and McManus, 2014); and CGs, situated within housing estates (Mints and McManus, 2014; Coalition of Austin Community Gardens, 2018). Table 1 includes a description of the various typologies.

Table 1: Different Typologies of Community Gardens

Typology of Community Gardens	Description	Figures
German Allotment Gardens	<p>These allotment gardens generally range between 200 and 400 sqm in size and in most cases contain a small shed. These are mainly used for growing flowers and other horticulture plants and are found in many northern European countries, clustered in certain areas within cities (Drescher, 2001).</p>	 <p>Figure 10: A typical example of a Schrebergarten colony in Dresden, Germany (Wunderbar, n.d.)</p>

<p>North American Community Gardens</p>	<p>These community gardens are generally small public plots of land which are taken over by the community to transform into green pockets and used to cultivate vegetables for community use (Baker, 2004; Meyer-Renschhausen, 2004; Saldivar-Tanaka & Krasny, 2004; Kaminski, 2025).</p>	 <p><i>Figure 11: Sogn Hagekoloni in Oslo, Norway is a typical example of a Norwegian allotment garden (Sogn Hagekoloni, n.d.)</i></p>
<p>School Gardens</p>	<p>School gardens (Drake & Lawson, 2015; Kingsley et al, 2019) offer a basis for a number of teaching elements to students in schools. Such examples could be the science of plants, the food production chain and the marketing and cultivation of a piece of land to nurture vegetables or fruits (Greene, 1910).</p>	 <p><i>Figure 12: Agnesschool Elementary School Garden in Rotterdam offers a typical example of a school garden (Nk Tegelwippen, n.d.)</i></p>

<p>Therapeutic Gardens</p>	<p>Therapeutic gardens (Kordon et al., 2022) are gardens that are densely planted in order to enhance the synergy of healing elements. This typology also has sub-typologies which include enabling gardens, healing gardens, rehabilitation gardens and restorative gardens (AMTA, n.d.).</p>	 <p><i>Figure 13: Crossroads Hospice Labyrinth Healing Garden in Canada is a typical example of a therapeutic garden (Labyrinth Locator, n.d.)</i></p>
<p>Verge Gardens</p>	<p>These community green areas are commonly seen in Australia and are found on public land between private properties and road kerbs. These turfed areas are transformed by the local council into planted areas, mainly with native shrubs and flowers and residents are expected to maintain them (Waverley Council, n.d.).</p>	 <p><i>Figure 14: A verge garden in Fremantle, Australia used for growing both ornamental plants and vegetables (Grayson, 2010)</i></p>

<p>Social Housing Community Gardens</p>	<p>These CGs can be seen in shared parts within social housing areas. These are often built to enhance the urban nature and social cohesion within these blocks (Truong et al., 2022).</p>	 <p><i>Figure 15: Cranbrook Community Food Garden on Cranbrook Estate in Tower Hamlets is a typical example of a community garden within a social housing area (Warde-Aldam, 2023)</i></p>
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The concept of an allotment garden is mostly popular in European countries. In contrast, the other public community gardens are mostly embraced in North American countries (Lee & Matarrita-Cascante, 2019; Kirby et al., 2021). Garden allotments are gardens divided into separate parcels of land, rented out to individuals to be taken care of (van den berg et al., 2010; Scott et al., 2017). Although these typologies are similar in nature and one can find gardens which have both individual parcels and collective areas (Rosol, 2010), it should be noted that garden allotments are mostly private while CGs are accessible to the public (Maćkiewicz & Puente-Asuero, 2021). Allotment gardens in Oslo (Figure 11) are made up of parcels of land with cottages that serve as a retreat for the small community that is leasing the land. However, this gated tract of land is open during summer for the public (Nordh et al., 2016). Rosol (2010) mentions that individuals still achieve some social benefits related to their well-being, even though these gardens are only opened on a limited basis. In fact, in Polish policies, these allotment gardens are regarded and sought after for their recreational and ecological benefits together with their provision of food (Drilling et al., 2016).

There are also other forms of gardens which include “garden colonies” and “wild gardens”. These garden colonies are nothing more than dilapidated public parcels of land found near modernist blocks of apartments which were illegally taken over by residents in the 1970s in Europe (Djokić et al., 2018). People illegally took over and fenced parcels of land in Zagreb and other allotment gardens in Plovdiv where they grow food, including trees and flowers (Gulin Zrnić & Rubić, 2018; Pickard, 2018). These two garden typologies are commonly referred to as “informal allotment gardens” due to their illegalities and issues pertaining to land ownership and lack of regulations (Djokić et al., 2018).

Community Gardens tend to also serve various functions in their neighbourhood. The two basic ones are economic, dealing with food supply, and social, which tackles the provision of social contact regardless of the geographic position the CGs are found in (Rosol, 2010; Feinberg et al., 2021). In CGs around the USA, community leaders have utilised these communal spaces as an arena for the promotion of physical and mental well-being, as a means for community development and as employment hubs for the poorer neighbourhoods (Lawson, 2005; Draper & Freedman, 2010; Hale et al., 2011). Meanwhile, CGs in Singapore tend to direct themselves more towards growing ornamental flowers and spices rather than for agricultural purposes (Tan & Neo, 2009). This goes to show that CGs around the globe follow various forms and motives, usually influenced by environmental, economical, cultural, and social differences.

2.2. Motivations to participate in Community Gardening

Community Gardens are not static objects but living groups of individuals responding to the needs of their present times. Likewise, the motives for joining a CG have changed drastically (Armstrong, 2000). In the last century, CGs were set up to be used mainly as food production places to cater for the food shortages resulting from the two world wars. Nowadays the aims are more diverse and represent today's reality (Golden, 2013). Motivations can be divided into two categories: the initial and the secondary. The initial motivations consist of those motives that drive an individual to participate in community gardening. Secondary motivations arise unexpectedly from the added benefits that are experienced when the participants attend the community gardening activities due to the initial motivations. In other words, one might choose to get involved in a CG to grow healthier food (initial motivation) but as time goes by, s/he gets to benefit from improved mental and physical well-being (secondary motivation) (Henryks, 2011; Partalidou & Anthopoulou, 2015; da Silva et al., 2016).

2.2.1. Initial Motivations

2.2.1.1. *Food Security*

One initial motivation that gets an individual involved in community gardening is food production. Countless studies have shown individuals participating in these types of communal activities primarily to grow healthier and organic foods as opposed to buying vegetables full of pesticides from supermarkets (Partalidou & Anthopoulou, 2015). Additionally, some findings also show that food safety motivates volunteers to take part in such activities because they are growing the produce themselves thus certifying it's locally grown and is of the highest quality (Guitart et al., 2013; McClintock et al., 2016). In some cultures, the aim is to restore food systems or improve food supply (Kingsley et al., 2019) to have better access to fresher produce (Armstrong, 2000). In other cases, CGs emerged in response to

poverty and hunger (Kingsley et al., 2019), and are thus seen as self-sustaining systems (Flachs, 2010; Kettle 2014). In these instances, the primary aim is to save money while in other cases to make money (Guitart et al., 2012).

2.2.1.2. Education

Studies have also shown that education is a key motivator (Guitart et al., 2013). General education of growing food and garden upkeep are the main contributors (Golden, 2013). Other motives are those related to environmental knowledge and local ecosystems which result in more sustainably conscious citizens (Okvat & Zautra, 2011; Colding & Barthel, 2013). Gardening is seen by many as a basic and vital life skill for survival in challenging times (Guitart et al., 2013). Many choose to partake in these activities because they either want to improve or develop such new beneficial skills (Agustina & Beilin, 2012; Bendt et al., 2013).

2.2.1.3. Environmental Sustainability

Moreover, environmental stewardship and sustainability play a crucial role in motivating individuals to help out in CGs (Campbell, 2004; Harris, 2009; Kingsley et al., 2019). Studies show that taking care of an urban environment while practising something which protects the environment is also a key driving factor (Holland 2004; Wakefield et al., 2007; Wills et al., 2009; Colding & Barthel, 2013; Wolch et al., 2014; McClintock et al., 2016). This can be seen in communities with higher income households, whereas individuals coming from lower income households are more likely to see CGs primarily as a food source (Darby et al., 2020). Golden (2013) mentions that some individuals are keener to participate due to the health concerns related to the urban environment, such as carbon emissions. Other researchers found that some people are motivated to conserve the remaining green spaces in their neighbourhood (Ohmer et al., 2009), which, if disregarded would lead to environmental degradation (Kingsley et al., 2019). Linked to this, is the motive to increase accessibility to public land (Schmelzkopf, 2002). These motives can take various other directions; from restoring dilapidated land and misused green patches to conserving fertile and unpolluted parcels of soft landscape areas (Directorate-General for Environment, 2015), all focusing on urban renewal and giving a new life to underutilized spaces (Guitart et al., 2013).

2.2.1.4. Leisure

Another valid motive is the relaxation aspect of engaging in community gardening (Schmelzkopf, 2002; Golden, 2013). Many choose to get involved in these communal activities because they become a place for recreation (Guitart et al., 2013; Nordh et al., 2016). In the study conducted by Nordh et al. (2016), one participant admitted that CGs are safe spaces where one can leave their children to play. Therefore, these places are a source of happiness for all generations (Poulsen et al., 2014; Sonti & Svendsen, 2018). Also, individuals who enjoy being outdoors surrounded by nature and greenery (Armstrong, 2000; Clayton, 2007; Rogge

et al., 2018) can do so while gardening (Ohmer et al., 2009) or participating in urban agriculture in CGs (Kingsley et al., 2019).

2.2.2. Secondary Motivations

2.2.2.1. *Personal*

There are several aspects when it comes to secondary motivations. By far, the most sought-after benefit is the improved quality of life when engaging in community gardening (Cervinka et al., 2016). The term "quality of life" describes the overall well-being of a person or population, taking into account the positive and negative parts of their lived experience at any given moment (Teoli & Bhardwaj, 2023). Self-sufficiency is another important driver to join a CG (McClintock et al., 2016), which then results in volunteers developing further their creative skills (Domene & Saurí, 2007). Furthermore, people who partake in such activities tend to have a higher possibility of developing a sense of belonging due to their willingness to learn about the true meaning of life and possibly self-actualisation (Guitart et al., 2012; Kelly, 2012; Partalidou & Anthopoulou, 2015). To reach such levels, one must be in contact with nature (Guitart et al., 2013). Such green spaces in urban areas are ideal places where volunteers can reconnect with nature to achieve total well-being (Stocker & Barnett 1998; Breuste & Artmann, 2015).

2.2.2.2. *Social*

The most intangible secondary motivation is the social aspect which tends to be researched using qualitative methods making it difficult to quantify such data. However, through various studies, a number of commonalities can be noted. While the social benefits (Veen, 2015) tend to vary from one CG to another, all participants mentioned social development (Duchemin et al., 2008) and community building (Holland, 2004). Community building was identified as a main driver specifically in non-profit gardens (Hancock 2001; Saldivar & Krasny, 2004) and it demonstrated a commitment of giving back to the community (Ohmer et al., 2009), among other outcomes. Such CGs are not only a place where people meet (Poulsen et al., 2017), but through social support, community bonds are enhanced which results in having a close-knit society exemplifying social resilience (Okvat & Zautra, 2011). Consequently, through these social interaction opportunities, communities are empowering themselves through interchangeable capabilities such as teamwork and problem-solving skills (Bendt et al., 2013). This not only leads to social cohesion within urban communities (Armstrong, 2000; Wakefield et al., 2007; Zoellner et al., 2012; Golden, 2013; Veen, 2015; Ward Thompson et al., 2016) but also improves interracial relations between the locals, (Saldivar & Krasny, 2004). In relation to this, a direct benefit of partaking in a CG is crime reduction. It is interesting to see that the more maintained a green open space is, the less crime activity occurs (Schmelzkopf, 1995;

Saldivar & Krasny, 2004). As Djokić et al. (2016) mentioned, socialisation is vital and these CGs are seen as one of the ways people are spending more time outdoors (Partalidou & Anthopoulou, 2015).

2.2.2.3. Health

Health can be regarded as the primary motive to join a CG amongst subgroups within a community. This is because activities within a CG are seen as a way of improving both the physical and mental health (Armstrong, 2000; Wakefield et al. 2007; Schram-Bijkerk et al., 2017). On the other hand, health can also be classified as a secondary motive. Several studies have shown that there is a direct relationship between the involvement of individuals in a CG and their overall health (Armstrong 2000; Kingsley et al., 2009; Guitart et al., 2012; Guitart et al., 2013). There are several mental health benefits when joining a CG, but the increase in personal and psychological well-being is the most evident (Cervinka et al., 2016). In addition to this, multiple studies have discussed the improvement of physical health as a popular motive when it comes to participating in CGs. This is because participants tend to view gardening as a form of recreational activity (Holland, 2004; Ohmer et al, 2009; Corrigan, 2011; Guitart et al., 2013; Partalidou & Anthopoulou, 2015).

2.2.2.4. Culture

Culture also plays a key role when it comes to volunteer participation in community gardening. Research shows that nostalgia is a huge factor that drives people to give a helping hand in such activities. This mainly involves traditions, memories and sometimes even connections to the past when they were younger (McFarland et al., 2018). Even though some are driven to enhance the cultural practices of their community (Feinberg et al., 2021), a larger group of individuals were more interested in preserving the existing cultural heritage and practices (Schmelzkopf, 1995; Saldivar-Tanaka and Krasny, 2004; Irazabal & Punja, 2009). In addition to this, spirituality, which stems from cultural practices according to Guitart et al. (2013) is enhanced by helping in a CGs (Kingsley et al., 2009).

2.2.2.5. Place Attachment

Many are also inspired to beautify their urban environment (Ohmer et al, 2009) while a larger group is interested in nurturing and maintaining their garden as they become attached to it (Nordh et al., 2016; Lee & Matarrita-Cascante, 2019). In other words, the latter group experiences a sense of place towards the CG due to the social interactions and experiences they had there (Armstrong, 2000; Wakefield et al., 2007; Zoellner et al., 2012; Veen, 2015; Ward Thompson et al., 2016).

Collectively, these motivations demonstrate the diverse personal, social, and environmental drivers that encourage participation in community gardening. To illustrate these more clearly, the following table (Table 2) provides a synthesized overview of the motivations discussed above.

Table 2: List of Initial and Secondary Motivations

Initial Motivations	Secondary Motivations
Food Security	Personal
Education	Social
Environmental Sustainability	Health
Leisure	Culture
	Place Attachment

2.3. Barriers and Obstacles to participation

2.3.1. Barriers

When it comes to the barriers to participating in these gardening activities, some factors are to be considered. The conditional factors are linked to human participation (Lee & Matarrita-Cascante, 2019), while the external factors are not related to the individual's actions.

2.3.1.1. Lack of time and proximity

One of the most important conditional factors is the time needed to take care of these gardens. Many researchers including Kingsley et al. (2009) found that gardeners tend to take the energy and time required to nurture communal gardens for granted which then leads to not showing up for communal gardening activities. Weekly and in some cases, daily, routines of watering and weeding are sometimes seen as a huge commitment by gardeners who are busier than others. Time, being the most valuable asset in life, is often unexchanged for gardening. Meenar & Hoover, (2012) found that many become interested in joining a CG but become undevoted to the place because they are overwhelmed by the amount of work it involves. In addition to this, other studies have shown that gardeners become frustrated with the strict opening hours of CGs and end up losing interest in gardening the area (Mast, 2013).

Linked to time is the distance that gardeners have to travel to get to the garden. The longer the distance to get there is, the higher the probability that their interest is lost. In interviews with gardeners, Milburn and Vail (2010) found that proximity is a key factor when it comes to participation. The relation is inversely proportional; the longer the time of travel, the less participation is seen.

2.3.1.2. Lack of knowledge and skills

Another common barrier to participation is the lack of gardening knowhow and skills (Cohen & Reynolds, 2015). Many are those enthusiasts wanting to join CGs, but a few are those who know how to take care of these gardens. This always leads to either not wanting to participate at all or else, getting involved with the prospect of learning new life skills, which goes beyond merely watering plants. In fact, the latter case can be seen in a study conducted across America in 2011-2012 where 445 CGs were surveyed resulting in gardeners lacking knowledge on technical skills like managing pests and invasive plants (Drake & Lawson, 2015; Diaz et al., 2018). In view of this, awareness on community gardening and community involvement in such local initiatives should be raised to educate the public on how active citizenship is achieved. A study based in Pontianak City showed that more than 70% of the people interviewed appreciate the benefits of PUGS but a few (between 4.95% - 11.43%) could identify one (Inderawan & Ikhwanudin, 2019).

2.3.1.3. Other barriers

There are other conditional factors affecting participation in CGs amongst which are limited accessibility to gardens, the amount of workload that is involved, racism in societies of diverse cultures, and waiting lists. Holland (2004) mentions that when individuals find it difficult to access a garden, be it the route or the area the garden is in, this always tends to discourage them from joining the CG. Furthermore, racism was also mentioned in certain societies as a barrier to joining CGs. This is created when locals are preferred over people from other ethnicities (Meenar & Hoover, 2012; Guitart et al., 2012). Guitart et al. (2012) also say that interested individuals are likely to withdraw from joining a CG when there are long waiting lists which sometimes take years.

2.3.2. Obstacles

2.3.2.1. Lack of Participants

Several studies show how conditional factors that result in barriers end up decreasing participation (Drake & Lawson, 2015; Diaz et al., 2018). This lack of interest shown by individuals and even by gardeners ends up in CGs closing down (Drake & Lawson, 2015). These researchers also found that three challenges CGs face were attracting people (62%), preserving and protecting the gardeners in the long run (61%), and seeking out volunteers (56%). In addition to this, a report by the American Community Garden Association discovered that 20% of the CGs (323 out of 1615) in the USA closed down between 2007 and 2012 because gardeners lost interest in participating (Drake & Lawson, 2015). This is not only alarming because CGs have to close down, but mostly because the vacant land could end up in the hands of a commercial developer. (Schmelzkopf, 1995; Staeheli et al., 2002).

2.3.2.2. Land Acquisition

Many times, local activists take over vacant or derelict public land and turn it into a flourishing green pocket. Even though this type of active citizenship is needed in a society, one must keep in mind that when the time comes, this garden has to be given up for more profitable use (Rosol, 2010). Rosol (2010) continues to mention that if a garden gets external funds, it has to be turned into a community building such as a kindergarten school if it gets funding for a school garden. This goes to show the fragility of such spaces which have no guarantee of permanence (Lawson, 2004; Drake & Lawson, 2015). In response to this, such land that is continually being lost to other land uses, particularly commercial and residential, can be brought to a halt through lobby groups or NGOs as these have the potential to disrupt this ongoing destruction.

This being said, several studies show that such destruction continues to take place as there is no resistance from pressure or lobby groups (Pothukuchi & Kaufman, 1999; Twiss et al, 2003; Surratt, 2010). Consequently, this stresses the point that individuals, together with groups of

these sorts, can impact decision-making to the point that affect indirectly the urban environment they live in (Tidball & Krasny, 2007; Kordon et al., 2022). Pressures for land can vary from commercial to residential, and in already densely populated urban neighbourhoods, the creation and permanence of these green communal spaces is seen as quite challenging due to housing issues (Kabisch, 2019). Land tenure issues are a global concern, particularly for those engaged in urban agriculture. According to the UN Development Programme (1996), around 800 million people faced such challenges, which Bryld (2003) identifies as a major obstacle. In almost all recorded cases, landowners choose to develop their land when they notice it is turned into a CG (Schmelzkopf, 1995).

2.3.2.3. Lack of Interest to Participate

Apart from the fact that land acquisition issues are a major deterrent to participation (Schmelzkopf, 1995; Staeheli et al., 2002), participation diminishes over time due to the gardener's lack of interest (Drake & Lawson, 2015). In fact, Exner & Schützenberger (2018) stress the importance of long-term commitment from the volunteers and the nearby community to foster some level of place attachment in order to ensure the longevity of these CGs. Studies (Guitart et al., 2013) have shown that experienced gardeners helping out in these CGs, aid in the long-term survival of these gardens due to the strong emotional attachment that they would have developed. This would not only help in encouraging more volunteers to partake in these activities but would also enhance a sense of community in the area and fight against CGs closure (Guitart et al., 2013).

2.3.2.4. Lack of Institutional Support

Community Gardens also fail and close down due to the lack of support needed to function well. This type of support would generally come from non-profit organisations. Governmental institutions rarely assist CGs financially, especially in neighbourhoods where there is no political will to invest. These challenges take various forms, amongst which the most common are access to good quality water supply and support to secure land tenure (Cohen et al., 2012; Drake & Lawson, 2015). In addition, Local Governments (LGs) have been observed to be too resistant to help CGs and other forms of urban agriculture initiatives. Reasons vary from LGs being hesitant to turn derelict land into gardens rather than residential areas, and to knowing that the public would disapprove of these gardens as they can be seen as hazardous or not aesthetically pleasing (Harris 2009; Jermé & Wakefield, 2013; Wesener et al., 2020).

In relation to this, Thornton (2017) found CGs in Australia were finding it hard to compete with residents' pressures as they were unsupported by LG as the latter underestimated their potential. Meanwhile, CGs in Belgrade are going through the same issue, that of not finding any support from LGs, but recently, there has been an indication that a framework is going to be set up to regulate CGs and ensure their longevity (Čepić et al., 2020). Therefore, it's of vital

importance that residents get involved and help CG's members defend their right of using underutilized land and turning it into community gardens (Twiss et al, 2003; Surratt, 2010). This would consequently result in an enhanced sense of community in the neighbourhood, which stresses the importance of pressure groups who can assist in converting these temporary gardens into permanent green spaces (Tidball & Krasny, 2007; Kordon et al., 2022).

2.3.2.5. Opposition to Activism

Apart from the lack of support from local institutions and LGs, Governments tend not to tolerate any activism whatsoever. This is seen through the way Singapore's government deals with environmental issues, that of governing with a technocratic style (Tan & Neo, 2009). This approach would limit civic activism, thus limiting the true potential CGs can bring to their surrounding neighbourhoods. In an article written by Yeo, (2000), the same government clarifies that they, referring to all of the government personnel, have to be cautious as in the past, pressure groups were slowly being politicised by opposing parties, therefore ruining the scope of such groups and instead put more pressures on the current government. That being said, Yeo (2000) also highlights that previously to that, the government made it a point to encourage civic groups to voice their concerns and give them space to do so, to make the communities flourish through civic engagement. This shows that even though governments want proactive engagement to take place, they often resist certain pressures that could be detrimental to their re-election.

2.3.2.6. Community Gardens Leadership Issues

Community Gardens may not only be affected by external variables, such as institutional support and land tenure issues but are also affected by issues faced internally within the group. Tan and Neo (2019) found that changes in the leadership of a gardening groups resulted in the abandonment of the CG. In addition, Kolb (2022) found similar leadership issues in urban areas where residents have limited access to affordable quality food. In such instances, CGs proved helpful by providing a supply of nutritional food when residents were in need (Kolb, 2022).

2.3.2.7. Lack of Planning

Planners also play a vital role in the livelihood of community gardens. Their role in ensuring the permanence of such gardens through better planning for neighbourhoods which favour their existence is vital for their longevity. Thus, volunteers can have peace of mind and reassurance that their hard work will be fruitful. Therefore, planners must design and strategically plan neighbourhoods where these green spaces would not eventually end up in the hands of a developer and lose their designated land use (Armstrong, 2000; Pudup, 2008). Adding to this, data has shown that throughout decades, the relation between CGs volunteers and planners has been doubtful, resulting in the absence of such green enclaves in masterplans (Lawson, 2004). If this issue is not addressed, CGs will continue to be taken up for

development, as studies show how top-down planning has led to the destruction of CGs (Schmelzkopf, 2002; Staeheli et al., 2002; Saldivar and Krasny, 2004; Wakefield et al., 2007 and Irazabal and Punja, 2009).

2.3.2.8. Lack of Infrastructure in Place

Community garden groups face various other challenges regarding the land available for use. These CGs are not always initiated on reclaimed land, and sometimes gardening groups would have to scout out for land, which comes with its issues. These infrastructural issues include the size of the land, soil conditions including depth, type, organic content and contamination, and visibility when it comes to conveying the image of the community garden (Mintz & McManus, 2014; Kingsley et al., 2019). Other studies have also shown that good access to water supply is crucial for safeguarding the future of community gardens (Pires 2011; Guitart et al., 2012; Cohen et al., 2012; Drake & Lawson, 2015; Wesener et al., 2020).

2.3.2.9. Lack of Funding

When CG groups set up these gardens, they face other challenges that are detrimental to their longevity. Funding, particularly in volunteering groups, is crucial (Tan & Neo, 2009; Carrad et al., 2023). As mentioned, financial assistance from LGs is scarce and it is almost impossible to secure funding from such institutions (Ghose & Pettygrove, 2014). Guitart et al. (2012) also argues that the fact that a CG cannot fund itself, makes it already a hurdle for those individuals who wish to join, consequently losing interest.

2.3.2.10. Social Conflicts and Governance Challenges

Community gardens often face both external and internal social challenges that can affect their sustainability. Local Governments are frequently caught between supporting community gardens and addressing residents' complaints—particularly regarding the gardens' appearance and their impact on the surrounding neighbourhood. For instance, in cities like Columbus and New York, officials have expressed concern about receiving complaints from nearby residents, ranging from compost odours to the misuse of public utilities (Morckel, 2015; Saldivar-Tanaka & Krasny, 2004). Such grievances can also extend to broader issues like perceived exclusion or internal disputes among gardeners (Tan & Neo, 2009; Schmelzkopf, 1995; Guitart et al., 2012).

Internally, conflicts often arise due to a lack of clear communication or governance structures. Tensions can emerge when gardeners feel that produce is not being shared fairly, as seen in cases where some participants harvested more than others (Charles, 2012). This can lead to frustration and a decline in volunteer participation (Butler, 2013). Although it may be difficult to regulate produce distribution ethically (Ostrom, 2005), establishing transparent rules and group agreements can help maintain harmony and ensure the longevity of the garden. As one

gardener from Lorong Ah Soo noted, some level of discontent is inevitable, but community gardens are generally accepted as part of the broader neighbourhood fabric (Tan & Neo, 2009).

2.3.2.11. *Vandalism*

Another significant issue that hinders volunteers from participating in these communal activities is theft and vandalism (Teig et al., 2009). An example is one instance where a resident took some 'extra' produce from a nearby CG which led to disputes with the gardeners. In response to this, the resident was claimed to have the legal right to do this since the CG was part of the public space. It is the lack of communication between the LG and the gardeners which puts the latter in a position of no authority to deal with such issues (Murphy et al., 2022). Thus, it's of critical importance that CGs representatives are given the required authority to settle unresolved issues and create a regulatory framework that restrict certain unwanted behaviour both from the volunteers and the residents.

There are numerous studies about what motivates gardeners to participate in community gardening. Many of these talk about the functional motivations but another sizeable number mentioned how people are emotionally motivated to join CGs (Lee et al., 2019). Lee et al. (2019) mentions that the gardeners' emotional attachment to the garden should be promoted to encourage them to participate while also reducing the time that would be required to maintain the gardens. In addition to this, Lee et al., (2019) argues that CGs should be more privatised so that the volunteers can become more attached to the place, therefore cultivating a deeper sense of ownership and connection with the garden without any interference from the neighbours.

In conclusion, all the above challenges have to be analysed well before starting a CG in order to tackle issues like acquisition of land, funding, leadership and lack of interest in participation, while maintaining the garden long term (Okvat & Zautra, 2011).

Overall, the barriers and obstacles outlined reveal the key challenges that may hinder participation in community gardening. The following table (Table 3) provides a consolidated overview of these challenges as discussed above.

Table 3: List of barriers and obstacles to participation in Community Gardens

Barriers	Obstacles
Lack of time and proximity	Lack of Participants
Lack of knowledge and skills	Land Acquisition
Other Barriers	Lack of Interest to Participate
	Lack of Institutional Support
	Opposition to Activism
	Community Gardens Leadership Issues
	Lack of Planning
	Lack of Infrastructure in Place
	Lack of Funding
	Social Conflicts and Governance Challenges
	Vandalism

2.4. The Maltese Context

Within the local context, there are few studies that touched upon urban agriculture, particularly focusing on community gardens and allotments. These studies vary in scope from exploring the potential power and willingness of local stakeholders to facilitate the implementation process of community gardens (Mizzi, 2021) to investigating the integration of community gardens within our urban environment through the retransformation of public spaces (Cassar, 2014). The most recent study explored the feasibility of starting allotment gardens on underutilised agricultural land around Malta and found that even though there is interest, several barriers hinder the actual implementation of such projects (Pace Ricci, 2017).

The fact that there is a local knowledge gap in this field of study portrays the bigger picture. Indeed, Scheiber (2020) and Zammit (2015) argue that even though there are several great green initiatives, governance issues persist and unfortunately hinder such activism. This can be clearly seen from the undivided power the central government has when it comes to the management of public spaces. Instead, it should be local councils who manage such tasks in a more efficiently bottom-up approach, thus empowering more grassroots initiatives (Scheiber, 2020). That being said, interest from a number of NGOs and locals is on the rise and as the demand is increasing, the supply of CGs is nowhere near.

The only formalised Community Garden to date in Malta is the 'Giving Garden' of Friends of the Earth Malta (FoEM), situated in Floriana (Figure 16). FoEM invites people to join and help them, normally every last Saturday of the month. Through this CG, individuals from various backgrounds get to know each other while carrying out gardening tasks. This activity is enhanced through educational talks that are given from time to time to promote local food consumption and organic gardening practices amongst others. In addition to this, the ever-growing group of volunteers end each session with a get-together, highlighting the true purpose of a CG (Friends of the Earth Malta, n.d.).



Figure 16: Friends of the Earth Malta 'Giving Garden' (Friends of the Earth Malta, n.d.)

The other instance of community gardening activities can be seen in *Fomm ir-Riĥ*, where an activist Nadia Cassar has been restoring private derelict land into a regenerative forest (Figure 17) (Volunteers Malta, n.d.). The Green Fingers Club, which she set up, is made of a group of individuals which meet on a weekly basis to take care of the land and learn about regenerative agriculture and its benefits. Apart from the gardening activities, they carry out other day to day tasks as deemed needed (Change Makers, n.d.). Due to the fact that land acquisition remains a persistent issue, it's important to highlight that existing CGs are set up on privately owned land. Even in the case of FoEM, the land was privately bought prior to setting up the CG.



Figure 17: The Green Fingers Club Garden (The Green Fingers Club, n.d.)

Additionally, there is the *Abbatija tad-Dejr* Allotment Garden in Rabat (Figures 18 & 19). Even though this falls under a private allotment garden model, it can still be regarded as a form of CG due to the community feeling the 18 tenants show towards one another (Heritage Malta, 2014). Several years after the initiation of the garden in 2019, most of the original tenants still have their contracts renewed which proves the success of this allotment garden (Heritage Malta, 2014).



Figure 18 & Figure 19: A few of the allotment gardens in the *Abbatija tad-Dejr* Allotment Garden in Rabat (Times of Malta, 2021)

Furthermore, after informal conversations with a number of professionals in the field, it became evident that interest within other the local communities has increased as these individuals have been reached by the Marsa, *San Ġwann* and Marsascala Local Councils to initiate something of this sort within their community. Unfortunately, no evident progress has materialised to date. However, in *Żejtun* there was the initiation of an allotment garden designed through a bottom-up approach but this is being held back by management related issues. In addition to this, another initiative of this sort is in its conceptualisation phase between the *Baħar iċ-Ċagħaq* Local Council and the residents. In 2022, there was a collaboration between the Senglea Local Council, Senglea Community Gardens, *Dawra Madwarna* (NGO) and the Senglea Community where everyone came together to do a number of gardening activities in *Misraħ* Andrea Debono in Senglea (Büsch, 2023). Even though this activity was a onetime initiative (Figure 20), today, a number of residents still take care of the piazza.



