

School Climate Assemblies: An Innovative Approach to Promote Sustainability Competences and Community Action

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Abstract

Youngsters' participation in decision-making processes is essential to address current complex global challenges that manifest at local and regional levels, such as the climate crisis, biodiversity loss and desertification. This paper presents the EDU4CLIM project, which focuses on implementing school climate assemblies to engage and empower young people in climate change challenges towards promoting more sustainable, equitable and socially just societies.

In this collaborative and deliberative democratic process students critically reflect, deliberate, make decisions and seek to find and propose solutions to promote local and regional sustainability, providing them with inclusive spaces to engage meaningfully in climate decision-making processes. This project has been piloted in 15 secondary schools in the province of Tarragona (Spain). The assemblies are structured in three stages of learning, deliberation and decision-making, with the support of a group of facilitators who guide participants throughout the process, ensuring that all opinions and voices are heard. In this paper we present the implementation process followed and the main results in relation to the influence of school climate assemblies in the development of sustainability competences among students and explore the impact that the school climate assemblies and a final sustainability fair, involving all students and schools, had at an individual, community and social levels.

Keywords: climate assemblies, schools, sustainability fair, impact