

Brochures can also be made, as well as short video clips or another kind of informative materials to be spread amongst the students and the trainees, aiming to prevent suicide and to provide wider understanding of the states of anxiety and depression.	
Other information	Website: <a href="http://www.bgmental.info/bg">http://www.bgmental.info/bg</a> Facebook <a href="https://www.facebook.com/ncpha.government.bg/">https://www.facebook.com/ncpha.government.bg/</a> Available in Bulgarian and English.
Contact	<a href="mailto:ncpha@ncpha.government.bg">ncpha@ncpha.government.bg</a>

### iii. PERMIND - Spain

Organisation	Fundación INTRAS	
Location and timing of practice	The project has been developed in Valladolid, Castile and León and Tarcoante, in Tenerife, Canary Island, both in Spain. The project started in June 2017 and finished in August 2019.	
Title	PERMIND Project	
Objective:	<p>PERMIND is a horticulture training course for people with mental health issues that uses permaculture as a therapy aiming to improve social and personal development. Permaculture is an innovative, and therefore relatively unknown) system of agricultural and social design principles imitating the no waste, closed loop systems seen in diverse natural systems and inspired in the patterns and features observed in natural ecosystems.</p>	
Detailed content:	<p>Permaculture is a multidisciplinary toolbox including agriculture, hydrology, energy, natural building, waste management, animal systems, appropriate technology, economics and community development. It is based on care of earth, care of people and fare share.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Permaculture as therapy: Several studies have reported the benefits of horticultural therapy and garden settings in reduction of pain, improvement in attention, lessening of stress, modulation of agitation, decreasing the need for medication, antipsychotics and thereby reducing hospitalisations.</li> </ol>	



2. Non-formal learning: Defined as “learning that is intentional from the learner’s point of view and embedded in planned activities not explicitly designed as learning”. PERMIND is based on it as well as the principle of ‘learning by doing’ to acquire knowledge.
3. Mental health challenges: The mental health of its citizens is a vital but under-valued resource within the EU. It is estimated that one in four people experiences a significant mental health problem in their life, so the problem really affects everybody. Although employment is identified as providing people with a social identity, sense of meaning and sense of self-esteem (being linked with EU’s policy objectives of prosperity, social inclusion, security and public health), it is very difficult for this target group to get a job, as declared by the WHO in 2010: “mental disabilities are associated with unemployment rates that can reach 90%”.

Based on the above, the PERMIND project tackles the challenge of providing high quality training in permaculture for people with mental health issues to create sustainable slow growing communities, thus increasing their knowledge, competencies and work opportunities.

PERMIND project has developed an eLearning platform for people with mental illness including an interactive training curriculum based on permaculture and using a learning-by-doing methodology to improve skills and competences of the target group. The curriculum is divided into 6 didactics units:

- Permaculture as therapy
- Design the place
- Designing our edible garden
- Edible garden forest
- Maintenance of our edible garden
- From the seed to the harvest

The permaculture curriculum teaches everything related to ecological practice, environmental awareness and balanced way of life. Topics like agriculture, water harvesting and hydrology, energy, natural building, forestry, waste management, animal system, aquaculture, appropriate technology, economics, community development, biodiversity preservation, resilience, integrated production, soil preservation and so on.

PERMIND project has developed the PERMIND mobile/tablet application as innovative educative tool that complements the eLearning platform.

The eLearning platform is available for free and for long (at least 2 years). During the development of the platform, some technical problems were found but were finally resolved. To what extent the PERMIND learning platform partners consider it a suitable educational tool, the medium score is also high 4,5/5 (in internal survey made to the project’s partners)

### Evaluation of results:

PERMIND project had developed a pilot course for trainees (people with severe and prolonged mental illness) and for trainers to test the didactic materials created for the eLearning platform. The course was implemented twice per week in a relaxing and



comfortable natural environment.

PERMIND wants to change the life of the participants, providing them with abilities, competences and experiences; giving them the chance to use their own hands to learn and make something useful, something that they can share with other people.

The project have trained 75 people with mental illness during a year in contents and practical knowledge related to green farming, as well as empowered by being responsible of feeding the PERMIND application. This innovative education philosophy gives the power to the person; the self-esteem and self-confidence of the participants has increased, something crucial in their recovery process and for their daily life. Trainees (people with mental illness) have improved their manual skills, enjoy the therapeutic effects of working the land and being in touch with nature, spending time with other people, using technology and socialising with others.

The participants in the project have interacted with each other's but also with the local community (showing the garden, selling the eco vegetables, picking up organic wastes, giving the welcome basket to the neighbors, etc.), thus being a great integration tool.

For the participant organisations piloting the course, PERMIND has changed the way in which they manage their gardens and orchards, and even in the way that they manage other training courses and resources, being more sustainable. Professionals of the mental health field have learned another way to work in the land and another way to understand the environment. The feeding of the app was also a different way to provide people with mental health issues with learning activities.

PERMIND project has developed an eLearning platform to teach how to use the permaculture with therapeutics aims for people with mental illness. The platform allows the creation of an easy to use teaching-learning environment, integrating didactic materials and tools of communication, collaboration and educational management always following the common thread of permaculture. The PERMIND platform is addressed to professionals of the mental health sector that are looking for new ways to improve the quality of life of the people they work with. A collection of training units are available in the platform (web page) for free.

### What makes it a good/best practice?

Before this project, permaculture had never been used as a therapeutic activity and at the same time as a realistic and profitable way to make a living. The innovative methodology followed is based on learning by doing (to ensure concentration, interest and involvement) as well as on the co-production principles, where the user/client plays a major and active role in their recovery process.

75 people with mental illness have been trained during a complete year in agriculture techniques based on permaculture philosophy and 10 professional of the mental health field have trained in a transversal methodology that can be applied in others fields.

### How can it be adapted to VET?

Although aimed at the general public, the practices within the PERMIND project can be



<p>adapted into VET.</p> <p>A lot of vocational institutions offer outdoor, physical courses – e.g. horticulture, construction, sports etc. – and therefore have outdoor facilities or creative spaces that can be used. The activities from PERMIND can be adapted into these VET courses, but also offered as an additional activity for all students over lunch or at the end of the day.</p> <p>The main focus of the PERMIND project is to address and improve mental health by participating in mindful activities (in this case gardening) and in vocational education this activity can be accompanied with advice/lessons about the beneficial activities to improve mental health - being outside, being creative, partaking in a regular physical activity, being present and appreciative, creating and giving etc. – all of which are addressed in the PERMIND project by gardening but this can also be adapted to different creative activities. Having students working together and supporting each other towards creating a beautiful garden, whilst learning about positive mental health strategies, is an activity that could be adapted into many VET organisations.</p> <p>The e-Learning course and app can also be used by teachers to increase their knowledge to further improve this activity.</p>	
Other information	<p>Website: <a href="http://www.permind.eu/">http://www.permind.eu/</a>          Available in English, Spanish, Swedish, Greek and Slovenian.          Dissemination actions: PERMIND app, newsletters.</p>
Contact	<p>María Carracedo  <a href="mailto:mcb@intras.es">mcb@intras.es</a></p>

#### iv. MedianetFORM - Italy

Organisation	<p>MediaLabor srl</p>  <p><b>MEDIALABOR</b> srl servizi per il lavoro</p>
Location and timing of practice	<p>The practice takes place in Verona, Italy and started in 2011 and is still ongoing.</p>
Title	<p>MedianetForm</p>

