Fostering children’s food literacy through School Gardens in Denmark

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The "Gardens for Bellies" school garden concept

- Gardening and food production
- Nature: Biology/ecology
- Gastronomy: Cooking and taste development

Photo: Jensen, K. Gardens for Bellies, Natursamarbejdet, Aarhus, Denmark
Research approach and methods

Explorative case study research

- Qualitative methods
- Literature reviews (2)
- Questionnaire for parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interviews – garden educators</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews – teachers</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews – decision-makers and project staff</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus group interviews - children</td>
<td>5 focus group interviews x 6 children per interview (+ individual interviews with special needs children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations – garden activities</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations – competence development/network workshops</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Photo: Dyg, P. M. Haver til Maver, Gribskov, Denmark
The process:
• Organizational set-ups
• The pedagogy

Effects on:
• Food knowledge: incl. cooking skills and taste
• The school setting & the home
• Well-being; including identity and social skills
Children’s self-reported learning and attitudes

- To grow their own vegetables:
  - The process from seed to table,
  - Nature’s cycle: Pollination, fertilisation, decomposition etc.
- Varieties of vegetables, plants and insects
- Cooking and taste
- Social and personal skills

Links to subjects and food literacy:
- Science, Maths, Danish, home economics (arts and religion).
- Action competence,
- Healthy diets and living
- Inter-connectedness
- Sustainable living

Photo: Jensen, K. Gardens for Bellies, Natursamarbejdet, Aarhus, Denmark
Food knowledge and skills

- Growing food/knowledge about different varieties
- Cutting, grating and baking food
- Tasting food and adding spice
- Trying out (new) recipes
- Tasting and learning about new vegetables
- Experimenting with food
- Cooking with less meat
- Gaining knowledge about organic food
- **No explicit focus on health or nutrition**

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Girl, 4th grade: "In a way it tastes a little better when you have grown the food yourself." She tastes veggies although there are some things she does not like. Her classmates are not as picky eaters as her. (FG, 4th graders)
International research on school gardens

Fruit and vegetable consumption

Interpersonal skills

Identity and well-being – mental health

Ecoliteracy

Science attitude