



**European Approaches
to Inter-Generational
Lifelong Learning**

Orto in Condotta

ITALY
Case Study Identity Card
2007



Education and Culture

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EAGLE CASE STUDY

ITALY

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

The Orto in Condotta initiative (and its local projects) is aimed at:

- Introducing a multidisciplinary didactic methodology into primary school curricula, where the vegetable garden becomes a tool for environmental and food education. The context-based and hands-on methodology leads pupils to see with their eyes and to do with their hands, thus developing a deeper awareness of the territory and the traditional activities.
- Transforming the pupils from consumers to micro-producers who are aware of the choices behind different kinds of cultivation and who realise how sustainable development can be fostered at individual and community level.
- Fostering sensory education, helping pupils (re-)discover their body in relation to the surrounding environment.
- Raising awareness on the value of natural processes, making use of organic and biodynamic cultivation methods. Pupils discover the value of time (fruits and vegetables ripen following a particular cycle) and of natural products.
- Getting to know the local territory, its traditions and cultural heritage (also made of natural products, recipes, social activities)..
- Acquiring theoretical notions and developing practice of organic agriculture.

Within the classroom, the involved teacher(s) organise(s) the activities, involving gardening grandparents and other experts. The grandparents provide their support throughout the three years.

At the end of each school year, an event is organised. The whole local community is invited. Particularly parents are asked to participate and to share with their children and the teachers the outcomes of the programme.

At the end of 2005, already 50 schools had joined the Orto in Condotta community/network. The objective for the following three years (2006-2009) implies the involvement of at least 100 schools. Since students participate on a voluntary basis, and it is not compulsory to attend the practical workshops and activities, their number greatly varies in time.



2 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

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| <i>Title</i> | Orto in Condotta |
| <i>Country/ Countries of origin</i> | Italy <u>Comments:</u> The 'school gardens' experiences were initially launched by Slow Food USA in the mid-90's, based on an idea of Ms Alice Waters. The original 'The edible schoolyard' was aimed at introducing into school curricula a new method for food education based on practical activities carried out vegetable gardens with the support of parents, grand parents and other experts in the local community. |
| <i>Duration</i> | Starting Year: 2003 End Year: Still running <u>Comments:</u> The 'school garden' initiative was launched in 2003 at the International Slow Food Conference held in Naples. Since then, an ever increasing number of schools have joined the initiative; at the end of 2005, approximately 50 school gardens had been created. In 2006, the objective of 100 school gardens was set. |
| <i>Status</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Running <u>Comments:</u> The Orto in Condotta programmes are organised on a three-year basis. |
| <i>Managing institution</i> | Primary school |
| <i>Contact details</i> | Last Name: D'Onorio First Name: Annalisa Title: Position/Role: National reference person Institution: Slow Food Italia Street: Via MendicITÀ Istruita 8 Town: Bra (CN) Post Code: 12042 Phone: +39 0172 419696/ 674 / 628 Fax: E-Mail: educazione@slowfood.it URL: http://educazione.slowfood.it/educazione/ita/orto.lasso |
| <i>Funding</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public-Private-Partnerships (PPP) <u>Description:</u> The Orto in Condotta projects are proposed locally by a school or a group of schools. The school contacts the Slow Food Italy Secretariat which provides detailed information on the project's guidelines and implementation possibilities, and supports the school in assessing the viability of the project. Once the project's viability is confirmed, Slow Food, the school(s) and the local municipality sign a Memorandum of Understanding and the project's activities are started. In this respect, many of the planned activities (e.g. teachers training) are carried out within working hours (to be considered as the school's own funding), or alternatively are carried out on a voluntary basis (e.g. the work of the 'gardening grandparents'). |
| <i>Partnership arrange- ment/organis- ational form</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bottom-up, grass root initiative <u>Comments:</u> The local Orto in Condotta project is developed locally by the school, in co-operation with the Slow Food Italy Secretariat, on the basis of the local community's needs and ideas. |
| <i>Scale</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community based ▪ Local <u>Comments:</u> The Orto in Condotta project can be carried out either at community scale (e.g. involving only one school) or at local level (e.g. involving a group of schools working in a network). |



3 DESCRIPTION OF COLLABORATING GROUPS

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| <i>Collaborating Group I</i> | Description: 'Gardening grandparents', schoolteachers, parents, other people with a gardening expertise. There are not any specific requirements as regards gender, age, (present or past) occupation, and economic status. Involved people are volunteers who are committed in exposing young generations to traditional gardening activities and the related values (healthy living, responsible trade and consumes, etc.). As regards the involvement of the gardening grandparents, they are usually retired people with specific abilities in gardening. |
| <i>Total number of Collaborating Group I</i> | At least 1 grandparent for each project |
| <i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group I</i> | <u>Minimum Age:</u> 18 <u>Maximum Age:</u> No age ceiling <u>Age distribution (please describe, if possible in %) & Description:</u> NA |
| <i>Collaborating Group II</i> | <u>Description:</u> Primary school students. |
| <i>Total number of Collaborating Group II</i> | Not possible to quantify <u>Comments:</u> At the end of 2005, already 50 schools had joined the Orto in Condotta community/network. The objective for the following three years (2006-2009) implies the involvement of at least 100 schools. Since students participate on a voluntary basis, and it is not compulsory to attend the practical workshops and activities, their number greatly varies in time. |
| <i>Age group(s) of Collaborating Group II</i> | <u>Minimum Age:</u> 6 <u>Maximum Age:</u> 11 |

4 DESCRIPTION OF INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING PRACTICES

The practice description of intergenerational learning practices serves a twofold purpose: i) a qualitative practice description of the case and ii) a quantitative assessment of additional case descriptors.

