



SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT 2015





INTRODUCING KÉK



SOCIAL IMPACT

The effect of an activity on the social fabric of the community and well-being of individuals and families.

Source: social enterprise UK

KÉK is an independent architectural cultural centre operated by young Hungarian architects, artists and civilians. The centre aims to open new perspectives in architectural and urban thinking in Hungary through fresh, provoking and focused programs, relevant also in international context.

KÉK has been engaged in the creation of urban gardens in Hungary, transforming derelict and vacant lands into welcoming and desirable areas for local community to visit and enjoy. KÉK supports NGOs and community groups in the creation of community and school gardens while directly administering four self-sustained community gardens in Budapest.

Social Impact Report

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LEONARDO_közösségi kert_tervezés_Király-Salgó Borbála_Kontra Dániel_m=1.200_2012.04.24





***+ MY GOAL IS TO SHOW THAT
LIVING IN A CITY CAN BE BETTER
THAN JUST WORKING AND
GOING TO CLUBS +***

ABOUT THIS REPORT



This report sets out to explore the wider social impact created by Leonardo and Kerthatár community gardens for the 2014/2015 period. It shares findings from an evaluation study undertaken between September and December 2015.

Throughout this report, we demonstrate that our gardens have been extremely successful in engaging people from very different paths of life in a space for nurturing personal and social development. This involvement in a community-based green space, combined with the physical and psychological effects of gardening, has provided opportunities to improve the quality of life of gardeners and communities in terms of eating habits, health, wellbeing, education, employability and community engagement.

Though our members share the common traits of being committed to social and environmental values, their backgrounds and motivations are very diverse. For some, it is the wish to grow fresh vegetables and fruits, for others the opportunity for developing new social connections or even taking part in the urban renewal of Budapest. Most of us, however, share the same feelings of relaxation, joy and fulfilment doing gardens.

We believe that these feelings our gardeners cultivate, - such as happiness and joy - and the relations and skills they develop within the gardens - from leadership through horticulture and cooking -, make them feel happier and more satisfied citizens, less sensitive to stress and more engaged in the city life.

We see our community gardens are spaces for growing all these outcomes, while promoting a local model of food production which is affordable, ecological, participative, and easily transferable to Budapest districts. We believe that proving and further improving our outcomes is key to account for the broader value of community gardening and their importance as a lever of local development.

The Hungarian Architecture Centre clearly plays an important role as facilitator of these hubs of green activism, being able to deliver a wide range of support & training in the forms of capacity building, program management, courses and one off workshops on a wide range of sustainability topics.

KEY IMPACT



The study shows that the KÉK gardens have given rise to a number of important positive outcomes:

Social interaction

The gardens were described as a space for growing social networks, not just vegetables. Gardeners gained from the opportunity to interact with people of all walks of life in a supportive, non-formal and welcoming environment. This was significant in relation to how they felt involved in a healthy and purpose-led community. Gardeners said that trust and social bonds developed within the gardens as a result of sharing a common purpose.

Positive outlook

Gardeners described feelings of relaxation, slowing down and relieving from the stresses and strains of everyday life. Many gardeners reported the sense of satisfaction that comes from the joy of a successful harvest. Some of them reported this to have reduced their mental stress. They believe this had an impact on their ability to applying positive feelings to other areas of life.

Horticulture and soft skills

The opportunity to practice gardening, attending training, learning formal and non formal skills, coupled with the cooperative dimension of garden management, provided numerous opportunities for personal, cultural and professional development. Gardeners believe that they improved personal and professional skills within the gardens. They said that previously had typically been unable to develop specific knowledge - such as permaculture and pest control - and to practice some skills - and skills - such as leadership and negotiation - during their daily life.

Food production

Our gardens enable individuals and families without direct access to the land to produce nutritious and organic food. This was described by gardeners as a financial saving for themselves as well as as an opportunity to share surplus food with friends and parents.

Active and healthy lifestyle

Gardeners increased their physical activity in comparison to previous routines. They said the growing season provides all-year-round opportunities for activities that involve physical exercise. As a result, evidence of self-perceived health benefits was found in gardeners who had a traditional sedentary lifestyles as well as in more active individuals. Gardeners suggested that physical exercise in a nature setting may give greater effects than exercise in an “unnatural” setting.

Healthy eating

Eating more vegetables and choosing to buy from local shops were identified as the key changes in eating habits and lifestyle. This was explained as a result of having more vegetables available. Some gardeners reported a change in their diets as a consequence of having developed new knowledge options through sharing vegan recipes and taking part in educational activities about organic food. In the long term, this impact lead to change in attitude and behaviours, developing an awareness and appreciation of the taste, quality and cost of food after growing their own.