Figure 20: Misraħ Andrea Debono (Büsch, 2023)

There are also other initiatives that even though they are not intended to the wider public, one can still see their potential over time. Primary and Secondary schools around Malta are embracing the potential of agriculture and consequently has resulted in a collaboration between the Ministry for Agriculture, Fisheries and Animal Rights (MAFA) and the Ministry for Education, Sports, Youths, Research and Innovation (MEYR) to launch an educational programme known as “Let’s Talk Farming” (Let’s Talk Farming, n.d.). With its primary aim being to promote farming and local food production within schools, it has over the last two years seen a radical change in mentality in several schools. In fact, the *Maria Regina* College Mosta Secondary (*Żokrija*) has been quite active when it comes to gardening, and make use of their large field situated within the school’s premises, to grow a variety of vegetables (Figures 21 & 22). The already tightly knit community of students takes it in turns to maintain their field which shows that there are still youths actively engaged in such activities (Agribusiness Labs *Żokrija*, n.d.). The other CG is the Kitchen Garden, which is part of the *Sant’ Anton* Gardens in Attard (Figure 23) (Cassar, 2014). The Urban Youth Gardens (n.d.) mentioned that individuals whose family members are dealing with cancer, meet up and organise activities regularly which includes the maintenance of this urban garden.



Figure 21 & Figure 22: The communal garden at the Maria Regina College Mosta Secondary (Agribusiness Labs Žokrija, n.d.)



Figure 23: The garden at the Kitchen Garden (Cassar, 2014)

Even though this study delves into the Community Garden model, rented allotment gardens face similar issues and thus, past initiatives are still relevant. The “*Midd Idejk fil-Biedja*” was a great successful project which had 57 allotments, 50 square meters each, in *Għammieri* (Figure 24) (Muscat, 2014). It started in 2011, and its main purpose was to involve more individuals in this sector. Indeed it did, but many ended up heartbroken when they got to know

they had to move out in the beginning of 2014. They were promised to be relocated to another site in Bulebel, but this never took place (Muscat, 2014). Prior to that, back in the 1976, a scheme known as the “*Iżra u Rabbi*” was initiated in Qrendi but unfortunately, soon after, it was brought to a halt. Through this scheme, private allotment parcels were given and rented out to individuals (Manduca, 2004; Cassar, 2015).



Figure 24: The allotment garden that once stood in Ghammieri, Luqa (Pullicino, 2012)

3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology used for this research. Following a brief introduction on the research aims and objectives, the research approach and the collection techniques are described in detail highlighting the data collection, data analysis and limitations of each. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations and strengths of the methodology.

In relation to the research gap identified within the Maltese context (as highlighted in Chapter 1) the following research aims were developed:

- To explore whether Maltese citizens are in favour of and interested in setting up community gardens, and
- To investigate how much time (if any) Maltese citizens are willing to invest in the creation and maintenance of a community garden.

Based on this the research question, this study aims to delve into:

What extent is the Maltese society willing to contribute to the co-creation, maintenance, and aftercare of green public spaces in Malta?

More specifically the research objectives are:

- To review literature on community gardening models and understand why and how international communities participate in community gardening.
- To understand the key attractors for participating in co-creating and maintaining community gardens in international contexts.
- To understand whether Maltese citizens are willing to invest in the creation and maintenance of a community garden in the Maltese context.
- To identify key motivators and barriers / challenges related to community involvement.

3.2. Selecting and Developing the Methodology

This study makes use of an inductive research approach, which takes the exploratory route. The inductive approach is used when there is limited amount of data on a particular subject, so the study starts by carrying out observations and then proposing theories (Goddard & Melville, 2004). Given the fact that there is no existing research on how public participation can aid in the co-creation and aftercare of green public spaces, specifically within the local Maltese context, the inductive approach was chosen over the deductive approach as it is

better suited to discover new insights through the participants' perspectives. Instead of putting to the test a predetermined hypothesis, this study aims to identify motivations and potential barriers related to the community involvement within community gardens. Through this inductive method, all data gathered will be analysed for patterns pertaining to both participants who had the chance to experience a community garden and others who participated in a public survey. This falls in line with the study's exploratory approach which will be investigating unexplored areas of research, particularly social motives that could eventually guide professionals in the field take better community-led decisions.

To achieve the mentioned objectives, a mixed-method approach was employed, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative workshop data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. Figure 25 highlights the methods and the data collection tools used. According to Carmona (2013), a mixed-method approach makes it possible to explain the reasons behind the quantitative outcomes, through the qualitative method, and challenge the qualitative interpretations through the quantitative method. Integrating both approaches improves validity, enables researchers to use the appropriate tools to address different aspects of a study subject as well as supports triangulation (Carmona, 2013). Linking with the latter, Creswell (2014) also highlights the importance of this and speaks about how some qualitative findings can help clarify uncertain patterns resulting from the quantitative data or vice versa. He goes to mention how both qualitative and quantitative data, when analysed together, can result in more robust and decisive conclusions as the mixed-method approach adds depth by not only concluding numerical results, but also questioning such outcomes (Creswell, 2014). In order to better understand whether Maltese citizens want to take part in and maintain such gardens, both qualitative and quantitative data was collected. On one hand, it was felt that the gardening workshops would serve as a means for the participants to get their hands dirty and experience a community garden first-hand. However, the data would be specific to a small community group extracted from a specific case study. The online survey was thus used for the general public, so as to obtain a variety of responses enhancing the diverse opinions and insights gathered.

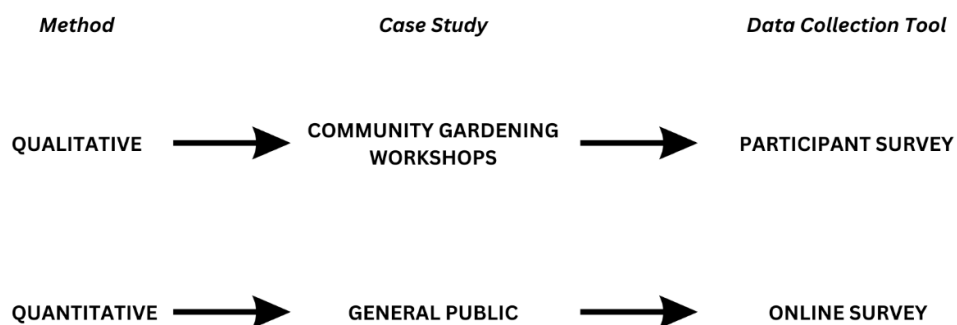


Figure 25: Diagram illustrating the mixed method methodology

3.3. Describing the Data Collection Techniques

3.3.1. Community Gardening Workshops

To understand better how individuals within an established community feel about taking care of an existing green space, a number of gardening workshop sessions were conducted. A post-workshop survey was carried out to gather opinions of those who took part.

Developing the Workshops: Using a Case Study Approach

As outlined above, it was decided to conduct gardening workshops with a specific community so as to provide the opportunity for first-hand experience of community gardening and then understand the individuals experience. Several spaces where to conduct the workshops were considered. The following table (Table 4) clearly indicates the strengths and weaknesses of each possible venue.

Table 4: Table highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of possible venues to conduct the gardening workshops in

Possible Areas	Strengths	Weaknesses
Social Housing Area within a Locality	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are instances where individuals have already tried growing food for their own consumption. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Permission to grant the use of area can be a lengthy process. 2. Residents could refrain to participate due to grudges with their neighbours. 3. Gardening tools and supplies need to be sourced out.
Friends of the Earth Malta Garden	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Less troublesome as it's privately owned. 2. Gardening tools and equipment needed are available. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A significant percentage of participants partaking in the already organised workshops are foreigners staying in Malta for short stays, thus would not be fit for this study. 2. The data could end up being skewed since the existing community of this garden already wants to drive change, thus would not yield mixed opinions.
University of Malta (UoM)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tightly knit community of students and staff. 2. Participants would encourage their friends to join the workshops. 3. The fact that individuals make use of the UoM premises daily, motivates them to join even more. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Individuals might refrain from participating due to not knowing other participants. 2. Gardening tools and supplies need to be sourced out.

The University of Malta was chosen as the venue to carry out these gardening workshops and a number of sites were highlighted (in Figure 26) as being ideal for such activity. These sites were the Green Roof situated on the Faculty for the Built Environment Building (in green), 2 green planters in front of the Old Humanities Building (in red), the Japanese Garden (in yellow), the Arvid Pardo study area (in purple), the area to the left of the UoM second entrance (in blue) and the strip of soil to the right of the UoM second entrance (in orange). Furthermore, a total of 4 workshops were deemed ideal to gather enough data. Two sites had to be chosen within the campus so that there'd be enough area for the work of four participating groups.

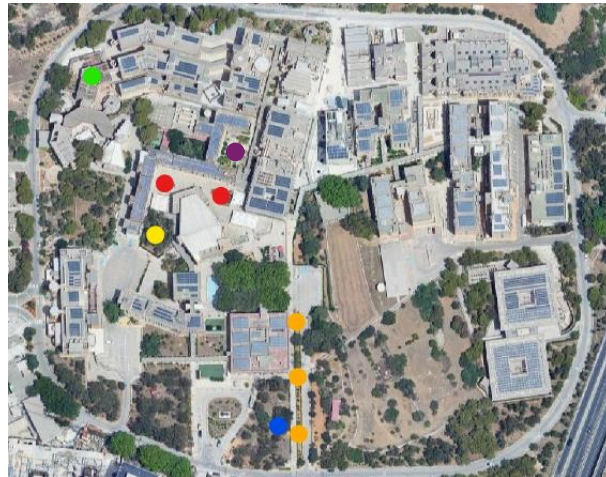


Figure 26: The possible highlighted areas at the University of Malta to carry out the gardening workshops

The first area to be chosen was the Faculty for the Built Environment Green Roof (in green). This is a sought-after garden nestled in a quiet area on campus and it is being nurtured by a group of students and academics who meet up twice a month. These reasons made such an area ideal to try gardening as a learning experience for those who are new to this subject. Meanwhile, the other area which seemed to be ideal was the Arvid Pardo study area (in purple). Since it's a green study area forming a small piazzetta, several hundreds of students pass by it on a daily basis, making it an ideal spot for the gardening activities. This way, the work carried out would be appreciated by many.

This study used a random sampling strategy that utilised a case study approach, in this case, the University of Malta community staff and students. In order to provide every member of the chosen subset an equal chance to participate, a random sampling method was applied. This was accomplished by sending out an open invitation to all students and staff members using the university's official email system. Posters (as seen in Figure 27) were placed at strategic spots throughout the university campus, some of which can be seen in Figures 28-31, and invitations were circulated on social media. Those who showed interest, willingly signed up for the workshops.

Gardening

Workshops

Are you a
University of
Malta
Student or
Staff?

9TH / 16TH / 23RD /
30TH NOVEMBER



 University of Malta

**FREE OF
CHARGE**
*tools included



REGISTER YOUR INTEREST!

*These Gardening Workshops are being organised as part of a Master of Architecture and Urban Design study conducted by Ryan (ryan.debono.19@um.edu.mt)

Figure 27: The gardening workshops poster which was used for advertisement purposes



Figure 28, Figure 29, Figure 30 & Figure 31: The posters were printed and hung on a number of notice boards that are placed at strategic locations on UoM campus. These include: UoM canteen, UoM Gateway, Dar Manoel Magri and around ten more faculties

Each workshop was envisioned to have between five and eight individuals, making it an ideal to manage the group well. Therefore, a total of thirty-two participants was the maximum number of volunteers needed divided between four workshops. Following a month from the first invitations that were sent, a total number of 47 individuals were registered, from whom 42 participants showed up to the workshops. To accommodate all the registered 47 participants, five workshops had to be carried out instead of four. Time availabilities of the participants was another factor to consider. The chosen time for the workshops was between 9am till 11am and from 2pm till 4pm, both on a Saturday, during the month of November. In addition to this, another two individuals showed up without registering who were encouraged to join by their friends.

The workshops took place following this structure:

- 9:00 AM / 2:00 PM - Meet-up
- 9:10 AM / 2:10 PM - Ice Breaker / Consent Forms
- 9:15 AM / 2:15 PM - Gardening Activities
- 10:30 AM / 3:30PM - Survey
- 10:45 AM / 3:45 PM - Gathering / Snack & Concluding Remarks

Below are a few photographs of the tasks carried out during the workshops (Figures 32-43). Additional photographs can be seen in Appendix G.



Figure 32: The researcher giving a short introduction on community gardens and green roofs during the first workshop



Figure 33: The researcher provided food and coffee for the participants in order to simulate the atmosphere of a community garden during all workshops



Figure 34: The participants weeding during the second workshop



Figure 35: A small portion of the waste collected during the second workshop



Figure 36: The researcher explaining to participants how to disassemble a drip head from an irrigation system for cleaning during the third workshop



Figure 37: Participants engaged in cutting and propagating plants during the third workshop



Figure 38: The researcher assisting the participants in carrying out pruning and cleaning the irrigation system during the third workshop



Figure 39: Participants carrying out pruning and working up the soil during the fourth workshop



Figure 40: Each participant was given a basil pot after each workshop as a gesture of appreciation, acknowledging their contribution and the time committed to the study



Figure 41: The shrubs were strategically positioned within the soft landscaping area to aesthetic enhance the quality of the overall area during the fifth workshop



Figure 42: The researcher explaining what is meant by transplanting and how it is carried out during the fifth workshop



Figure 43: The participants planting indigenous shrub in Arvid Pardo Area during the fifth workshop

Developing the Survey and Data Collection

Overall, the thirty-five questions that made up this survey were designed to answer questions primarily related to participation in community gardens in Malta. The first seven questions were aimed to collect the socio-demographic data of the participants. Meanwhile the other questions were designed to be both open (12 questions) and close ended (10 questions) questions to allow for both statistical data and further explanations. Additionally, the remaining questions (6 questions) used the Likert scale to statistically analyse the opinions provided. The survey (can be seen in Appendix C) was conducted during the gardening workshops using Google Forms while two participants chose to answer the survey using pen and paper. A total of forty-three surveys were conducted from a total of forty-four participants.

Analysing the Data

The data gathered from these surveys was analysed both statistically and thematically. The socio-demographic data and the results from the close ended questions was already graphically represented in Google Forms. This data is presented in pie and bar chart format later in Chapter 4. Meanwhile, for the thematic analysis pertaining to the open-ended questions, the data gathered was imported into a word document where it was coded manually according to the most common themes, as can be seen in Appendix E. Every response gathered was thoroughly analysed to eliminate human errors. The salient emergent themes were listed, and the coded results can be found in the results in Chapter 4 presented in tables.

Strengths and Limitations

Every data collection method comes with its strengths and weaknesses. The gardening workshop was chosen due to the number of strengths it has when compared to its limitations. The fact that it is a hands-on experience yields more valuable and more insightful findings. For the conducted survey to yield positive results, a workshop which mimics what actually happens in a community garden was required. Moreover, through an actual workshop, the participants would end up experiencing several benefits of such activity first hand, resulting in more fruitful results.

Meanwhile, the time needed to plan and actually carrying out the workshops turned out to be quite time consuming. Another main limitation was the resources needed to carry out the gardening workshops. Apart from the effort needed to make everything work together, the resources available were limited. Even though there were several professionals and governmental entities who provided most of the supplies needed, the need for tools, for example, was not fulfilled. Also, some workshops ended up with six participants while others with 11. For this reason, tools were not sufficient when groups exceeded the envisioned number of eight participants. These large groups can be considered a limitation to the study because the researcher could not give one to one attention. Another limitation was the lack of funds available to carry out such research projects. Although the funds needed were covered by the researcher, it still limited the number of activities that could have been carried out during the workshops. It was important that the survey's length and approximate time needed to answer the questions remained as short as possible. This is because there was a greater chance of collecting better quality data if the duration of the survey is not too long. This also limited the number of questions that were included within the survey, limiting the span of information that could have been collected.

3.3.2. Public Online Survey

Apart from the workshops and the post-workshop survey, an additional survey was carried out to the general Maltese population to further understand their willingness to participate in these community gardening activities. The collected data from both surveys can be compared to analyse the participants' interest and clarify if a hands-on experience increases interest in these activities.

Developing the Survey and Data Collection

This part of this study used a simple random sampling method to allow every participant from the public to have an equal chance of participating. This was achieved by circulating an invitation to take part in the survey on different social media platforms. Participation was voluntary and the sample size amounted to 180.

This survey (can be seen in Appendix D) mimics the post-workshop survey in structure but is shorter in length and much simpler to understand. The first seven questions from the twenty-question survey were related to the socio-demographic data. The other questions comprised of seven close ended questions and five open ended questions. Contrary to the post-workshop survey, this had more close-ended questions so that the data gathered can be easily analysed. Additionally, a Likert scale question was used to see how many interested people would start or continue to participate in community gardening activities on a regular basis. Overall, the same questions were used in both surveys, but these were kept shorter. Meanwhile, this survey was conducted through an online platform; forms.app (Forms App, n.d.) and was piloted to see whether it could be improved. The survey was left open for around two months.

Analysing the Data

As for the post-workshop survey, this data was also analysed statistically and thematically. Since a different tool was used for data collection, data from close ended questions had to be imported into an excel file to make it visually legible through pie and bar charts. Meanwhile, the data gathered from the open-ended questions was imported into a word document and was coded manually according to the most frequently mentioned themes (seen in Appendix F). Then the latter data was represented into tables. Both the charts and tables produced are presented later in the results in Chapter 4.

Limitations

The main limitation is the number of responses collected from this quantitative survey, which limits the representativeness of the data in relation to the general Maltese population. In fact, the target sample size was calculated by an online tool: Riley Research (Riley Research, n.d.) and the sample size of 384 participants would be needed. This was based on the population size of Malta of 563,443 (NSO Malta, 2024) while assuming a confidence level of 95% and confidence interval of 5. Assuming the same confidence level and a sample size of 180, the confidence interval accomplished was 7.3. Even though a considerable number of responses were recorded, the sample size of 180 participants was not sufficient to allow for representativeness. Another limitation would be that the survey was only circulated online, leading to possible issues of unequal access to those who don't have access to the internet. That being said, the online survey was circulated and 'shared' on many social media groups as possible. While keeping these limitations in mind, the overall methodology as a mixed method approach ensured a rich data set. The qualitative gardening workshops provided in depth data and opinions while the quantitative survey served as a complimentary method to support, compare and validate the qualitative findings.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

The University of Malta's research ethics procedures were strictly adhered to. Before starting out to collect data, the research ethics committee gave its approval for the method. Participants' written consent was sent out by email and were all collected before the commencement of the workshops. Although individuals consented to be photographed for research purposes, all information obtained from the post-workshop survey has been anonymised. In the meantime, consent to publish the collected data was given, and an information paragraph was included on the public online survey's welcome page. Participation in this instance was strictly anonymous. Appendix A and B contain all of the relevant forms for both surveys.

3.5. Overall Strengths and Limitations of the Mixed Method Approach

The use of a mixed methods approach was successful in enhancing the quality and nature of the data gathered for this study. One of the main benefits of mixed methods research is the ability to employ specific techniques to align with the aims and objectives of the research subject, thus optimising the strengths of each approach (Creswell, 2014). This approach was chosen as it provides both rich qualitative insights into individual experiences and statistical data that shed light on specific commonalities. This way, the research question would be addressed from multiple angles - findings from volunteers who participated in the gardening activities and from a specific community and from the general population who were only given a general idea on what community gardening is about. The two main approaches chosen were effective in this respect; the qualitative approach was used to fill in the gaps when the quantitative approach was unable to fully capture some aspects of the research. The variation in responses between the open and close-ended questions demonstrates the value of qualitative inquiry in capturing uncommon barriers that may otherwise remain hidden. The combined use of these methods produced a thorough dataset that offered qualitative insights that provided an in-depth understanding of the topic as well as statistical support. The validity and depth of the results were thus reinforced by the successful integration of both approaches (Carmona, 2014).

Despite efforts to uphold academic thoroughness, the study's pragmatic nature occasionally required certain concessions, especially in relation to the quantitative data collection. This issue was properly acknowledged and is known to be a normal risk when it comes to using mixed methods research (Carmona, 2014). In other terms, this means that compromises were made during the research process, such as collecting fewer data points in the general public survey, so that the study could remain practical and manageable. These kinds of trade-offs are common in mixed methods research, where balancing both methods often requires some level of adjustment.

Although the introduction acknowledges that children and older adults are among the groups who may benefit most from community gardening, they were excluded from the present study. This decision was made due to the practical challenges of engaging vulnerable populations within the limited timeframe of a short research project. As such, the research sample was restricted to adult participants of working age, whose inclusion posed fewer ethical and logistical constraints.

4. Results

4.1. Introduction

This chapter summarises the results of the mixed methods research that explored the willingness of the Maltese society to contribute to the co-creation, maintenance, and aftercare of green public spaces. The findings are organised statistically and thematically, in accordance with the main research question and objectives. For every data collection method, quantitative data obtained via surveys is presented followed by the qualitative data derived from the individual's opinions. The results are intended to give a thorough grasp of community views regarding urban greening initiatives, motivational factors, perceived challenges, and participation patterns. Then the statistical analysis will be presented in a way which highlights any possible association between responses given and demographics of the respondents.

4.2. Post-Workshop Survey

4.2.1. Introduction

A survey was conducted at the end of each gardening workshop at the University of Malta to gather participants' feedback on their overall satisfaction, as well as their motivations and barriers to participating in a community garden, both now and in the future. Although a total number of 44 participants showed up for the workshops, a total of 43 responses were collected. The survey questions and their respective responses are found in the Appendix C and Appendix E respectively. The tables in this chapter will be showing data from open ended questions that was categorised according to common themes, while the figures show the data for closed ended questions.

Figures 44–54 present the socio-demographic data of the workshop participants. Starting with gender (Figure 44), 59% of respondents were female, with higher participation from students aged 18–24 (Figure 45). Thirty respondents were Maltese, while the remaining 13 were of mixed nationalities (Figure 46). Apart from the localities shown in Figure 47, only one respondent came from each of the following: Attard, Fgura, Gzira, Ghaxaq, Hamrun, Luqa, Marsaxlokk, Mtarfa, Paola, Qormi, Qrendi, Santa Venera, Swieqi, and Balzan—totaling 23 localities. Many participants were full-time students holding a Bachelor's degree (Figure 48). Additionally, 63% were full-time students (Figure 49), and 74% had no dependents (Figure 50). About 40% reported having 5–10 hours of free time per week (Figure 51). Regarding gardening experience, 60.5% had some background (Figure 52); of these, 44% learned it in childhood,

while 42% had recent experience (Figure 53). Finally, 56% were already aware of community gardens (Figure 54).

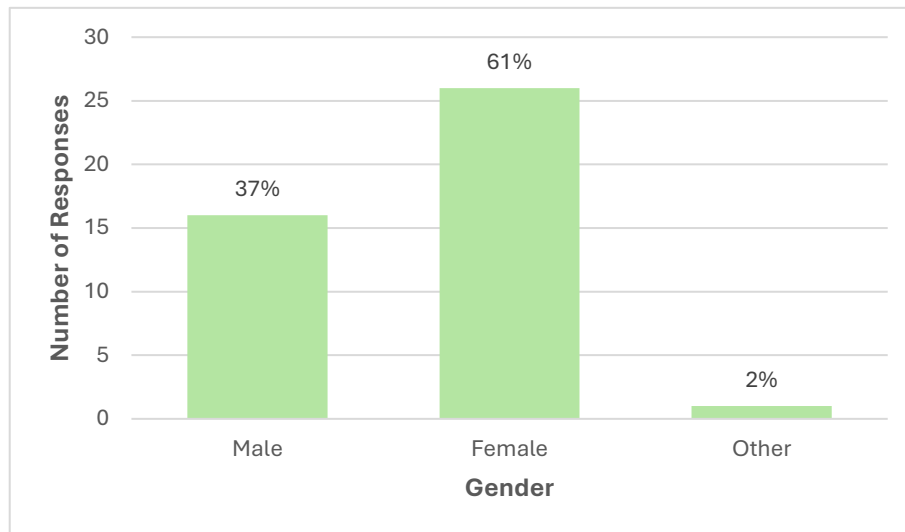


Figure 44: Number of responses according to gender

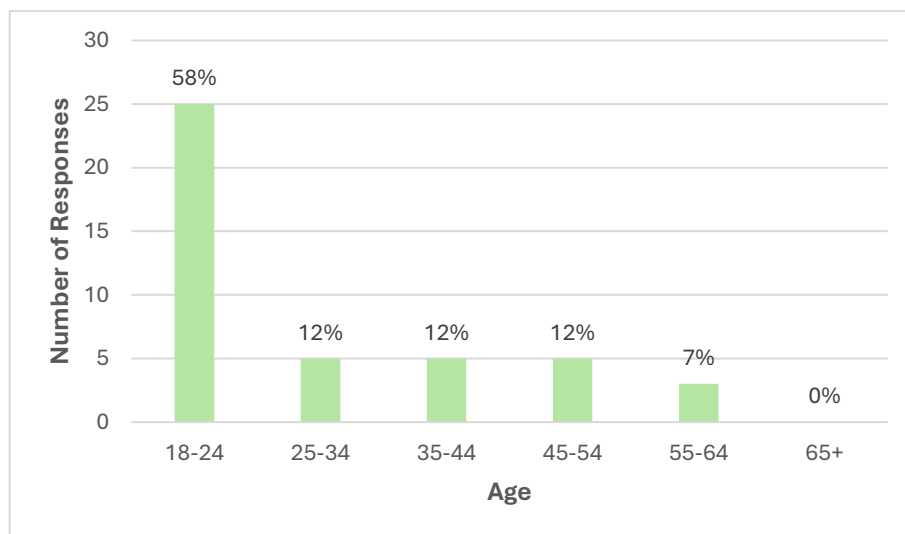


Figure 45: Number of responses according to age

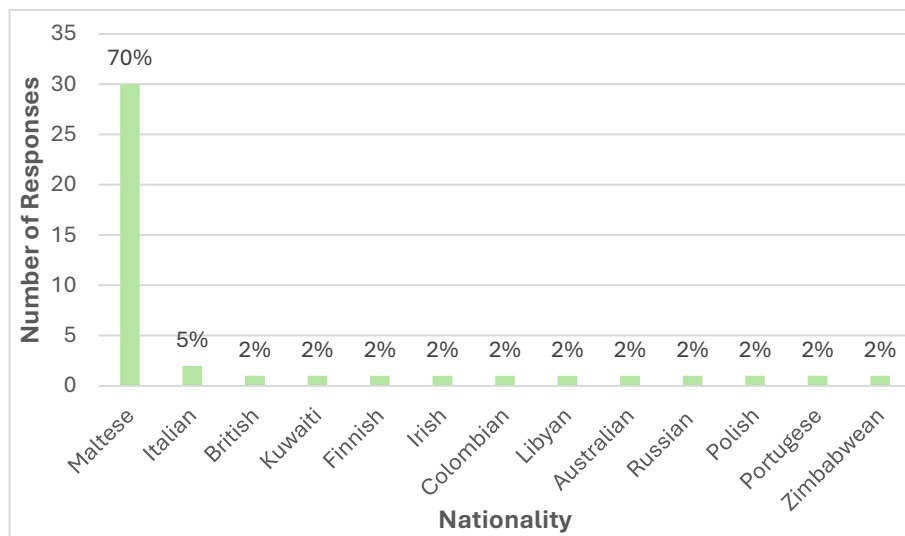


Figure 46: Number of responses according to nationality

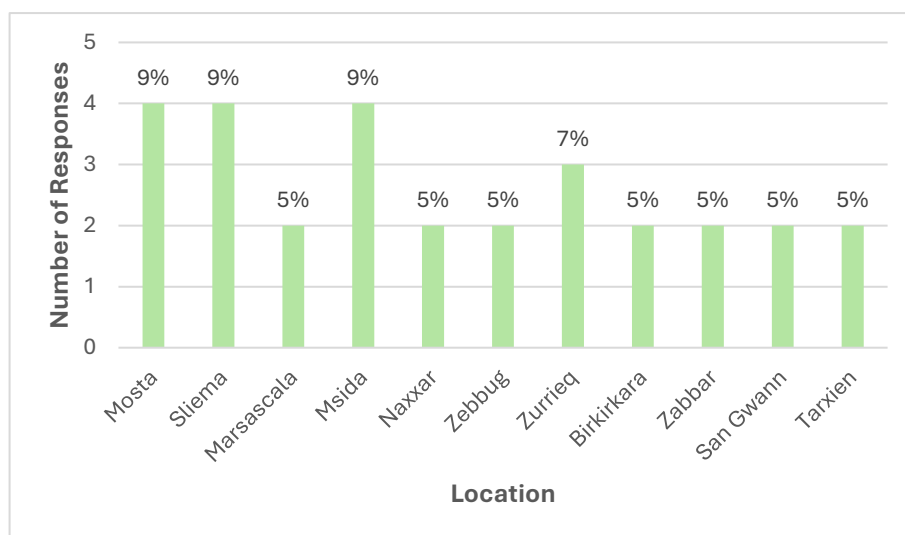


Figure 47: Number of responses according to location (for those >1)

