Reviewer's report

Title: A Haven of Green space: Learning from a pilot pre-post evaluation of a school-based social and therapeutic horticulture intervention with children

Version: 0 Date: 27 Jul 2017

Reviewer: Federica Sancassiani

Reviewer's report:

This paper is about findings about the impact of a pilot "Social Therapeutic Horticulture (STH)"-based intervention on social and emotional skills of school children aged 10-14.

If considered the really preliminary and innovative nature of the study, I appreciated the potential social impact of the program implemented, mainly based on participatory methodologies in the school setting.

Overall, the paper needs to be better organized and simplified, in order to make easier the reading and to better appreciate procedures and findings. Hence, authors should consider to use a schema like this, both in the abstract and in the entire text:

- Background (with study aims)
- Methods (design of the study; setting/procedures; sample; assessment tools; statistical analyses; ethics)
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusion

Authors should better describe the procedure used by teachers to recruit the children included in the study protocol, specifying the reason why it was decided to include just children with BEDS and not all children in the classrooms. Furthermore, authors should better describe the qualitative method used to analyze the MWIA. They only referred generically to Braun V, Clarke V. Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology 2006, 3:77-101, without specify which kind of thematic analysis they performed in the present study.
Finally, due to the small size of the sample, as well as the absence of a control group, authors should better emphasize the preliminary nature of the study in the title, in the aims, as well as in the discussion and conclusions.

Mainly for this reason, in my opinion, it is not appropriate to insert any consideration about the study of Ohly et al, 2016. Authors might consider to write a comment about that study in another paper.

Please, find in attachment the paper revised with my comments.

Are the methods appropriate and well described?
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.
No

Does the work include the necessary controls?
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.
No

Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.
Yes

Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.
I am able to assess the statistics

Quality of written English
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:
Acceptable

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