Green open space

The impact of being in an open air setting was described by many volunteers as critical part of what they gained from their experience. For many this was an unique opportunity to live in a city without losing the connection with the nature. This was also described as an opportunity to stimulate a range of senses, which led to increase their sense of well-being and quality of life.

Family outdoor education

KÉK gardens create a safe environment, through a range of activities, some of which are attended by families and children. This resulted in many children beginning to identify and eat vegetables they would have never considered before. This was also explained as a family opportunity to strengthen family bonds, improve children performance and help kids address behavioral problems.

2014 - 2015

LEONARDO COMMUNITY GARDEN

1500	120	2500	€4.500
SQUARES METERS	COMMUNITY GARDENERS VOLUNTEERS	HOURS OF GARDENING ACTION	SAVED IN FOOD BUYING

84%

**SAID STRESS AND ANXIETY HAD
REDUCED**

79%

**SAID THAT IMPROVED SOCIAL
RELATIONS AND DEVELOPED NEW
FRIENDSHIPS**

70%

**OBSERVED POSITIVE CHANGE IN EATING
HABITS**

71%

**AGREED THAT THEY DEVELOPED NEW
SKILLS IN HORTICULTURE AND FOOD
GROWING**

2014 - 2015

KERTHÁTAR COMMUNITY GARDEN

1500 SQUARES METERS	80 VOLUNTEERS	7.740 HOURS OF GARDENING ACTION	€5.700 SAVED IN FOOD BUYING
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80%

SAID STRESS AND ANXIETY HAD REDUCED
AND QUALITY OF LIFE IMPROVED

73%

SAID THAT IMPROVED SOCIAL RELATIONS
AND DEVELOPED NEW FRIENDSHIPS

70%

OBSERVED POSITIVE CHANGE IN EATING
HABITS

80%

AGREED THAT THEY DEVELOPED NEW
SKILLS IN HORTICULTURE AND FOOD
GROWING

CONTENTS

About this report.....	6
Key impacts.....	7
Leonardo.....	9
Kerthatár	
Methods.....	12
Food Habits.....	15
Health and Wellbeing.....	18
Self-development.....	22
Community Building.....	29



METHODS

This evaluation employed a mixed-methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Data was gathered from primary and secondary sources between September and October 2015.

Survey : In September 2015, an online survey was sent to all people who hold a plot in Leonardo and Kerthatár gardens in order to ask a series of questions about what changes they had experienced as a result. The survey included 55 questions exploring individual perceptions about many possible outcomes. The survey had a response rate of 25% and 30% respectively in Leonardo and Kerthatár community gardens.

Interview: The survey was based on a set of in-depth interviews carried out with gardeners and program stakeholders. Interviewed were representative with regard to age, gender and length of involvement in our gardens.

Document analysis: Other secondary sources reviewed included previous surveys, reports, promotional materials, websites and newspaper articles.

Focus group: The data collection process was integrated by a focus group based on the application of a Theory of Change. The focus group was attended by 8 gardeners. The answers were used to map out what impacts, positive and negative, intended and unintended, happened in the short and medium term as a result of gardening activities, and how those outcomes contribute to achieving the long-term aims of our organisation.

