



Enthusiasm spread from individual initiatives to collective action

In one Spanish school the principal noticed and seized the opportunity to act as part of the Eco-schools network and receive support from the ECF4CLIM project for the development of environmental activities. The school received help from many organizations. Together, with support from organizations like CIEMAT, ARBA, Ecoescuelas, and CENEAM, they learned about clean energy, recycling, and biodiversity conservation, how to save water, trees, forests and how nature is important. They understood better what and why actions for sustainability are important.

What helped them most in engagement was enthusiasm and effective planning. When everyone wanted to do something good for the planet and by working together, they achieved things. They also created a network of environmental friends and invited other schools to participate and shared their ideas. To make it all work, it was important that the

principal appointed one teacher as the official program coordinator. Finding time for activities was challenging as it was difficult to fit ECF4CLIM activities into regular classes. They managed to use recess for their activities, art classes to make posters and to include special time in the school schedule for project activities.

What can we learn from these experiences? Individual attitudes, emotions and initiatives are very important to succeed in engaging others in collective action. Intrinsic motivation, peer influence, and an emotional connection to nature are key drivers of engagement. Also collaboration, planning and inclusive facilitation were key to sustaining participation. Students' commitment deepened when they felt their voices mattered. Hands-on learning and basic sustainability knowledge formed the foundation, while personal reflection and open dialogue enabled wider inclusion. However, sustainability values were not always prioritised, often being challenged by academic pressures and inconsistent role-modelling. Strong pedagogical leadership was essential for fostering meaningful whole-school engagement.