

# PROMOTING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT THROUGH "SHARED ACTIVITY" ON SCHOOL AGROECOLOGY

Arnau Amat

PhD student in Science Education Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona  
and Environmental Educator of La Plana Mancommunity  
[aamatv@gmail.com](mailto:aamatv@gmail.com)

Mariona Espinet

professor in Departament de Didàctica de la matemàtica i de les ciències,  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Margo Prims, Sílvia Estapé, Gilbert Sandoval, Clara Guindulain, Sònia Prat  
teachers from Valldeu school de Sant Martí de Centelles.  
Catalonia (Spain)

## INTRODUCTION



Valldeu school is a rural school, 60Km north from Barcelona. In this school there are from 3-year-old students to 12-years-old students. One of the important aims of the school is to promote the participation of the educational community (teachers, students, families, and neighbors) within school projects. School garden and thus school agroecology represents a good sustainability field to include community agents within the school dynamics. . A key point in agroecology is that it includes different types of knowledge, from ecology, to agronomy and popular knowledge so that changes can be produced towards the sustainability of food production and consumption. School agroecology takes this idea into consideration and promotes activities where to exchange the diversity of funds of knowledge of the different community agents.

## DEVELOPMENT



The collaboration started in 2008 when the school built a food garden in the school yard. Teachers from the school requested to the La Plana Mancommunity the help of an environmental educator to run the educational management of the school food garden from a community perspective. From 2009 on the La Plana Mancommunity held meetings with different community agents to focus their interests in food gardening and to find ways to participate in its development. Once the community orientation of the initiative was clear, families and teachers held meetings to make decisions on what type of activity would best promote the participation of the community in the teaching and learning around the school food garden.

## TEACHERS

The teachers are the main actors of the collaboration. They prepare and organize the activities, with the environmental educator. Their role in the workshops is to help children, families and neighbors to be active agents in the workshop and to coordinate the organization.

## FAMILIES

The families are invited in this activities. They work together with the students to study an agroecological topic in a cooperative group. There are two or three familiars in each group.

## UNIVERSITY

The research group GRESC@ help us to improve these activities and study what happens at the level of agents' interactions and at the community level when different community actors participate in "shared activities" on school agroecology.

## SHARED ACTIVITIES



The shared activities on school agroecology are the most important tool in this project and they have always the same pedagogical structure. Each activity starts with a basic agroecological question that invites to action, such as "What can we do with so many nails in the garden?" or "What kind of soil is better to our food garden?" Once a month, different actors of the community come to school to learn together about one agroecological topic. There are three kinds of workshops: observation workshop, experimental workshop and Gardening workshop. The families and the students work together in four cooperatives group.

## STUDENTS

In the cooperative groups there are kindergarten students and primary school students. They help to each other to do the activities and to resolve the agroecology topic.

## LOCAL ADMINISTRATION

There are two local administration involved in this collaboration: the city hall and La Plana Mancommunity. The environmental educator of La Plana Mancommunity prepares the activities and organizes the shared activity with the teachers. The city hall of Sant Martí de Centelles helped us to build the food garden and

## NEIGHBORHOOD

The neighbors advise the teachers on gardening. They explain us when and what vegetables to plant. When they participate in the shared activities, they are in the Gardening workshop.