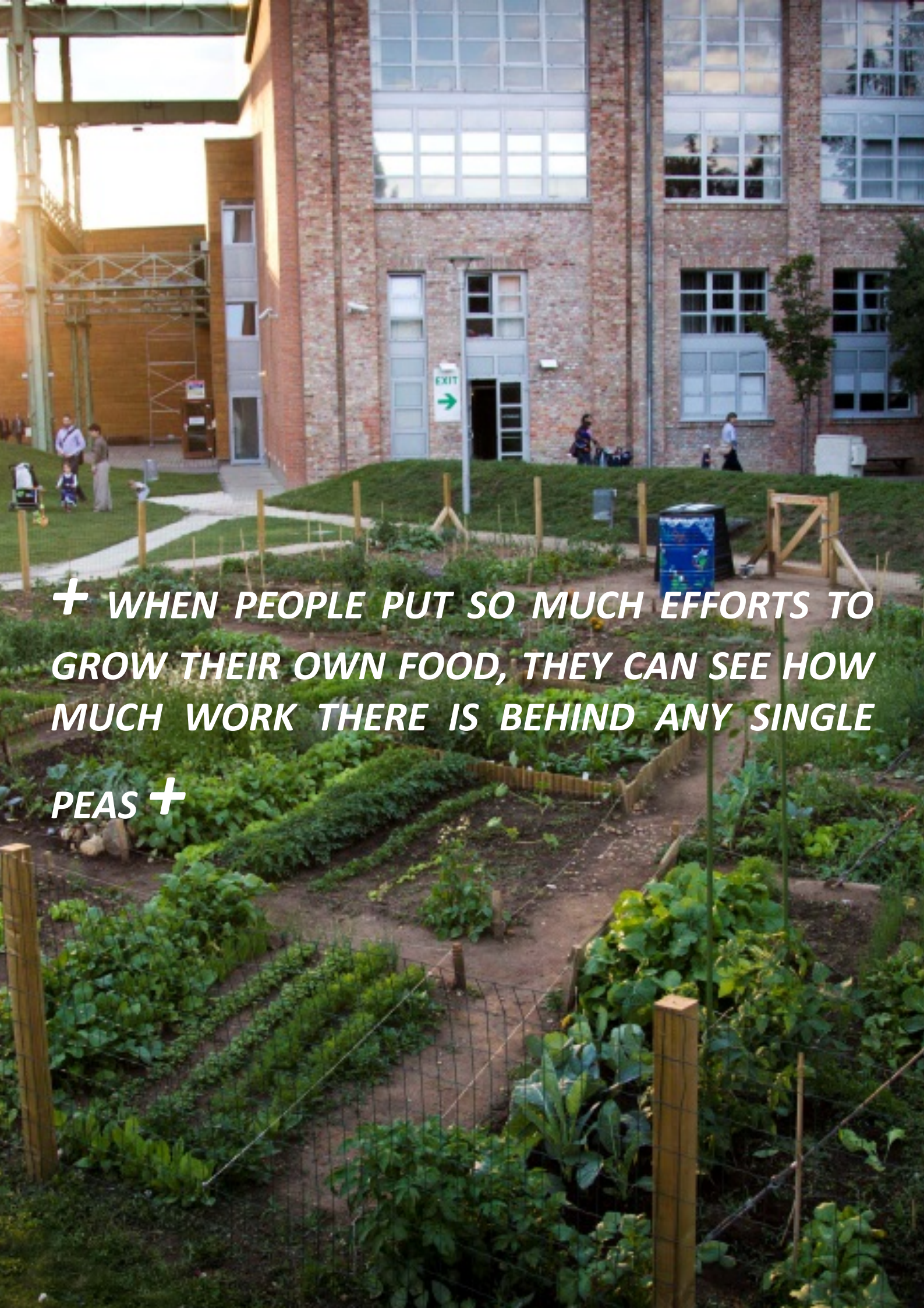
Impact Map : During the focus group, an impact map for KÉK community gardens was developed by gardeners and KÉK staff.

The map illustrates the main impacts of KÉK gardens across 4 outcome clusters :

1. Food habits
2. Well-being
3. Self-development
4. Community building

Preliminary findings were presented in a public event in Budapest in October 2015 and further insights were taken from gardeners, staff and local activists. Where possible primary data were integrated with insights from other peer and participatory action studies. Much of our data, however, is self-reported and related to self-perceived outcomes. We believe this is key to evaluate our outcomes as with our community gardens we are trying to improve the well-being, resilience and sustainability of our communities.





+ WHEN PEOPLE PUT SO MUCH EFFORTS TO GROW THEIR OWN FOOD, THEY CAN SEE HOW MUCH WORK THERE IS BEHIND ANY SINGLE PEAS +

EATING HABITS

1. Cost savings

Our community gardens produce food worth hundreds of euro. The financial benefit, however, is not only created in terms of vegetable outputs but also through weekly saving in food spending. This saving in family budget help both the nutritional and financial health of gardeners. As a consequence, gardeners reveal that longer people are engaged in our gardens, the more they save in food expenditure, and the more they want to stay involved with us. This positive cycle is particularly stressed by gardeners who spend 5 hours or more per week gardening.

Interviewed suggest a variety of additional benefits for both individuals and communities, including the fact that food-growing activity increases the sharing of vegetables with friends and families, promoting the creation of new social networks with associated cost saving and community bonds. For example, harvesting tomatoes during the growing season led to grow enough tomatoes to cover all summer long for at least four people.

€ 1.60

are saved by **LEONARDO**
gardeners per week

€ 2.65

are saved by **KERTHATÁR**
gardeners per week

2. Food empowerment

The most common experience felt by those in the focus group were feeling more aware about food issues and empowered to pursue healthier options, such as buying organic and eating more vegetables. Our members stressed that community gardening encouraged them to adopt food habits that reflect a more local and sustainable society. For example, interviewed said that many of them were interested not only in consuming more vitamin-rich food but also in buying food from local shops and farmer markets. This long-term behavioural shift was framed as a result of the nutritional education delivered

in our gardens through informal discussion, recipe sharing and community meals. Gardeners also said that adopting healthy habits was a consequence of being being more aware about the food growing cycle. Learning about growing and harvesting as well as understanding seasonality and identifying different food variety helped them to develop an interest for items that are fresher and retain more nutrients than those purchased in the food industry. This was identified as a shift in food preference, potentially leading to change food behaviour in the long-term.