Description of Learning Arrangement & Learning Practice

The Orto in Condotta projects are aimed at creating 'school gardens' as an educational opportunity, where pupils can interact and work with expert adults in non formal and informal learning contexts, so to discover the value of traditional gardening activities (with implications in terms of environmental awareness, knowledge of traditions, understanding of local heritage and potential).

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- Transforming the pupils from consumers to micro-producers who are aware of the choices behind different kinds of cultivation and who realise how sustainable development can be fostered at individual and community level.
- Fostering sensory education, helping pupils (re-)discover their body in relation to the surrounding environment.
- Raising awareness on the value of natural processes, making use of organic and biodynamic cultivation methods. Pupils discover the value of time (fruits and vegetables ripen following a particular cycle) and of natural products.
- Getting to know the local territory, its traditions and cultural heritage (also made of natural products, recipes, social activities)..
- Acquiring theoretical notions and developing practice of organic agriculture.

Within the classroom, the involved teacher(s) organise the activities, involving gardening grandparents and other experts. The grandparents provide their support throughout the three years.

At the end of each school year, an event is organised. The whole local community is invited. Particularly parents are asked to participate and to share with their children and the teachers the outcomes of the programme.

The project can be implemented only once an agreement is reached between the local interested school(s), the municipality and the Slow Food Italia Secretariat, so to assure consensus around the rationale and objectives and participation in the planned activities. In this respect, the project is managed and developed locally by a 'learning community', made of the above-mentioned players, together with parents, local associations (if possible), and other experts who can contribute to the gardening activities and the related cultural, historical and social activities. As soon as the project is approved, the local 'learning community' identify one or more 'gardening grandparents' who is in charge of showing the youngsters how to take care of a vegetable garden applying traditional methods. Their role, in this respect, is key since they represent the link with the local traditions, memories and values (e.g. the 'slow pace'), in contrast with the fast and undifferentiated contemporary society. Furthermore, the gardening grandparents must assure that:

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The garden has to be cultivated throughout the project duration (3 years), except when the school is closed (e.g. summer holidays) and when no gardening grandparent can take care of the garden. ▪ Cultivation has to be organic or biodynamic. ▪ The plants in the garden have to be endemic and typical of the area/region; whenever possible, the protected and / or denominated productions have to be fostered. ▪ No genetically modified plant can be cultivated. ▪ Special attention has to be paid to those vegetables with a 'learning value', e.g. those which can be harvested and then eaten by the children. ▪ The use of water is a key learning point in the whole project. Pupils have to water the plants. This is to be accompanied by a reflection on the role of water in agriculture and on a careful management and use of this resource. ▪ Pupils can eat the products of their vegetable garden. In the best hypothesis, products should be used in the school refectory and served to children. <p>These basic principles are elaborated in a three-year programme. The objectives pursued are:</p> <p>1st year: the vegetable garden and sensory education 2nd year: food and environmental education 3rd year: food culture and the local heritage and territory</p> |
| <i>Location of the learning activity</i> | Formal settings i.e. educational institute Informal settings i.e. community facility/building |
| <i>Learning activities (related to policy objectives)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education, training & learning ▪ History and reminiscence ▪ Environment & environmental protection; |
| <i>Fields of Learning</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Development and continuity of societal values |
| <i>Knowledge & Learning Exchange/Flow between the target group(s)</i> | Predominantly 'upstream' i.e. younger to older (e.g. visitor services, lectures, ICT skills development, traveling); |
| <i>Interactions between the target group(s)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group based |
| <i>Categories of the learning activity</i> | Formal |

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| OECD/DeSeCo Competences addressed by the CS | <p>1 = Competence Category 1: Using Tools Interactively 1.1 = The ability to use language, symbols and text interactively 2 = Competence Category 2: Interacting in Heterogeneous Groups 2.1 = The ability to relate well to others; the ability to cooperate 3 = Competence Category 3: Acting Autonomously: 3.1 = The ability to act within the big picture</p> <p>Pupils are engaged in hands-on activities in the vegetable gardens. With the guidance of the gardening grandparents (acting as teachers and mentors), under the supervision of their teachers, and with the support of other experts and parents, pupils work together in the garden and learn to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use the specific tools and instruments ▪ Recognise the soil specificities and make the right choice as regards the plants to seed and the cultivation technique to use ▪ Take care of plants, e.g. learning when to water the plants, cut them, etc. ▪ Listen to experts' suggestions and advice and put them into practice ▪ Recognise natural signs and take the needed measures to protect the garden ▪ Prefer local plants, related to the local tradition and history |
| EC Key Competences addressed by the CS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Learning-to-learn ▪ Interpersonal and civic competences ▪ Cultural awareness |
| Success factors and barriers of the CS | <p>Success is mainly related to the participation of grandparents as mentors and trainers, working in the school setting. Their teaching is based on experience; theoretical notions leave room to hands-on activities, an attentive observation of the nature and of its phenomena. With the guidance of the grandparents, pupils make direct experience of natural events and learn how to recognise particular conditions and to make the right choice. Furthermore, the involvement of parents and of experts in the different fields addressed contributes to creating a sense of ownership and commitment with the children.</p> <p>The Orto in Condotta initiative has been gaining consensus and success throughout Italy. An increasing number of schools have joined the network and have set up specific programmes meeting local needs and expectations of pupils, and of the community at large. Quantitative data are not available yet. Therefore it is not possible to measure the extent of its success.</p> |
| Results of the CS | <p>The main outputs developed in the many Orto in Condotta projects are mainly vegetable productions. The events organised at the end of each school year provide parents, and the other members of the local community to share with the children, the teachers, and the grandparents the results of their work.</p> <p>No formal accreditation is provided. Obviously, being the activity carried out as part of the curriculum, it is valued as part of the school programme.</p> |