EU GO- EUROPEAN URBAN GARDENS OTESHA

IDENTIFICATION OF A GOOD EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE OR TOOL

Name of the community garden		Possible short title for the practice		
COMMUNITY GARDENS OF CAN MASDEU		Assembly: Participative model of gardeners		
Type of tool		**Contact person**	Name and role	**Claudio Cattaneo, dinamizador**
Activity	X		Phone	
Methodology			E-mail	Claudio.cattaneo@liuc.it
Other (specify):			Other contacts	**Laura Ciudad:** lciudad2002@yahoo.es

It can be addressed to...				It deals with the following topics...			
All		School	x	Intercultural dialogue		Intergenerational dialogue	x
Children	x	Institution	x	Gender Equality		Fight against poverty	
Youngsters	x	Social service	x	Sustainable Consumption	x	Education to sustainable development	
Adults	x	Job service		Sustainable Urbanisation	x	Socio-professional training	
Women	x	Migrants service	x	Health promotion		Social cohesion	x
Elderly	x	Neighbourhood	x	Horticultural therapy	x	Leisure activity	x
Other (specify)				Other (specify) Producing food			

DESCRIPTION Please describe the practice you have developed.

The group that squatted the farm of Can Masdeu (between Barcelona and the outskirts) opened some gardens for our own consumption, in which people of the house as well as anyone who wants to learn and help can participate every Thursday. Apart from the gardens of "the house" we have a project of community gardens and a project for a total of 40 individual and shared plots and a community plot opened for all participants of the community gardens.

Both in the gardens of "the house" and in the community gardens the functioning is assembly-based and counts with work commissions. The project is based in four points cultivate organic food and sow traditional seed exchange of knowledge generations. There is a symbiotic relationship between young and old people. This created a constant two-way exchange of information between generations, realities and mindsets.
Our organized decision-making tool is our monthly assembly and share responsibilities through commission. Commissions such as water (really important as we rely on raining water so themes are how to preserves it and equal distributions), manure (going to farms or riding clubs to collect it), social events (organizing event with community around, meals for gardeners, common work day) economy (each assembly each plot pays one euro, organized events to collect money), now we are creating an conflict commission (through meeting and dialogs).

AIMS AND OUTCOMES Which are the main purposes tackled in a community garden with this tool? Which concrete results have been observed at short and long term?

One of the main purposes tackled with this tool is **self-determination**, which bring us the ability or power to make decisions for ourselves. The project is based in a non-hierarchical consensus-based organization model. Between the participants, the Project itself has reinforced an intergenerational rapprochement, the Exchange

of knowledge (there are also adults teaching computer science to the elderly) and the implication in the assembly methodology.

The social aspects takes a lot of importance both in the formal part (organization and participation in social events such as meals in the surrounding valley, traditional folk music and dance celebrations in the neighborhood) and in the informal part (generation of a support network between the participants, intergenerational transmission of knowledge, etc).

The community project regenerated social networks in the community. And improves the social dialog, skills in how to resolve our conflicts.

WHAT MAKES IT A GOOD PRACTICE OR TOOL? Identify which elements make this action a good practice, for ex. Innovation, coherence, link with other projects or people, favours social mixing, simplify work, earn time or money, etc.

The project of community gardens set a precedent in the city, since many other squatting projects have come out, and it contributes to the development of the imaginary of the importance of urban agriculture and its practice. It has also contributed to create a network of urban gardens in Barcelona. Groups of common people organizing themselves using assemblies as a tool for decision making. Take responsibilities of your actions.

STEP BY STEP Please, describe how to put in practice, guiding with clear instruction and materials needed someone that would like to experiment your tool in a local community garden around Europe

Project of community gardens

1. FIND A SPACE. A group of activists would squat an open space. As a possible alternative to squatting, the group needs to get the administration of a space. It requires more time but it is more secure. Also the group might decide to get closer to the owner of the space and find a common agreement.
2. OPEN THE SPACE. Promote social participation among the inhabitants of the neighborhood. In spite of our "community" ideals, we have decided to subdivide part of the land and assign it to individual persons, little groups or collectives of people. As a second step, it can be decided to administer some land on community basis.
3. ORGANIZE THE ASEMBLY. **There are no votes in meetings, instead decision are arrived at through a process of discussions and proposals**. We define some rules (organic agriculture not use of pesticides, 1€/month contribution for the community expenses, define commissions, create group dynamics, mark a minimum of implication, define selection criteria to assign the plots, etc.
4. ACTIVATE THE GROUP AND SPACE. Create common working days for activities such as bring fertilizer, organize tools, greenhouse, etc.
5. OPEN UP TO THE EXTERIOR. Make the project known in the neighborhood, participating in local events, make synergies with the participants, already integrated in the neighborhood.
6. CREATE FUNCTIONS. In this case, it can be considered to dedicate one plot to agro-ecological education if somebody is interested in it. (In the case of Can Masdeu, the educative project came out from the assembly of the house, using one plot of the house garden). Other functions can be decided according to the local and social characteristics and needs.

COMPETENCES Which are the previous knowledge and skills required to put in practice this tool?

- Capacity of assembly-based organization
- Some knowledge to squat and to create the necessary infrastructure
- Through the assemblies people develop their own social skills, participative skills, how to get decision.
- But the most important is: you need a lot of motivation and capacity to resist or endure
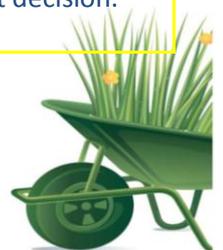
EVALUATION How do you normally evaluate the outcomes of this tool?

Very positively. The achievement of the results was excellent. The dissemination of the results reached a world level. We appeared in a one-hour report on the Spanish TV, on the German TV, in the 2008 "State of the World" and in many local newspapers. Moreover we are influencing the urban public policies.

Assembly is a great tool as everybody has its voices. So testimonies of participants is the evaluation methods:

"*Everybody told me I am mad but the doctor keeps telling me to come to the plot. Coming here is a therapy for me*" Carmen 83 years from south.

"*Instead of being in a bar playing cards, I prefer to walk and do physical work here I feel better*" Jose 75 Granada

"*I like to feel the soil in my finger like when I was a child. Here headaches disappear* " Candela 73 from Canary Island.

"I *believe working in the plots helps to connect with Earth and overcome the frenetic speed of the cities. I also eat nice organic food*" Isabel 57 school teacher

"*We are a very nice group of people very heterogenic, an explosive mixture in the same project*" Belen 25 year engineer Consumer Coop plot

"*I come here because I feel pity for the guys hanging from the wall under rain and cold against police. I though could that be possible? So I came here next day to ask for a plot*" Pablo 75 retired

And many other voices.