Figure 1: Evidence of improved outcomes towards eating and purchasing habits in Leonardo community garden

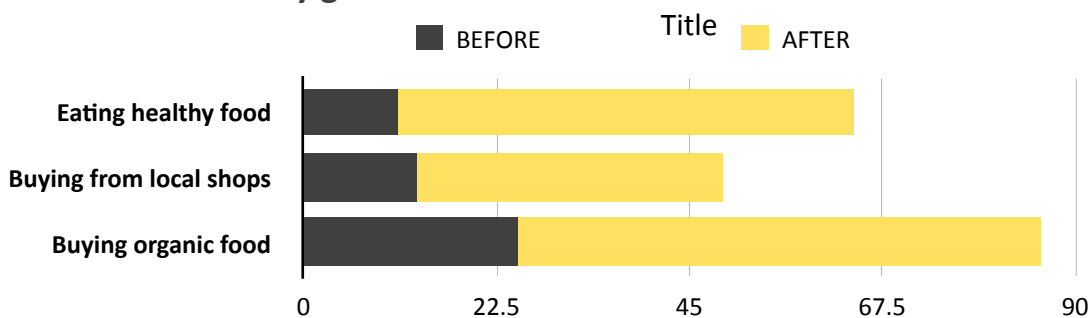
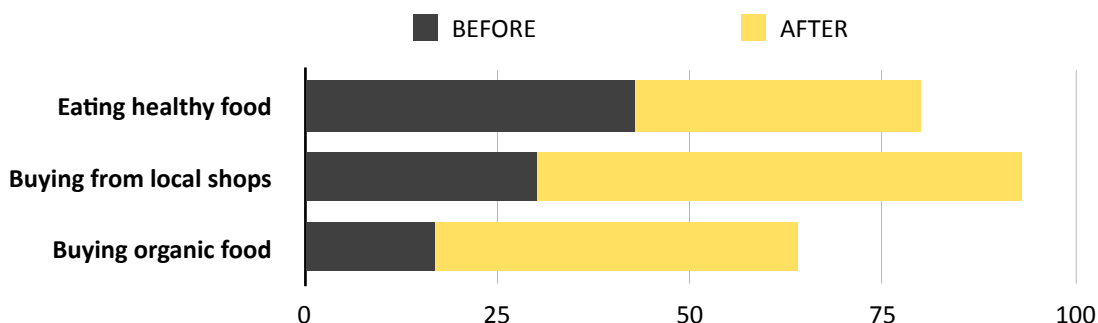


Figure 2: Evidence of improved outcomes towards eating and purchasing habits in Kerthatár community garden




+56%
of Leonardo
gardeners:

Reported an
increased
consumption of
vegetables and
fruits

+67%
of Kerthatár
gardeners:

Reported an
increased
consumption of
vegetables and
fruits

A woman with her hair in a bun, wearing sunglasses and a black turtleneck, is leaning forward and working in a garden. She is holding a wooden handle, possibly a shovel or rake. In the background, another person is also working, bent over. The sky is blue with some clouds. The overall scene is outdoors and appears to be a community garden or a similar setting.

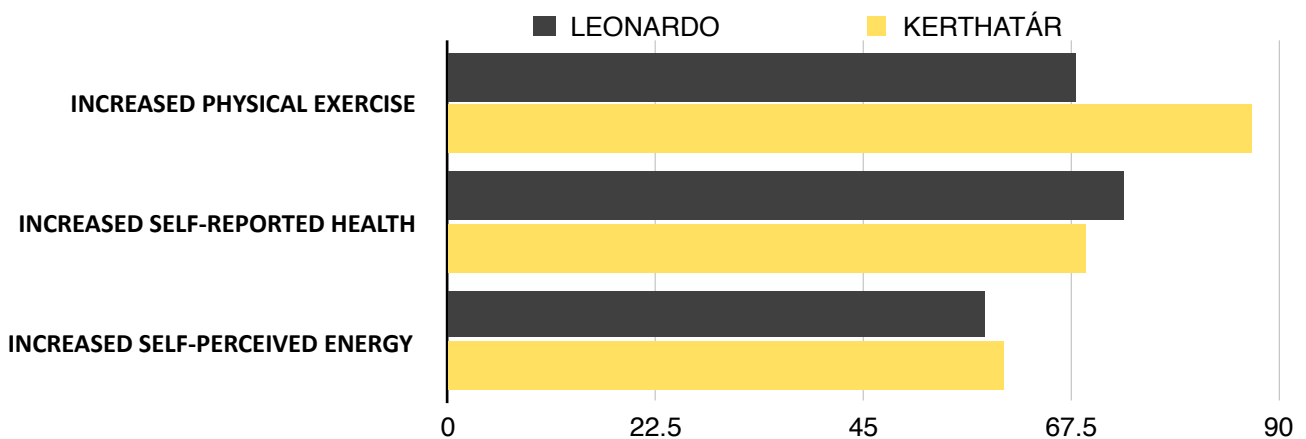
***+ URBAN GARDENING CAN GIVE YOU
THE CHANCE TO ENCOUNTER THE
JOYS OF NATURE...IT HELPS YOU TO
ESCAPE FROM THE STRESS OF
EVERYDAY LIFE +***