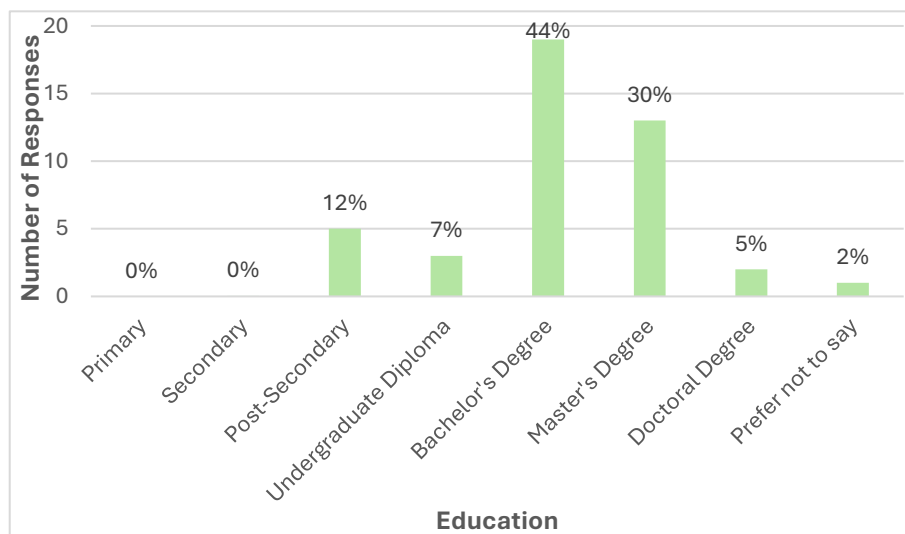


Figure 48: Number of responses according to highest level of education

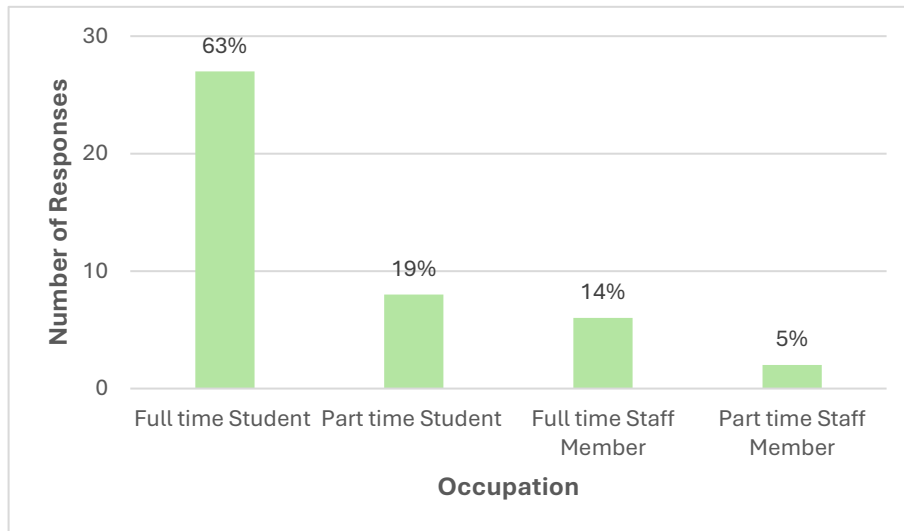


Figure 49: Number of responses according to occupation

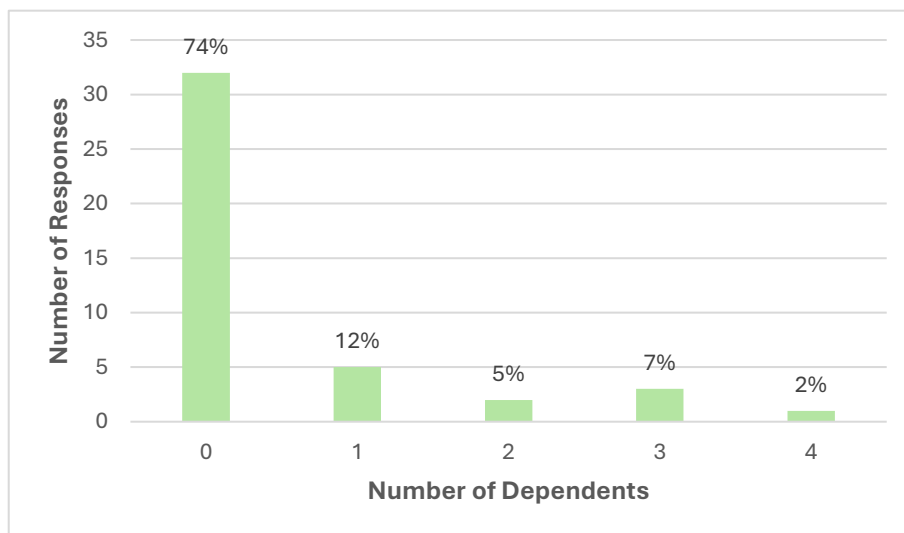


Figure 50: Number of responses according to their number of dependents

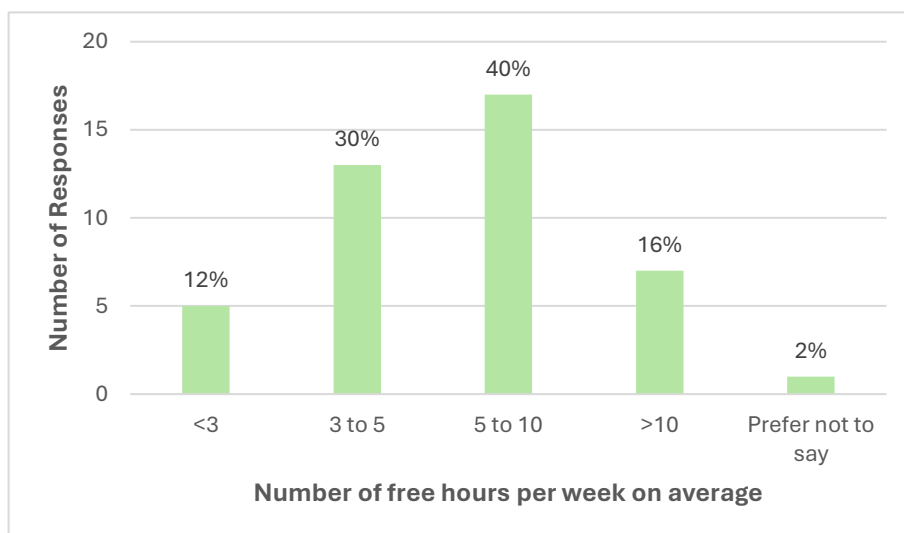


Figure 51: Number of responses according to the number of free hours per week on average

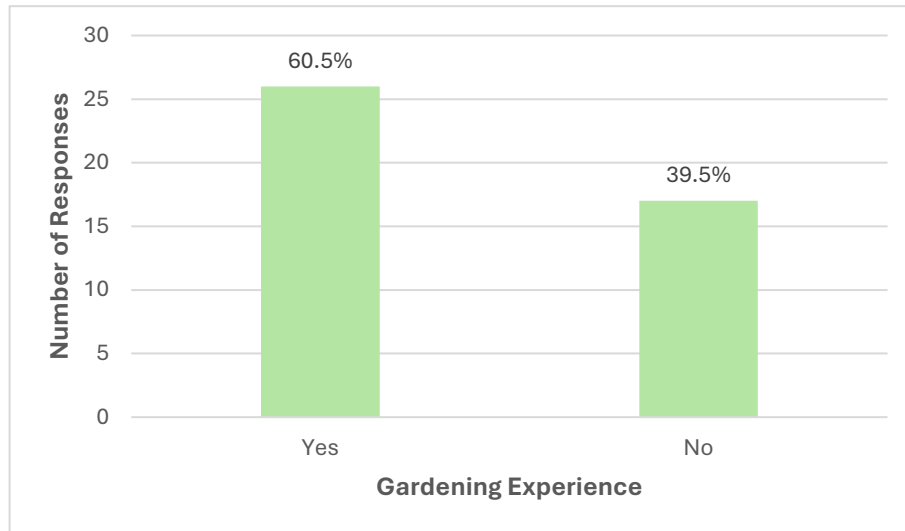


Figure 52: Number of responses according to gardening experience

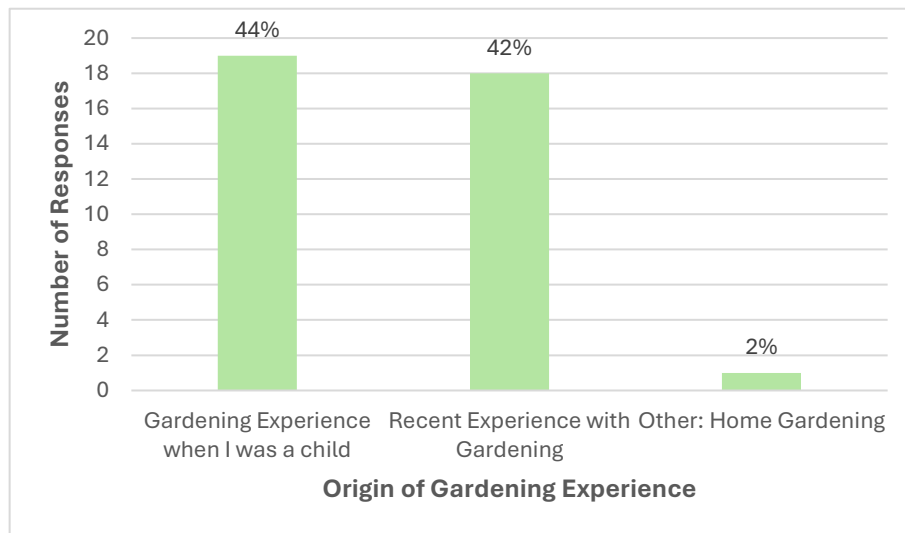


Figure 53: Number of responses according to origin of gardening experience

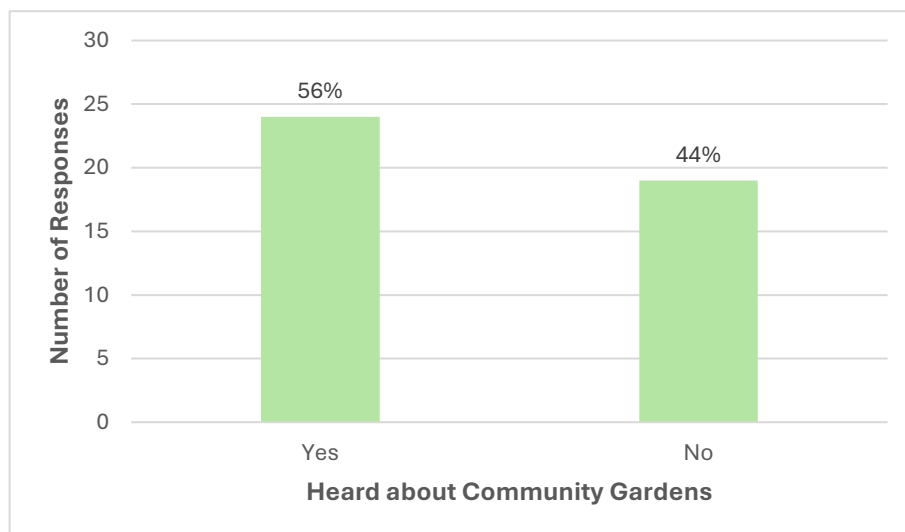


Figure 54: Number of responses according to whether they heard about community gardens

Following these, the respondents were asked to specify where they heard about the term ‘community gardening’. The responses (seen in Table 5) were varied but the predominant source was social media and the internet in general.

Table 5: The means through which participants came across the term ‘community gardens’

Sources	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Social media / Internet / TV	9	38%
Case Studies Abroad	5	21%
Own Research	4	17%
Through Relatives	2	8%
Environmental Awareness	2	8%
Other	2	8%

4.2.2. General satisfaction on the Gardening Session

The following set of questions were aimed at understanding the participants’ perceptions and suggestions related to the gardening workshops that they took part in. Figure 55 shows how 30 out of 43 participants were very satisfied with the workshops, of which almost one third enjoyed socialising and the community feeling whereas almost another third enjoyed the gardening tasks (as seen in Table 6). There were also others who enjoyed cleaning, others that gave them a sense of purpose, as well as those who experienced aromatherapy.

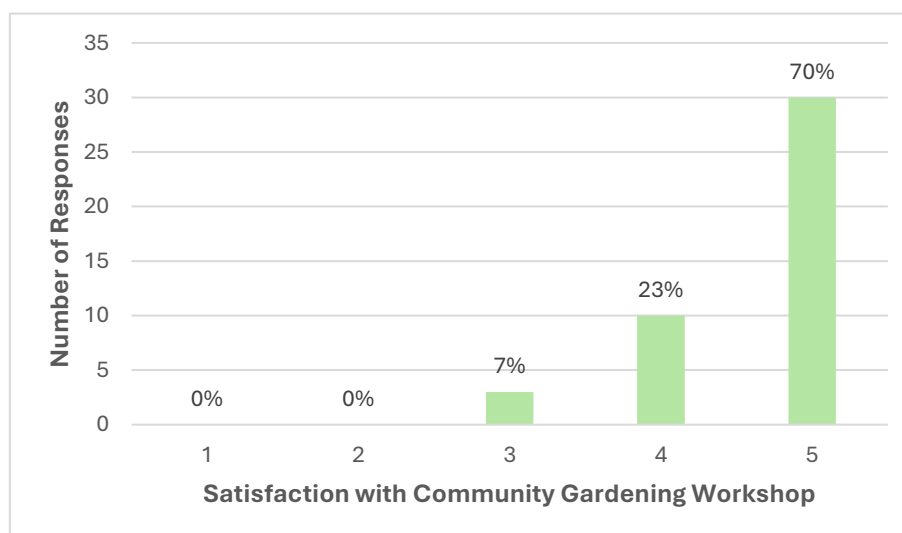


Figure 55: Respondents’ overall satisfaction with the community gardening workshop

Table 6: Activities which were mostly enjoyed during workshops

Activities	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Socialising / Community Feeling	17	32%
Gardening Tasks	16	30%
Learning	9	17%
Connection with Nature	4	7%
Leisure	4	7%
Others	4	7%

Moreover, the participants were asked to indicate on the Likert scale their enjoyment of the social gathering. This resulted in a positive outcome (Figure 56). Meanwhile, through an open-ended question, the respondents were asked to write down reasons (reasons were not given as options) why they did not enjoy the workshops as much (Table 7). These were mainly due to the lack of resources, lack of commitment from others, lack of guidance and weather. There were also several personal issues including mobility, others wanting to experience more planting and flowers, while others who had issues with the rocky soil and the smell of vinegar. The remaining Likert scale questions, presented in Figures 57, 58 and 59, also yielded positive and satisfactory results.

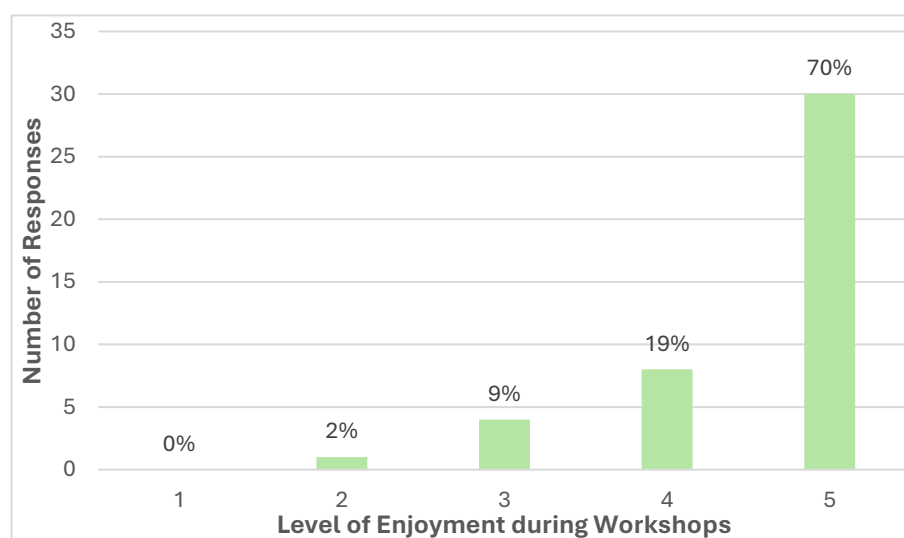


Figure 56: Respondents' level of enjoyment during workshops in terms of the social gathering aspect

Table 7: Aspects that the respondents found disappointing or frustrating about the workshop

Aspects	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Not Applicable	28	61%
Other personal issues	9	20%
Not enough tools	3	7%
Lack of commitment from others	2	4%
Lack of guidance	2	4%
Weather	2	4%

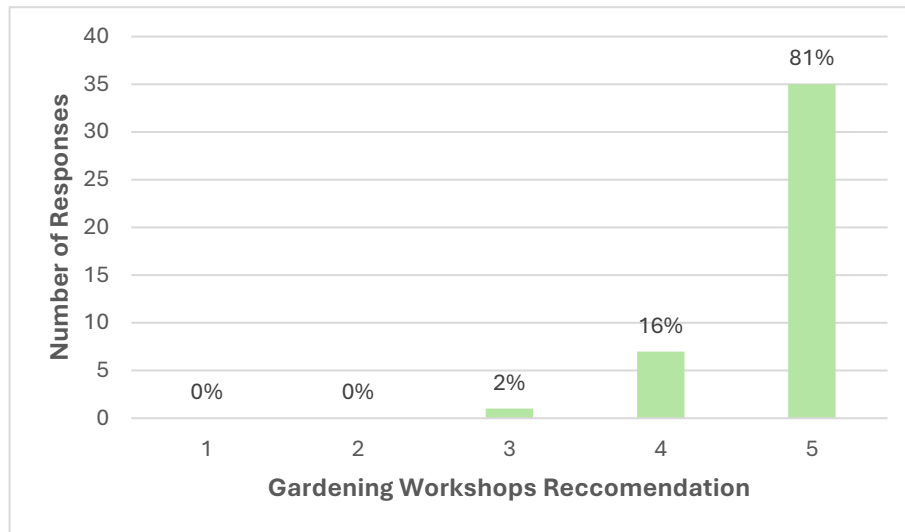


Figure 57: Extent to which respondents would recommend the gardening workshops

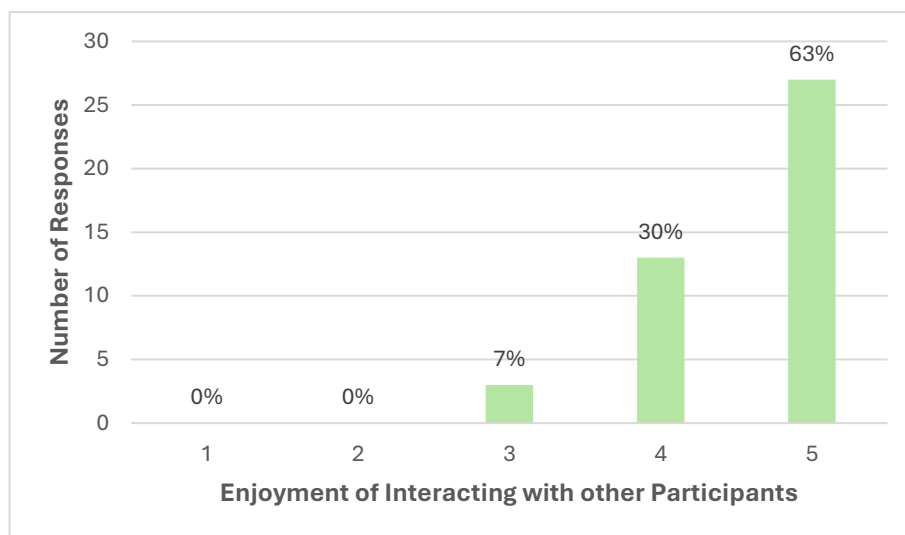


Figure 58: Respondents' enjoyment of interacting with other participants during the workshop

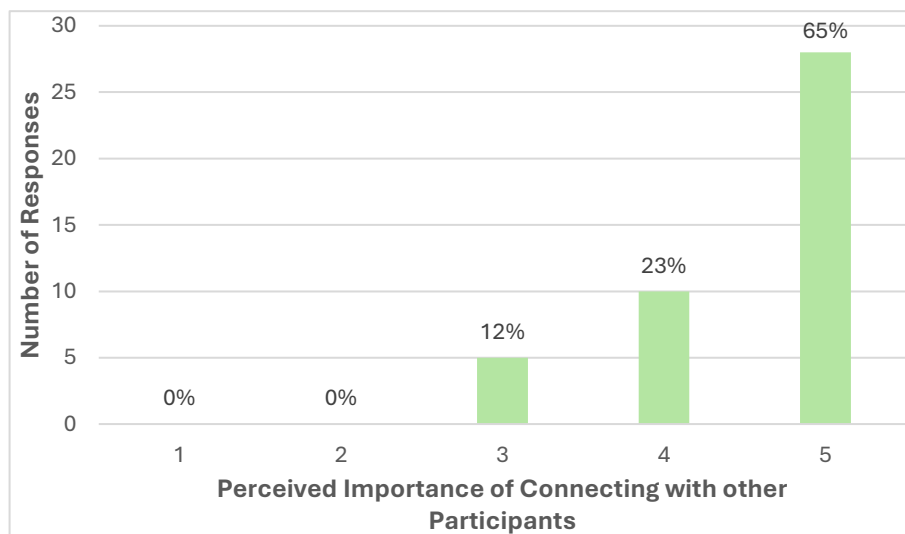


Figure 59: Respondents' perceived importance of connecting with other participants during the workshops

The final question was about the participants' feedback on how the workshops helped the respondents connect with each other (Table 8). A considerable number of responses, around 43%, highlighted that talking to other participants about their lives and hobbies amongst other things, helped them connect better than, for instance, from working together or communicating to work together for a common goal. Other responses included the fact that it's a physical meeting in a natural environment, something which is in decline nowadays. Others said that they connected while discussing difficulties encountered during gardening.

Table 8: Aspects that helped the respondents connect with the other participants

Aspects	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Talking / Conversations	19	43%
Meeting new people & making connections	11	25%
Others	5	11%
Working together	3	7%
Communicate to work	3	7%
No Response	3	7%

4.2.3. Motivations and Barriers to Participation in a Community Garden

The third section of the survey focuses on what encouraged or discouraged the participants to take part in the gardening workshops. 23% of all respondents said that the love for gardening was the motive for sparking interest (Table 9). The other main factors (>9%) were encouragement through friends, the love for nature and the wish to learn about gardening. Another substantial amount (18.2%) were mixed factors amongst which included wanting to help, curiosity and the connection to the respondents' studies. Furthermore, the most highlighted motivations (Figure 60) to participate were environmental sustainability, personal growth and education, having 25, 23 and 22 responses respectively. The social and leisure motives followed, both having 20 responses.

Table 9: Aspects that sparked interest in participating in the gardening workshop

Aspects	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Love for Gardening	10	23%
Learn to Garden	7	16%
Others	8	18%
Through a friend	5	11%
Love for Nature	4	9%
Awareness	3	7%
Childhood Experiences	3	7%
Connect with Others	2	5%
Opportunity	1	2%
No Response	1	2%

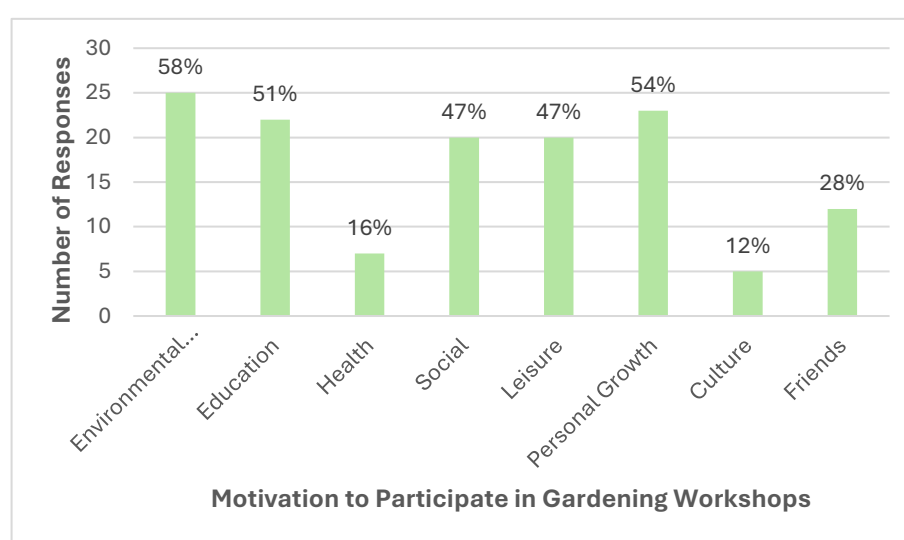


Figure 60: Respondents' motivation to participate in the gardening workshops

The participants were asked to explain their expectation prior to participating in the workshops (Table 10). Overall, the responses were positive and most spoke about how their expectations were met (28.6%), how much they've enjoyed it (23.8%) and how their expectations were exceeded (21.4%). Respondents were also asked about what was hindering their participation in the beginning (Table 11), with lack of time and lack of information about the workshops being the main factors.

Table 10: Respondents' expectations of the gardening workshops

Expectations	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Expectations met	12	29%
Enjoyed it	10	24%
Expectations exceeded	9	21%
Excepted more but ok	4	10%
No expectations	3	7%
Others	3	7%
Expected more	1	2%

Table 11: Factors hindering respondents from participating when initially registering

Factors	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Not Applicable	30	70%
Lack of Time	4	9%
Lack of information about workshops	4	9%
Work & life commitments	2	5%
Others	2	5%
Weather	1	2%

The respondents were asked whether they were faced with any challenges during the workshops, 37 of them (86%) claimed they did not (Figure 61). Those who did, mentioned lack of knowledge and physical health (Table 12). Others found it hard to garden without gloves while another participant was finding it difficult to learn new gardening skills. Meanwhile, when ask what might prevent them from participating in community gardens on a regular basis in the future (Table 13), the most prominent response was lack of time, with a percentage of around 40%.

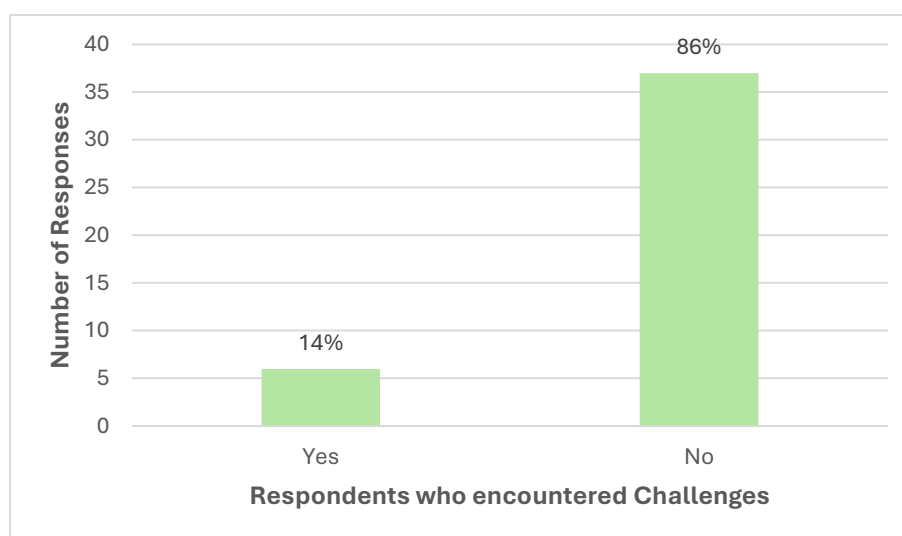


Figure 61: Number of respondents who encountered challenges or obstacles during the workshops

Table 12: Challenges faced by the respondents during the gardening workshops

Challenges	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Not Applicable	36	83.7%
Others	3	7%
Lack of Knowledge	2	4.7%
Physical Health	2	4.7%

Table 13: Factors that might prevent the respondents from participating in community gardening activities, on a regular basis, in the future.

Factors	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Lack of Time	19	40%
Work Commitments	5	11%
Other Commitments	4	9%
Others	4	9%
Not Applicable	3	6%
Weather	3	6%
Proximity	2	4%
Lack of Opportunities	2	4%
Lack of Motivation	1	2%
Lack of Knowledge	1	2%
Lack of Interest from others	1	2%
Lack of Resources	1	2%
Health	1	2%

When asked to give constructive feedback and possible improvements on the workshops, one fourth of the participants said that it was perfect and almost another 20% pointed out some suggestions (Table 14). These suggestions included, providing bigger gardens, a wider variety of activities and plants, and the fact that a roof garden is not accessible to people with mobility issues, thus stressing the importance of public green areas that are accessible to all. Another participant appreciated the food and coffee provided, but explained that restrooms should not be forgotten. There was another individual who suggested that “staff members should have a dedicated hour per week during working hours to go if they choose – or to any aspect of the university for collective environmental improvement” (see Appendix E, page 144).

Table 14: Improvements highlighted by respondents that could have made the workshop more accessible or enjoyable

Improvements	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
It was perfect	12	25%
Others	9	18%
Better Advertisement	8	16%
More Learning	5	10%
More frequent	4	8%
More Tools	3	6%
More Information on Tasks	3	6%
In other localities	1	2%

4.2.4. Future Participation

Moreover, in this section of the survey, questions related to the participants' future participation were asked. Figure 62 shows the response distribution between being interested (4) and very interested (5) in continuing to participate in community gardening activities, on a regular basis, in the future. When compared to Figure 55, which included 30 responses, one notices a decrease of 8 participants who despite being satisfied, are still not interested in participating in the future. That being said, 40 respondents claimed that they were willing to volunteer their time to help maintain a community garden (Figure 63).

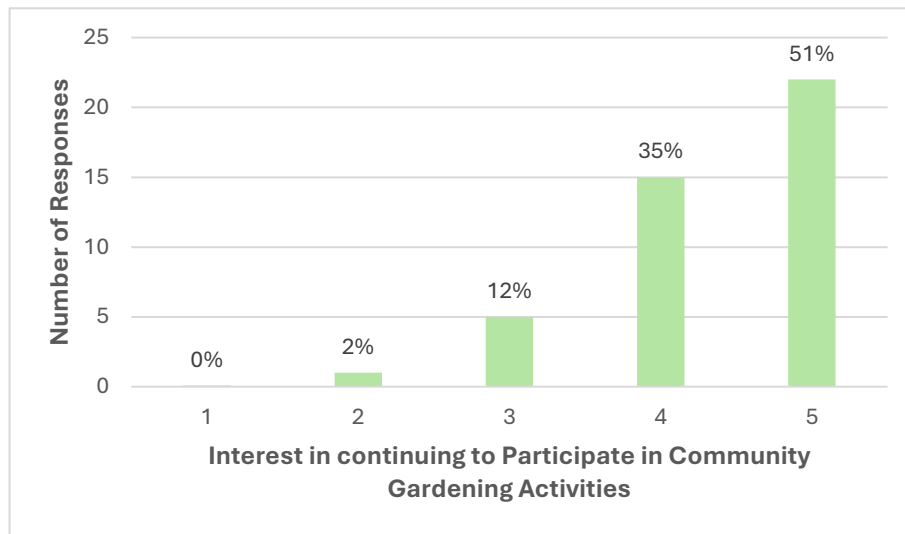


Figure 62: Respondents' interest in continuing to participate in community gardening activities on a regular basis, in the future

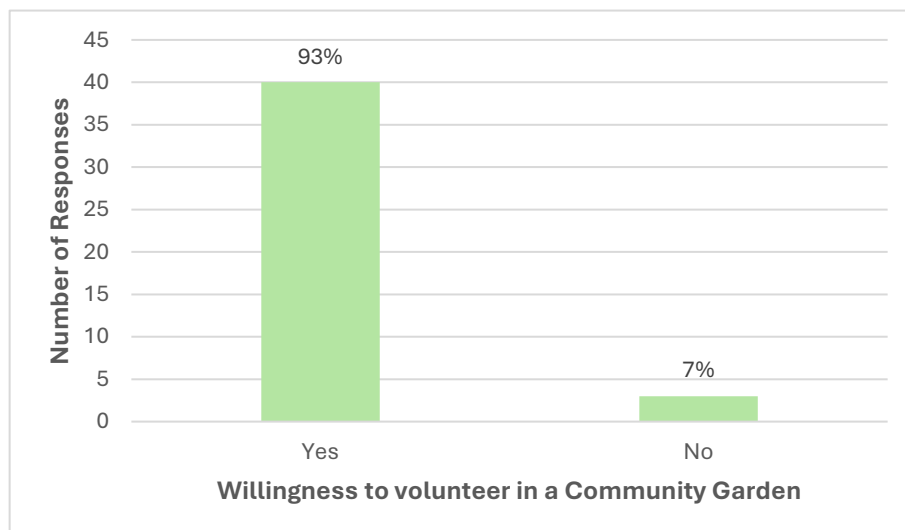


Figure 63: Number of respondents willing to volunteer their time to help maintain a community garden

Following this, the respondents were asked to explain their reasons. The most common reasons for willing to volunteer (>10%) were that of providing green spaces that aid in improving our urban environment and that it's therapeutic. There were others who would participate because they love nature and gardening, want a more work life balance and it was fun and natural to do. Meanwhile, those who are not willing to volunteer mentioned that their time for such activities is limited and another explained that s/he is not good at gardening. The respondents were also asked to mark their preferred frequency to participate in community garden activities (Figure 64). Overall, the respondents were split (21 each) between once a month and twice a month. There was another respondent who chose to participate once a week in these gardening activities.

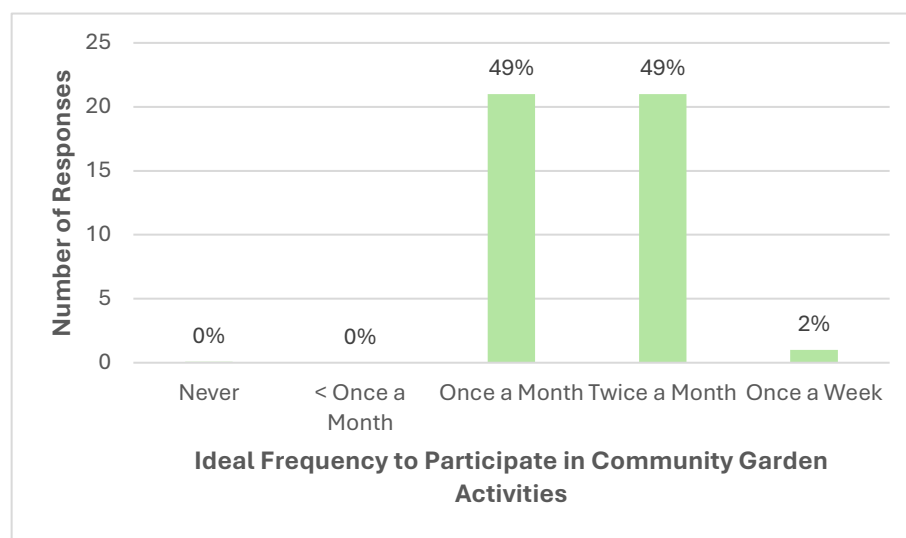


Figure 64: Respondents' ideal frequency to participate in community garden activities

Following that, the respondents were asked about their interest in leading a community garden (Figure 65). Here, responses were balanced between those who are keen on doing so and those willing to giving it a try. The rest of the respondents were not interested in doing so. When the participants were asked to give reasons to their previous answer (Table 15), three of them mentioned that they would lead a community garden with the help of others. Others mentioned how they are not keen on taking responsibility, how they don't see themselves fit to do so while another explained how s/he prefers books and plants rather than dealing with strangers.

