



PRIMER ENCUENTRO DE HUERTOS ESCOLARES

26,27 y 28 de octubre Tudela (Navarra)



Summary Memory 1st State Conference on Scool Gardens

Andrea Estrella Torres

Germinando

La traducción del texto al inglés ha sido realizada por
Susan Ress, profesora de educación primaria.



The **1st State Conference on School Gardens** was held on the 26th, 27th and 28th of October in Tudela, and was organized by the [Colectivo Helianto](#) and [Cooperativa Germinando](#), both members of the **RUC** (Cultivated University Network -[Red de Universidades Cultivadas](#)) and with the support of the Government of Navarra, Tudela Town Council and the Open University.

More than 80 people attended, among whom were teachers, families, representatives from different institutions, and agro-environmental educational organisations from all over Spain. Attendees came from Andalucía, the Basque Country, Madrid, Extremadura, Castilla La Mancha, Castilla y León, Cataluña, Murcia, Aragón... We spent three intense days, from presentations on different experiences (given by public bodies, teachers, environmental education groups) to group work on topics we have in common related to school gardens.

The conference began early on Friday with the opening ceremony performed by the hosts: the Government of Navarra, Tudela Town Council, the "Colectivo Helianto" and the "Cultivated University Network" (Red de Universidades Cultivadas). We watched a very moving [short film](#) made by the "Colectivo Helianto" which explained the educational values of using school gardens.

Germán Llerena and Andrea Estrella then opened the morning session by establishing the theoretical framework and context of school gardens in Spain. **Germán Llerena**, from **Sant Cugat Del Vallès Town Council and a member of GRESC@-UAB** group, introduced the concept of school agroecology, with the aim of putting school gardens into a context which goes further than considering their agricultural or ecological aspect.

A proposal was made for pupils to lead the change in reforming school food, starting with the production stage, from a school vegetable garden, to the consumption stage in the school canteen. School agroecology is an area of education that can help strengthen the work which is already being carried out in different schools in Spain ([presentation](#)). **Andrea Estrella**, from the "Germinando de Madrid" cooperative, gave a preview of the preliminary results of mapping school gardens which was being carried out while the conference was being organised. Using estimated data, which was lower than the real figure, it can be confirmed that nearly 1.000.000 children have a school garden



([presentation](#)). The mapping process will carry on over the next few months, and you can help us to complete the missing statistics [here](#).

Once the opening ceremony was over, we enjoyed a delicious breakfast of ecological produce provided by **Ángel Puente** and the [Despensa Biológica](#).

During the first round of experiences, **Eduarne Huesa and Beatriz Antón** from the Basque Country Ingurugela Centres, talked about the way the work done through school gardens in the environmental education programme in their community (CAV - Comunidad Autónoma Vasca), which focuses on supporting teachers and creating teaching resources ([presentation](#)). **Ana María Domínguez and Gurutxe Sancho**, from Pamplona, talked about how the Pamplona Town Council [School Garden Programme](#) worked, and what they have learnt since it began during the (2017-2018) school year ([presentation](#)).

Eryka Fernández came from DILAS in Carcabosa Town Council, Extremadura (to share her experience as a motivator of local agro-ecological initiatives - DILAS, [here](#)), to talk about [Carcabosa in Transition](#), a municipal agro-ecological project covering many aspects, including ecological school gardens ([presentation](#)).

Eva María Medina, from the Department for Ecology and the Agency for the Management of Agriculture and Fishing in the Community of Andalusia, enlightened us by explaining their Community's [Andalhuerto](#) project, where they estimate there are over a 1000 schools with a school garden. She stressed the importance of collaborating with local and autonomic institutions to guarantee the success of these programmes ([presentation](#)).

To start the speeches by teachers, we had the pleasure of counting on a large group of members from **CEIP Bartolomé Nicolau and their Families in Nature Club** ([web](#)), from Talavera de la Reina. Two years ago they received a prize for second place in the [National Prizes for School Gardens](#), awarded by the Healthy Life Association and the Triodos Foundation (Asociación Vida Sana y la Fundación Triodos). Thanks to Ray, their teacher, we were made to see just how important the role the human factor plays in creating a successful school garden ([presentation](#)). We then heard **Joseba Unzalu**, who spoke about some great aspects of his Project at Eskola- baratza (school garden) in Olabide Ikastola ([video](#)). Last



of all we listened to **Silvia Larrañeta and Marta Gómez** explain their [ecological agriculture educational project](#) at CPAEN/ NNPEK (Navarra), where they have embedded curricular content at schools through some excellent and interesting teaching resources.