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

1. SELF-PERCEIVED PHYSICAL HEALTH

Impacts on health include factors that contribute towards positive lifestyles such as physical activity and nutritional improvements. Our survey reveals that gardeners spend significant time doing gardening work, specifically 150 minutes/per week on average in Leonardo and 270 minutes/per week on average in Korthar. Calorie calculators provide estimates of calories burning for different gardening activities, suggesting that gardening burn around 250 - 500 calories per hour, according on the level of intensity of the activity (e.g. Boots Diet online calorie burn calculator, 2014). In this evaluation, 68% of gardeners participants in Leonardo and 84% in Korthar reported improved self-perceived health as a result of increased exercise frequency.

Figure 3: Evidence of self-reported outcomes towards health



Source: respondents who “agreed” and “strongly agreed” with the statements

+80%
of Leonardo
gardeners:

Agreed that being engaged in community gardens made them feel healthier

+73%
of Kerthatár
gardeners:

Agreed that being engaged in community gardens made them feel healthier

2. MENTAL WELLBEING

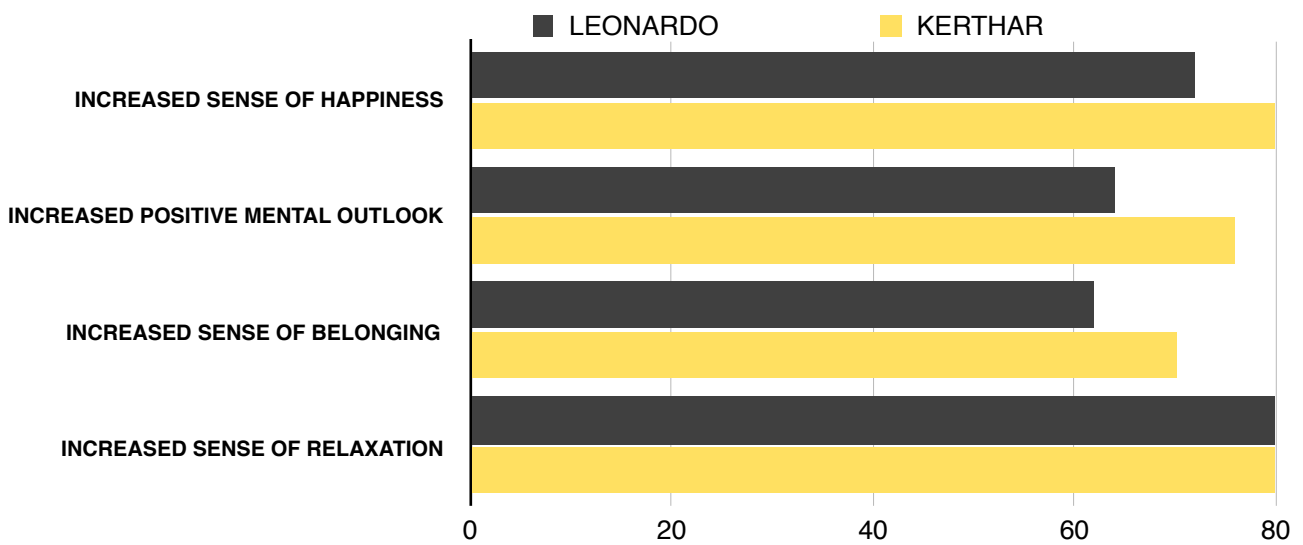
Community gardening have shown to have a positive impact on mental well-being. This is the result of the physical activity of gardening combined with the positive feelings of being in a green open space. Evidence of increased life satisfaction and well-being resulted include emotions of happiness, sense of belonging, relaxation, social inclusion and social engagement.

social connections made other householders ‘feel better!

Our community gardeners and volunteers appear to be aware that community gardening influence their mental well-being as our impact on these outcomes was evidenced by the huge majority of participants. Figure 4 provides a summary of these results

Growing veg is a relaxing and positive activity. Some felt better able to concentrate at work after spending time gardening. The new

Figure 4: Evidence of self-perceived improvements in mental well-being



SOURCE: Figures reported relate to respondents who “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the statements.