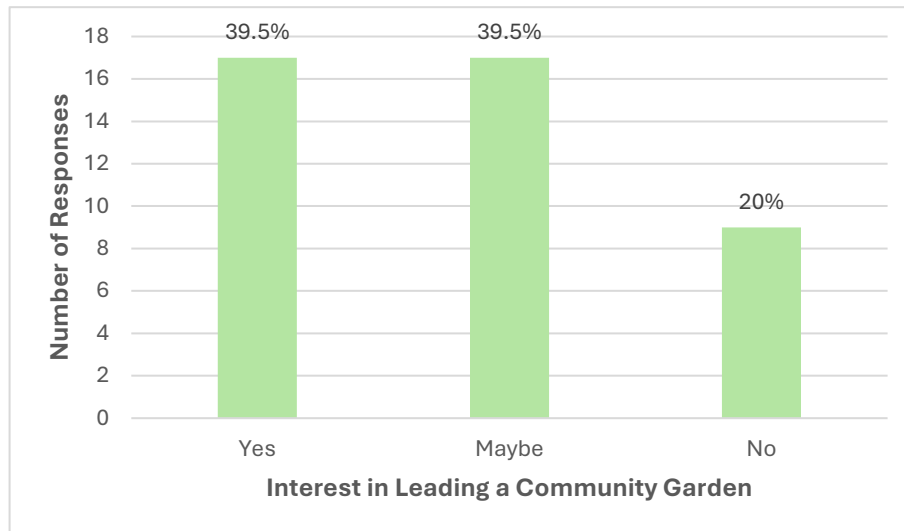


Figure 65: Number of respondents according to their interest in leading a community garden

Table 15: Reasons why the respondents are not/interested in leading a community garden

Responses	Reasons	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Yes	Definitely yes	9	21%
	Yes, but need help	3	7%
No	Lack of Experience / Knowledge	14	32%
	Others	6	14%
	Lack of Time	4	9%
	Not Comfortable	3	7%
	Other Responsibilities	2	5%
No Response		3	7%

At the very end of the survey, participants were asked how they found out about the workshops (Figure 66). Although a lot of effort was put in by the researcher to share these gardening workshops both online through social media platforms and through posters on campus, the most common factor (14 out of 33) mentioned was through word of mouth, mostly encouraged by friends.

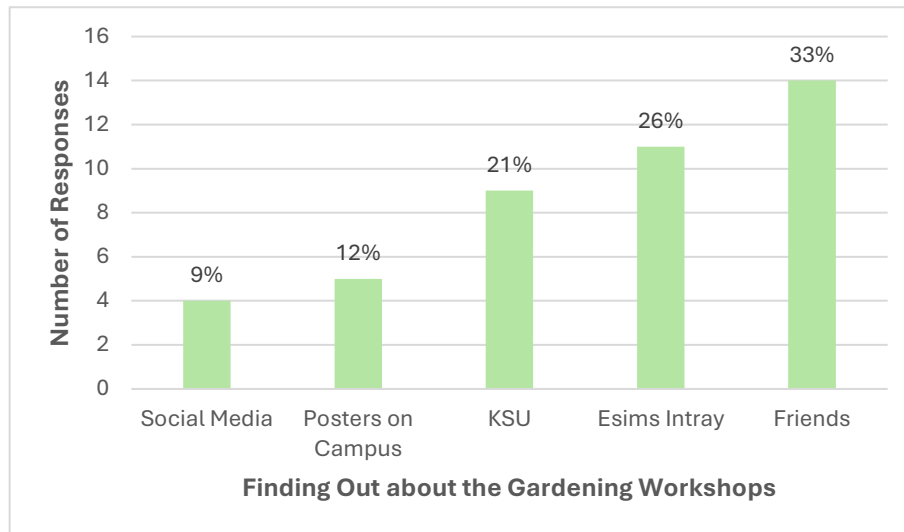


Figure 66: How the respondents found out about the gardening workshops

4.3. Public Survey: The Public Perspective

4.3.1. Introduction

The public survey was conducted to have a clear understanding of the public’s needs when it comes to community gardens. The total number of respondents at the end was 180. In Appendix D and Appendix F, one can find the survey questions together with their corresponding responses.

The first section (Figure 67 – Figure 73) highlights the socio-demographic data of the individuals that took part in the public survey. The first question (Figure 67), concerning gender resulted in 72 male respondents, 107 female respondents and one individual classifying as “Other”. Moreover, most respondents came from the “25-34” age group (Figure 68) and 170 respondents were Maltese. There were also single individuals from Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia and Turkey (Figure 69). Furthermore, as seen in Figure 70, the prominent level of education of the respondents was a Master’s Degree, having 87 individuals in total. Furthermore, an astonishing amount of 110 respondents highlighted that they do not have any dependents (Figure 71). While 63 respondents said that they have 5 to 10 free hours per week on average (Figure 72), there was a mixed outcome between those who don’t / have gardening experience (Figure 73).

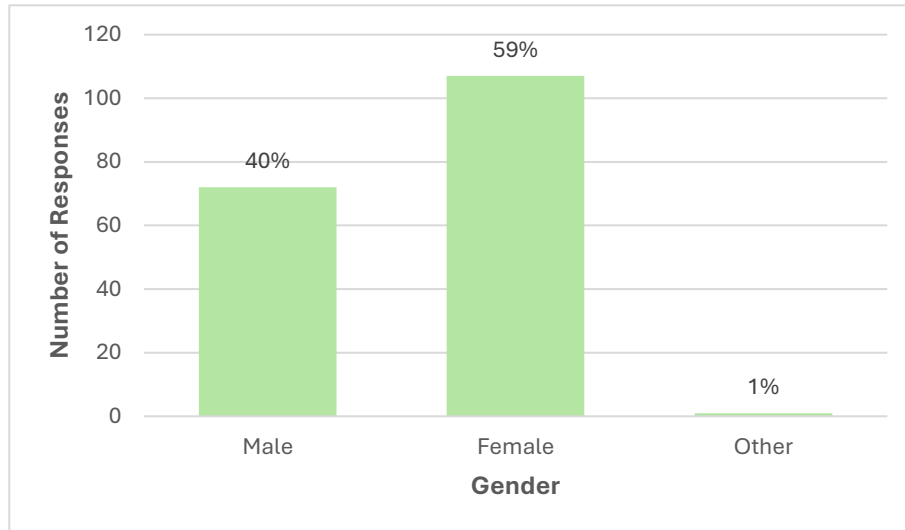


Figure 67: Number of responses according to gender

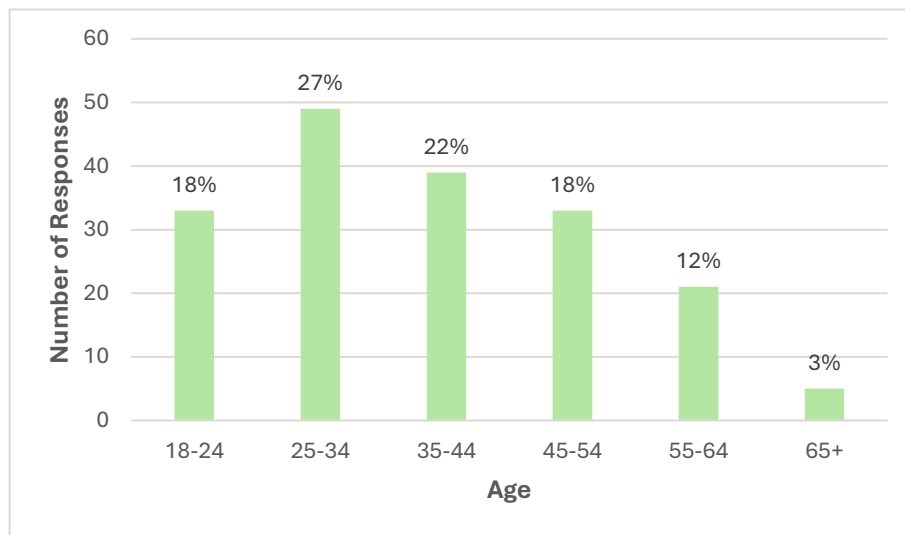


Figure 68: Number of responses according to age

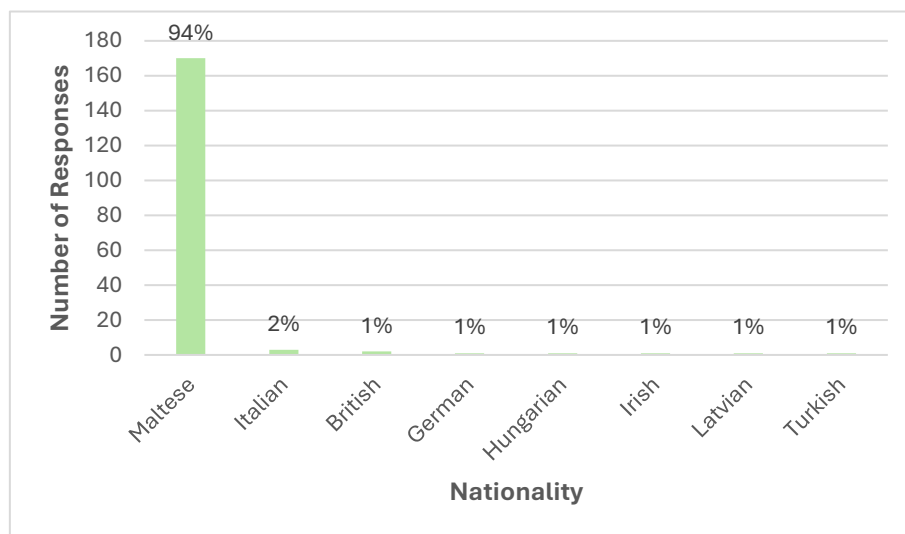


Figure 69: Number of responses according to nationality

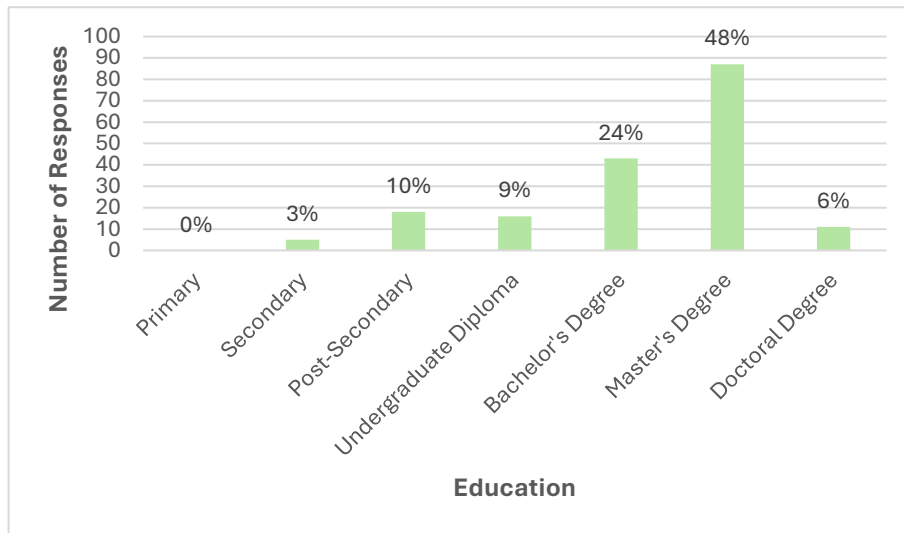


Figure 70: Number of responses according to highest level of education

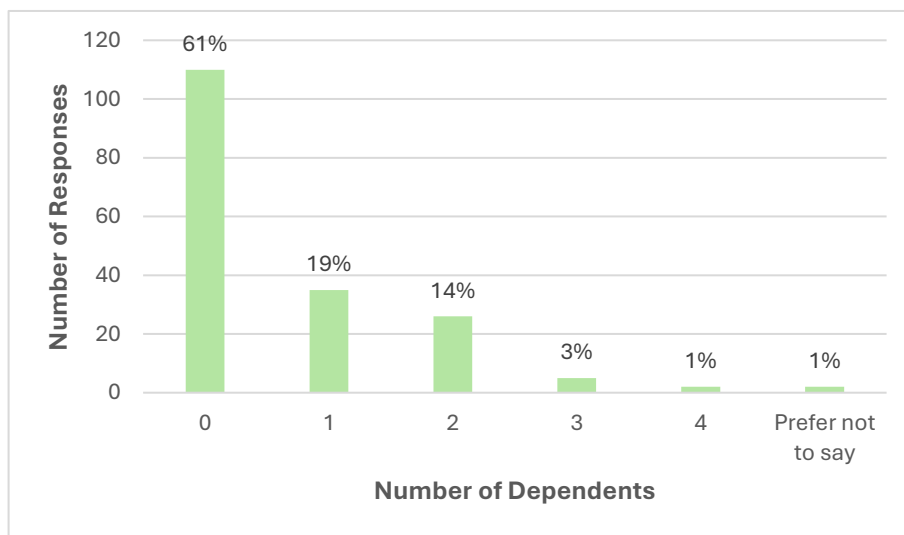


Figure 71: Number of responses according to their number of dependents

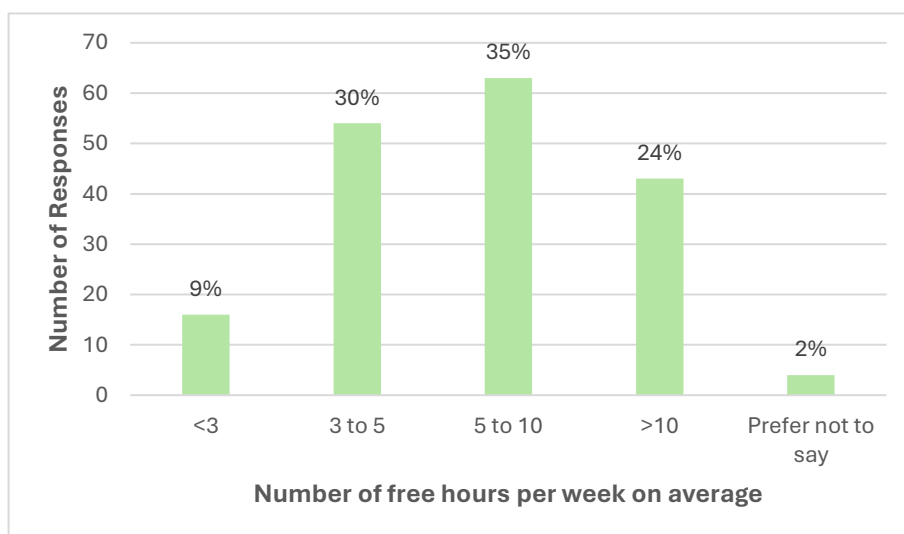


Figure 72: Number of responses according to the number of free hours per week on average

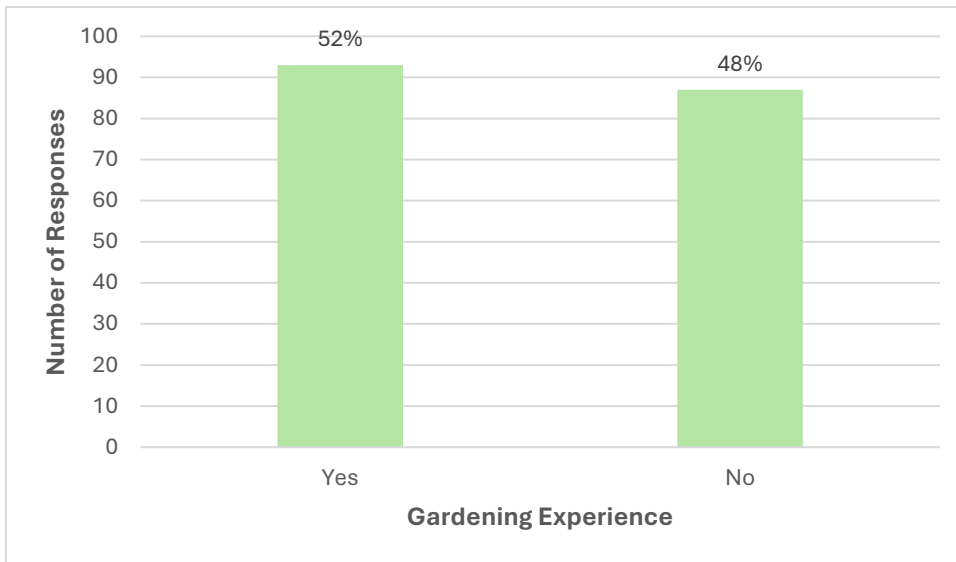


Figure 73: Number of responses according to gardening experience

4.3.2. Perceptions on Community Gardening

The questions in the second section were designed to gather data on the respondents' perception on community gardening. In fact, Figure 74 clearly shows how 141 out of 180 respondents were already familiar with the term community gardens and what they entail. The other respondents (39) had never heard about the term. In view of this, a brief description of the difference between shared community gardens and private allotment gardens was given. When asked what typology is preferred, 83 participants marked both typologies (46%), 61 participants marked allotment gardens (34%) while the rest of the participants (36 in total) chose community gardens (Figure 75).

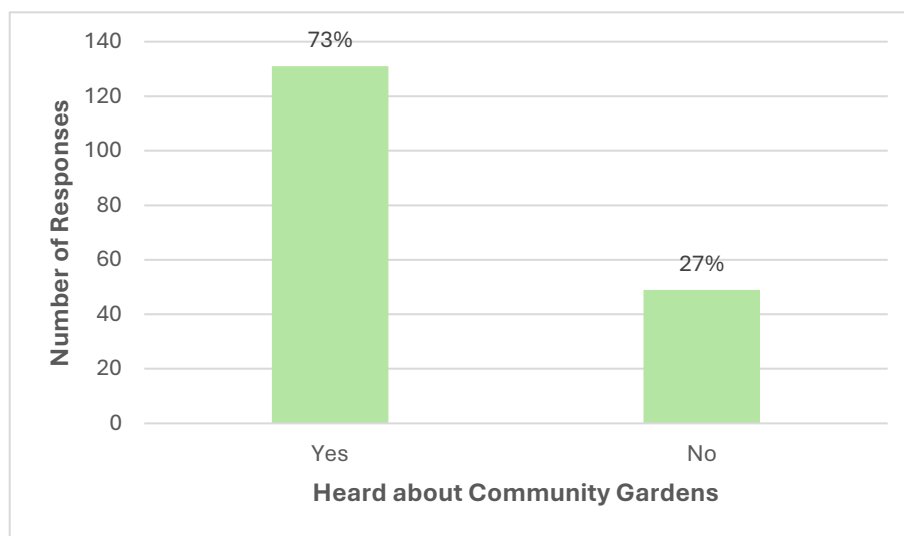


Figure 74: Number of responses according to whether they heard about community gardens

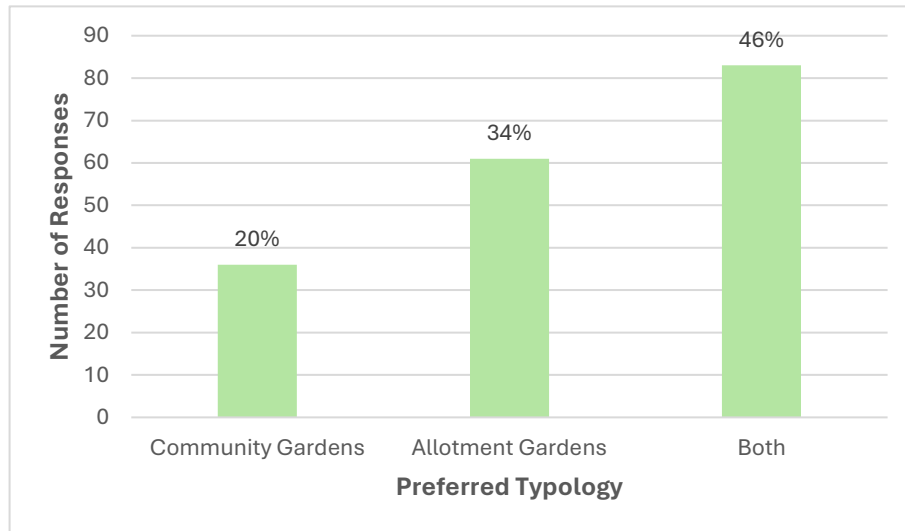


Figure 75: Number of responses according to which typology they prefer

4.3.3. Motivations and Barriers to Participation in a Community Garden

This section of the survey goes over the motives and possible barriers that affect participation in community gardens. The motivations (Figure 76) that were chosen the most (69%) were environmental sustainability and leisure (59%) while the least chosen ones (<50 responses) were education (24%) and culture (19%). Meanwhile, when asked to write down the motives (Table 16), the most prominent ones were fresh produce (12%) and raising awareness & working for a great cause (11%).

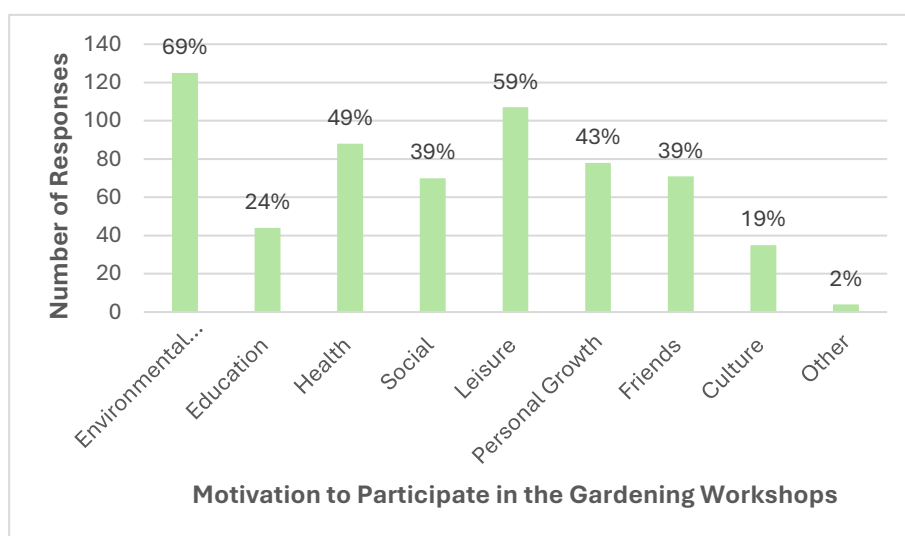


Figure 76: Respondents' motivation to participate in the gardening workshops

Table 16: Aspects that motivates respondents to participate in a community garden

Motives	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Fresh Produce / Food Security	18	12%
Raising Awareness / Work for a great cause	16	11%
Environmental Sustainability	14	9%
Education	13	9%
Socialising	12	8%
Mental Health	11	7%
Relaxing / Leisure	9	6%
Close / Connection to Nature	8	5%
Sense of Community	8	5%
Hobby	7	5%
Personal	7	5%
Beneficial for kids	6	4%
Urban Area Enhancement	6	4%
New / Making Experiences	4	3%
Physical Health	4	3%
Cost Effectiveness	3	2%
Unclassified	3	2%
Fresh Air	1	1%
Culture	1	1%

Following the motives, the respondents were asked to mark the barriers that discourages them from participating in community gardens. As seen in Figure 77, the most mentioned barrier was lack of time (58%), followed by the lack of skills (32%). When asked to write down possible barriers (Table 17), most participants mentioned the lack of collaboration and communication between the gardeners, that could end up in conflict (19 responses). Lack of time (11 responses) and lack of spaces for such gardens (10 responses) followed. There was another respondent who mentioned that the language difference is critical and discourage them from participating in these communal activities.

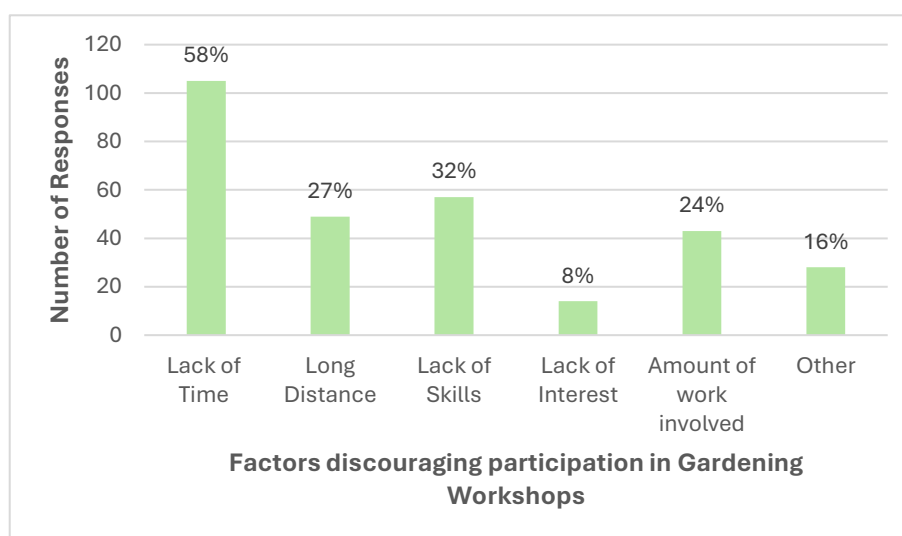


Figure 77: Respondents' discouragement factors to participate in the gardening workshops

Table 17: Aspects that discourages respondents to participate in a community garden

Barriers	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Lack of collaboration / communication / respect / conflict between gardeners	19	24%
Lack of Time	11	13%
No Opportunity Spaces available	10	13%
Proximity	6	8%
Lack of help from LG and Government	5	6%
Lack of Management	5	6%
Lack of interest	4	5%
Lack of knowledge / experience	4	5%
Vandalism / Theft	4	5%
Lack of Supplies	3	4%
Lack of information on the subject	2	3%
Legal Issues	2	3%
Weather	2	3%
Physical Health	2	3%
Language Barrier	1	1%

4.3.4. Future Participation

The final section focuses on the interest to participate in community gardens in the future. Figure 78 shows that according to the Likert scale, most participants, 63 in all, were interested in participating. The remaining participants were asked to explain what hinders their participation (Table 18). The most prominent factor outlined was the lack of time, totalling 84 responses. The proximity to community gardens, the people who take part, work commitments and family commitments were other factors hindering participation at 27, 17, 14 and 11 responses respectively. The respondents were also asked about their willingness to volunteer their time to help maintain a community garden (Figure 79) which resulted in 128 positive responses (71%) while the other 52 would not.

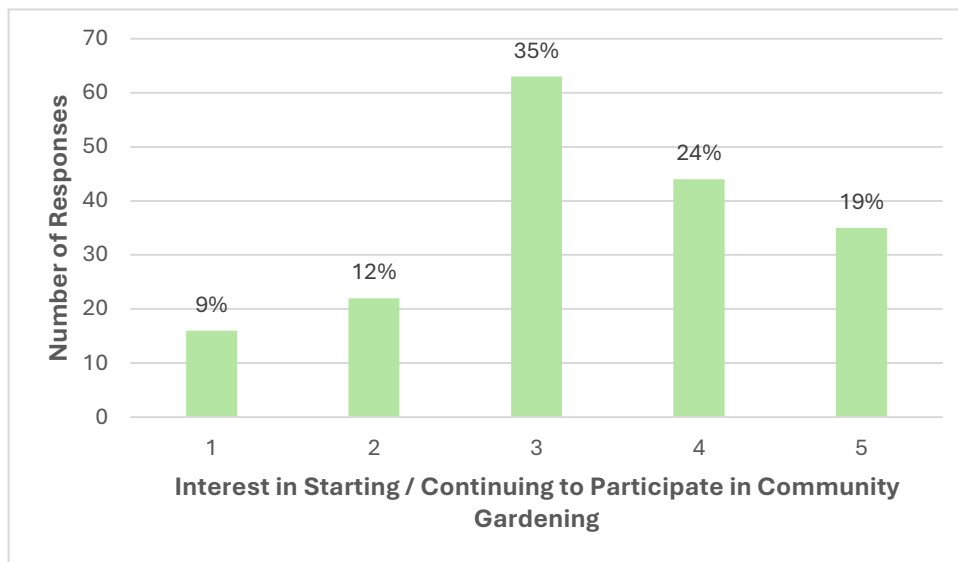


Figure 78: Respondents' interest in starting / continuing to participate in community gardening activities on a regular basis, in the future

Table 18: Factors that prevent respondents from participating in a community garden on a regular basis

Factors	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Lack of Time	84	35%
Proximity	27	11%
People	17	7%
Work Commitment	14	6%
Family Commitment	11	5%
Health Issues	10	4%
Lack of interest	10	4%
Lack of Skills / Knowhow	8	3%
Energy / Amount of work	7	3%
Weather	6	3%
Personal	6	3%
Commitment Issues	6	3%
Other Commitments	5	2%
Lack of commitment from others	4	2%
Lack of Resources	4	2%
Vandalism / Theft	4	2%
Lack of Available Spaces	3	1%
Lack of long-term security	3	1%
Lack of organisation	3	1%
Unpredictable Events / Emergencies	2	1%
Other Priorities	1	0.4%
Feasibility	1	0.4%
Lack of Freedom	1	0.4%
Lack of Knowledge / Information	1	0.4%

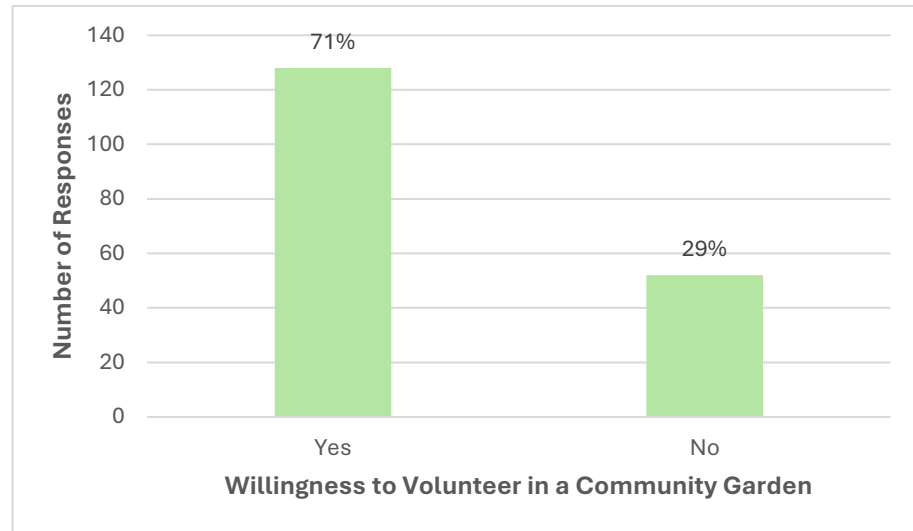


Figure 79: Number of respondents according to their willingness to volunteer their time to help maintain a community garden

Moreover, respondents were asked to give reasons (Table 19). Those who said they would volunteer were motivated mostly by the sense of belonging and fulfilment from gardening (14 responses). Others (>10 responses) mentioned willingness to create green spaces in Malta, and the sense of community and socialising. There were also others who explained how they would volunteer only if they manage their time better and the community garden is managed effectively. Meanwhile, those who were not willing to volunteer explained how they have limited time available for such activities (18 responses). Other reasons included the lack of interest, their physical health and the other people who take part in the community garden.