At around 14:00 we had lunch at Restaurante Remigio, where we were greeted by Luis Salcedo, a young chef trained at the Basque Culinary Centre, who explained his commitment to using local, ecological and seasonal produce.

In the afternoon, a little later than planned, we had the pleasure of listening to and learning from **Ángel Puente**, an experienced agro-environmental educator, who delighted us with different workshops. These consisted of creating cross-curricular content using the school garden. Worksheets created to help us carry out these same activities at school will be available soon.

We then listened to **Juan José Robles**, the coordinator from the school garden network in Murcia ([presentation](#)), who stressed the importance of supporting and advising teachers when creating their school garden teaching projects and embedding this learning in the curriculum. **Juan Pedro Ocaña**, made a long journey from Algeciras (Cádiz) to talk to us about his experience as a teacher at [CEIP Adalides](#), where they have an interesting cross-curricular project, as part of the Andaluerto de Andalucía programme ([presentation](#)). **Eduardo Fisbein** came from [Asociación Naturbana](#), Madrid to talk about how to integrate a school garden and the curriculum in schools through the use of a community allotment called the 40 Fanegas, in the north of Madrid ([presentation](#)). Finally, **Elena Hernando**, from the Tríodos Foundation, shared her experience in dissemination and support being given by the Foundation to school and social garden projects via <https://www.agriculturasocial.org>

We finished this intense day with a discussion panel, formed of; Marta Ceballos, a teacher at CES Cardenal Spínola CEU representing The Cultivated University Network (Red de Universidades Cultivadas), José Luis Pinzolas from the Zaragoza Allotment Network (Red de Huertos de Zaragoza) representing public institutions, Almudena Orden from the Agro-ecological Plot Cooperative (Cooperativa El Bancal agroecología), representing agro-educators, and Ray from CEIP Bartolomé Nicolau representing teachers. Germán Llerena chaired the panel and we



reflected on some of the strengths and weaknesses of different school garden projects and programmes, from the point of view of each group.

On Saturday, the day began with a presentation by **Luis Molina**, an expert from the Department for Environmental Education at Madrid Town Council, who shared her experience and the programme of **The school Garden Network in Madrid (Red de Huertos Escolares de Madrid)** ([link](#)). She analysed and stressed the need to establish and maintain a good relationship between local councils and autonomous communities to acknowledge the work done by teachers ([presentation](#)).

Marisa Muñoz from Luis Feito School also spoke about how there were many possible teaching resources to be created related to a school garden, even if there was no plot available and the garden had to be planted in wooden crates ([link to web](#) and [radio](#)).

Pedro Peinado, a Maths teacher from Murcia at IES Los Albares de Ciezal and a Francisco Giner de los Ríos prize winner for the Improvement in the Quality of Teaching, amazed us with his **"Planting Numbers" ("Plantando Números")** project at IES Salvador Sandoval ([Video](#)).

After the break we listened to **Pedro León, Isabel Diaz-Emparanza and Noelia García from CRA Valle de Rianza**, Milagros (Burgos) who had also won the Francisco Giner de los Ríos prize for the Improvement in the Quality of Teaching for their **Gardenology 3.0 (Huertología 3.0)** ([presentation](#)). **M. del Mar Martínez, Enrique Arroyo y Guillermo Espadín**, were also present to talk about their interesting school garden experience at **CEIP Fernán González**, Aranda de Duero (Burgos), proving that school community is one of the key values of a school garden ([presentation](#)).

Before lunch on Saturday, we also had the chance to carry out some group work to go into and discuss some aspects in greater depth.

For the first stage we split into two large mixed groups (teachers/families, representatives of institutions and agro-environmental teachers) to take part in a Café gathering or "World Café" to discuss the following points:

- **School garden goals.** It was important to discuss and consider the diversity of the aims of the school garden projects which could be set out by different schools and representatives.



