



# Neighborhood lights

## School gardens

### BACKGROUND.

By mid 2017, the elementary schools of Seville found themselves in the center of a press turmoil due to the extraordinarily high temperatures the students were suffering inside their classrooms.

This situation sparked a broader discussion, not only on climate conditions, but also on the influence of open spaces in schools on education itself, the means of integration and politics of gender. Within this context, several proposals have arisen to deal with these difficulties. Because of the urgency of the situation, most of the proposals addressed the problems from a strictly technical point of view.

But from another side, there has been a grassroots movement started by the educational community with the goal of stopping the deterioration of open spaces at schools. While most of these spaces tend towards homogeneity, some new landscape strategies appear, attempting to improve the situation from a holistic perspective.

“Neighbourhood lights\_2017” is a clear example of these emerging movements in the educational community, favouring a collaborative intervention on 5 schools driven by thoughts on health, climate, diet and education through nature based strategies.

### AIM OF THE INTERVENTION.

The intervention aims to show that it is possible not only to have more temperate open spaces at schools, but that they could also become more educational, healthy, nourishing, diverse, fascinating and even magical.

To fulfill such a goal it is not necessary to draw up complicated proposals. We are of the opinion that it is enough to simply profit from the plants growing around us. Therefore it is not necessary to spend a lot of money, just time and patience. It is necessary to collect plants and to cultivate them, following a serene path in contrast to the constant urgency of some other initiatives.

The intervention also tries to show that the educational community itself is capable of creating and generating self-sufficient activities connected to the existing materials within the schools. This includes collecting plant life and other simple tasks with the end goal of creating cooler, healthier, educational, nourishing, diverse, fascinating and magical spaces.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION.

The interventions are divided into 5 school gardens from different neighbourhoods in the City of Seville. Each of these interventions tries to explore the possibilities each school has to improve certain elements, such as its health conditions, climate, food, diversity or education, all done through landscape strategies.

The interventions have been made through the direct participation of the students and the educational community with 5 creative teams. These 5 teams are composed of architects, landscape architects, gardeners, environmentalists, musicians, journalists, and photographers.

The students comprise more than 250 participants, who, in the time period of three months, have explored the botanical species around their schools and homes. Their discoveries and experiences were depicted and shared to the general public through digital cartographies. These experiences formed the background for designing landscapes and gardens with the aim to improve the current conditions at their schools.

### ASSESSMENT

This process came to its critical peak at the exhibiting space of Casa Murillo. There, some of the artifacts and prototypes were displayed as lighting devices as an insight into the future works to be developed at the schools themselves. From this perspective, we believe that the paradigm of sustainability must be nourished not only by the scientific certainties, but also by some other cultural narratives mixing functionalism and symbolism.

Afterwards these pieces were brought to the schools, where they keep growing beneath a continuous program of maintenance and care. Hopefully this spring they will collect their very first harvest.

On the design and construction of these installations up to 45 creatives have participated, together with 33 teachers and more than 250 students.

Already 7000 citizens have visited the different landscape interventions.

The Cultural and Education Board of the City of Seville are committed to continue with this program of activities, incorporating 5 new schools in the next year.

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## 1. MARKET GARDENS

“Market Gardens” is a proposal to transform “Salvador Távora High School” into a landscape lab on wheels, where they would work on nutritional experiments through the construction of 18 mobile market gardens. This High School shares the prevalent paradigm of modern cities, a continuous skin of concrete and asphalt with isolated spots of vegetation. Very little is left from ancient Seville, which was populated by multiple market gardens within

its historical core, inside the city walls. From this point of view, “Salvador Távora High School” is the perfect lab to nurture nature again, precisely on those spots where its presence has been for a long time forgotten, like enclosed courtyards, terraces and roofs.

Design: Pablo Pardal, Pepa Gervasini; Participants: IES Salvador Távora; Collaborators: Pablo Viveros; Lighting: Benito Jiménez; Production: El Mandaíto; Narration: Surnames; Curator: Nomad Garden; Cultural promoter: Ayuntamiento de Sevilla