Table 19: Reasons why the respondents are not/willing to volunteer their time to help maintain a community garden

Responses	Reasons	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Yes	Sense of Belonging / Fulfilling	14	9%
	Creation of Green Spaces / Make Malta Green	11	7%
	Sense of Community	10	7%
	Socialising / Making Connections	10	7%
	Environmental	6	4%
	Relaxing / Leisure / Enjoyment	6	4%
	Love for Gardening / Nature	6	4%
	Producing Fresh Produce	5	3%
	Learn new skills	5	3%
	Physical Health	4	3%
	Mental Health	3	2%
Yes, if	Better Time Management	12	8%
	Better CG Management	4	3%
	Other Positive Comments	20	13%
No	Lack of Time	18	12%
	Others	8	5%
	Physical Health	4	3%
	Issue of People	4	3%
	Lack of Interest	3	2%

Furthermore, when asked to choose their ideal frequency to participate in community garden activities (Figure 80), most respondents answered once a week, totalling 80 responses out of 180. Following that, 45 respondents chose the twice a month option, and 35 respondents chose to participate once a month. In parallel, there were 107 respondents (59.4%) who were not interested in leading a community garden. The other respondents who said yes, account for 12.2% (22 responses) while there were 51 respondents who would consider leading a CG (Figure 81).

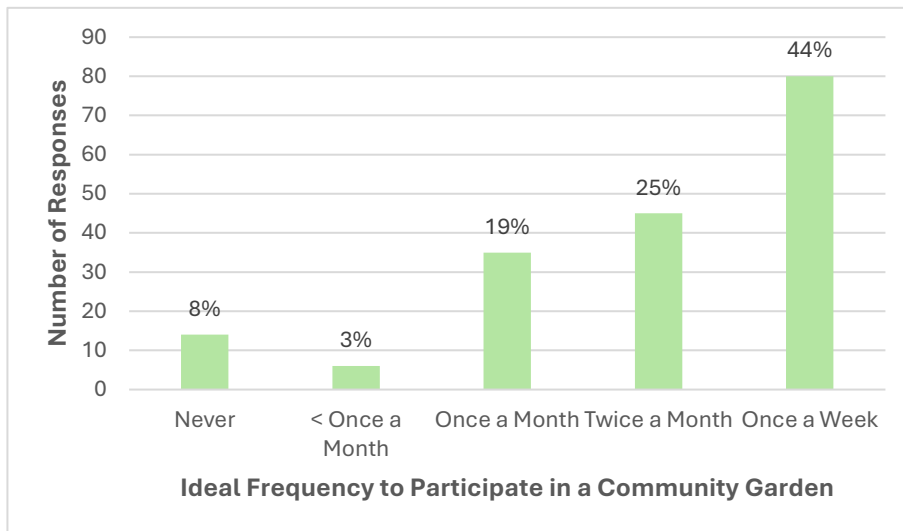


Figure 80: Respondents' ideal frequency to participate in community garden activities

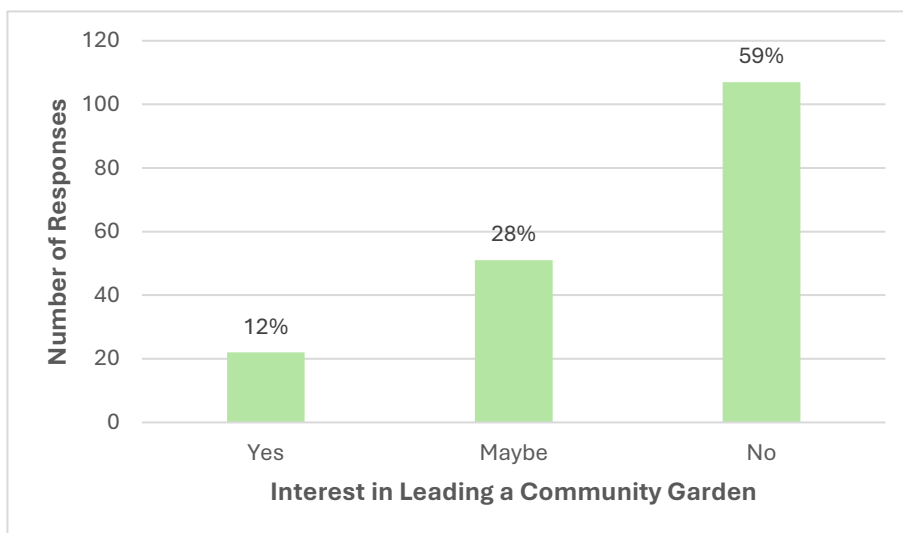


Figure 81: Number of respondents according to their interest in leading a community garden

When given the opportunity to leave final thoughts and comments (Table 20), there were several positive (11 responses) and personal comments (7 responses) but mostly there were suggestions on community gardening in Malta (32 suggestions). There were others who tried to explain why they are not in favour of community gardens and would not support such idea.

Participant feedback revealed interest and practical concerns related to the creation of community gardens in Malta. A number of respondents identified behavioural and cultural challenges, even though many saw the initiative as a step in the right direction towards fostering community development, mental health, and environmental awareness. It was frequently mentioned that gardening is not a deeply established part of Maltese culture and that some people lack the knowledge or motivation to engage in it. There is an overall

tendency to replace vegetation with low-maintenance surfaces, as highlighted in Santa Margherita in Mosta.

One recurrent theme was education, with many recommending schools as the best place to start fostering continuous interest, especially among younger generations. To minimise neglect or misuse, a number of participants emphasised the importance of careful planning and management. Others suggested low membership fees or work schedules that promote accountability. Significant interest was also shown for seeking the help of government agencies, NGOs, and local governments to supply cash, land, and supervision. Priority locations were determined to be dense urban areas like Valletta and areas with little access to environment, especially in the island's east.

The participants suggested using marketing and media to spread the word about the advantages of communal gardening. Others advocated repurposing underutilised or abandoned land, such as public areas, schoolyards, and even urban parks. Despite the mention of issues like vandalism, lack of discipline, and public ignorance, the overwhelming response was one of great support, particularly if the programme is inclusive, community-driven, and backed by organised administration and education.

Table 20: Other final thoughts given by the respondents

Thoughts	Number of Responses	Percentage of Responses
Suggestions	32	58%
Positive Comments	11	20%
Other Personal Comments	7	13%
Lack of Time	2	4%
Lack of Knowledge	1	2%
Theft	1	2%
Other Negative Comments	1	2%

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter presented the key findings derived from both qualitative and quantitative methods with the post-workshop survey and public survey. The responses of the open-ended questions can also be found readily grouped under their respective theme in Appendix F. The following chapter will go over the four main themes that answer the research question, which include, the people's willingness to participate, their motivations, their barriers and the available time per week they are willing to invest in such communal activities.

5. Discussion

5.1. Recapitulation

This research set out to examine whether Maltese citizens are supportive of and interested in establishing community gardens; and to assess the extent to which they are willing to dedicate time to the creation and maintenance of such spaces within the local context. These aims were addressed using a mixed methods approach incorporating gardening workshops and an online public survey. More specifically, this study aimed to review community gardening models and understand why and how international communities participate in community gardening; and to understand the key attractors for participating in co-creating and maintaining community gardens in international contexts. These objectives were fulfilled in the literature review presented in Chapter 2. Finally, the third and fourth objectives were to understand whether Maltese citizens are willing to invest in the creation and maintenance of community gardens in Malta; and to identify key motivations and barriers/ challenges for participation. These objectives were achieved through the surveys conducted after the gardening workshops and online with the general public. A discussion of the findings is presented in Section 5.2 of this chapter offering valuable insights into the specific motives and challenges that shape engagement within the Maltese context.

Before proceeding to Section 5.2, a synthesized overview of the socio-demographic data collected from both surveys is presented. The table (Table 21) below summarizes these characteristics to provide context for the subsequent discussion.

Table 21: Comparison between the socio-demographic data collected in the surveys

	Post-Workshop Survey	Public Survey
Number of Respondents	180	43
Gender	Female (61%)	Female (59%)
Age Group	18-24 years (58%)	25-34 years (27%)
Education	Bachelor's Degree (44%)	Master's Degree (48%)
Free hours per week	5-10hrs (40%)	5-10hrs (35%)
Gardening Experience	Yes (60%)	Yes (52%)
Heard about CGs	Yes (56%)	Yes (73%)

5.2. Answering the Research Question

To answer the research question: “To what extent is the Maltese society willing to contribute to the co-creation, maintenance, and aftercare of green public spaces in Malta?”, three sub themes are considered. These being: Interest and Frequency; Motivations; and Barriers to participate in community gardens.

5.2.1. Interest and Frequency to participate in Community Gardens

One of the key aims of this study was to explore whether Maltese citizens are supportive of and interested in establishing community gardens. When asked about their willingness to continue engaging in such initiative, 51% of participants reported being very interested and 35% being interested, indicating a positive experience and a strong desire for continued involvement. This contrasts with the general public's responses, which were more varied. 35% of all respondents expressed a neutral viewpoint regarding continued participation (Figure 82). These findings suggest that direct experience with community gardening significantly increases individuals' willingness to remain involved, while those without prior exposure tend to be more uncertain. This is likely to have occurred due to perceived constraints or unfamiliarity with the concept, despite being given a brief overview on each typology. Such findings are in line with the study Partalidou & Anthopoulou (2017) conducted, where they found that those who had strong attachment towards gardening and previous experience tend to participate in communal gardens.

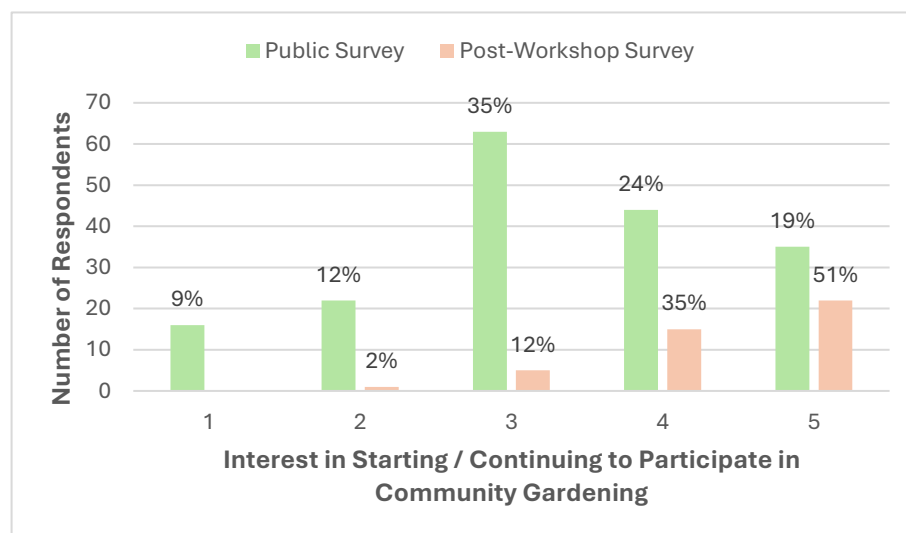


Figure 82: Comparison between the interest in starting / continuing to participate in a CG, from both surveys

As with previous findings, lack of time was repeatedly identified as the primary barrier to sustained participation. Several respondents elaborated on additional challenges, including legal uncertainties related to land tenure, which were described as discouraging even for highly motivated individuals, as seen below:

“Trid tissolva l-kwistjoni legali kif se jkun hemm devolviment temporanju tal-art lil min se j/tidhol għal din l-attività'. Ma naħsibx li jagħmel sens li min jidhol għal dan l-impenn i/tkun intaxxat/a jew li ma jkollhux/iex serħan il-moħħ li dak li j/tħalli f'din l-art (allotment) jibqa' hemm (il-kwistjoni ta' sigurta').” (in Appendix F, page 171)

“The legal issue of how there will be a temporary devolution of land to those who will undertake this activity needs to be resolved. I don't think it makes sense for those who undertake this commitment to be taxed or not have peace of mind that what they leave on this land (allotment) will remain there (the issue of security).”

In terms of preferred models, 40% of the public expressed interest in both allotment and community gardens, while only 20% favoured community gardens exclusively. Allotments were selected by 14% more respondents overall, reflecting a cultural hesitation towards shared gardening spaces. This results from various reasons, amongst which were discussed in Section 2.3 of Chapter 2. Similarly, a study done in Canberra found that two-thirds of the residents preferred allotment gardens over communal gardens (Turner & Henryks, 2012). As Cepic et al. (2020) mentioned, the allotment garden typology prevails in Europe, even though new community gardening forms are emerging.

Despite these reservations, both surveys demonstrate a clear underlying interest from people within the Maltese context to start / continue community gardening. The main reason why many are not interested in giving their time is the lack of funds allocated for the maintenance of urban “green” areas (Rosol, 2010). Some are also still sceptical on these communal gardens and others tried to voice their concerns in the surveys. Needless to say, awareness is still needed especially on the benefits and potential of these activities. It is evident that only a significant portion of the Maltese population recognises the value and potential of such projects.

Furthermore, one of the objectives of this study was to assess the willingness of Maltese citizens to invest their time in the creation and maintenance of community gardens. In the post-workshop survey, 93% of participants indicated their readiness to volunteer for such activities, compared to 71% of respondents from the general public (Figure 83). This difference may be attributed to participants' prior experience with gardening, which appeared more prevalent among workshop attendees and likely contributed to their increased motivation to engage in ongoing efforts. When asked to elaborate on their reasons, workshop participants

cited environmental sustainability and the contribution to green public spaces as their primary motivators. The same response was ranked second by members of the general public. This reinforces the earlier findings discussed in Section 5.2.1, which identified environmental sustainability as the dominant driver of participation across both groups. Despite this interest, in both surveys, lack of time remained the most cited obstacle. However, some respondents said that with better time management and the right support, they could foresee themselves participating.

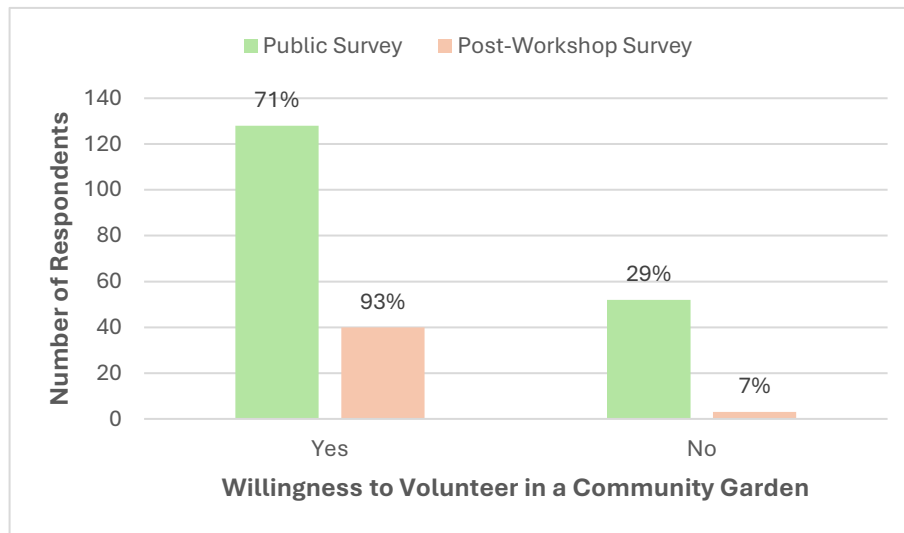


Figure 83: Comparison between the respondents' willingness to volunteer in a CG, from both surveys

When it comes to frequency of participation, workshop participants most commonly selected once a month and twice a month, while 44% of the general public chose once a week. This discrepancy may stem from the fact that workshop participants, have gained first-hand experience and may have more realistic understanding of the time and effort required. In contrast, the general public may have underestimated the level of commitment involved. Overall, the findings suggest that while participation frequency may vary, there is a clear and growing interest in community gardening initiatives in Malta.

5.2.2. Motivations to Participation

As outlined in Section 2.2 of Chapter 2, various factors contribute to individuals' motivation to participate in community gardening. To explore whether the gardening workshops influenced participants' motivations, data from both the post-workshop survey and the public surveys were examined and compared. When asked about common motivators, the most frequently selected option was environmental sustainability (58%), followed closely by personal growth (54%) (Figure 84). A similar pattern emerged in the public survey, where environmental

sustainability was the most cited motivator, accumulating 69% of responses, followed by leisure at 59%. These findings suggest that across both groups, contributing to environmentally sustainable practices serves as the primary driving force behind participation. Kirby et al. (2021) found that although the respondents highlighted multiple motivations, “improving the environment” was chosen the most, followed by “relaxing or releasing stress”. This highlights the universal nature of environmental stewardship as a common objective across different contexts.

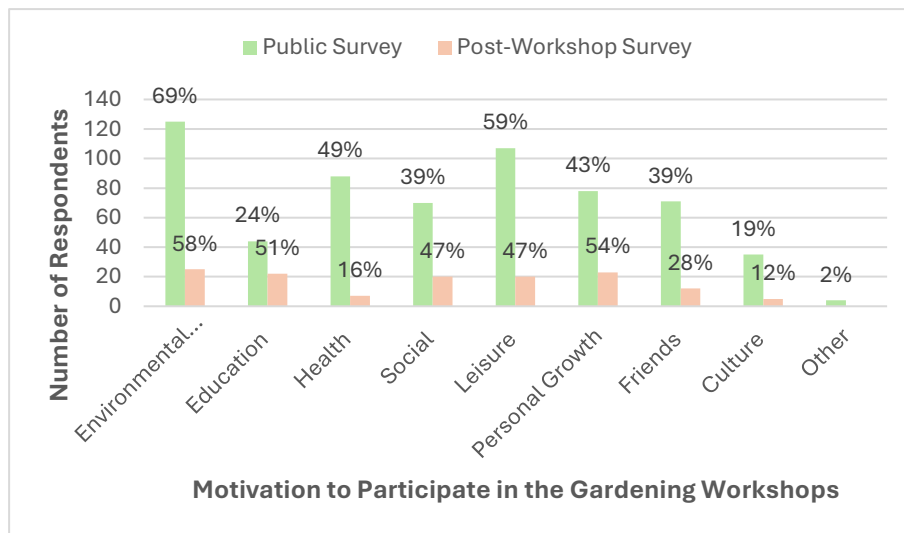


Figure 84: Comparison between the motivations to participate in CGs, from both surveys

A noteworthy distinction also emerged: workshop participants were more inclined to value learning and education as a motivating factor, whereas non-participants prioritised health benefits. This contrast indicates that direct involvement in the initiative may shift individuals’ focus toward educational and developmental outcomes, even among those already more experienced in gardening. Similarly, another study has shown how community gardens were developed to promote education (Somerset et al., 2005). Besides that, 23% of those who participated in the workshops claimed that their passion for gardening initially sparked their interest in participating, emphasising that almost one-fourth of them were knowledgeable about gardening and wanted to learn more. Conversely, culture was the least cited motivator across both surveys, potentially reflecting the limited tradition of collective community gardening within Maltese culture.

Furthermore, individuals who experienced the workshops first-hand tend to view community gardening as a means of personal development, while the general public largely perceived it as a recreational activity. That said, one response from a member of the public offered a concise yet insightful overview of the multifaceted benefits associated with community gardening:

“I am a volunteer for a global community group called The People's Food and Farming Alliance... community is key, community gardening is a healthy, outdoor, social, therapeutic and productive activity and if growing regeneratively supports soil life, wildlife and climate flexibility, one micro ecosystem at a time...it is a no brainer win-win”

This perspective illustrates that, although overall awareness of such initiatives in Malta remains relatively limited, there are individuals, particularly those working with NGOs, who recognise their value and are eager to contribute to positive environmental and social change. Overall, the data indicates that people in Malta are motivated to engage in community gardening to contribute to a common goal, that, of cultivating sustainable and resilient neighbourhoods.

5.2.3. Barriers to Participation

Several barriers were identified to hinder individuals from participating in community gardening. When asked through an open-ended question, 40% of workshop participants cited lack of time as their primary obstacle, followed by family obligations (11%) and other commitments (9%), all of which directly relate to time constraints. Similarly, when the public was presented with a set of predefined options, lack of time (58%) emerged as the most common, followed by lack of gardening skills (32%) (Figure 85). These findings indicate that time availability is the most significant barrier across both respondent groups. Similarly, Cepic et al. (2020) found that 57.5% of those not interested in gardening claimed lack of time as their main barrier. Likewise, Kortright and Wakefield (2011) mentioned that it is commonly regarded that residents in non-food growing neighbourhoods tend to explain that lack of time prevents them from take part in such activities. Therefore, it is of vital importance that community gardens are strategically placed within the urban environment to be in close proximity to users (Turner and Henryks, 2012).

Interestingly, despite the online survey respondents reporting more free time on average, their selection of lack of time may have been influenced by the structure of the survey, which presented barriers as fixed options. When asked to elaborate in an open-ended question, lack of collaboration and communication emerged as the most cited issues (24%), followed with time at 13%. Several studies have examined how lack of communication can hinder the success of community gardens, as the latter thrive on collaboration (Drake & Lawson, 2015; Diaz et al., 2018) This suggests that secondary barriers, including the potential for conflict among participants, may weigh heavily on people’s perceptions, even among those without prior

experience of community gardening. As discussed in Section 5.2.1, some individuals associate such activities with leisure, as quoted below:

“It is very difficult to work in a team here, which is why I would prefer to do it on my own. Also, I dislike the loud Mediterranean culture where people tend to talk loudly. In principle it's a good thing, but being with others, whose mentality can vary, will definitely backfire. I would go to relax, and meet busy people, who might even intrude on my area.”

“I would imagine that some participants would be lazy and greedy and would hence collect fruit and vegetables without putting in any work. That would put me off. Also, I do not enjoy working in a busy environment thus if there are lots of people working at the same time in the community garden, it would not be enjoyable for me.”

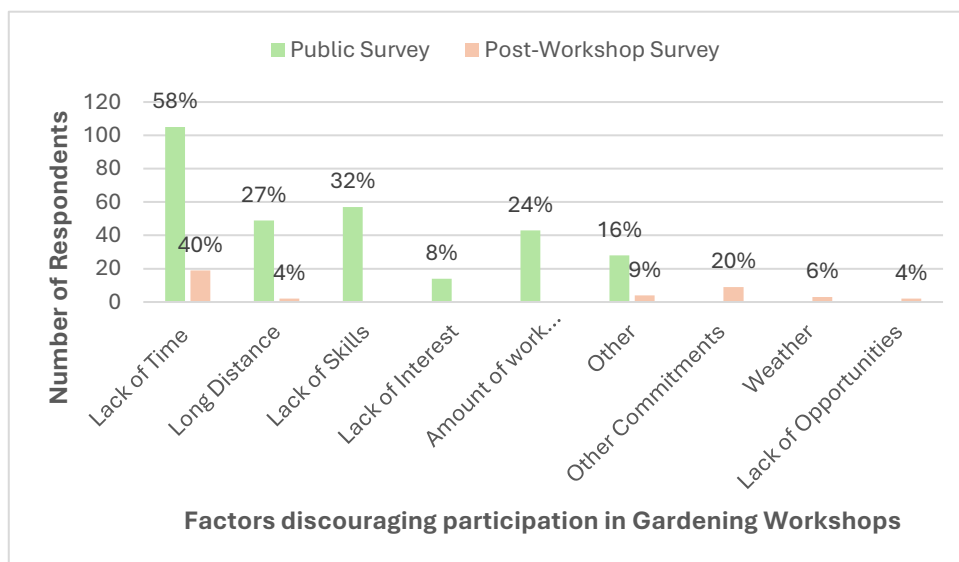


Figure 85: Comparison between the factors discouraging participation in CGs, from both surveys

Notably, while these respondents expressed general support for community gardening, they indicated that the behaviour or attitudes of others discourages them from participating, which uncover the social complexity of collaborative and collective green initiatives. Another observation is that physical health was the least cited barrier in both surveys, suggesting that participants perceived other factors, such as time constraints, proximity, weather and lack of skills as more notable obstacles to community garden participation. Lack of time is the most consistent challenge in the Maltese context.

5.3. Final Reflection and Recommendations

This study has demonstrated a clear and growing interest in community gardening within the Maltese context. While awareness of such initiatives remains relatively limited, findings suggest that interest is likely to increase with greater awareness and education. A significant proportion of respondents indicated a preference for allotment gardens over community gardens, mostly citing concerns about collaboration and potential conflict among gardeners. However, the hands-on workshops conducted during this research were met with enthusiasm, with several participants expressing interest in learning more and continuing their involvement. These findings highlight the powerful role that hands-on experience plays in shifting public perceptions and increasing engagement. Likewise, Ramos et al. (2019) found that by engaging neighbourhood residents in such gardening and planning sessions, engagement and participation would naturally increase.

Throughout the research process, the researcher encountered numerous like-minded individuals, particularly those involved in grassroots initiatives, who were highly supportive of the study and affirmed the urgent need for broader public awareness. It is evident that experts and practitioners in this field must unite to provide guidance on how community-based gardening projects function and to help educate the general population, with priority given to younger generations.

Support from local councils is essential to enable more grassroots initiatives within localities. Tactical urbanism should also be encouraged. Pop-up events and public engagement activities can serve as effective tools for raising awareness, gradually increasing demand for accessible green spaces. Replacing on-street parking or underused urban areas with green infrastructure would help address the barriers highlighted earlier.

Ultimately, broader outreach and visibility are crucial. As interest grows, public pressure on government bodies to provide and support such initiatives will likely follow. Meaningful changes will occur when policy-making is guided by a bottom-up approach, where communities are involved and public spaces are used. In this regard, Bon (2015) found that adopting a participatory and collaborative approach in the planning and development of community gardens serves as a foundational element for their success. Such engagement fosters a heightened sense of ownership among residents, which in turn enhances their commitment to the initiative. This increased sense of responsibility contributes to stronger emotional connections with the space, leading to improved maintenance and, ultimately, ensuring the longevity of the garden (Bon, 2015). Moreover, participatory approaches to community garden design contribute to the integration of healthy and ecologically sustainable food practices into residents' daily lives. This supports individual well-being and fosters the

development of communities that thrive in environments where both social and nutritional needs are addressed (Ma, 2023). Community gardening has the potential not only to foster environmental stewardship and civic engagement but also to enhance the sense of community and improve overall quality of life in Malta's urban environments.

5.4. Future Research

This study explored the potential and motivations for community gardening in Malta, by assessing the willingness of Maltese citizens to engage in the creation and upkeep of such spaces. Given the limited volume of local research on this topic, there is considerable scope for further academic research, particularly from a bottom-up implementation perspective.

Future research could examine how Malta's administrative and bureaucratic processes may be streamlined to facilitate the establishment of community gardens. Investigations on how the national government and local councils can work towards efficient and community-driven models to promote environmental projects. Another valuable area of study would involve collaboration between government entities, local councils, and residents to develop practical, publicly accessible guidelines for initiating community gardens on public land, minimising administrative resistance.

A research study on the development and sustainability of newly established community gardens, created in partnership with local councils, could provide essential data on long-term community engagement, operational viability, and emerging social trends. Complementing this and the local study by Pace Ricci (2017), another study could assess the management structures of community gardens, including initial capital requirements, ongoing maintenance costs, and models for financial sustainability.

Land tenure also warrants focused research, particularly regarding legal frameworks for securing public land for fixed periods, ensuring the long-term survival of these green spaces. Additionally, a spatial analysis of the Maltese urban areas could identify underused land suitable for a network of community gardens, with the aim of placing a garden within a 10-minute walking radius of every house.

Future research should seek to include both children and older adults, as their participation is central to understanding the broader social and therapeutic value of community gardens. Children may gain environmental awareness, opportunities for play-based learning, and intergenerational connection, while older adults often experience therapeutic benefits such as improved well-being, stress reduction, and social inclusion. Including these groups in

subsequent studies would therefore provide a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse personal and communal benefits of community gardening.

Further studies could also monitor existing gardens or pilot temporary pop-up gardens in underused urban spaces to explore user behaviour and uncover less visible participation barriers. Before formulating national policy frameworks, it is essential to deepen our understanding of public interest and demand for community gardening, building on the foundation established in this study.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Workshops Ethics Survey Forms

A1. Information Letter

A2. Participant's Consent Form

A3. Photo Release Form

Appendix B - Public Survey Ethics Forms

B1. Questionnaire Consent – Anonymous Data Collection

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Appendix C - Post-Workshop Survey Questions

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Appendix E - Post-Workshop Survey Answers

Appendix F - Public Survey Answers

Appendix G - Workshops Photographs

A. Post-Workshop Survey Forms

A1. Information Letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Ryan Debono and I am a student at the University of Malta, presently reading for a Master in Architecture and Urban Design. I am presently conducting a research study for my dissertation titled Investigating the Potential of Community Gardens to Foster Shared Ownership of Public Green Spaces in Malta; this is being supervised by Dr. Sarah Scheiber. This letter is an invitation to participate in this study. Below you will find information about the study and about what your involvement would entail, should you decide to take part.

The aim of my study is to explore whether Maltese citizens are in favour of and interested in setting up community gardens. Another aim of this study is to investigate how much time (if any) Maltese citizens are willing to invest in the creation and maintaining of a community garden in the Maltese context. Your participation in this study would help contribute to a better understanding of the key motivations for participation, barriers and/or challenges in relation to the user perspective. Any data collected from this research will be used solely for purposes of this study.

Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to take part in a gardening workshop of about 2-3 hours involving a number of gardening activities which include; sowing, planting, watering and weeding. You will be provided with small gardening tools to carry out the mentioned tasks. Upon completion of these activities, you will be asked to fill in a survey on the workshop itself while being provided with some refreshments.

Data collected will be stored on a password protected laptop / drive - and only I and my supervisor will have access to it. Your consent to be made identifiable will be requested. Should you wish to remain anonymised, pseudonyms will be used in the published data. Photos may be taken during the workshop, your consent to be featured will be specifically requested, if you do not wish to be featured this will also be respected.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary; in other words, you are free to accept or refuse to participate, without needing to give a reason. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any time, without needing to provide any explanation and without any negative repercussions for you. Should you choose to withdraw, any data collected from the survey will be erased as long as this is technically possible (for example, before it is anonymised or

published), unless erasure of data would render impossible or seriously impair achievement of the research objectives, in which case it shall be retained in an anonymised form.

If you choose to participate, please note that there are no direct benefits to you. Your participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks.

Please note also that, as a participant, you have the right under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation to access, rectify and where applicable ask for the data concerning you to be erased. All data collected will be stored in an anonymised form for the duration of the study which will be concluded in July 2025. I understand that all data collected will be erased within one year of the completion of the study (July 2026).

A copy of this information sheet is being provided for you to keep and for future reference.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me by e-mail ryan.debono.19@um.edu.mt; you can also contact my supervisor over the phone: +356 2340 0000 or via email: sarah.anastasi@um.edu.mt.

Sincerely,

Ryan Debono
ryan.debono.19@um.edu.mt

Dr. Sarah Scheiber
sarah.anastasi@um.edu.mt
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A2. Participant's Consent Form

Investigating the Potential of Community Gardens to Foster Shared Ownership of Public Green Spaces in Malta

I, the undersigned, give my consent to take part in the study conducted by Ryan Debono. This consent form specifies the terms of my participation in this research study.

1. I have been given written and/or verbal information about the purpose of the study; I have had the opportunity to ask questions and any questions that I had were answered fully and to my satisfaction.
2. I also understand that I am free to accept to participate, or to refuse or stop participation at any time without giving any reason and without any penalty. Should I choose to participate, I may choose to decline to answer any questions asked. In the event that I choose to withdraw from the study, any data collected from me will be erased as long as this is technically possible (for example, before it is anonymised or published), unless erasure of data would render impossible or seriously impair achievement of the research objectives, in which case it shall be retained in an anonymised form.
3. I understand that I have been invited to participate in a gardening workshop and a survey in which the researcher will involve me in a gardening session which will conclude with a survey to explore whether Maltese citizens are in favour of and interested in setting up community gardens and to investigate how much time (if any) Maltese citizens are willing to invest in the creation and maintaining of a community garden in the Maltese context. I am aware that the workshop will take approximately one hour and twenty minutes. I am also aware that the survey will take approximately half an hour. Finally, I am aware that a further forty minutes will be allocated to introductions and closing remarks.
4. I understand that my participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks.
5. I understand that there are no direct benefits to me from participating in this study. I also understand that this research may benefit others by developing knowledge on maintaining and upkeeping of a communal garden.
6. I understand that, under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and national legislation, I have the right to access, rectify, and where applicable, ask for the data concerning me to be erased.
7. I understand that all data collected will be stored in an anonymised form for the duration of the study which will be concluded in July 2025. I understand that all data collected will be erased within one year of the completion of the study (July 2026).
8. I have been provided with a copy of the information letter and understand that I will also be given a copy of this consent form.

