

# Revaluing vegetable gardens and renaturalizing the city...

Lleida, Spain

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## Background

### THE PROBLEM:

- Rural/urban disconnect.
- Abandonment of traditional family farms and livestock farms
- Environmental impoverishment of the surroundings

### PROFILE OF LLEIDA

- 140,000 inhabitants / 12,863 hectares of orchards.
- Located inland, in an agricultural plain, between the Pyrenees and the river Ebro.
- 150 kms away from Barcelona.



## Approach



### What are they working on?

- Revaluing the agricultural environment of the city: historical (identity), social, environmental and productive values.
- Promote the vegetable gardens (family and school), and the Huerta de Lleida.
- Encourage ecological horticulture, self-composting, the presence of biodiversity and a more natural and sustainable management of open spaces.

### What was the starting point?

- For more than 10 years we have been promoting the Huerta and organic gardens from different initiatives and disseminating the importance of biodiversity in Lleida.



## Methodology



### The tools used have been:

- Bringing schools and citizens closer to the agricultural and livestock farms of the Huerta (guided tours, proximity market.
- Promote social and school gardens and composting, with training, advice, resources and social dynamization.
- Promote and encourage biodiversity (introducing traditional varieties of vegetables, installing wildlife refuges.
- The project is led by the Lleida City Council (with occasional collaboration from the University of Lleida, producers and neighbors associations, the AdV Ecológica de Ponent).
- The action is financed with own funds and European aids (Agriproxi Project, PRTR Next Generation).



## Outcome



### What have they achieved?

- Create a social network of people/entities/producers/schools that support each other.
- Strengthen the link between people and nature and their environment.
- Recovering traditional varieties of vegetables and helping to improve urban biodiversity.

### Next steps

- Renaturalize the city through the creation of biodiversity oases, a more "natural" management of urban greenery, a better connection between vegetable garden and city (green paths, ecological corridors)...

Challenge: How to extend the link with nature and the environment to all citizens.

## Lessons learned

- The importance of making visible and making known or recognizing what we want to be valued.
- To seek the personal link, the personal experience, to understand and be able to act.
- Challenges:
- Ensuring that initiatives can be sustained over time.
- Need to repeat over time the training/advice/resources...
- To guarantee the incorporation of products from Lleida's vegetable garden into the daily life of schools and citizens.