- **Main difficulties for school garden projects or programmes.** To be able to start finding solutions the commonly recurring problems need to be identified and analysed. In this way it is possible to find a way to solve them through different proposals and actions.
- **Map of key players and of de actors and alliances.** We think it is important to map the key players involved in, and/or potential participants in, school garden projects. We should also establish what alliances would be favourable to increase the possibility for successful school gardens.
- **Learning and main ideas after the meeting.** On the first day the idea to create a "manifesto" from the conference arose, and taking advantage of the work done in the groups to identify key ideas, we were able to draw some interesting conclusions. We met in three groups organised as teachers and families, public institutions and agro-educators to exchange ideas. In this document ([link](#)) you can see the results of these debates from the different groups.





After the groupwork, we ate a delicious ecological lunch at the local "Restaurante Remigio".

Once back at the congress we began the activities once more with different workshops run by Ángel Puente related to school gardens. These workshops were useful as they demonstrated how they could be held in school without a school garden, with the aim of working different competences and subjects.

To end the conference, there was a plenary to draw conclusions with the aim to create a manifesto to share the work done and experiences during the meeting. There is also a need to motivate and acknowledge the work being carried out in school gardens as a teaching tool and means to stimulate social change.

These are the conclusions drawn during the conference closing:

- All Autonomous Communities need to have the same rights to state coordination- to standardise and broaden the criteria in Autonomous Communities, maybe to create a state system for school gardens?
- It is essential that there be a coordinator for the school garden at every school, with free teaching hours to do this job, as well as points for their teaching C.V.
- There should be training programmes at Universities and schools on cross-curricular aspects and active methodology, as well as its use as a teaching tool. These training courses should be continuous and focus not only on technical aspects, but also on teaching aspects.
- It is of great importance that we create widespread discussion on and define school agroecology.
- We need to keep moving towards making school gardens a core subject at school throughout compulsory education and beyond. The school garden plot should be another teaching space, part of the design of different flexible learning spaces. This would allow teachers to have more time to take part in innovative teaching, learning and creating teaching projects based on the school garden.



- To do this, agreed, stable legal guidelines should be drawn up, and not be susceptible to cuts and changes by different governments.
- It is of great interest to meet and coordinate with international school garden networks.
- School gardens should be included in the planning and design of new schools.
- An effort must be made to promote and advertise school garden projects and resources.
- An effort must also be made to broaden involvement in the social, neighbourhood and intergenerational values to be fostered in school garden projects.
- It has been exciting to confirm that the most important aspect of school garden projects are the people involved, that successful projects are the ones where a committee has been formed of all interested parties. "The human potential of a garden is its best tool".
- To be able to achieve some of the aims, rules regulating sanitary standards in school gardens need to be relaxed so that the products may be eaten or used in the school canteen.
- Finance and support from local authorities is essential. We are all motivated and eager to carry on with our exchange of experiences and to create a network.





Before leaving we celebrated how well everything had turned out. Mikel Ziordia a friend from the "Colectivo Helianto" gave us a tour of Tudela, explaining some interesting parts of the town and its history.

On Sunday morning to close the conference, we went by bus to Arguedas to visit the school garden. Both the mayor of Arguedas, Fernando Mendoza, and the teacher in charge of the school garden, Francesc Josep Riudavest, were our hosts during the visit. They explained, along with the "Colectivo Helianto" the special features of this garden as a garden of reference for the "School Garden Network of the Riverbank". After a delicious brunch provided by Arguedas Town Council, we made a brief visit to Bardenas Reales Nature Park.

In addition, as it would happen, the International Network of School Gardens was holding a conference of Mexican School Gardens in Chiapas (Mexico), where the Mexican Network of school Gardens was formed. They congratulated us in this [lovely way](#). We need to start saving to be able to meet them in Villarrica (Chile) where the next international conference will be held...





From "Helianto y Germinando", as well as from the "Cultivated University Network" we can only thank everyone who took part in the conference from the bottom of our hearts, you helped us create the great atmosphere we all enjoyed. Here you can see Germán, Diego, Ángel and Andrea, who masterminded this conference (along with the other members of the Helianto y Germinando team) when it ended.



We are now planning the second conference... we are really very keen to make further progress with our exchange of experiences revolving around school gardens.

AGAIN, THANK YOU ALL FOR MAKING IT POSSIBLE!