



KIDS' EDIBLE GARDEN EVALUATION





Aim: To teach students about reusing organic waste and recycling it within the school system by creating a place to grow and eat.

The journey began in 2005 as a trial in four Marlborough schools. Today there are 20 schools in the Marlborough programme with raised gardens, a curriculum-based programme and a funded facilitator to support learning in the garden.




The Purpose of the Evaluation:

- Determine the success of the KEGs programme in schools
- Determine the success of the KEGs programme in the curriculum
- Determine the success of the KEGs programme in school communities

This is a summary of findings.



Success of the KEGs programme in schools




- The original aims of reusing organic waste have been met
- The KEGs programme connects well with Enviroschools. Many schools are using Enviroschools as the overarching umbrella for KEGs
- The KEGs programme is an interactive way to demonstrate a full cycle of learning - reuse organic waste, grow organic edible gardens and eat the produce grown




"The freedom in the structured programme is very helpful, it adds flexibility."
(Facilitator)

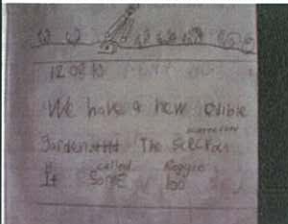


"Equal funding for time would make it more purposeful and would allow the programme to flow into the classroom better."
Funding per student.
As a school we evaluated the KEG's programme with students and staff at the end of term, it demonstrated a need and a want for more time in the garden. We get the same amount of funding as smaller schools so the students don't get much time with the facilitator in the garden."
(Lead teacher)

"All the children are involved, not just the more academic learners in the classroom. It evens out all the children; they are all on the same playing field"
(Principal)



Success of the KEGs programme in the curriculum


- 53% of the respondents believed the KEGs programme provided opportunities to connect the programme with all parts of the curriculum
- It offers flexibility to use the garden as a learning tool
- KEGs assists with the delivery of the curriculum, has made learning fun and real, giving opportunity for all students to shine

"There is different weighting but all of them are there"
(Lead teacher)

"We also cover the Maori aspect and links using the garden, the garden's use is endless, it just needs imagination." (Facilitator)


"I use it as a lever; it links with the curriculum and captures the key competencies."
(Facilitator)



"All key competencies are touched on within the KEGs programme."
(Principal)

"Under the enquiry umbrella of science, social studies, health; Reading and literature are shared using books, poetry, websites... Thinking hats, diagrams, blends and even art. Water colour paintings for an exhibition, line drawing and practical planting."
(Lead teacher)

"All competencies are covered depending on the age group. The older students definitely, the younger ones have more fun so there is less of a focus."
(Facilitator)



Success of the KEGs programme in school communities

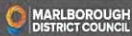
- Students reported sharing knowledge with family and encouraging them to reuse organic waste at home. Many had set up their own worm farms, composting system and some had their own garden
- Surplus produce from school gardens are shared with the school community along with seasonal easy recipe ideas
- Parents/caregivers saw the savings the gardens provided. Some identified their garden as a place which increased family time and improved family communication




"I have 4 children. My eldest 2 were not involved with KEGs, the school didn't have the programme yet, and they are definitely not gardeners. My younger 2 have gone through the KEG's programme and they love gardening. There is such a big difference between the 2 that are doing KEGs and the 2 that haven't. They love to plant and play in the garden; not that they like to eat the veges, they give away what they have grown and love to share and teach their skills to others"
(Parent)


"My son only gives me a small snippet of his day at school, but when he has been in the garden I get loads more feedback on the happenings at school for that day"
(Parent)

"The programme brings all threads together and connects them – life long skills like growing, cooking, compost beside science and the technical information that they would normally learn in a classroom."
(Parent)




Conclusion

- The Evaluation of the Kids' Edible Garden programme has demonstrated that the programme is being implemented as intended and is achieving all of its initial objectives
- KEGs teaches students to reuse organic waste, grow organic edible gardens, eat the produce grown and cook easy recipes using seasonal produce




Identified Issues and recommendations

- 1. Schools overburdened with workloads**
The facilitator is key to maintaining the programme. Without funding to support this role almost all schools, especially the lower decile schools, would have to stop delivering the KEGs Programme
- 2. KnowledgeNet is not being utilised**
Provide training on eKnowledgeNet to facilitators and appropriate teachers so they get the benefits from this site
- 3. Distribution of funding for the programme**
Fund the KEG's schools on a pro rata basis, based on the number of students participating in the programme.




- 4. Standard hours in garden each week (Winter months are quiet while the summer months busy)**
- 5. Allow schools to use funded hours as needed so they can work with students more during the busy warmer months and less in the cooler months**
- 5. Awareness of community programmes that could support families and programmes at the school**
- 6. Provide information on programmes about Marlborough Community Hubs and Community Gardens.**
Request information for school newsletters and pamphlets to schools on what's available in the community



6. Students requested more cooking time
 Link with grandparents/parents to help run cooking classes or seek volunteers through Volunteer Marlborough.

7. Some facilitators feel overloaded to maintain gardens (weed, water etc).
 Develop a roster system resource for the students that would maintain the garden, educate students and remove any extra workload from the facilitator. The students take ownership of their garden and work as a team.
 Remind facilitators that the KEG's gardens are an education tool and it's ok for them to become messy.



What the schools are saying ...


"Without MDC funding KEGs in my opinion would not survive. The support from council enables a consistency in resources, sharing of knowledge and training for facilitators. The teacher training is also made possible with teacher release funding. MDC provides great support of the KEG's programme with the key links and umbrella support from Enviroschools."

"Facilitators are the key, they are needed."

"For sustainability a paid facilitator is needed....."

"Sustainability of the programme relies on maintaining a facilitator. The programme wouldn't work if a facilitator was not provided."

"The programme offers important life skills that we can't afford to loose in society. We as a school want to grow the programme and strengthen KEGs, so we could possibly sustain some components, but funding does help to keep a facilitator."



*"It's life and life skills"
 All senses are used - taste, smell, visual and touch. The children are connected to what they are doing rather than abstract learning, they get practical skills."*



"It links learning with nature and the environment in a real hands on way. It is a programme that could capture all learning" .