+56%
of Leonardo
gardeners:

Agreed that being engaged in community gardens improved their life satisfaction


+67%
of Kerthatár
gardeners:

Agreed that being engaged in community gardens improved their life satisfaction

It's clear that, for the majority of gardeners, the experience has been transformative, leading to long-term change in attitudes and behaviours. The results demonstrate the enduring effect that gardening is likely to have on every area of a person's life, helping people to achieve their potential, to realise ambitions and to cope with adversity.

The evaluation highlighted a number of elements that make the most significant contribution towards the outcomes, including the feeling of achievement gained from harvesting vegetables, the emotional air setting which provide a connection with the nature and allow people to get fresh air and appreciate the cycles of nature as well as the positive consideration of undertaking a purposeful activity with other individuals.





+ GARDENING BRINGS ME IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE NATURAL WORLD AND THE CLIMATE. I HAVE LEARNT TO SEE HOW PLANTS REACT TO THE CHANGING CLIMATE CONDITIONS. I FEEL LUCKY BECAUSE LIVING IN A BIG CITY USUALLY DON'T GIVE YOU THIS PERCEPTION OF THE NATURE +

SELF-DEVELOPMENT

During the focus group, nearly everyone said they had felt “educated” in some ways within our gardens. The term was used by gardeners to describe a large variety of experiences, ranging from developing horticultural literacy to enhancing communication skills. However, all the responses shared a common feeling that something positive had happened, leading some of them to be able to understand and do something they were not able to do before. The educational outcomes show benefits to individuals by developing new knowledge, skills and attitudes by providing non formal training as well as allowing experiential opportunities for professional development.

1. Horticultural knowledge

Learning and sharing what they know about food growing and horticulture has a positive effect on participants, with the majority of them reporting increasing their knowledge and skills in food growing. While our gardeners had different level of horticultural knowledge, ranging from basic to advanced, the impact of increased horticultural skills were found across all members regardless of garden experience. Practical training and informal discussion provided opportunities for learning to occur, and provided chances to develop specific knowledge in garden planning, vegetable growing and garden maintenance.

Discussion with older members and sharing traditional techniques for growing organic vegetables were identified as a key lever of learning. Another lever of learning concern the development of relationships and the consequent swap pings of plants and seeds.

Table 1: Evidence of self-reported learning outcomes

OUTCOME	LEONARDO	KERTHÁTAR
FOOD GROWING SKILLS	+83% of gardeners agreed “ I have learnt how to grow my own vegetables”	+80% of gardeners agreed “ I have learnt how to grow my own vegetables”
RECYCLING AND COMPOSTING	+73% of gardeners agreed " I have learnt how to compost and recycle my own garbage”	+56% of gardeners agreed “ I have learnt how to compost and recycle my own garbage”
HAND CRAFT SKILLS	+83 of gardeners agreed “I have learnt some craft work and creative design”	+64% of gardeners agreed “I have learnt some craft work and creative design”

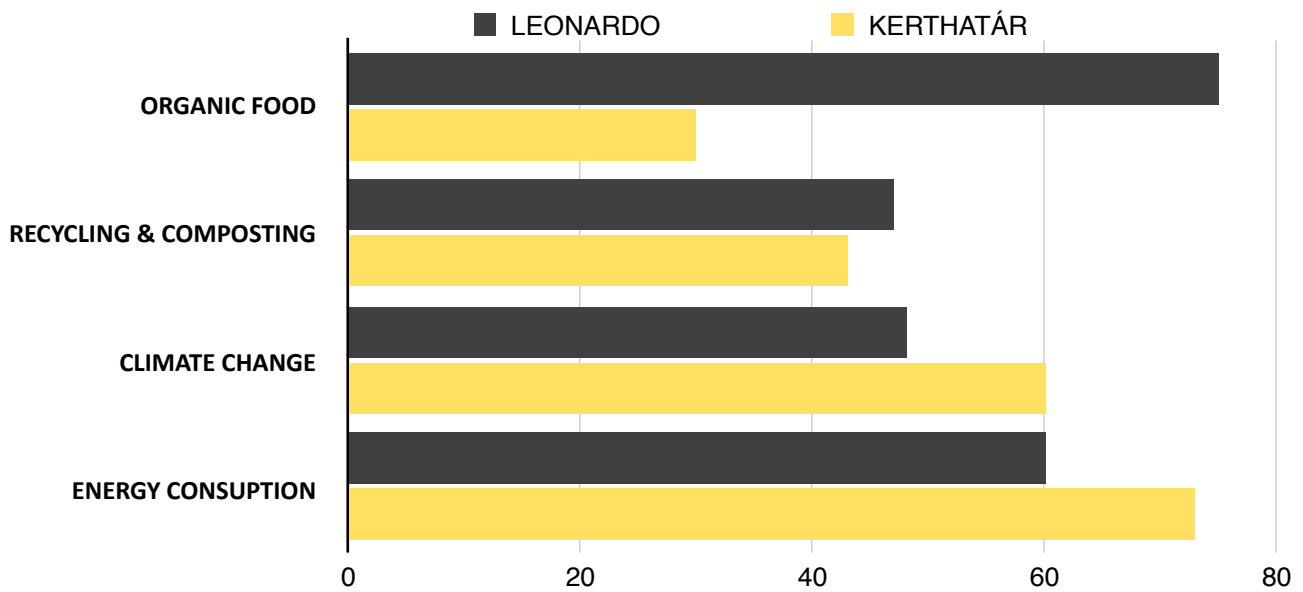
Source: Figures reported relate to respondents who “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the statement.

