

**DESIS**  
**NETWORK**  
Design for  
Social Innovation  
and Sustainability

# Gortilea Social Farm



universidade  
de aveiro



**Universidade de Aveiro**  
**ID+ DESIS Lab**  
**Portugal**  
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## **Promoters.**

**Heritage Fund**

**The Rural Area Partnership**

**Prince's Countryside Fund**

## **Funders.**

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**Clare Mullan**

## **Acknowledgements.**

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**Robert**





## **Context.**

**It's known that individuals with learning difficulties/mental health problems can benefit from the contact with nature and farm based activities. Set in Claudy (Northern Ireland), Gortilea Social Farm represents an exciting new approach to delivering Occupational and Educational outcomes. Through the use of activity analysis, assessment of function, collaborative goal setting and grading of activities the farm provides this type of intervention approach.**





## **The project.**

**Officially recognized in 2013 this farm presents the opportunity for the participants have a meaningful and enjoyable day farmer in a supportive rural environment to encourage them, regardless of ability and academic attainment, to discover and achieve tasks that they may have previously believed was out of their reach.**





## **The process.**

**A typical day can vary on the farm and is very much tailored to meet the needs of the individual participant through a holist approach. However, in general the activities practiced include: environmental sustainability, animal husbandry, growing and cooking healthy food, rural crafts, hippotherapy and accredited training programmes.**





# Governance and Policy Making



**Top-down approach**

**Experience for free**

The design process of the farm's activity is innovative and by inciting others to do so can cause changes in the educational system. However, the project is more like to have a top-down approach as it recognizes its partners and promoters to support their activity and makes, for example, a certain group of participants enjoy this experience for free.

# Activism and Civic Participation



**Inclusion**

**Hippotherapy**

Gortilea was the first Hypotherapy Clinic in Northern Ireland providing hippotherapy (characteristic movements of a horse to provide classified motor and sensory input). Initiatives such as these contribute to improving the quality of life of these individuals and draw society's attention to these health problems that tend to be ignored.



# Social Interactions and Relations



**Communication skills**

**Interpersonal relationships**

In addition to the teamwork they may have to perform in the farm's activities, participants connect with the local employers, improve their communication skills and enhance their interpersonal relationships during the conviviality.



# City and Environmental Planning



**Schools**

Thanks to its excellent response to different needs of participants, the Gortilea Social Farm offers several programmes either for parents, carers or teachers. In this way any nearby school or care association looking for alternative curriculum based learning for children of all ages and abilities, can make a visit.



# Production, Distribution and Consumption



**Local products**

**Farm's production**

The seeds, fruits and vegetables selected by the participants to plant and treat on the farm, as well as the by-products of the animals (milk and eggs) are harvested and used for participants to prepare their meals with nutritious and delicious homemade product that they saw grow.



# Skill Training and Education



**Educational abilities**

**Accredited qualification**

The farm has accredited training programs like LANTRA, City and Guilds Qualifications and NVQ'S Agriculture and Horticulture. Participants obtain an accredited qualification for the occupational and educational abilities achieved during the rural learning experience.



# Job Creation



**Volunteer work**

**Employment**

When appropriate, at some point, the Gortilea Social Farm's occupational therapist may intervene and help prepare participants to return or move to volunteer work, additional training or employment.



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