9. I am aware that, by marking the first tick-box below, I am asking to review extracts from the survey I fill in, that the researcher would like to reproduce in research outputs, before these are published. I am also aware that I may ask for changes to be made, if I consider these to be necessary.

MARK ONLY IF AND AS APPLICABLE

- I would like to review extracts of my survey that the researcher would like to reproduce in research outputs before these are published.
- I would not like to review my survey extracts that the researcher would like to reproduce in research outputs before these are published.

1. I am aware that, by marking the first tick-box below, I am giving my consent for my identity to be revealed in publications, reports or presentations arising from this research, and responses I provide may be quoted directly or indirectly.

MARK ONLY IF AND AS APPLICABLE

- I agree that my identity may be disclosed in research outputs.
 - I do not agree that my identity may be disclosed in research outputs.
2. I am aware that in the case that I do not want my identity to be revealed my data will be pseudonymised; i.e., my identity will not be noted on transcripts or notes from my survey, but instead, a code will be assigned. The codes that link my data to my identity will be stored securely and separately from the data, on the researcher's password-protected computer, and only the researcher will have access to this information. Any hard-copy materials will be placed in a locked cabinet/drawer. Any material that identifies me as a participant in this study will be stored securely for the duration of the study and erased within one year from the completion of the study (July 2026).

I have read and understood the above statements and agree to participate in this study.

Name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Ryan Debono
ryan.debono.19@um.edu.mt

Dr. Sarah Scheiber
sarah.anastasi@um.edu.mt
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A3. Photo Release Form

Throughout the gardening workshop session, I will be photographing the various activities being carried out by the project participants. These images are for documentation and research purposes and will be used to disseminate information about my project in research papers and other forms of public documentation. None of the photographs will be used to present any person appearing in them in a derogatory manner. If you do not give consent to be photographed, you will not appear in any visual documentation of the project. If you give consent to be photographed, you can still request access to any visual material and also request erasure of this material. You also have a right to withdraw consent at any time in relation to my use of photographs in which you appear, prior to publication, by contacting me at the contact details provided below.

Kindly read the following statements and tick wherever you agree:

- I agree that the team can photograph me during the gardening workshop session, and use these images for research and exhibition purposes.
- I do not agree that the team can photograph me during the gardening workshop session, and use these images for research and exhibition purposes.
- I agree that photographs may need some slight editing, mainly for aesthetic purposes.
- I do not agree that photographs may need some slight editing, mainly for aesthetic purposes.
- I agree to have my photographs taken and used for research and exhibition purposes, however I ask for my face to be blurred out

Name of participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Ryan Debono
ryan.debono.19@um.edu.mt

B. Public Survey Forms

B1. Questionnaire Consent – Anonymous Data Collection

My name is Ryan Debono and I am currently reading for a Master in Architecture and Urban Design at the **University of Malta**.

I am currently conducting research that aims to explore whether Maltese citizens are in favour of and interested in setting up community gardens. Another aim of this study is to investigate how much time (if any) Maltese citizens are willing to invest in the creation and maintenance of a community garden in the Maltese context. The questionnaire that you have been invited to complete forms part of this study. This will take you approximately 5 minutes to complete. Any data collected from this survey will be used solely for the purposes of this study.

If you choose to participate, please note that there are no direct benefits to you.

Your participation does not entail any known or anticipated risks.

Participation is entirely voluntary, i.e., you are free to accept or refuse to participate.

At no point will you be asked to provide your name or any other personal data that may lead to you being identified. Furthermore, you may skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

The findings which emerge from this research may be published in a dissertation, at conferences or in journals.

If you wish to participate in this study, please click the button that says: "I agree to participate". If not, please close the browser window, or click "I do not wish to participate".

Should you have any questions or concerns, you may contact myself or my supervisor on the details provided below.

Yours Sincerely,

Ryan Debono
ryan.debono.19@um.edu.mt
+356 79457221

Dr. Sarah Scheiber
sarah.anastasi@um.edu.mt
+356 2340 0000

DECLARATION BY RESPONDENT:

I hereby confirm that I am 18 years of age or older. I am aware that completing and submitting this questionnaire implies that I am participating voluntarily and with full informed consent on the conditions listed above.

- **I agree to participate – begin survey.**

- **I do not wish to participate – exit the survey.**

B2. Data Management Plan

Nature of Data

The data for this dissertation will consist of textual responses together with Likert scale ratings and numerical data. The dataset will have 16 variables and an expected size of approximately 50-200 observations. The data can be read and viewed using Microsoft Excel or similar spreadsheet software. To ensure anonymity, participants will be assigned unique identification numbers in order to eliminate any personal identifiers from the dataset. There are no secondary sources of data for this research, and all intellectual property rights for the data will reside with the University of Malta.

Management of Data

As the student, I will be solely responsible for the management of the data. Metadata will be created to maintain participant anonymity, using unique identification numbers to organize and make the dataset comprehensible. The collected data will be analysed manually with the possibility of using NVivo (software). All data will be securely stored on a password-protected laptop, with an additional backup maintained on a password-protected external drive. This dual-layered storage system ensures the safety and accessibility of the data. Both the laptop and external drive will adhere to secure storage requirements.

Data Sharing

No part of the collected data will be shared publicly or with third parties. Since data sharing is not planned, there will be no mechanisms or embargoes for such activities. Furthermore, the data will not be used for commercial purposes. To address privacy, ethical, and confidentiality concerns, all data will remain securely stored and inaccessible to others, ensuring that the rights and privacy of participants are fully protected throughout the research process.

C. Post-Workshop Survey Questions

Demographic Data

1. Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

2. Age:

- Under 18
- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65+ years old
- Prefer not to say

3. Nationality:

- A whole list of nationalities from where the participants can choose

4. Where do you live? Kindly specify locality.

5. Highest Education Level:

- Post-secondary
- Undergraduate Diploma
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Prefer not to say

6. Occupation:

- Full time Staff Member at UoM
- Part time Staff Member at UoM
- Full time Student at UoM
- Part time Student at UoM

7. How many dependents live with you?

- None
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4+
- Prefer not to say

8. Kindly indicate the approximate number of hours of free time you have per week on average

- Less than 3 hours
- Between 3 hours to 5 hours
- Between 5 hours to 10 hours
- More than 10 hours
- Prefer not to say

9. Did you have any prior gardening experience?

- Yes, explain
- No

10. If you answered "Yes" in the previous question, kindly indicate (Write "NA" if you previously answered "No")

- Gardening experience when I was a child
- Recent experience with gardening
- Other

11. Have you ever heard about community gardens?

- Yes
- No

12. If you answered "Yes" in the previous question, kindly specify where you came across this term (Write "NA" if you previously answered "No")

General satisfaction on the Gardening Session

13. How satisfied were you overall with the community gardening workshop?

Likert Scale: 1-5

14. What did you enjoy most about the workshop?

15. To what extent did you enjoyed the social gathering aspect (gardening, socializing and having a break together)?

Likert Scale: 1-5

16. What, if anything, did you find disappointing or frustrating about the workshop?

17. Would you recommend this workshop to others?

Likert Scale: 1-5

18. To what extent did you enjoy interacting with other participants during the workshop?

Likert Scale: 1-5

19. How important is it to you to have opportunities to connect with others through shared activities like gardening?

Likert Scale: 1-5

20. How did the workshop help you connect with the other participants?

Motivations to Participation

21. What initially sparked your interest in participating in a community gardening workshop?

22. What motivated you to participate in the community gardening workshop? Choose from the following:

Education / Environmental Sustainability / Leisure / Personal Growth / Social / Health / Culture / Friends / Others

23. What were your expectations for the workshop, and how did they compare to your actual experience?

Barriers to Participation

24. Were there any factors hindering you from participating when initially registering? If so, what were they?

25. Did you encounter any challenges or obstacles during the workshop?

- Yes
- No

26. If you answered "Yes" in the previous question, kindly specify what were the challenges (Write "NA" if you previously answered "No")

27. What factors might prevent you from participating in community gardening activities on a regular basis in the future?

28. What improvements could be made to the workshop to make it more accessible or enjoyable for future participants?

Future Participation

29. How interested are you in continuing to participate in community gardening activities in the future, on a regular basis?

Likert Scale: 1-5

30. Would you be willing to volunteer your time to help maintain a community garden?

- Yes
- No

31. Kindly provide further explanation for previous response

32. What would be your ideal frequency for participating in community garden activities?

- Once a week
- Twice a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month

33. Would you be interested in being in charge and leading a community garden?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

34. Kindly provide further explanation for previous response

- How did you find out about this workshop?
- Social Media
- Posters on Campus
- KSU
- eSIMS Inray
- Friends

D. Public Survey Questions

Demographic Data

1. Gender (Ġeneru):

- Male (Raġel)
- Female (Mara)
- Other (Oħrajn)
- Prefer not to say (Nippreferi ma ngħidx)

2. Age (Eta’):

- Under 18
- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55-64 years old
- 65+ years old
- Prefer not to say (Nippreferi ma ngħidx)

3. Nationality (Nazżjonalita):

- A whole list of nationalities from where the participants can choose

4. Highest Education Level:

- Post-secondary
- Undergraduate Diploma
- Bachelor’s degree
- Master’s degree
- Doctoral degree
- Prefer not to say (Nippreferi ma ngħidx)

5. Occupation:

- Full time Staff Member at UoM
- Part time Staff Member at UoM
- Full time Student at UoM
- Part time Student at UoM

6. How many dependents (children / vulnerable people) live with you?

- None (Xejn)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4+
- Prefer not to say (Nippreferi ma ngħidx)

7. Kindly indicate the approximate number of hours of free time you have per week on average

- Less than 3 hours (Anqas minn 3 siegħat)
- Between 3 hours to 5 hours (Bejn 3 siegħat u 5 siegħat)
- Between 5 hours to 10 hours (Bejn 5 siegħat u 10 siegħat)
- More than 10 hours (Aktar minn 10 siegħat)
- Prefer not to say (Nippreferi ma ngħidx)

8. Did you have any prior gardening experience?

- Yes (Iva)
- No (Le)

Perceptions on Community Gardening (Percezzjonijiet fuq Ġonna tal-Komunità)

Community gardens are public green spaces where individuals come together to cultivate fruits, vegetables, and flowers, while taking care of the space. Unlike allotment gardens (where individuals maintain separate plots), community gardens are collectively managed, with all participants working together to care for the garden as a whole. These spaces offer numerous benefits, including promoting physical and mental health through outdoor activity, enhancing food security, and strengthening social ties. Additionally, the harvest from community gardens is typically shared among the volunteers, ensuring that everyone involved enjoys the fruits of their labour. (Il-ġonna tal-komunità huma spazji ħodor pubbliċi fejn individwi jingħaqdu biex jikkultivaw frott, ħaxix u fjuri, filwaqt li jieħdu ħsieb l-ispazju. B'differenza mill-ġonna tal-mikrija lill-individwi (fejn l-individwi jzommu plottijiet separati), il-ġonna tal-komunità huma miżmuma b'mod kollettiv, bil-partecipanti kollha jaħdmu flimkien biex jieħdu ħsieb il-ġnien. Dawn l-ispazji joffru bosta benefiċċji, inkluż il-promozzjoni tas-saħħa fiżika u mentali permezz ta' attività fil-beraħ u t-tiżiħ tas-sigurtà tal-ikel. Barra minn hekk, il-ħsad mill-ġonna tal-komunità huwa tipikament maqsum bejn il-voluntiera, biex jiġi żgurat li kull min hu involut igawdi l-frott tax-xogħol tagħhom.)

A typical example of a community garden is that this type of garden is taken care of by all the volunteers, and the cultivated produce is shared. **This research study is focusing on this garden typology.** (*Eżempju tipiku ta' ġnien tal-komunità huwa li dan it-tip ta' ġnien jieħu ħsiebu l-voluntiera kollha, u l-prodott ikkultivat jinqasam. Dan l-istudju ta' riċerka qed jiffoka fuq din it-tipoloġija ta' ġnien).*)



A typical example of an allotment garden is that this type of garden is divided into separate plots, and each gardener has their own fenced garden. **This research study is NOT focusing on this garden typology.** (*Eżempju tipiku ta' ġnien ta' li jinkera lill-individwi huwa li dan it-tip ta' ġnien huwa maqsum fi plottijiet separati, u kull ġardinar għandu l-ġnien magħluq tiegħu. Dan l-istudju ta' riċerka MHUX jiffoka fuq din it-tipoloġija ta' ġnien).*)



9. Have you ever heard about community gardens? (Ġieli smajt b'gonna tal-komunità?)

- Yes (Iva)
- No (Le)

10. Which garden typology would you mostly like participate in? (F'liema tipoloġija ta' ġnien kieku tipparteċipa l-aktar fih?)

- In a Community Garden (Shared) (Fi ġnien tal-komunità)
- In an Allotment Garden (Private) (Fi ġnien mikri)
- In both Gardens (Fiż-żewġ gonna)

***Motivations and Barriers to Participation in a Community Garden
(Motivazzjonijiet u Ostakli għal-parteċipazzjoni fil-Ġonna tal-Komunità)***

11. What motivates you to start / continue participating in a community garden? Choose from the following motivations: (X'jimmotivak biex tibda/tkompli tipparteċipa fi ġnien tal-komunità? Aghżel mill-motivazzjonijiet li ġejjin:)

Education (Edukazzjoni) / Environmental Sustainability (Sostenibbiltà Ambjentali) / Leisure (Divertiment) / Personal Growth (Tkabbir Personali) / Social (Soċjali) / Health (Saħħa) / Culture (Kultura) / Friends (Ħbieb) / Other (Oħrajn)

12. Kindly write any other thoughts on why you would be / are motivated to participate in a community garden. (Jekk jogħġbok ikteb xi ħsibijiet oħra dwar għaliex tkun motivat biex tipparteċipa fi ġnien tal-komunità.)

13. What discourages you from starting / continuing to participate in a community garden? Choose from the following motivations: (X'jaqtalek qalbek milli tibda/tkompli tipparteċipa fi ġnien tal-komunità? Aghżel mill-motivazzjonijiet li ġejjin:)

Lack of Time (Nuqqas ta' ħin) / Long Distance (Distanzi twal) / Lack of Skills (Nuqqas ta' ħiliet) / Lack of Interest (Nuqqas ta' interess) / Amount of work involved (L-ammont ta' xogħol involut) / Other (Oħrajn)

14. Kindly write any other thoughts on why you would be / are discouraged from participating in a community garden. (Jekk jogħġbok ikteb xi ħsibijiet oħra dwar għalfejn tkun taqta' qalbek milli tipparteċipa fi ġnien tal-komunità.)

Future Participation (Parteċipazzjoni fil-futur)

15. How interested are you in starting / continuing to participate in community gardening activities in the future, on a regular basis? (Kemm int interessat li tibda/tkompli tipparteċipa f'attivitajiet tal-ġnien tal-komunità fil-futur, fuq bażi regolari?)

Likert scale:1-5

16. What factors might prevent you from participating in a community garden on a regular basis? (Liema fatturi jistgħu jipprevjenuk milli tipparteċipa fi ġnien tal-komunità fuq bażi regolari?)

17. Would you be willing to volunteer your time to help maintain a community garden? Kindly explain why. (Tkun lest li tagħti mill-ħin tiegħek biex tgħin iżzomm ġnien tal-komunità? Jekk jogħġbok spjega għaliex.)

- Yes (Iva)
- No (Le)

18. What would be your ideal frequency for participating in community garden activities? (Liema tkun il-frekwenza ideali għalik biex tipparteċipa f'attivitajiet f'għonna tal-komunità?)

Once a week (Darba fil-ġimgħa) / Twice a month (Darbtejn fix-xahar) / Once a month (Darba fix-xahar) / Less than once a month (Anqas minn darba fix-xahar) / Never (Qatt)

19. Would you be interested in being in charge and leading a community garden? (Tkun interessat li tkun responsabbli u tmexxi ġnien tal-komunità?)

- Yes (Iva)
- No (Le)
- Maybe (Jista' jkun)

20. Kindly write any other possible final thoughts. (Jekk jogħġbok ikteb kwalunkwe ħsibijiet oħra li għandek.)

E. Post-Workshop Survey Answers

12. If you answered "Yes" in the previous question, kindly specify where you came across this term (Write "NA" if you previously answered "No")

N/A - 19

Social Media / Internet

1. Social media
2. Social media
3. online over social media
4. I think the internet, maybe social media
5. Through the internet
6. On youtube
7. I saw some advocates speaking about it on TikTok. Calling for more sharing, community and gardening together, specifically rooftop gardens in densely populated urban areas.
8. Gardening TV programmes
9. I have seen some

Abroad

1. In australia we have some community gardens
2. Workplaces in scandinavia
3. It's popular in Poland
4. In England
5. Certain parts in Scotland have community gardens because they have no garden with their house

Relatives

1. From talks with a relative
2. Came across the term through discussion with my fiancé (who has researched the field) and a bit through internet video documentaries.

Research

1. In my research
2. Took part in research at university
3. Research and work
4. Thesis study was on green roofs

Environmental Awareness

1. Online and project green
2. Environmental Activism

General knowledge but I don't know specific examples
i dont recall

14. What did you enjoy most about the workshop?

Gardening Tasks

1. Planting
2. Planting
3. Relocating plants
4. Pruning and planting
5. Nizbor is sigar
6. Digging burrows
7. Working in the garden
8. Getting my hands dirty in the soil
9. Very hands on
10. Hands-on
11. The community aspect as well as how hands on it was
12. Learning and hands on activity
13. Meeting new people and getting my hands dirty
14. Working with plants and others
15. Hands on and diversity of the people. It was interesting also how we learnt about the way to pot the plants and how we call the terms in different languages. It was nice to connect again with a colleague in a very relaxed environment.
16. Hands-on experience

Community / Socializing

1. The community
2. meeting with people
3. The people
4. Building a sense of community
5. Interaction
6. The community aspect as well as how hands on it was
7. Meeting new people and getting my hands dirty
8. Working with plants and others
9. Working with people
10. Enjoy the free time and help the community
11. Socializing and making a difference
12. being around greenery and interacting with other people
13. I find gardening and clearing rubbish to be very satisfying, not to mention connecting with other people of similar mindset and interest. If not from different degrees and nationality.
14. Friendly atmosphere, social aspect

15. Hands on and diversity of the people. It was interesting also how we learnt about the way to pot the plants and how we call the terms in different languages. It was nice to connect again with a colleague in a very relaxed environment.
16. Time with nature, learning and talking meeting new people
17. The team effort and the kind countenance of the team leaders

Learning

1. Learning new information
2. Learnt many new things
3. Insightful information given by ryan and feedback throughout on how to do it
4. Learning in a community
5. Learning about gardening by speaking with Ryan and learning that I enjoyed it more than I expected and how it impacted me positively from a mental point of view.
6. Giving up tips throughout the session
7. Learning and hands on activity
8. Hands on and diversity of the people. It was interesting also how we learnt about the way to pot the plants and how we call the terms in different languages. It was nice to connect again with a colleague in a very relaxed environment.
9. Time with nature, learning and talking meeting new people

Connection with nature/calm environment

1. The ability to reconnect with nature, which isnt as common in Malta
2. being around greenery and interacting with other people
3. Time with nature, learning and talking meeting new people
4. Calm environment

Leisure

1. Fresh air, enjoyable experience
2. Enjoy the free time and help the community
3. Being out in the fresh air doing a type of physical activity which I enjoy
4. I find gardening and clearing rubbish to be very satisfying, not to mention connecting with other people of similar mindset and interest. If not from different degrees and nationality.

Others

1. YES A LOT
2. Cleaning
3. Socializing and making a difference
4. I got to experience mind-numbness in the best way possible - I was able to focus on the task only whereas usually I'm doing task on autopilot and thinking about things. It was also a moment where I could practice active listening to others' interesting discussions while working on my task. Finally I experienced aromatherapy from pruning plants and felt a sense of purpose on a personal basis.

16. What, if anything, did you find disappointing or frustrating about the workshop?

N/A

25

Not enough tools

3

Lack of commitment from others

1. It's more that I'm not fit enough. Also I get a bit frustrated that bit everyone participate the same. Maybe also there was not enough tools.
2. I found that people milling about and not investing most of their energy into the work to be a little frustrating. I would've like to complete all the tasks set by Ryan, but I understand the fatigue and maybe not being able to socialize and work effectively at the same time.

Lack of guidance

1. We needed more guidance how to do the tasks
2. being my first time i was a bit lost and personally struggled to ask for help at times

Weather

1. It started raining unfortunately
2. Rain

Good comments

1. Nothing really - everyone came together with the will to work on a task and everyone easily adjusted to their task.
2. N/A , if anything it should happen more often with more marketing
3. Nothing a new experience

Other issues

1. My inability to try multiple things
2. I wished to experience more planting
3. Passed too quickly
4. Vinegar smell :)
5. Back pain, though that wasn't a factor due to the design of the workshop
6. With all of the trash, it felt like we basically had to start from scratch
7. Lack of trash bins
8. I wish there were flowers or more learning on how to maintain and grow them at home
9. Rocky Soil

20. How did the workshop help you connect with the other participants?

Meet new people / New connections

1. getting to know new people
2. Get to know new students
3. I met people from my same course but in different years, which is really useful
4. I met someone new and it was nice
5. Met new people and definitely something new from my university course
6. Met and interacted with new people in a pleasant and neutral atmosphere
7. Made new connections, meeting new people who share a love for gardening
8. Got to know people from faculties I would otherwise have no contact with
9. Met someone but not much socialising as it was a bit short
10. I got to know people interested in gardening
11. Different nationalities and backgrounds in regards to education

Talking / Conversations

1. Talking about our lives
2. By talking about their homes in other countries and also some experiences in Malta
3. Simply speaking about our experience with gardening allowed us to open up and speak about our personal lives as well
4. It was comfortable for me to connect with other participants because there wasn't a need for constant attention to dialogue as everyone was mainly focused in their task but then every once in a while a casual and easy going open discussion went on where everyone could add in to the conversation. This is a perfect environment for an introvert who doesn't always feel comfortable conversing.
5. It helped by creating casual conversations with other people I wouldn't have spoken to unless there was an activity going on such as this
6. It made it easy to communicate with others
7. We could chat about previous gardening experience, share knowledge of plants and techniques associated. I find working towards a goal collectively is an easier way to break the ice and build connection.
8. There were opportunities for conversations in an informal setting
9. It was nice because we had something to do so conversation flowed naturally
10. The fact that we were interested in gardening and we opened up on our course at UM
11. I didn't know anyone, but stayed with 2 other people and we immediately clicked and had a lovely conversation.
12. By interactions with others
13. it allowed an easy way to open a conversation
14. When you have a common task you talk to people and get connected to them quickly

15. We were doing something, so the small talk didn't have to be interesting enough on its own
16. conversing about nature's importance
17. Common interests
18. Same hobby!
19. Possibility to chat while doing gardening tasks

Working together

- 6 By interacting and working together
- 7 by working together towards a common goal
- 8 Students from different faculties working together

Communicate to work

1. Teamwork
2. By communicating more to work
3. Communicate to complete tasks

Other Important

1. It's a physical meeting in a natural environment. Something that's missing nowadays
2. By encouraging a sense of community
3. Cool space for cool people
4. Asking others about difficulties
5. Important to know this kind of activities for our community

Others

1. Idk
2. Very well
3. */

21. What initially sparked your interest in participating in a community gardening workshop?

Through a friend

1. A friend told me
2. A friend recommendation
3. Heard about through a student
4. My friend wanted to try something new
5. My friend told me about it

Love for Gardening

1. I like gardening
2. Previous gardening
3. One of my hobbies is gardening
4. I am interested in gardening but I do not have much opportunity in terms of both resources and time
5. Gardening is something that relaxes me and I want to do more of it.
6. It was designed as part of an action I already carry out, and I wanted to help in the research
7. I have a few plants at home and my mom loves gardening
8. I needed to be around plants
9. I'm interested in growing food
10. I enjoy gardening and was hoping to learn more about it

Love for Nature

1. I love nature but don't know how to garden so I thought it would be a nice opportunity and also to help with dissertation!
2. Opportunity to reconnect with nature
3. Interest in Green Infrastructure
4. Doing an outdoor activity

Childhood Experiences

1. I miss gardening with my mother and feel a bit smothered by how urban Malta can be compared to the biome I grew up in. I wanted to get my hands dirty and smell the soil again.
2. the memory of my childhood
3. It reminds me of home

Learn to Garden

1. I love nature and want to learn more about gardening
2. Interest in starting my own garden with herbs
3. The want to learn more about gardening as I did not have much experience beforehand
4. Firstly it was a unique topic I came across on LinkedIn, secondly I enjoy hands on activities. Thirdly as we wish to have a terrace garden, we wanted to have an experience with taking care of plants.
5. It was something different I wanted to learn something new
6. Presently I am getting into gardening and thought this would help me
7. I enjoy gardening and was hoping to learn more about it

Connect with Others

1. Gardening with others, giving an opportunity to connect with the community of a locality
2. I'm single and I find lack of activities in Malta to meet people apart from clubbing. In this team it was mostly students but maybe it would ne interesting to have similar workshops with age groups. You can refer to my master's dissertation about single women in Malta.

Awareness

1. I have wanted to do something like this as i believe it is necessary for society to include these initiatives
2. Environmental awareness
3. The need of it in our ever growing urbanisation

Opportunity

1. The opportunity to participate in gardening because I never had many opportunities

Others Important

1. Curiosity
2. helping out
3. My wife saw the email application and we both thought it was a great idea, so we applied together
4. Just the subject in my inbox
5. The creativity of doing this event about an important topic
6. Videos seen at a scandinavian gaming company
7. I don't normally participate in uni extra curricular activities
8. Posters and it's connection to current studies

Others

1. Don't know

23. What were your expectations for the workshop, and how did they compare to your actual experience?

Expectations exceeded

1. Better than expected
2. Expectations were exceeded
3. Expectations were exceeded
4. Exceeded my expectations
5. They exceeded my expectations
6. My expectations were met in a very positive way
7. it was better than I expected
8. My expectations were that it was going to be a simple gardening presentation, but the hands on practical work made it much more interesting and satisfying.
9. Better than I thought

Expectations met

Expectations were met, new skills such as weeding and shovelling were developed

1. All met
2. Expectations were met, getting a good introduction to gardening and its importance to university
3. I was expecting to have a good time and socialize and my expectations were met.
4. I was pretty close to my expectations
5. i expected to learn how to plant and i did
6. I eventually learnt more about pruning and planting and it met my expectations. I learnt also about herbal remedies
7. I had high expectations and they were met, having found adequate tools and organisation throughout
8. Expected to get my hands dirty and touch plants which I did. Expected to learn a lot which I did. Expected to meet new people which I did.
9. I think I expected a more food growing geared work. But I've come to understand a good amount of herbs will be grown here. Otherwise it matched quite well.
10. My expectations was to learn the basics of gardening and from the work shop I think I had a good introduction to gardening
11. Basic knowledge about gardening and some practical experience. Met expectations
12. It matched my expectations

Excepted more but ok

1. Expected some kind of lecture and practice but it was mostly practice
2. i expected to have some more teaching but this was perfect
3. More flower learning but it was still super fun
4. I was expecting to learn about gardening, how to plant and take care of fauna. The reality was more on par with taking out weeds and taking care of soil, which I enjoyed nonetheless and learnt how important it is to take care of and maintain soil prior to actually planting anything.

Expected more

1. was hoping for more participants

No expectations

1. I think I didn't have any expectations but it was more fun and interesting and I enjoyed it.
2. I didn't have high expectations but I was pleased to learn about these initiatives.
3. Had no expectations ... Was open to the experience. I enjoyed it

Enjoyed it

1. I enjoyed the hands on
2. Great
3. I did not expect this much! The mini picnic in the end was such a sweet touch that brought the participants together.
4. I enjoyed the project of cleaning up and giving a fresh new look
5. Hands on experience and feedback which was given very well by ryan :)
6. Very well organized
7. Quite good. I thought there was more talking but this was not the case. I'm very pleased. Well Done!
8. I think I overestimated how much gardening education I could get in this short amount of time
9. It was more relaxing than I thought and I was very happy doing it. Would be interested in similar future events! Well done for this!
10. I didn't have any expectations but I was pleasantly surprised with how friendly everyone was and how rewarding the work felt

Others

1. Just getting to garden
2. To learn more gardening skills
3. I had not considered the amount of trash, but it did not ruin the experience

24. Were there any factors hindering you from participating when initially registering? If so, what were they?

Weather

1. The weather

Lack of time

1. The amount of free time available
2. Time – availabilities
3. Finding the time
4. The time availability but it was fixed.

Work & life commitments

1. Work commitments
2. Clashes with life events

Lack of information about workshops

1. Did not know anyone but it was fine!
2. Anxiety
3. Doing this activity without know who is going to be there or what were the exact tasks
4. Not knowing enough about it

None

30

Others

1. I didn't actually hear about it until my friend told me about the work shop half an hour before it started
2. just to connect to the nature so nice we spend most of the time looking at the PC

26. If you answered "Yes" in the previous question, kindly specify what were the challenges (Write "NA" if you previously answered "No")

Not Applicable

36

Lack of knowledge

1. Lack of knowledge in gardening
2. Confidence in what i was doing

Physical Health

1. Knee injury, I only went up the roof garden once
2. I need to be more physically fit

Others

1. More green space
2. Not enough gloves, didn't know what I was doing
3. Learning new task

27. What factors might prevent you from participating in community gardening activities on a regular basis in the future?

Lack of Time

1. The limited amount of free time
2. Not enough time due to persistent studies
3. Lack of time
4. Lack of time
5. Maybe time
6. Time
7. Time restrictions
8. Only a lack of time if I have assignments
9. Distance from home, during weekends only
10. Time commitment or not enough interest from others
11. Availability in schedule
12. Not having enough time perhaps
13. Busy schedule
14. Opportunities (not available in my community) and time
15. Lack of time and structured meetings
16. just timing and how my schedules aligns with my other activities
17. Mainly busy timetable
18. Timing, not always available
19. Time availability and resources
20. My own personal free time

Proximity

1. Whether there are community gardens in a location convenient to me
2. Distance from home, during weekends only

Work Commitments

1. Work commitments
2. My own workload while studying, but I may prioritize it as it has such a range of benefits.
3. Occupied with university
4. maybe some school assignments
5. Work commitments and social activities

Other Commitments

1. Other commitments
2. Other commitments
3. Other Commitments
4. Life commitments, lack of spaces where to practice community gardening.

Lack of Opportunities

1. Opportunities (not available in my community) and time
2. Life commitments, lack of spaces where to practice community gardening.

Lack of Motivation

1. I won't find the motivation to garden on my own, so if the sessions are scheduled and organised by a third party, I will enjoy turning up and helping in the garden

Lack of Knowledge

1. My inexperience

Lack of Interest from others

1. Time commitment or not enough interest from others

Weather

1. Weather
2. If they are held in Summer
3. Summer heat

Health

1. Maybe my health

Lack of Resources

1. Time availability and resources

Not Applicable

1. NA
2. NA
3. None

Others

1. Convenience
2. I have a dog and I normally want to spend time with him int the weekend..so ideally there is a dog area near the community garden so he can play while I'm gardening. Also it could be an activity for staff at university that once a month the ones who wish can help for a couple of hours.
3. Other people's initiatives, since I'm inexperienced
4. Anxiety

28. What improvements could be made to the workshop to make it more accessible or enjoyable for future participants?

It was perfect

1. It was just perfect
2. It was perfect
3. None that I can think off
4. I can't think of any
5. I think it was fairly enjoyable/accessible already
6. Everything was well organized
7. Nil - well done for the organisation
8. None
9. I don't think it could have been improved, it was well planned, communicated and executed :)
10. I think it was very accessible and well thought out
11. All good very well organised
12. I personally found it very enjoyable, I don't think I have anything I would improve

More Learning

1. Maybe having an informative sheet on the processes we did
2. I think maybe we could be provided with videos and tutorials beforehand
3. A bit of theory before the practice. Just enough to be more engaged
4. Some teaching about gardening ... Ex how to plant and any specific criteria for particular plants etc
5. Maybe to give more tips about different things related to gardening

More frequent

1. Making it a monthly event would be a social meet up
2. it was done well, maybe to do it more often
3. increasing its frequency and making it available in different localities
4. Making it a more regular basis thing, almost like a club.

