ROOFTOP GARDENS. THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF A HORTICULTURE PROJECT

Barcelona City Council

CityZen Impact Workshop
April 19 2021
The Municipal Institute for People with disabilities

Goal: to promote the equal participation of people with disabilities in all areas of community life. To this end, it seeks to promote accessibility in the various municipal services and facilities.

Structure and staff: a district support officer in each of the city's districts (10), two central support officers and one service coordinator.

The 10 districts of Barcelona
Project Background – Public Parks and Gardens and People with Disabilities

- Labour agreement with the Parks and Gardens dept. of Barcelona City Council.
- 18 plots of land in Barcelona made available for associations of people with intellectual disabilities and/or mental disorders.
- Barcelona as a high density city without the possibility of new ordinary plots.
- 2016 saw the start of the rooftop gardening experience for NGOs of people with disabilities working in Barcelona.
Main goals

The project consists of entities of people with disabilities managing hydroponic urban gardens on rooftops of municipal facilities.

Main goals of the project:
- The promotion of people with disabilities in an area that brings benefits in different aspects (leisure, training, relationships, etc.).
- Making use of disused spaces like the rooftops of municipal buildings
- Contributing through these projects to creating a greener city.
- Innovating in the management of water and soil in the city to obtain sustainable quality produce.
Implementation

1. April 2016 saw the start of the rooftop garden project at the Municipal Institute for people with disabilities, with NGOs of people with intellectual disabilities.
2. Since 2016, the project has grown up to 8 different plots in rooftops and terraces in different districts and areas of the city.

3. Different profiles of disabilities are now participating in the project (intellectual disability, mental disorders and physical disability)

Implementation

Next steps

5. A study is under way for 3 new gardens (2 in schools and 1 in the facilities of a Housing Program for vulnerable population)

7. Replica of the project in another Catalan city.

8. Seek to promote the collaboration with other population groups such as children, elderly people, etc.
• Profile of the people taking part: mild or moderate intellectual disability, people with mental disorders or physical disabilities.
• Number of participants per group: 6-8 per group (some NGO participate with several groups on different days).
• Frequency of attendance: 1 day a week from September to July.
• Type of crops: green vegetables, aromatic plants (14 different varieties)
• Total production in 2020: 3590 Kg of fresh food.
Stakeholders

Networking: participation of different professional profiles from the “third sector” and public administration.

Participating NGOs of people with disabilities:

- 15 participating entities.
  - 8 entities of people with mild / moderate intellectual disabilities
  - 6 entities of people with problems derived from mental health
  - 1 entity of people with physical disabilities

- Number of participants:
  - Year 2016: 30 farmers
  - Year 2019: 120 farmers
  - Year 2021: 170 farmers
Stakeholders

Other relevant players:

• Different departments of Barcelona City Council hosting gardens on their rooftops and collaborations in educational and environmental dissemination.

• Enterprises in charge of the technical tracking, teaching and assessment.

• Social canteens and Food Banks of the nearby territory (mainly people at risk of social exclusion and in the process of detoxification).

• Derivative academic research: high school final projects; degree, master and Phd projects; research projects teams of national and international
As a social innovation project, the initial objectives were focused on:

- Improvement in the quality of life of the participants
- Innovation in the use of hydroponics and testing the food quality of agronomic production in the city.

• However, the project has exceeded the initial expectations so we had to incorporate new implementation criteria.
1.- **Sociological study.** BCNUEJ, UAB, ISGlobal. 2018.

- Main results: Improves quality of life index (5 points increase).
- Verification of the role change of the participating users
2.- Agronomic study. IRTA

• Main results:
  – Healthy foods promptly treated with phytosanitary products suitable for organic farming
  – Control of consumption, recirculation of water and reuse of nutrients.
  – High productivity outcomes.
Results compared to success criteria

Improvements based on the evolution of the project

- Open call for tender
- Giving production surplus to vulnerable groups, thereby improving the quality of their food.
Results compared to success criteria

- Improvement in accessibility of municipal roofs and infrastructure.
- Greater variety of cultivation (cucumber, pepper, beans, courgettes ..)
- Increase in the tasks of the participants
• We have developed a defined work methodology that has been successfully replicated in each rooftop garden.
• Adaptation during the pandemic COVID – 19. The project did not stop and has become a good solution for the NGO.
• The project Won the European Public Sector Award (EPSA) in 2019
Thank you for your attention!

Municipal Institute for People with Disabilities
Ferran Urgell – furgell@bcn.cat