2. Sustainability literacy

We collect data on participants’ knowledge about environmental topics in order to evaluate whether our experiential learning has developed new knowledge or built on existing knowledge. This shows us that our members were only relatively aware about sustainability topics. For example in Leonardo + 36% were aware about basic climate change science and + 30% understood recycling and composting.

Secondly, we investigated the extent to which their involvement within the garden helped to develop more specific knowledge. Surveyed reported evidence of learning in each areas investigated, including climate change, renewable energy, recycling and organic food production. Findings are displayed in the next graph.

Figure 5: Evidence of sustainability literacy and learning outcomes



Source: Figures reported relate to respondents who “strongly agreed” or “agreed” with the statement.

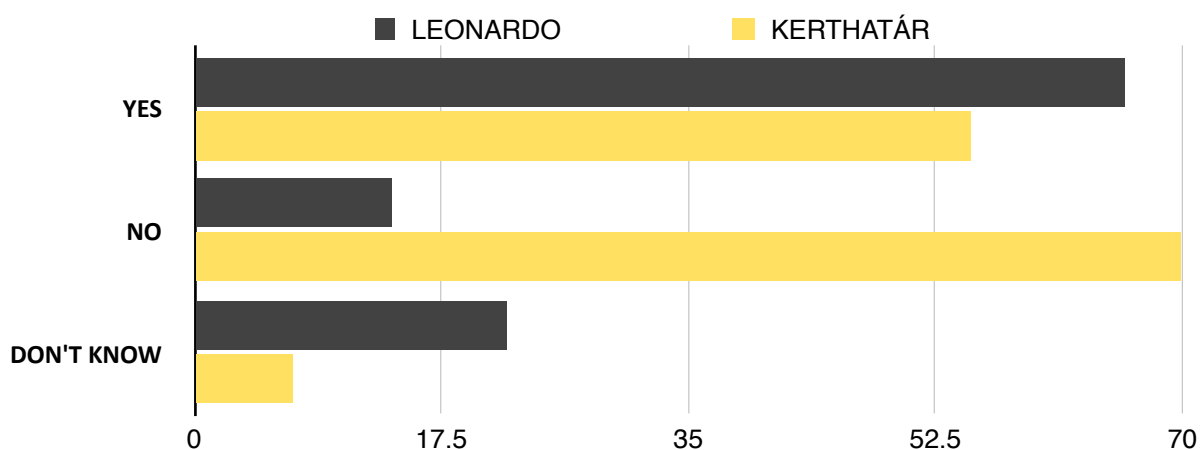
Our evaluation reveals that gardeners and volunteers respond very positively to learning in all areas of environmental education, developing knowledge on a wide range of environmental issues, beliefs and so-called “climate-friendly” behaviours. It suggests that volunteers engaged in community food growing projects respond better to messages and priorities concerning the needs to tackle global warming through changing energy and food behaviours as they develop experiential learning and practical understanding of environmental change, leading to environmental and financial benefits for individuals and society.

SOFT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

We investigate our impact in developing skills which are transferable across different work settings. Because transferable, or soft, skills can only be developed through personal experience, a formal learning environment is unlikely to be effective in promoting these skills. Instead, gardening requires people to become actively engaged in social interactive settings and involve a huge variety of skills, which reach far beyond

gardening, encompassing communication and leadership as well as ecological design and permaculture. The experiential learning of community gardening is unique as it involves dealing with educators and members of the local communities in interaction with the natural environment.

Figure 6: Our Impact on participants' overall skill-base



The main soft skills developed by our gardeners are communication skills, team work, leadership skills and personal responsibility:

- Communication skills : Conveying or sharing ideas and feelings effectively
- Leadership : Taking responsibility for activities and people. Taking initiative. Making prompt and clear decisions. Negotiations : Accepting differences while avoiding argument and dispute.
- Teamwork: Contributing to achieving team goals. Building team spirit. Recognising and rewarding the contribution of others. Listening to, and consulting, others. Ability to interact, communicate and build relationships with others.

