

THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

Anamarija Slabe has designed and established a broad network of organic school gardens at all levels of the Slovenian education system - from kindergarten to secondary school. A graduate agricultural engineer, specialised in organic farming, she made it her mission to develop organic farming in Slovenia.

The experience she gained in raising awareness among farmers and other stakeholders encouraged Anamarija to look for other solutions for the dissemination and transfer of knowledge. She wanted to introduce young generations to organic farming in an innovative way. As part of the project, she started setting up organic school gardens in 2010 and encouraged schools to grow their own produce in their own gardens or in co-operation with local organic farms.



Figure 1. Children carry out daily chores on the school's organic garden.

The innovation launched by an NGO was initially financed by the Swiss mechanism. Today, it has grown into a well-functioning network of schools and

kindergartens (around 100 participants) that offers training for mentors (teachers), cooperation, exchange of practises, etc. under the umbrella of the Organic School Gardens Association

THE INNOVATION IMPACT

The impact of this innovation is significant in terms of environmental and social sustainability. Through the activities in the gardens, children and teachers learn about food production, gardening and fruit growing and come into contact with the garden, plants and nature. Changing habits is encouraged on a broader scale as the children carry their new knowledge into their homes and local neighbourhoods. The Organic School Gardens Association also has a major impact in the field of education. Sustainable development issues are now being integrated into the curriculum of most school subjects.

As part of the EU project EATHINK2015, they have transferred their best practises to other EU countries. The idea of school gardens has also gained wider support - after the experience of the COVID-19 period, outdoor education is becoming particularly desirable. The work of the network has been recognised by policy makers at national level and organic school gardens have been included in the Action Plan for the Development of Organic Farming until 2027.

USEFUL LINKS

- [Official website of the Organic School Gardens Association](#)
- [Web map of organic school gardens in Slovenia](#)