Better Advertisement

1. Perhaps promoting it in more places
2. Maybe promoting it more so more people know about it (the uni social media)
3. More advertisement to young people to develop an interest from an early age
4. More promotion so more people are aware about it
5. Media marketing
6. Better advertisement

7. More advertising should be done to achieve a wider spread of people
8. Advertising

More Tools

1. I would say more tools may be useful.
2. Shovels
3. Using more tools to hurry up the process

More Information on Tasks

1. Be more clear in the specific tasks
2. More preparation for assigning specific tasks to each individual
3. More awareness about gardening, more explanations on the task assigned, more tasks in the same session.

In other localities

1. increasing its frequency and making it available in different localities

Others

1. The only people who might not be able to enjoy community gardening are those suffering physical disabilities or health issues like hay fever. They could perhaps join by contributing to the mini picnic or purchasing of gardening tools.
2. Food and coffee were appreciated, use of restroom might be difficult
3. hmm maybe some mid work snack
4. bigger garden
5. Do not specify that it is for Maltese but for all persons residing in Malta
6. More variety of activities
7. More plants to grow
8. The location was not accessible to people with mobility issues, and some information on the plants we were handling and the practices we were carrying out would have been welcome
9. Staff should have a dedicated hour per week during working hours to go if they choose – or to any aspect of the university for collective environmental improvement

31. Kindly provide further explanation for previous response

YES

Good for the Environment & Provide Green Spaces

1. It's good for the environment and as a BEN student is a good reminder of what we need to protect, not just the theoretical aspect of it
2. Its good to take care of our surrounding areas
3. To have more greenery areas on campus
4. With the lack of green spaces in Malta, these initiatives are super important.
5. More green space

To Learn

1. To gain more knowledge
2. Continue developing gardening skills
3. As I love learning and I would love to grow and have my own garden

Love Gardening

1. I like gardening
2. I really like gardening
3. I love gardening. It's relaxing and I lack space at home

Connect with others / Social Aspect

1. It's a chance to connect with others and provide a place to enjoy some greenery
2. Its a good concept which makes you learn a lot about crops while interacting with peers of similar interests
3. Connect with people, nature, social benefits of gardening (other people can enjoy)
4. I liked the experience and would enjoy to continue sometimes. Also the social aspect is really nice.

Relaxing

1. It was also quite fulfilling to see the fruits of our labour so I think I would want to experience that again for sure
2. It was surprisingly soothing as an experience and helped to relax and take my mind off of things.
3. It would be a nice leisure activity

Fulfilling

1. It would be personally fulfilling and therapeutic both mentally and socially.
2. It gives a feeling of fulfillment as well as tranquillity.

Therapeutic

1. It's a therapeutic activity for me, I enjoy the benefits of fresh fruit/veg if its a food growing garden.
2. I believe in horticultural therapy, and enjoy an activity which my daughter can join too.
3. Very therapeutic
4. It would be personally fulfilling and therapeutic both mentally and socially.
5. Because I believe that greenery can help to heal all wounds, stress and improve your daily life

To make a better community

1. I can give back to the community and make it better within my society
2. To help community
3. It has number of positive reasons both on a personal and community level

Personal Health

1. A green environment means healthier communities
2. It has number of positive reasons both on a personal and community level
3. I think gardening it's important. It's important to connect with nature for your mental health
4. Firstly, it is a space that we should all take care of, it is our home and secondly, it is a healthy way to invest our free time in something positive.

Others

1. na
2. I am already a volunteer at the green roof
3. Yes especially if it is casual
4. Yes I would, the only issue I currently have is free time.
5. I believe in these kinds of activities for different ages
6. But not at the moment. Exams are on the way
7. I wish for a more work life balance.
8. i would if it was organised properly
9. well it is something natural to do and it is fun
10. I am very interested in plants and would like to know more with more hands on experience
11. I love nature

NO

1. Due t time availability
2. Studies are quite intensive at the moment
3. I'm not sure I am good at it

35. Kindly provide further explanation for previous response

1. Lack of Experience / Knowledge
2. Lack of experience in gardening
3. Lack of experience
4. Lack of experience
5. I don't know if I have enough experience yet to lead one
6. I'm not knowledgeable enough to lead in this field
7. I do not have the knowledge and experience
8. Not very experienced so I can't lead
9. I am not very experienced so wouldn't feel comfortable leading a group
10. I do not have much knowledge about gardening
11. I don't know enough to lead one but once I learn I would be happy to
12. Need further experience and learning about this gardening
13. I do not feel knowledgeable enough since I had no prior experience
14. I'm not really a leader type and don't have enough knowledge on maintaining a garden
15. I can coordinate but I lack technical expertise

Lack of Time

1. I don't have time to commit
2. Unfortunately I would not be able to attend regularly enough to lead a community garden
3. I will volunteer to help maintain a garden but don't have the time to organise the initiative
4. I doubt that I would have that much time

Not Comfortable

1. I don't feel comfortable in a leadership role
2. I am not very experienced so wouldn't feel comfortable leading a group
3. Shyness

Other Responsibilities

1. Depends on other professional responsibilities
2. I have a lot of responsibilities

No others

1. I am not keen on taking responsibility, but I understand the importance of it
2. Would not know how to start or organise.
3. I'm happy to just be a part

4. I usually spend time doing other types of volunteering
5. Not sure if it would be my fit
6. I prefer books and plants to unknown individuals

Yes

1. I love organising.
2. It sounds nice
3. Its a field which I like
4. To help community
5. As I believe it's a good initiative and it gives you purpose
6. I wouldn't mind organizing and directing such an activity. I love how it can unite people.
7. Seeing everyone communicating and work towards a good common goal makes me happy
8. Malta is a place that needs a lot of green space and the more people participate the more impact we have. There is nothing better than setting an example
9. If i know the tasks, i can explain the tasks and help the participants carry them out

Yes with help

1. i would need some help i think
2. If there are enough volunteers to work with
3. It depends on the level of support and flexibility

Others

1. Cant tell for now

NA

1. na
2. NA

F. Public Survey Answers

11. Kindly write any other thoughts on why you would be / are motivated to participate in a community garden.

Mental Health

1. It improves well-being, mental health and physical health. It allows us to be closer to nature and learn about it.
2. Mental health, physical exercise and socialising
3. Mental Health
4. Gardening can be therapeutic
5. To be part of the community
To raise awareness about having green spots (lungs), Physical activity, Mental health
6. Environmental and mental benefits.
7. Good for mental health.
8. il-gnien (l-ambjent) huwa terapija ghaldaqstant nemmen li huwa bzonjuz ghal min ibghati minn ansjeta , stress , problemi socjali u anki tajjeb li lit-tfal nuruhom l-importanza ta xoghol fil-komunita u xoghol fin-natura. Tlifna dik il- 'connection ' bejn il-bniedem u in-natura , li nahseb li hija bzonjuza sabiex socjeta tkun b'sahhita mentalment. Hawn wisq stress u ansjeta u tellieqa sabiex kulhadd ikun l-aqwa b'detriment ghal-hajja aktar b'sahhita. Is-semplicita li taghtik n natura m'hawnx ahjar minna.
9. Dan jien biex dak li jkun ihoossu ahjar mentalment. Hija xi haga wisq sabiha li ssajjar dak li tkabbar.
10. We truly need these initiatives in our country both for environmental sustainability and also for our general well-being since life has become too hectic and we are losing the most important aspects of life.
11. Sustainability; taking care of our earth; healthy and relaxing

Physical Health

1. It improves well-being, mental health and physical health. It allows us to be closer to nature and learn about it.
2. Mental health, physical exercise and socialising
3. To be part of the community, To raise awareness about having green spots(lungs), Physical activity, Mental health
4. Tisbiħ tal-ambjent, tindif tal-arja, saħħa, divertiment u ħbieb ġodda

Education

1. It improves well-being, mental health and physical health. It allows us to be closer to nature and learn about it.
2. Get to know more people, more experiences and knowledge growth.
3. To learn about local plants and share a hobby.
4. Although you would be enhancing the surroundings, it is an activity for both personal and social leisure, where one can learn to nourish plants and vegetables while communicating with others. It is by far one of the best way to slow down and enjoy nature without any noise and screenings.
5. It's a way to learn more about gardening, and perhaps even about organic gardening
6. Learning new things
7. I think it's imp for all society to have the possibility to have somewhere to go and learn gardening
8. To perpetuate knowledge through generations
9. to learn and grow foods without pesticides that everyone can share.
10. Would be a great initiative that brings people together and learn about caring for plants and the environment
11. for socialisation and also to increase my knowledge about nature
12. Sharing ideas, spending time culturally on same area.
13. it instills a certain connection to nature. I already have my own piece of land which i cultivate in an agricultural and floricultural manner. helping out in a community garden, even if its only providing advise, is something i see as positive.

Close / Connection to Nature

1. It improves well-being, mental health and physical health. It allows us to be closer to nature and learn about it.
2. my own space to be with nature and grow my own veg
3. Although you would be enhancing the surroundings, it is an activity for both personal and social leisure, where one can learn to nourish plants and vegetables while communicating with others. It is by far one of the best way to slow down and enjoy nature without any noise and screenings.
4. A chance to be in and promote nature
5. Relaxing in nature.
6. Community gardens would be a great initiative to get people re-connected with nature and even with each other. Most people do not have gardens and consequently, do not know about the satisfaction derived from seeing plants grow from seed or, produce flowers in addition, community gardens also help to restore nature (for instance, by planting flowers that attract pollinators). Gardening is a relaxing hobby which helps people escape from the frenetic pace of today's life.

7. it instills a certain connection to nature. I already have my own piece of land which i cultivate in an agricultural and floricultural manner. helping out in a community garden, even if its only providing advise, is something i see as positive.
8. far from cars ,annoying people. closer to nature.

Fresh Produce / Food Security

1. Fresh and genuine produce, as well as a way to relax after work/in the weekend.
2. It's nice to have a sense of community and fresh produce
3. Such activities are a tool that may be utilised to increase environment protection and food safety awareness.
4. To eat pesticide and insecticide free food.
5. To grow organic food
6. It's a way to learn more about gardening, and perhaps even about organic gardening
7. Dan jien biex dak li jkun ihossu ahjar mentalment. Hija xi haga wisq sabiha li ssajjar dak li tkabbar.
8. In my dwelling, although I have a sizeable courtyard, adjacent buildings have taken away much from the sunlight. This has limited my cultivation possibilities. A community garden would give me back a viable space.
9. I enjoy the reward of having food to eat and share. Also seeing the smaller insects, birds etc who live in these gardens.
10. It is very satisfying to see living plants thriving thanks to one's efforts. If this results in edible fruit and vegetables the satisfaction would be greater. Producing and sharing food also creates a powerful bond between people.
11. to learn and grow foods without pesticides that everyone can share.
12. Growing my own food and living a life closer to a self sustaining one, rather than buying processed food from the supermarket that I do not know how it was harvested and how much carbon dioxide was released for it to be shipped
13. Most of the existing dwellings and modern apartments dont have gardens. To grow your own produce in your own property has become a luxury.
14. I also think it would be relaxing and satisfying to grow something yourself and watch its progress.
15. grow food/herb crop to use for cooking
16. If there was a possibility to grow vegetables, one may do so without the use of any pesticides which is much healthier than what is offered in the general market.
17. I believe it would also be a great activity to teach children about growing your own fruit and vegetables. Thus another motivating factor would be engagement and participation of children.
18. utilising green spaces for growing crops that can be shared between volunteers is very sustainable, and can be very rewarding. hopefully cost effective too

Relaxing / Leisure

1. Fresh and genuine produce, as well as a way to relax after work/in the weekend.
2. Although you would be enhancing the surroundings, it is an activity for both personal and social leisure, where one can learn to nourish plants and vegetables while communicating with others. It is by far one of the best way to slow down and enjoy nature without any noise and screenings.
3. Brings nature closer to the urban environment, and increases the appreciation of the average person of ecosystems, flora and fauna etc. Also provides a recreational element to the Maltese lifestyle.
4. it's relaxing
5. socializing, relaxing, feeling part of environmental action, gathering opportunities
6. Biex inqatta' naqra ħin tas-serġan mill-ħajja u l-ġenn ta' kuljum
7. Getting my mind off the madness of this country
8. Sustainability; taking care of our earth; healthy and relaxing
9. Tisbiħ tal-ambjent, tindif tal-arja, saħħa, divertiment u ħbieb ġodda

Socialising

1. Get to know more people, more experiences and knowledge growth.
2. Mental health, physical exercise and socialising
3. To share experiences and gather information about gardening and put into practice.
4. Although you would be enhancing the surroundings, it is an activity for both personal and social leisure, where one can learn to nourish plants and vegetables while communicating with others. It is by far one of the best way to slow down and enjoy nature without any noise and screenings.
5. Environmental Sustainability | Culture | Friends
6. It is very satisfying to see living plants thriving thanks to one's efforts. If this results in edible fruit and vegetables the satisfaction would be greater. Producing and sharing food also creates a powerful bond between people.
7. Communication
8. socializing, relaxing, feeling part of environmental action, gathering opportunities
9. Would be a great initiative that brings people together and learn about caring for plants and the environment
10. for socialisation and also to increase my knowledge about nature
11. Sharing ideas, spending time culturally on same area.
12. Tisbiħ tal-ambjent, tindif tal-arja, saħħa, divertiment u ħbieb ġodda

Experiences

1. Get to know more people, more experiences and knowledge growth.
2. A family activity with kids

3. socializing, relaxing, feeling part of environmental action, gathering opportunities
4. Participating in community gardens allows one to discover new places in the country and appreciate the beauty around us, which sometimes goes unnoticed.

Hobby

1. Personal hobby of mine. Promote habitat for insects.
2. To learn about local plants and share a hobby.
3. my own space to be with nature and grow my own veg
4. I love gardening so i think its a lovely concept i have learned about this thing when I was at southampton and my professor told me that they have communal gardens and he brings his children and they grow different sort of vegetables and fruits together and I think that is a lovely idea not only because its a nice activity (quality time) but you can also grow your own food.
5. I like plants, helping endemic species flourish more, and it is a lovely hobby.
6. I do not have a green space at home, yet I really enjoy gardening so I would be happy to have access to a community garden.
7. Community gardens would be a great initiative to get people re-connected with nature and even with each other. Most people do not have gardens and consequently, do not know about the satisfaction derived from seeing plants grow from seed or, produce flowers in addition, community gardens also help to restore nature (for instance, by planting flowers that attract pollinators). Gardening is a relaxing hobby which helps people escape from the frenetic pace of today's life.

Environmentally

1. Personal hobby of mine. Promote habitat for insects.
2. It helps a lot in environmental sustainability and it offers a breath of fresh air (due to the green area)
3. Such activities are a tool that may be utilised to increase environment protection and food safety awareness.
4. I like plants, helping endemic species flourish more, and it is a lovely hobby.
5. Environmental and mental benefits.
6. I enjoy the reward of having food to eat and share. Also seeing the smaller insects, birds etc who live in these gardens.
7. We need more green spaces and food for bees, butterflies etc
8. Brings nature closer to the urban environment, and increases the appreciation of the average person of ecosystems, flora and fauna etc. Also provides a recreational element to the Maltese lifestyle.
9. Environmental Sustainability | Culture | Friends
10. socializing, relaxing, feeling part of environmental action, gathering opportunities

11. I find it important to leave space for wild flowers so our pollinators can have a good time as well. And it's a lovely sight!
12. Community gardens would be a great initiative to get people re-connected with nature and even with each other. Most people do not have gardens and consequently, do not know about the satisfaction derived from seeing plants grow from seed or, produce flowers in addition, community gardens also help to restore nature (for instance, by planting flowers that attract pollinators). Gardening is a relaxing hobby which helps people escape from the frenetic pace of today's life.
13. We truly need these initiatives in our country both for environmental sustainability and also for our general well-being since life has become too hectic and we are losing the most important aspects of life.
14. Sustainability; taking care of our earth; healthy and relaxing

Sense of Community

1. It's nice to have a sense of community and fresh produce
2. Fostering a strong community and enhancing the aesthetics of a place.
3. To be part of the community
To raise awareness about having green spots(lungs)
Physical activity
Mental health
4. neighbourhood sense of feeling
5. It fosters a sense of community well-being, which is at the risk of being lost.
6. I think it is a lovely way of bringing people together with something tangible at the end!
7. It would be a rewarding community experience with a meeting place for like minded people.
8. it is better for the community

Fresh Air

1. It helps a lot in environmental sustainability and it offers a breath of fresh air (due to the green area)

Good for kids

1. I believe that it is healthy for everyone more so for kids to appreciate the work of others like farming and gardening.
2. I especially love seeing children participate in gardening and learning about where food is coming from.
3. I believe that it is healthy for everyone more so for kids to appreciate the work of others like farming and gardening.

4. I believe it would also be a great activity to teach children about growing your own fruit and vegetables. Thus another motivating factor would be engagement and participation of children.
5. Since we don't own a field, it would be a good opportunity for our children to participate.
6. Also to teach my kids the benefit of growing your own food. Also to reduce waste.

Enhancement of Area

1. Fostering a strong community and enhancing the aesthetics of a place.
2. Isebbhu l-ambjent tal-madwar
3. I find it important to leave space for wild flowers so our pollinators can have a good time as well. And it's a lovely sight!
4. Gardens are essential to our community in this age as blocks of apartments are taking over all types of houses with gardens. They are our last chance with gardening.
5. Most properties nowadays no longer have gardens (and not even yards). This would help those who have a passion for gardening and enjoy their beauty apart from providing hands on experience
6. Tisbiħ tal-ambjent, tindif tal-arja, saħħa, divertiment u ħbieb godda

Raising Awareness / Work for a great cause

1. To be part of the community, To raise awareness about having green spots (lungs), Physical activity, Mental health
2. Make Malta a greener place.
3. Help the community, help the world.
4. It is time every locality caters for such gardens to keep local produces alive
5. To contribute to greening of public spaces and the satisfaction of seeing your input growing
6. It's a very interesting concept wherein everyone is taking care of a common garden for the benefit of all the neighborhood.

Culture

1. Environmental Sustainability | Culture | Friends

Cost Effectiveness

1. Financial stability
2. utilising green spaces for growing crops that can be shared between volunteers is very sustainable, and can be very rewarding. hopefully cost effective too
3. Explore the possibility to reintroduce the concept of product exchange. To possibly have a self sufficient community.

Personal

1. The garden makes me feel alive, happy and free
2. I love the environment in general
3. Il-fatt li taqta mir-rutina u l-genn tal-hajja timmotivani biex nippartecipa
4. to spend some time with my children doing gardening
5. far from cars ,annoying people. closer to nature.
6. Gardening helps very much in calming down, however I have my own private gardens and I'm not sure if I would feel the same if I would garden in a shared environment.
7. It is an interesting, new concept to explore in a place where green spaces are unfortunately diminishing. It would be also motivating to see something being nurtured and grown all from your own hands. I would rather though prefer a rented space as I would be scared to ruin other people's crops ... or vice versa once I would have gotten the hang of it.

Unclassified

1. I like the idea but I'm too old for this.
2. If I did not have such a space at home
3. As long as it is within my locale and not have to travel to get to it.

Important Ones

- Fil-passat konna ħdima fuq dokumenti ta' l-ippjanar dwar l-użu ta' l-art li saru liġijiet. Gonna tal-komunita' konna ddiskutejnihom u minn dejjem xtaqna li jsiru fuq artijiet pubbliċi peress li jgħinu fit-tiġħ tal-komunita' u biex jagħtu żvog lil min m'għandux din il-facilita' minbarra li jgħinu fit-trasferiment ta' l-għerf bejn il-ġenerazzjonijiet u anke biex ikun hemm attivita' soċjali li tkun ta' nteress komuni f'lokalita' fejn l-iżvilupp mgħaġġel qiegħed jnaqqas l-interazzjoni bejn il-ġirien u nħawi differenti fil-lokalita'.
- I am a volunteer for a global community group called The People's Food and Farming Alliance... community is key, community gardening is a healthy, outdoor, social, therapeutic and productive activity and if growing regeneratively supports soil life, wildlife and climate flexibility one micro ecosystem at a time...it is a no brainer win win win
- Grants by government to start community gardens, provision of tools, re-design of streets to create spaces for community gardens and decrease space dedicated to cars.

13. Kindly write any other thoughts on why you would be / are discouraged from participating in a community garden.

Lack of knowledge / experience

1. Lack of experience and knowledge on the subject
2. I have never worked in one.
3. I would be very cautious on what to do since I have absolutely 0 green finger skills and would not want to ruin someone else's hard work.
4. Sometimes the lack of knowledge of public events hinders the exposure of community gardens.

Lack of Time

1. free time
2. busy schedule
3. Free time.
4. Lack of time available unfortunately is an issue
5. I'm a busy person so I wouldn't be giving my fair share. Plus in my locality it would be nearly impossible to have, so I would have to commute to go to a community garden
6. As much as the issue of time is prominent, the people themselves that cause destruction of community garden is a bigger problem. That thus discourages people from participating.
7. Has to be on weekends mostly
8. jien ghandi ghalqa zghira fejn qed niprova nuza is-sistema tal-permaculture. Ghandi xi beds kif urejt fil-pics aktar il-fuq. Uzajt dak l-metodu fejn fil-beds qed naghmel haxix tal-borma. Ghadni qed nitghallem . Li jaqtali qalbi huwa dan , ghaliex diga ghandi ' gnien ' li qed niehu hsieb u mhux facli, lebsa nidhol ghal progett iehor hekk .
9. If I had more free time, I would rather do some gardening in my own home. besides, I'm quite skeptical about different people with different ideas/expectations taking care of the same garden. But maybe that s because I'm not familiar with how these work.
10. There cannot be one field/garden per town, it needs to be by area to be able to support the quantity. My town is not planned to have such gardens in terms of infrastructure. Also another big discouragement is the time required. My time is split between raising kids and work. When working is hard to find time to do field work.
11. Different opinions, availability and resources

Weather

1. Weather
2. It-temp, xita, sħana tas-sajf, għodda tal-ġnien, nuqqas ta' interest minn nies oħra u jew kunsilli lokali, deoartimenti konċernati tal-Gvern.

Proximity

1. I'm a busy person so I wouldn't be giving my fair share. Plus in my locality it would be nearly impossible to have, so I would have to commute to go to a community garden
2. I don't know of any in Malta and to be fair I have a mini-garden on my rooftop so I would say even due to proximity.
3. If it is far away and if there isn't **parking** provided.
4. I am a garden keeper at a currently running community garden in Gozo, and people bring their dogs in, who dig and poop on garden beds and have even bitten me. While I love all animals I find dog poop to be a health hazard in a garden. I have no other issues with community gardens. If public transport was better or a garden was closer to me I would spend a lot more time there.
5. aktar mill boghod, jaqtaghli hafna qalbi li ma nsibx **nipparkja**
6. I live in Gozo and nearly all community gardening advertised is on Malta

Lack of collaboration / communication / respect / conflict between gardeners

1. Lack of collaboration between other individuals
2. Certain people have no respect they rob other's work the produce, not worth it.
3. As much as the issue of time is prominent, the people themselves that cause destruction of community garden is a bigger problem. That thus discourages people from participating.
4. working with others to maintain the garden may be challenging
5. It is very difficult to get team work in Malta, which is why I would prefer to do it on my own. Also I dislike the loud Mediterranean culture when it comes to open spaces with people shouting like mad to talk. In principal it's a good thing, but being with others, whose mentality can vary, will definitely back fire. I would go to relax, and start meeting busy bodies, who might even intrude on my area.
6. Other people
7. Depends on the people I am participating with, had many negative experiences with people bullying me for how I look and speak.
8. Other people might not be helpful or may be destructive to the process
9. I consider myself a leader and prefer doing things my way. Such initiatives will probably involve disagreements and I have enough of them at work!
10. Different opinions, availability and resources
11. If people who are gardening with me are negative thinkers and if there is a lacking of supplies and ugly environment.
12. best not shared as a lot of people are know it alls
13. I don't like the idea of having multiple people gardening the same garden
14. If its a shared community you may have people that dont know boundaries and can mess with your stuff

15. Egotistical tendencies of certain people ruin the experience for the rest.
16. If it is shared rather than individual allotments, there is bound to be incompatible ideas and interventions without the agreement of everyone involved which may lead to conflict
17. I would imagine that some participants would be lazy and greedy and would hence collect fruit and vegetables without actually putting in the work. That would put me off. Also, I do not enjoy working in a busy environment thus if there are lots of people working at the same time in the community garden it would not be enjoyable for me.
18. Mhux dejjem tkun liberu li tizra/tħawwel dak li tixtieq.
19. Will the products be shared fairly and equally?

No Opportunity Spaces available

1. There are very little spaces available
2. Land cost and availability.
3. Lack of spaces provided for community garden from home and traffic to reach destinations.
4. Having an appropriate location which is not within a heavily urbanised, traffic or noisy area
5. lack of options to do so
6. Lack of space available.
7. lack of space, resulting in forced interaction with other people/ other people can disrupt your gardening works if they are not on the same page.
8. If there is the availability, i would do it
9. There cannot be one field/garden per town, it needs to be by area to be able to support the quantity. My town is not planned to have such gardens in terms of infrastructure. Also another big discouragement is the time required. My time is split between raising kids and work. When working is hard to find time to do field work.
10. No places where to get started (all public gardens are managed by the local administrations); concerns about the soil health (eg. use of pesticides/herbicides); concerns about vandalism / littering / disrespect of the gardening community

Lack of help from LG and Government

1. Lack of help and collaboration from local councils
2. Hemm bżonn ta' aktar involviment mill-Kunsilli Lokali bi sħab mal-Gvern Ċentrali u kumitati speċifiċi soċjali biex dawn il-postijiet jkun protetti minn KULL żvilupp ieħor, vandalizmu, serq u li jkun hemm regolamenti/liġi li torganizza aħjar din l-attività' essenzjalment komunitarja.
3. No actual opportunities (I am located in Gozo and there are no community gardens here. Not sure if there are in Malta). I am interested in starting a community garden

myself for my neighbors, but it feels like a nightmare to go ask the Local Council for a plot of public land, as I presume that they would need to contact the Lands Authority which will take ages. Moreover, I am not sure if my neighbours would be interested to participate in the long run.

4. It-temp, xita, sħana tas-sajf, għodda tal-ġnien, nuqqas ta' interest minn nies oħra u jew kunsilli lokali, deoartimenti konċernati tal-Gvern.
5. Lack of support (financial or community wise)

Legal Issues

1. Privacy and possessive rights. I don't feel that shared models work within our culture.
2. Hemm bżonn ta' aktar involviment mill-Kunsilli Lokali bi sħab mal-Gvern Ċentrali u kumitati speċifiċi soċjali biex dawn il-postijiet jkun protetti minn KULL żvilupp ieħor, vandalizmu, serq u li jkun hemm regolamenti/liġi li torganizza aħjar din l-attivitá' essenzjalment komunitarja.

Physical Health

1. The biggest problem would be that gardening/farming can be a physically strenuous occupation. Of course, however, it can be overcome with help from others.
2. I am multiply disabled

Lack of information on the subject

1. Wouldn't know where to start or where it is offered - if more info is provided I would take interest.
2. Not enough knowledge on where these can be found and how to get involved.

Lack of interest

1. To be honest, I support community gardens, I think they are a great idea & I'd gladly contribute financially. But if I had to help out in my community, I'd rather help out at the library, for example. Community gardening is not my thing.
2. other things I am interested in more than gardening...
3. It-temp, xita, sħana tas-sajf, għodda tal-ġnien, nuqqas ta' interest minn nies oħra u jew kunsilli lokali, deoartimenti konċernati tal-Gvern.
4. Lack of support (financial or community wise)

Lack of Management

1. Needs to be well managed
2. Lack of upkeep/maintenance in the long run
3. maybe that others will not do it and keep it 'nice'

4. I am a garden keeper at a currently running community garden in Gozo, and people bring their dogs in, who dig and poop on garden beds and have even bitten me. While I love all animals I find dog poop to be a health hazard in a garden. I have no other issues with community gardens. If public transport was better or a garden was closer to me I would spend a lot more time there.
5. It depends a lot on the renting cost. I would be interested in growing vegetables and I do not have any knowledge. Also, if I manage to acquire a large garden or a small piece of land through other means, I would prefer that option to renting.

Lack of Supplies

1. It-temp, xita, sħana tas-sajf, għodda tal-ġnien, nuqqas ta' interest minn nies oħra u jew kunsilli lokali, deoartimenti konċernati tal-Gvern.
2. Different opinions, availability and resources
3. If people who are gardening with me are negative thinkers and if there is a lacking of supplies and ugly environment.

Vandalism / Theft

1. Theft
2. If its a shared community you may have people that dont know boundaries and can mess with your stuff
3. I would be very concerned about the respectful point of the community. If they dont respect the project, the wont respect those who take care of the garden - high risk of vandalism ect.
4. No places where to get started (all public gardens are managed by the local administrations); concerns about the soil health (eg. use of pesticides/herbicides); concerns about vandalism / littering / disrespect of the gardening community

Language Barrier

1. Language. I don't speak Maltese.

Important Information

1. Ideally, such community gardens should be somewhere local and properly managed with instructions on the weekly tasks that need to be undertaken. To really take ownership of such a scheme however, people would need to have time to participate in such a community garden on a regular basis which, would not be possible for most people. Moreover, training sessions would need to be given to avoid damaging the plants through overwatering etc.
2. Such gardens should definitely be within walking distance and have a degree of safety for children etc. (such as Gnien ta Ball)

15. What factors might prevent you from participating in a community garden on a regular basis?

Lack of Time

1. Scheduled time, weather, school work deadlines
2. Limited time.
3. Time required to maintain plants
4. Time
5. Lack of time and lack of "freedom" with regards to what plants are cultivated since it is a group thing
6. Time limits, others not participating and sometimes weather (if too warm).
7. Time & commitment
8. Free time.
9. Busy schedule
10. free time
11. Time, work and lack of skills
12. Amount of work involved | Lack of Skills | Long Distance | Lack of Time (I'm a busy person so I wouldn't be giving my fair share. Plus in my locality it would be nearly impossible to have, so I would have to commute to go to a community garden)
13. Time, unfortunately.
14. Lack of time
15. The time needed.
16. the lack of time
17. Lack of free time
18. Lack of time
19. Lack of time
20. time
21. Time, lack of skill
22. time
23. Time
24. Lack of time.
25. Time constraints
26. No time available
27. lack of time, cold weather
28. Time is the major factor
29. Time, energy
30. Lack of free time and lack of skill.
31. Time
32. Mainly the lack of free time

33. Lack of time.
34. Less time available during the week
35. Time
36. Lack of Time (Nuqqas ta' hin) | Long Distance (Distanzi twal) | Lack of Skills (Nuqqas ta' ħiliet) (If it is shared rather than individual allotments, there is bound to be incompatible ideas and interventions without the agreement of everyone involved which may lead to conflict)
37. Time
38. Lack of time
39. nuqqas ta' hin
40. Time
41. The hours at work. I would gladly dedicate my time to the field. With a successful garden and enough produce, the community could exchange products and services.
42. Time
43. Hin
44. Time
45. time
46. Mostly time and health issues.
47. Lack of time
48. Nuqqas ta hin
49. Time / Energy / Motivation combination
50. Time
51. time
52. Nuqqas ta' hin
53. To find time on a regular basis
54. Lack of time and distance
55. Time
56. Nuqqas ta' hin.
57. not enough time to dedicate to it
58. Lack of free time
59. Time constraints, prefer to do other things, no green fingers!
60. Lack of time, sometimes
61. Time availability.
62. Time and typology of persons taking part
63. Health and time
64. Time and experience
65. As stated before, the factors can be time and also the destructive nature of society.
66. The day passes quickly, and realistically I won't be able to daily. And also when it rains or it is very hot I wouldn't be able to work.