Table 2: Evidence of self-reported skills development

OUTCOME	LEONARDO	KERTHATÁR
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	%73 of participants agreed “I learnt how to communicate effectively with people from different ages/background”	%57 of participants agreed “I learnt how to communicate effectively with people from different ages/background”
SKILLS IN WORKING WITH OTHERS	% 80 of community gardeners agreed “I learnt how to overcome disagreements with people of different ages/ backgrounds	57% of community gardeners agreed “I learnt how to overcome disagreements with people of different ages/ backgrounds
NEGOTIATIONS	%93 of participants agreed “I have found a place to escape from the city stress.	%93 of participants agreed “I have found a place to escape from the city stress.
LEADERSHIP SKILLS	%96 of participants agreed “I have found a much more active way of spending my free time.	%96 of participants agreed “I have found a much more active way of spending my free time.

We also ask to our gardeners to state whether they feel they had developed any other skills and abilities as a result of doing community gardening. The word cloud below describe the main keywords used by our surveyed.





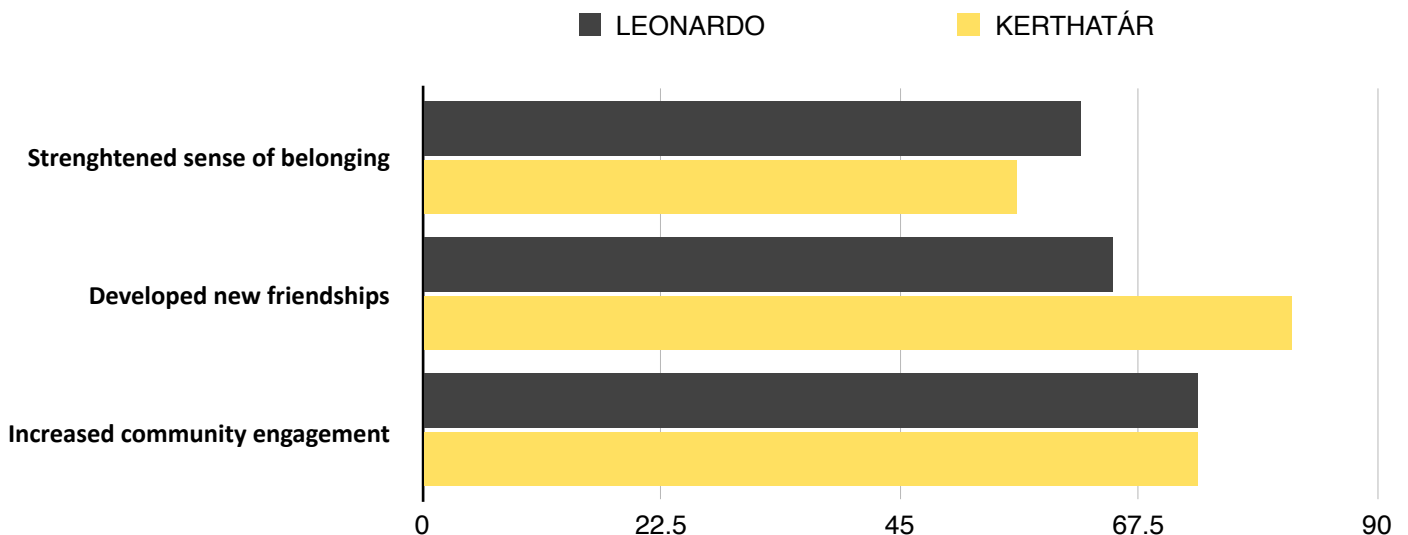
Since I became gardening, I have made new friends. We call each other, we speak on the phone. Normally, I would have never meet some of them but now we have something in common...a common purpose.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

The relationship between community gardening and the development of social connections is increasingly well understood. Although some pieces of evidence are more anecdotal than others, there is a considerable agreement about the contribution of community-based gardening in developing a stronger community spirit. Our evaluation confirm those findings, demonstrating a wide range of positive impacts, particularly concerning the increased amount of time spent with other people as part of a community garden. In addition, many gardeners are now in contact with people who they would have never met before and as a result feel a strong sense of community belonging.

Participation in KÉK gardens was shown to fundamentally tackle the isolation and loneliness that many people experience in a big city such as Budapest. This was reported by interviewed who were grown and raised in Budapest as well as from those who were from abroad. For many, the opportunity to being involved in new activities and relationship had a life-changing positive effect on the way they live the city. Many stressed the common sense of purpose which positively influence the building of trusts and respects.

Figure 7: Evidence of community outcomes



+79%
of Leonardo
gardeners:

Agreed that they feel more engaged in the community since they start gardening.

+67%
of Kerthatár
gardeners:

Agreed that they feel more engaged in the community since they start gardening.

