

A B S T R A C T S

**The International Network
of School Gardens**HELDA MORALES
AND BRUCE G. FERGUSON

The International Network of School Gardens (RIHE, acronym in Spanish) was born in San Cristóbal de las Casas (Mexico) in 2009, with the aim of accompanying and reinforcing the teachers who work in school gardens, as well as searching for strategies towards the gardens' sustainability. Ever since its foundation, the RIHE has held seven gatherings (one per year), and it is estimated it links over 3000 people from several countries of the Americas. Participants belong to academic institutions, civil society organizations, members of school communities (students, teachers and parents) of seven countries and some states in Mexico. The 2017 meeting will take place in Uruguay. An exchange of experiences and workshops dedicated to agriculture, nourishing, science and pedagogical strategies are carried out in each gathering, together with an exchange of seeds and different types of cultural activities.

**Social sustainability:
how to start a school garden
and give it continuity**SILVIA L. COLMENERO
AND KAY NICTÉ NAVA NASUPCIALY

This article explores the reflections shared by participants in several school gardens' experiences, including potential strategies and directions that allow for the continuation of agro-ecological projects in learning communities with different contextual and structural characteristics. The complex task of achieving continuity of a garden with multiple life cycles, different from the school ones, presents the challenge of implementing dynamics that allow for follow-up, keeping the garden alive and achieving continuity. Two main aspects towards the continuity of gardens will be touched upon in this writing: 1) community's integration and autonomy; 2) experiences to learn from and creation of community. Within the latter, six strategies are proposed: 1) the spark of contagion; 2) chores-tequios (communitarian work); 3) garden care committee; 4) promotion of co-facilitation and diversification of spaces to learn about the sowing and up-keeping of the garden; 5) promotion of regional, local, city and community meetings; and 6) integration of other agro-ecological practices into school life.

**The school garden as a learning
strategy in formal education**ENRIQUETA TELLO GARCÍA
AND SILVIA DÍAZ OCOTENCO

In recent years more and more people consider gardens as a school's learning matter and space. The gardens help re-signify curricular contents that are often thought of as distant from everyday life and with little or no usefulness when learned in the class-room. This article poses the great challenges to overcome, identified by the group which focused on the link between school gardens and the formal curriculum during the VII Meeting of the International Network of School Gardens (RIHE). The categories into which the challenges found were organized were: the organization of a comprehensive work plan, administrative issues, educational innovation and dissemination of know-hows. Some strategies that may work to overcome the challenges in each of the categories are presented in this article, with the expectation that they may prove useful in other situations.

School gardens as a strategy to strengthen a conscious, healthy and local consumption

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School age children and adolescents in Mexico represent one of the groups most affected by obesity and malnutrition. We are constantly bombarded by ads inducing an excessive consumption of “junk food” and sweet drinks. This brings about negative consequences for our health, our expenses, the environment and culture. Vis-à-vis this complex panorama, education must fulfil the role of restoring a healthy food intake. School gardens have become an alternative that backs a conscious consumption, in harmony with the Earth and among human beings. Sensitization, dietary education and the creation of cooperative organizations, among other actions, are relevant towards diminishing dietary problems. As educators we believe that, in order to advance, we must generate spaces and actions that incite reflection, participation, and gathering of ancestral know-hows around nourishment and working the land.

Seed production in school gardens: community and pedagogical strategies to protect the common goods

NURY GALINDO MARQUINA

This article stems from a collective reflection about the importance of seeds in school gardens and the challenges to overcome in order to produce them. Some strategies to face these challenges are also proposed. Emphasis is placed on the relevance of the seed in multiple life dimensions, together with an invitation to ponder on the role schools and school gardens may perform in rescuing and protecting local seeds and their associated know-hows. Learning-offering a service and participatory research-action are proposed as pedagogical and methodological tools to enable seed production and work in gardens, enrich the quality and meaning of education, and reorient connections with communities towards the common good.

Systematization of experiences: how to register and ponder work on the school garden

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School gardens are thought of as a dynamic, complex, collaborative process that needs to be pondered. The act of systematizing is a collective endeavor completed through narrative practices in which every person is acknowledged as a subject who is experienced, and possesses know-hows that are shared. Systematization of experiences in the garden is the tool that enables the recuperation of knowledges and innovations produced while toiling in the gardens, in an orderly, thoughtful way, with the aim of improving practice and sharing with other groups. The challenges that stem from the know-how (the link between participants' previous knowledge and scientific information); the doing (the way in which people work in the garden); and the being there (recovery of know-hows and practices and supporting their exchange; creating community and linking with other groups to share own experience and learn from others') are identified.

The Chiapas, Mexico, Network of School Gardens

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The RCHE (Spanish acronym) is formed by elementary level teachers and researchers who pursue, through school gardens, the development of educational models congruent with local context. To reach this goal, children's curiosity is stimulated, in the class-room, garden and community research is fulfilled, food for their own consumption is grown, local know-hows are rescued and valued, and an attempt is made to reach food self-sufficiency. Twelve gatherings have taken place in different sites since 2014. These bring together students, professors and families; they represent an opportunity to share know-hows and strengthen and enrich the practices of all members.

The school and community gardens network of Xalapa, Mexico

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The RHEC (acronym in Spanish) was formed on September 2015 based on participatory workshops with school principals, parents of students, members of the Universidad Veracruzana, and civil society organizations, as well as with gardeners. The network holds monthly meetings and workshops in schools, focusing on a variety of topics depending on the interests of the school community. They also hold a “harvest festival” at the end of every school cycle.

School and community gardens in Puerto Rico

ANA ELISA PÉREZ QUINTERO

In Puerto Rico, 85% of the food consumed is imported. That is why gardens are a tool not only for agricultural production, but also for food self-sufficiency, therefore, for sovereignty. The Puerto Rican gardens network is an organization that backs the gardens and supports the exchange of resources and know-hows. For the students at Vieques, occupied for over 60 years by the United States Navy, the fact of producing their own food is not only a production matter, but mainly one of community organizing and personal and collective healing.

Gardens’ program in educational centers, Uruguay

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This program, begun in 2005, is administered by Uruguay’s National Administration of Public Education and the Universidad de la República. Montevideo’s Administration also participated up to 2016. This program seeks to contribute to education in curricular contents of the school program, to develop work and healthy eating habits, agro-ecological practices and environmental conscience, and to have these extend to students’ homes. Presently 5,000 students and 180 educators are part of this program.

Boys and girls creating food sovereignty

The experience of the educational gardens of the Without Land Rural Workers Movement (Movimiento de los Trabajadores Rurales Sin Tierra, MST)

JEOVÁ SAMPAIO
AND ALEXANDRA MARIA DE OLIVEIRA

The educational gardens of the MST are developed with the daughters and sons of people who participate in the Movement’s land takeovers, undertaken so as to be able to exercise their right to work the land. The project is called “Children creating food sovereignty”, carried out in 38 schools located in 35 settlements. This text specifically talks about the experience of the Raimundo Facó school in Ceará, Brazil. The principles of rural education and popular education lay at the foundations of the educational gardens.

Traducción: Lucía Rayas