67. The time needed to dedicate to looking after a garden when growing plants, vegetables etc
68. Lack of time available. And family-related chores.
69. Health or unavailability.
70. Depends on where they are and therefore lack of time as well.
71. Time and other people
72. time and lack of skills, and more interest in other hobbies to do in my free time
73. Distance would limit me and time but other than that just a well thought out and organized place would be very enticing.
74. Lack of time and resources
75. lack of skill and possibility of being unavailable to care for crop for a prolonged period of time
76. Time + whether the project is of a certain level.
77. Time/other commitments
78. lack of time and energy. Preference for other activities
79. Lack of free time and sudden chores that arise from time to time limiting my availability
80. kif ktibt aktar il-fuq : qed niehu hsieb ghalqa zghira u ma jifdalx hin . Nahdem full time ukoll
81. I have my own garden and need help to keep it well
82. depending on the seasons, as first and foremost i dedicate most of my free time to my own land so when its either sowing or harvesting season, i would not be readily available for the community garden.
83. Lack of time e.g. if it is scheduled at times where I am working or can't attend, or lack of knowledge about location, what to do etc
84. Mostly time constrains, but also depending on the leadership. If this is combined with info sessions it could keep the momentum going as well.

Family Commitment

1. Time mostly that is spent with family
2. Lack of time available. And family-related chores.
3. If family commitments need to take priority. I have elderly parents and my activities sometimes need to be worked around their needs.
4. family commitment
5. Other priorities such as taking care of the family.
6. Work and family ties
7. Work life balance probably. Once i have a family, i think it would be very hard to find time for community garden.
8. Changing circumstances in life, such as elderly parents, children, etc.

9. I don't really want more accountability and things on my to do list. I usually want to spend time off away from people for the most part
10. Work and kids' commitments on top of house commitments
11. Work and family commitments

Unpredictable Events / Emergencies

1. Free time available fluctuates from one week to another
2. Lack of free time and sudden chores that arise from time to time limiting my availability

Work Commitment

1. Work commitments
2. I do not have time since i am part time farmer, beekeeper and rabbit keeper.
3. Time, work and lack of skills
4. Lack of time due to work and long distances
5. The lack of time which I have available due to my workload.
6. Indum ix-xoghol matul il-gimgha
7. Long work hours would limit me from taking care of the crops during week days and they might die.
8. Work and family ties
9. Unpredictable events due to working on shift
10. Location, work structure
11. Current schedule of work doesn't allow me to have as much time as i would like. Also the lack of facilities in malta or private space to start something personal.
12. work, personal commitments
13. Work and travelling traffic is awful
14. Work and family commitments

Other Commitments

1. Work life balance, especially since I am a masters student, most of my time goes to work studying, I use my free time for socialising and exercising
2. lack of skill and possibility of being unavailable to care for crop for a prolonged period of time
3. work, personal commitments
4. Have other commitments outside working hours
5. Time/other commitments

Lack of Freedom

1. Lack of time and lack of "freedom" with regards to what plants are cultivated since it is a group thing

Weather

1. Time limits, others not participating and sometimes weather (if too warm).
2. lack of time, cold weather
3. Depends on the weather, if it's too hot it would discourage a lot of people from participating in a community garden
4. The day passes quickly, and realistically I won't be able to daily. And also when it rains or it is very hot I wouldn't be able to work.
5. Time + whether the project is of a certain level.
6. It-temp, xita, sħana tas-sajf, għodda tal-ġnien, nuqqas ta' interest minn nies oħra u jew kunsilli lokali, deoartimenti konċernati tal-Gvern.

Lack of commitment from others

1. Time limits, others not participating and sometimes weather (if too warm).
2. Unwillingness of others to use regenerative growing methods or reason things thru with trust for the benefit of the whole community
3. Lack of interest from other members, travel time to/from, lack of equipment or utilities
4. It-temp, xita, sħana tas-sajf, għodda tal-ġnien, nuqqas ta' interest minn nies oħra u jew kunsilli lokali, deoartimenti konċernati tal-Gvern.

Commitment Issues

1. Time & commitment
2. Time / Energy / Motivation combination
3. the commitment
4. Commitment
5. ir-rabta
6. energy and motivation, lack of tools

Lack of interest

1. Lack of interest
2. Lack of interest.
3. It does not interest me
4. i am not a fan of gardening
5. Time constraints, prefer to do other things, no green fingers!
6. time and lack of skills, and more interest in other hobbies to do in my free time
7. Other hobbies & commitments
8. To be honest, I support community gardens, I think they are a great idea & I'd gladly contribute financially. But if I had to help out in my community, I'd rather help out at the library, for example. Community gardening is not my thing.

9. Time available, the people present, nearby urbanization and construction works (because of pollution) and other interests and hobbies
10. lack of time and energy. Preference for other activities

Lack of Skills / Knowhow

1. Time, work and lack of skills
2. Time, lack of skill
3. Lack of free time and lack of skill.
4. Lack of Time (Nuqqas ta' ħin) | Long Distance (Distanzi twal) | Lack of Skills (Nuqqas ta' ħiliet) (If it is shared rather than individual allotments, there is bound to be incompatible ideas and interventions without the agreement of everyone involved which may lead to conflict)
5. Time and experience
6. time and lack of skills, and more interest in other hobbies to do in my free time
7. lack of skill and possibility of being unavailable to care for crop for a prolonged period of time
8. If the garden is located far away from my work and/or home, that daily commute would discourage me to participate. It would also be off putting if there are people involved in the community whom I disagree with. I also require lots of education as I am not very well versed in gardening.

Proximity

1. Long distance travel
2. Amount of work involved | Lack of Skills | Long Distance | Lack of Time (I'm a busy person so I wouldn't be giving my fair share. Plus in my locality it would be nearly impossible to have, so I would have to commute to go to a community garden)
3. Traffic and no bicycle lanes within roads :/
4. Distance. I would be willing to assist and encourage others to do so if something similar could be created in Msida.
5. Proximity
6. distance from residence
7. Distance
8. Distance. Possibly requiring the use of private car if in remote areas.
9. Only distance. I'm a Gozitan without a car so I wouldn't travel to Malta. I'm also not able to pay money to participate.
10. Lack of Time (Nuqqas ta' ħin) | Long Distance (Distanzi twal) | Lack of Skills (Nuqqas ta' ħiliet) (If it is shared rather than individual allotments, there is bound to be incompatible ideas and interventions without the agreement of everyone involved which may lead to conflict)

11. Distanzi twal
12. distance to a community garden
13. Lack of time and distance
14. Lack of time due to work and long distances
15. Where it was situated
16. If I have to cross to Malta
17. People not cooperating, Garden very far from home
18. Depends on where they are and therefore lack of time as well.
19. jekk jkunu post lboghod middar
20. Distance would limit me and time but other than that just a well thought out and organized place would be very enticing.
21. Depends on the people I am participating with and travelling/parking availabilities.
22. Location, work structure
23. Lack of interest from other members, travel time to/from, lack of equipment or utilities
24. distance, other people depending on their character
25. If the garden is located far away from my work and/or home, that daily commute would discourage me to participate. It would also be off putting if there are people involved in the community whom I disagree with. I also require lots of education as I am not very well versed in gardening.
26. Work and travelling traffic is awful
27. Day to day life might get too busy if the garden is too far away. Ideally it will be walking distance

Feasibility

1. Only distance. I'm a Gozitan without a car so I wouldn't travel to Malta. I'm also not able to pay money to participate.

Energy / Amount of work

1. Time, energy
2. Amount of work involved | Lack of Skills | Long Distance | Lack of Time (I'm a busy person so I wouldn't be giving my fair share. Plus in my locality it would be nearly impossible to have, so I would have to commute to go to a community garden)
3. Time consuming
4. Time / Energy / Motivation combination
5. Hard work
6. energy and motivation, lack of tools
7. lack of time and energy. Preference for other activities

Vandalism / Theft

1. Vandalism
2. Theft
3. As stated before, the factors can be time and also the destructive nature of society.
4. Unless it is monitored, it will be subject to theft most probably from people with little to no knowledge about gardening, thus ending up making a lot of damage. (unintended vandalism).

Health Issues

1. disability
2. Health problems
3. Health
4. Mostly time and health issues.
5. Health and time
6. lack of physical strength it would involve
7. Age and old age health
8. Physical pain (I'm inclined to have back and wrist pain) but I'm also not a fan of dirty work
9. Health or unavailability.
10. mobility issues

People

1. The type of people
2. Time and typology of persons taking part
3. Idiots
4. Lack of a collectivistic approach from the neighbours.
5. Miscommunication between individuals working in the community garden and potential abandonment of the project
6. Difficult group dynamics
7. People not cooperating, Garden very far from home
8. A poor relationship with community members/lack of outside participation
9. If the persons who are participating are not my type.
10. Time and other people
11. people, I do not like to interact with people
12. Depends on the people I am participating with and travelling/parking availabilities.
13. distance, other people depending on their character
14. the people there. could be crowded, noisy.
15. I don't like the idea of having multiple people gardening the same garden

16. If the garden is located far away from my work and/or home, that daily commute would discourage me to participate. It would also be off putting if there are people involved in the community whom I disagree with. I also require lots of education as I am not very well versed in gardening.
17. Time available, the people present, nearby urbanization and construction works (because of pollution) and other interests and hobbies

Other Priorities

1. It is currently not a priority

Lack of Resources

1. Lack of time and resources
2. energy and motivation, lack of tools
3. Lack of interest from other members, travel time to/from, lack of equipment or utilities
4. It-temp, xita, sħana tas-sajf, għodda tal-ġnien, nuqqas ta' interest minn nies oħra u jew kunsilli lokali, deoartimenti konċernati tal-Gvern.

Lack of Available Spaces

1. Current schedule of work doesn't allow me to have as much time as i would like. Also the lack of facilities in malta or private space to start something personal.
2. Lack of green areas in Malta. This country is too suffocating with buildings
3. Time available, the people present, nearby urbanization and construction works (because of pollution) and other interests and hobbies

Lack of Knowledge / Information

1. Lack of time e.g. if it is scheduled at times where I am working or can't attend, or lack of knowledge about location, what to do etc

No help, thus no security / no long term plans

1. The lack of security in the project.
2. Lack of organisation / security of area
3. It-temp, xita, sħana tas-sajf, għodda tal-ġnien, nuqqas ta' interest minn nies oħra u jew kunsilli lokali, deoartimenti konċernati tal-Gvern.

Lack of organisation

1. Mostly time constrains, but also depending on the leadership. If this is combined with info sessions it could keep the momentum going as well.
2. Lack of organisation / security of area
3. Mismanagement

Others Personal

1. Leaving home - I'd rather do my own thing in my own space
2. needs to be incorporated in my daily schedule
3. Not knowing what I own.
4. Being able to go on holiday for long time. Although they are easier than pets and perhaps community neighbours can water instead of you.
5. I've only started thinking about community gardening now. I never considered before. I wouldn't say there is one particular thing that is stopping me from starting, but on the other hand, nothing in particular is motivating me to start. If say, a group of friends come up with the idea to start this together as a group thing I might join.
6. Trid tissolva l-kwistjoni legali kif se jkun hemm devolviment temporanju ta' l-art lil min se j/tidhol għal din l-attivitá'. Ma naħsibx li jagħmel sens li min jidhol għal dan l-impenn j/tkun intaxxat/a jew li ma jkollhiex serħan il-moħħ li dak li j/tħalli f'din l-art (allotment) jibqa' hemm (il-kwistjoni ta' sigurta').

**17. Would you be willing to volunteer your time to help maintain a community garden?
Kindly explain why.**

YES

Creation of Green Spaces / Make Malta Green

1. For my mental health, and to contribute positively to my locality by creating a green space and fostering a greater sense of community
2. Increasing green spaces and gardens which are greatly needed
3. To keep a green space
4. To make Malta a greener space for everyone, including biodiversity.
5. Ghax hemm bzonn hafna aktar hdura madwarna
6. Tisbiħ tal-ambjent, tindif tal-arja, saħħa, divertiment u ħbieb ġodda
7. To create a better and more sustainable environment
8. Gardens make life more serene. They enhance the community.
9. I am in favour of making Malta a greener and better place to live in. Like the rest of the Maltese, this country is my home. And I would like to contribute in the best way I know how.
10. If there was such a community garden within my locality, it would be lovely to contribute to further greening my locality.
11. We desperately need green spaces in malta, not necessarily concrete gardens, especially in urban areas.

Sense of Community

1. For my mental health, and to contribute positively to my locality by creating a green space and fostering a greater sense of community
2. It's an interesting idea to grow as a community
3. I think it would be a great idea, not only to get the community together but also to be able to have your own produce grow a few steps away would be ideal.
4. Bec i believe in fostering a community spirit, and this is a very healthy and productive way to do it. Also, i am sure that many skills can be learnt about organic methods.
5. It would be a nice thing to do both personally and for the community.
6. While preferring an allotment, a community garden might be interesting if shared with the right type of friends.
7. I wish to experience a more sense of community which I feel has been slowly diminishing in the past 20 years.
8. If enough people do it, it would foster a better community and a greener urban environment.
9. It would be a lovely idea to gather the community for something like this, and hopefully specialise in native plants.

10. Yes, as I feel that a sense of community and participation in said community is important to have a sense of belonging

Mental Health

1. For my mental health, and to contribute positively to my locality by creating a green space and fostering a greater sense of community
2. It is healthy in many ways
3. I believe it would help me both physically and mentally to participate in this activity. It would teach me discipline and timeliness. Moreover I would benefit from the fruits of my labour by having healthy fruit and vegetables.

Physical Health

1. Ghax Hu interessanti,jzommok attiv
2. Tisbiħ tal-ambjent, tindif tal-arja, saħħa, divertiment u ħbieb ġodda
3. It is healthy in many ways
4. I believe it would help me both physically and mentally to participate in this activity. It would teach me discipline and timeliness. Moreover I would benefit from the fruits of my labour by having healthy fruit and vegetables.

Relaxing / Leisure / Enjoyment

1. Its a relaxing and comforting past time
2. Because it will help me to relax.
3. Yes because it is beneficial to all to have fresh produce as well as a garden to enjoy.
4. Tisbiħ tal-ambjent, tindif tal-arja, saħħa, divertiment u ħbieb ġodda
5. It would be nice to help out
6. Biex inqatta' naqra ħin tas-serħan mill-ħajja u l-ġenn ta' kuljum

Love for Gardening / Nature

1. It's a nice way of connecting to nature and mental break from the hectic work life
2. I like nature
3. Relaxing in nature and getting something back.
4. Love of nature , healing in a community through nature centred activities
5. Good distraction and being outdoors.
6. because I like gardening

Producing Fresh Produce

1. It's a very nice initiative and would hone a sense of belonging in the community as well as having fresh produce
2. Yes because it is beneficial to all to have fresh produce as well as a garden to enjoy.

3. I think it would be a great idea, not only to get the community together but also to be able to have your own produce grow a few steps away would be ideal.
4. I believe it would help me both physically and mentally to participate in this activity. It would teach me discipline and timeliness. Moreover I would benefit from the fruits of my labour by having healthy fruit and vegetables.
5. In my dwelling, although I have a sizeable courtyard, adjacent buildings have taken away much from the sunlight. This has limited my cultivation possibilities. A community garden would give me back a viable space.

Learn new skills

1. Keep me motivated and expand my knowledge through different opinions.
2. Willing to learn new skills
3. Bec i believe in fostering a community spirit, and this is a very healthy and productive way to do it. Also, i am sure that many skills can be learnt about organic methods.
4. provides new opportunity to learn new skill that is fulfilling.
5. Participation would enhance my knowledge on the subject matter, while also makes me aware of the spaces around me.

Motivational / Mental Break / To Grow as a person / Sense of Belonging / Fulfilling

1. Keep me motivated and expand my knowledge through different opinions.
2. To help myself and others. It can be rehabilitating.
3. It's a nice way of connecting to nature and mental break from the hectic work life
4. Yes, as I would like to grow and make friends.
5. It is a worthy cause, makes you feel good, and has a positive impact
6. I believe volunteer work is important both on a personal and social level
7. Gardens make life more serene. They enhance the community.
8. It would be a nice thing to do both personally and for the community.
9. It's a very nice initiative and would hone a sense of belonging in the community as well as having fresh produce
10. for personal satisfaction and connection with others
11. I believe it would be a fulfilling use of my time.
12. interesting activity both personal and social
13. Green spaces such as community gardens can aid in increasing the quality of life for the entire society, including individuals not involved in the upkeep of the community garden
14. Yes, as I fee that a sense of community and participation in said community is important to have a sense of belonging

Environmental

1. To make Malta a greener space for everyone, including biodiversity.
2. I would be giving back to nature while being a helping hand. Its a win win :)
3. Such a project should be based on voluntary work, due to the simple and humble nature of the project - which aligns with passion for the environment.
4. To create more awareness, especially for my children and to provide more sustainability.
5. If enough people do it, it would foster a better community and a greener urban environment.
6. Yes since this type of community enhancing project is very interesting and yields a very sustainable result

Socialising / Connections with other People

1. Yes, it would be a good way to link it to other social groups for e.g. scouts
2. Yes, as I would like to grow and make friends.
3. To increase interaction between like-minded individuals.
4. Socialising
5. I believe volunteer work is important both on a personal and social level
6. Tisbiħ tal-ambjent, tindif tal-arja, saħħa, divertiment u ħbieb ġodda
7. for personal satisfaction and connection with others
8. interesting activity both personal and social
9. it would be nice to meet other people interested in the subject
10. It would be a nice experience to be around different people and be out for a change

ONLY IF THESE ARE RESOLVED

Time Management

1. Only if I had the time
2. Hin problema
3. It would be interesting if I had the time.
4. If having the time yes I would volunteer as it is a very positive initiative.
5. preferably during weekends
6. i'm very interested, but not sure i'd be able to commit due to time limitations, and skill issues
7. The benefits of a community garden are endless. If only I had the time.
8. Yes, if it was close to where I live and it does not require too much time commitment for example I could go only on weekends
9. Yes but with me needing to work and take care of the kids my time would be very very limited.

10. I would yes but only if the community garden does not depend on me going every week. I would not be able to commit going every week due to other priorities.
11. In my free time i would be interested in helping, however not on a regular basis
12. Skond il-hin . Jekk ikun fil-lokalita tieghi (Zurrieq) iva . Jekk ma jkunx , ma nithajjarx ghax tahli wisq hin fit-traffic u sakemm tasal tilhaq tigi dahna bin-nervi :)

Proper Management

1. I would be happy to give a small contribution to assist maintaining such a garden but there would need to be a designated 'manager' who takes final decisions on things
2. if there is a schedule and guidance is provided, yes.
3. Biex titfasslu r-regolamenti anke wara proċess konsultattiv pubbliku.
4. Yes, if it was organised properly

Others

1. I think its a great idea
2. Maybe
3. Good idea
4. Yep
5. I'm already doing so.
6. In theory yes because it's a good initiative
7. depends again who will the other volunteers are
8. As long as the project makes sense, yes.
9. For all the points I mentioned above
10. It is a very positive and beneficial activity
11. Should I learn on how to keep a community garden I will dedicate some time to it and see how it goes.
12. It's an interesting hands-on experience that's rewarding.
13. Only with people I know.
14. Yes, especially if taking part in such community gardens is extended to school children, and other groups within society

Others Important

1. If I don't have the time to do the gardening itself I would assist with the promotion and maintenance of the area.
2. I am retired and happy to give time and volunteer for my community
3. I used to work in the agricultural sector and would be willing to help in a community garden project.
4. I would consider giving it a try, once I have more info.

5. I always wanted to have my own garden however this is not possible and this would be a good alternative
6. I am a volunteer for a global community group called The People's Food and Farming Alliance... community is key, community gardening is a healthy, outdoor, social, therapeutic and productive activity and if growing regeneratively supports soil life, wildlife and climate flexibility one micro ecosystem at a time...it is a no brainer win win win (I think I answered fully above...I am happy for you to message me if you wish to discuss further 7995.5253)

NO

Lack of Time

1. Lack of time
2. Since I have a lack of time, commitment is an issue.
3. Time considerations in view of current commitments
4. forsi la nkun ikbar fiz zmien u jkolli aktar hin liberu
5. lack of time, mobility issues
6. At the moment, I do not have enough free time to invest in it or in skills/knowledge to acquire before starting.
7. Time
8. Lack of interest plus lack of time
9. Don't have the time.
10. Lack of time
11. Unfortunately, due to work and other commitments it may be difficult to offer assistance. Although, if i have time I would like to help if possible
12. I do not feel I will have time for that
13. I would not have the time to fully commit to such a big project
14. might take a lot of time
15. For the time being due to lack of free time it is not possible to volunteer
16. As of now, I do not have much free time.
17. Limited time. Also, there may be an issue of free-rider - others not doing their part to maintain common parts
18. If there was a garden I could just pop into and help whenever I had the time yes but I would not want to commit to a regular slot ...time and day...

Lack of Interest

1. not interested in garden activities
2. To be honest, I support community gardens, I think they are a great idea & I'd gladly contribute financially. But if I had to help out in my community, I'd rather help out at the library, for example. Community gardening is not my thing.
3. Lack of interest plus lack of time

Physical Health

1. lack of time, mobility issues
2. too old
3. I would help financially and encourage others to do so. I would visit regularly to meet up with other like minded people but my health would limit the physical help
4. Health problems

Issue of Peoples

1. depends who is running the place and the participants
2. I don't like the idea of having multiple people gardening the same garden
3. Limited time. Also, there may be an issue of free-rider - others not doing their part to maintain common parts
4. It depends a lot on the amount of privacy and how the garden would be shared.

Others

1. reasons already explained in previous questions
2. Same reasons as above.
3. how do i start?
4. not at the moment, despite my interest in this initiative
5. Because you never know your rights.
6. family priorities
7. I have previous experience in NGOs and there is too much bitching and different ideas and demands not requests. I decided to stay away from anything which involves team work.
8. I am not skilled enough in gardening.

20. Kindly write any other possible final thoughts.

YES

Very Interesting

1. Something new and innovative. People with same views share their experiences and knowledge for better community gardening.
2. It would be a very nice idea to be introduced in Malta, hoping it would be successful and catches on.
3. Very interesting ideas would love to see this idea flourish
4. I am very interested in organic crops
5. Great concept which would be nice to see it come to reality!
6. This would be a wonderful initiative if implemented
7. These are wonderful ideas but for it to be implemented there must be a great love for the environment, trees, plants etc.
8. I would love to share my passion and knowledge about plants and nature, and contributing to my community.
9. Very good idea.
10. Although I personally would prefer not to involve myself in such initiatives, I still think they are a good idea, and could offer a reprieve for those who do not have their own space to manage
11. I really think people especially those living in built up areas and apartment blocks would benefit physically and mentally from gardening and being involved in nature.

Others

1. I do have some knowledge in gardening but not enough to lead a team 😊
2. Good luck for your research! Excellent research topic
3. This might be ideal for people who spend their week in factories and during the weekend could tend their allotment and get some fresh air. Maybe even take some fresh vegetables home
4. It would be so interesting if this initiatives starts in our country . Pensioners would for sure like to volunteer .
5. Every home shall have a yard, and also every apartment or flat, depending on space for soil and irrigation so that Gardening's hobby can increase gradually.
6. Ir-riżultati ta' din ir-riċerka f'livell Universitarju għandhom jkunu pubblikati għax jżidu l-interess f'min qed jithajjar li j/ssib ħin għal din l-attività'.
7. May community gardens exist; however, I am unsure if people in their 40s who start participating in a community garden with no prior skills whatsoever / learning on the job would really be acting in a sustainable manner.

NO

Lack of Time

1. Since I do not have extra time I cannot make any commitments to be part of community gardens.
2. Time constraints is an issue.

Lack of Knowledge

1. I don't have the knowledge to take care of my own let alone lead others.

Theft

1. I will do it abroad not in Malta, here vultures and wolves are ready to rob you. Disgusted by the behaviour of many not few.

Others

1. I don't like the idea of having multiple people gardening the same garden

Suggestions

1. I think the community garden idea still needs to be instilled in your average maltese citizen. Some people lack the basic gardening skills, which could easily be taught. While others just completely dislike gardening as they see no use in it. A very good example to this is the area of Santa Margherita in Mosta. Most terraced houses in the area were designed to have front terraces with small planters prior to the front door of the house. Today, most of these houses removed these planters and just paved the front terraces with tiles. When speaking to some of the neighbours, most of them tell you that they removed it either cause wild plants were growing in the planters, the planters attracted ants and pesta OR once the plants died they were annoyed by the dead leaves and cleanup needed to the front terrace. I think if one was to consider the community garden idea - it would have to start from the citizens and the community - make them interested in the project/explain the benefits ect. And then grow from there.
2. The concept of community gardens should be extended as many don't know about it. It would be interesting to produce products to exchange or resell as well and to participate with schools and similar institutions.
3. Even though it's a great idea, proper management is necessary as otherwise it will either be abused by people for personal gain or left in disrepair/abandoned.
4. I believe that more land should be devoted for such gardens, especially in areas which are deprived of greenery such as the east side of the island which is totally deprived of trees and areas where one can enjoy nature.
5. community gardens must be supervised as we have lack of discipline trees and flowers get vandalised

6. Definitely, more media marketing wrt 'Community Gardening' - What it entails? What are the benefits? What one gains and gives? And so much more... Upon doing so, amongst the local people, they would be more hyped and enthusiastic to try out and be part of such initiative.
7. It's all about decent soil and green fingers, really.
8. this is a great initiative with much potential for environmental care and education, community-making, and mental health awareness! Perhaps a pilot that can inspire others. Thanks
9. Schools should be involved
10. I do believe that there should be a larger promotion of grass roots and systemic ecological involvement
11. In principal it is a very positive way forward, but you have to start with the children, if you would like this to evolve, with schools taking part and competing between themselves in a healthy manner as to who would be keeping his/her area in the best way possible. Whatever was started in schools basically was a success. But forget the older generation, who are so set in their own ways, both in doing things (such as this community gardening), and the way they related with others.
12. This is a very promising idea especially for abandoned public plots, and is a good opportunity to educate the younger generation, provide a source of recreation for the older generation - all for the overall benefit of the community.
13. Nahseb li idea tajba hafna li jkollna community gardens. Għandom ikunu f'kull lokalita jew vicin. Grazzi
14. Jekk tassew nistghu nghamlu dan il-progett inkunu bizzejjed sabiex nirbhu lil dawn ilkuntratturi bla qalb
15. These projects have to be seen by a professional team and supported by the government.
16. It would be nice if this initiative is encouraged and open to all ages.
17. Years ago there was a project called Midd Idejk fil-Biedja, with 65 10 X 5 metre allotments at Għammieri entrusted to private individuals. It was extremely popular but unfortunately was discontinued. I was involved in this project and would be happy to discuss it with you. Good luck with your studies. Community gardens could be run by Local Councils
18. Many existing green spaces in villages could benefit from creating community gardens. Involvement of groups and ngos is essential for these to flourish. There needs to also be LC and gov collaboration, funding and initiatives for these to take off.
19. this would be very good if there is a number of gardeners or crop growing enthusiasts already in the area. might be easier to start with small patches within urban park and monitor its success

20. Project Green in continuously designating and establishing gardens. However, the way they are set up might not mean they are fully utilising the potential of green infrastructure to maximise the ecosystem services most urgently needed by that specific urban area. Setting up community gardens instead of normal gardens in some localities might help overcome this. Moreover, community gardens might be places in local schools or next to playgrounds for easier access to families.
21. ma nafx jekk ghandiex x'taqsam, pero kieku jkun hawn aktar spazji hodur fil komunita u ma narawx bini biss, Malta tkun hafna isbah.
22. This would be a good initiative to keep people engaged in a community, like pensioners for example, or as an alternative to taking the children to playgrounds etc. These may also be good for people to just visit. I hope that such gardens will re-instate derelict gardens/fields, without formalising them or turning them into playgrounds/concreted spaces.
23. I think this is a wonderful idea and that it would benefit the Maltese residents greatly to participate in horticultural activities like these. I do think however that implementing it would be challenging to some degree, especially due to a lack of knowledge on the subject as many people never had fields or gardens.
24. Community gardens are an excellent way to bring people together who have a shared interest in gardening, even more so for people who do not have access to a private outside space. However they require a lot of time to be dedicated to overall maintenance.
25. I think it is a wonderful idea to have more participation from the community, on something which is very important but also nice to do. Things such as the place provided should be coming from a government scheme, and / or a wealthy company to give back to the country.
26. This should be the future of gardening for our future generations and also aquaponic farms. Spaces should be created to support change farming methods too.
27. people involved would need to have a similar mindset
28. I believe this could potentially be a great initiative. What worries me is the greed and laziness of the public. Moreover, I would still suggest that a small contribution be paid by all participants to maintain the gardens. Such money could be used to buy fertiliser, new seeds, equipment etc. Finally another suggestion would be to have a roster of the people who would be working in the garden so that there are no gaps of time with no one tending to the garden and on the other hand there is no over-crowding. Thank you
29. The localities that would most likely to benefit from such community gardens would be those that are mostly densely populated areas such as the Greater Valletta area. For such community gardens to work, there needs to be a mental shift and the public need

to start appreciating the importance of greening our communities for the purpose of the environment, physical and mental health etc.

30. My no immediately above is because I want to help start up a few community gardens...I am a landscape designer and feel strongly that this community effort is important (and I am working on others as well!) thank you and ood luck!
31. I believe this is the way forward for village agriculture, we have to cultivate some kind of connection and there is no healthier method than gardening.
32. This is really worth trying out. It could also be an activity for elderly who have the knowledge and who are still active but don't really know where to go, and for children to learn skills. However, as always ,it risks becoming a photo op for politicians rather than a sustainable a truly social project, unless it is funded by the community directly. 🍷

G. Workshops Photographs

Workshop 1

Date: 9th November, 2024

Time: 2 pm

Place: Faculty for the Built Environment Green Roof

Number of Participants: 9

Description of Works: During this session, general gardening tasks that were needed on the Green Roof were conducted. These include weeding, pruning bushes and uprooting dead shrubs, all of which went into the compost bin. These tasks were specifically done to prepare the garden for the next group to carry out further tasks.



Workshop 2

Date: 16th November, 2024

Time: 9 am

Place: Green Area in front of Faculty for the Built Environment

Number of Participants: 9

Description of Works: During this morning session, a number of tasks were carried out. The participants started to clean up the area from any garbage and then, weeding followed. In the meantime, a group of participants had to slightly till the soil to uproot weeds. Sweeping was also carried out by one of the participants. After removing dead shrubs and any left debris, the participants were helped by the researcher in planting a number of shrubs in the area.



Workshop 3

Date: 16th November, 2024

Time: 2 pm

Place: Faculty for the Built Environment Green Roof

Number of Participants: 8

Description of Works: During this session, the participants continued to finish off what the previous group started. In fact, they checked and cleaned each drip valve of the irrigation system to prevent it from clogging up. After doing so, a small group started to propagate some cuttings while the other group tilled the soil to prepare it for planting.



Workshop 4

Date: 23rd November, 2024

Time: 2 pm

Place: Arvid Pardo Study Area

Number of Participants: 6

Description of Works: During this session, the group took care of weeding, removing dead shrubs, pruning bushes as well as tilling the soil to prepare it for the next session. A general cleanup of the area was conducted.



Workshop 5

Date: 30th November, 2024

Time: 2 pm

Place: Arvid Pardo Study Area

Number of Participants: 12

Description of Works: During this session, only one task was carried out, that of planting the area. At first, the participants laid out the shrubs to plan out the landscaped area. A brief overview on how the plantation process takes place was given by the researcher. Then, the participants formed small groups to carry out the planting task. In total, 80 shrubs were planted which included the “*Sempreviva t’Ghawdex*”, “*Pankrazju*”, “*Riħan*” u “*Klin*”.

