

The Potential of Urban Agriculture in Poverty Alleviation
Implementation of Communal Vegetable Gardens at “Horta do Pocinho”

Morro dos Prazeres - Rio de Janeiro

2024

Proposed Project Summary

The China Latin America Youth Challenge to Alleviate Poverty

by

Fábio Augusto Riani Cirino

Marcia Stella Benzaquen

The Poverty Alleviation Challenge and the 5W1H Methodology

The 5W1H methodological approach consists of a powerful tool box in terms of synthesizing and organizing content and ideas that are bound to be conveyed to different audiences, provenient from distinct realities and backgrounds. It provides a means for, on the one hand, sharing knowledge and, on the other making it possible to compare varied situations as they present themselves in their nuances. It also provides a means of delving deeper into complex multilayered issues, thereby dissecting its constituent parts in order to make them clearer and more precise.

Our project is based on a Case Study of the implementation of a Communal Vegetable Garden in a very particular community called Pocinho, located at the center of a favela called Morro dos Prazeres, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

****An important note on terminology**

As will be later clarified, the general term ‘*Community*’ came to bear a very unique meaning in the Brazilian Portuguese Language of the new Millenium. As opposed to merely denoting a gathering of human beings who share a common living area, and maybe also values and other defining characteristics, the term nowadays points to what was once more broadly referred to as slums or favelas. It has since largely replaced these formerly employed terms due to what is

now regarded as a more politically correct attitude and referral to those who inhabit the area in order to avoid prejudice and promote a more positive approach to population diversities. In our text, terms may be used interchangeably in order to promote readability and familiarity with the issue at hand.

We shall, then, proceed by going straight on to the application of the 5W1H methodology to our project in order to present our case along with its suggestions for tackling the matters at hand..

→ **What** is poverty?

We understand Poverty as a broad and far reaching concept that encompasses primarily a complete Lack of Hope and Perspectives of reaching the following essential aspects of life:

- Employment, Work and sufficient Income
- Access to Sports, Leisure and Culture in its broader conception
- Proper Housing, Shelter and Clothing
- Food Security both in terms of quantity and quality
- Access to Education from fundamental elementary Schools on to higher education levels
- Access to Health Services
- A clean, safe environment, providing the essential right to come and go

We here attempt to explore the notion that Poverty is a pervasive and widespread issue that affects most major areas of life, undermining the possibility of a human being to grow into a healthy, productive, active, stable, self-sustaining and self assured member of society.

In our conception of Poverty, its alleviation would consist in restoring the hope in a possible life, with its essential ingredients being attainable, with integrity being safeguarded, both physically and mentally, with the possibility of a brighter and healthier present and future; turning a fulfilling existence into a palpable and feasible prospect for those living in the outskirts of main towns, in irregular dwellings, underprivileged living complexes, communities such as favelas and extremely low income regions.

We understand that poverty shows itself with many different faces and can be looked at from several perspectives. Ours is a somewhat humble attempt at sharing a reality that has become harsher and more diffuse as time has elapsed.

→ **When** did this Poverty producing mechanism begin?

Brazil is a large, almost continental in size, country that has a long history of foreign mainly European colonization as well as an intense enslavement heritage, both of aboriginal individuals and of peoples from African descent. This has imparted to the country many of the distinguishing features, which remain relevant to the present day when looking at the nation from a socio-cultural, political and economical perspective. As a colony to an European Metropolis, Brazil was, along several centuries, economically ravaged and exploited and its natural riches were mainly taken away from the country in order to be commercialized in the world market. In this sense, it may be said without exaggeration that colonizers did not care for the land in the least, since their main objective was not nurturing the land that was so abundant in resources, but wanted essentially to extract goods from the soil and minerals from the uncountable ores, such as precious stones gold, silver and whatever valuable goods that might come in hand. Degradation ensued. Much of Brazil's arable land was committed to Sugar Cane and Coffee plantations that exacted from the land much of its fertility. Monoculture was the way understood as being the most profitable to face the demands of the increasing world market. Many lives were sacrificed, especially aboriginal indigenous and African ones. Diseases became widespread in certain areas due to malnutrition, poor living conditions and overwork.

With the advent of Industrialization, there was a massive Rural Exodus, in which many of the field workers who previously were slaves, came to developing towns in search of occupations and means of living. This phenomenon replicated itself in different regions of the country. Cities became engorged with people, there was disordered growth of big towns and unsustainable urbanization. Along with it came irregular dwellings that served as precarious housing for thousands and then millions of people who, while not having formal education and capacitation, searched for means of livelihood. Several groups were underprivileged from the outset. The abolition of slavery took place towards the end of the XIX th century, and was initially more theoretical than actual. Slaves, who formerly had a sort of home, some access to food and a precarious but existing context, eventually migrated to towns where they had absolutely nowhere to go and no way of supporting themselves. Prejudice became their lot. Many tried by all means to find work by living as close to job opportunities as they could and this was the origin of many of the irregular housing complexes found today in Brazil's major cities. And as years went by, with population growth, there was an unhealthy swelling of the urban fabric.

We reached a point in which, in Brazil of the XXI st century, there are 17 million people living in more than 10 thousand Favelas (densely populated communities with unsafe, irregularly built dwellings, extremely poor sanitation conditions, difficult access by public transportation, no proper electricity provision, deficient and improper water supply, precarious and deficient education and much installed violence by organized gangs and drug dealings) by the year 2022. The city of Rio de Janeiro alone counts 22% of its population (total Rio de Janeiro's population in 2024 close to 6,8 million inhabitants) as favela residents as to the present date.



This is approximately what a typical Favela looks like: densely populated, irregularly built, unsafe dwellings, difficult physical access, insufficient adequate water, energy, sanitation, schooling and health supplies. Insecurity that stems from several fronts.

→ **Where** was our case study of Poverty and its alleviation endeavor carried out?

We are talking about a very particular favela called Morro dos Prazeres, situated at the very heart of the city of Rio de Janeiro.



Morro dos Prazeres is an urban community in the sense we have described above. It is home to our projects along with a couple of similar initiatives

- We are looking at a very steep sloped favela (55 degrees inclination from sea level) with more than 10000 inhabitants. The pictures give a very faint idea of the living conditions.
- Our case study is an ongoing project in the heart of this community, called '**Horta do Pocinho**' which translates to "Little Well Vegetable Garden".
- A previous "Urban Void" in the same location was transformed into what is now a flourishing and fruiting Communal Vegetable Garden.
- "Urban Voids" are defined as idle spaces, vacant and abandoned lots, that spread diseases caused by garbage accumulation and mosquitoes (that amply reproduce in that favorable environment); those are spaces where land is being wasted, used many a time for criminal, illegal practices, affecting, moreover, the external beauty of the region. These are potentially viable plots of land which are underutilized, abandoned within the urban fabric, more often than not neglected, thus contributing to social and economic exclusion.

- Here such a plot was totally revitalized from its original state into a flowering and vibrant communal vegetable garden.



Many pictures of equivalent endeavors at Morro dos Prazeres are available searching for key words: Morro dos Prazeres; horta comunitária.

It is important to stress that existing initiatives such as Horta dos Prazeres Vegetable Gardens, also located at Morro dos Prazeres, are currently being built through the program '*Hortas Cariocas da Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro*' and the currently emphasized activation of the Pocinho Communal Vegetable Garden (Horta Comunitária do Pocinho) are all today taking place through a socio environmental program called *Favela-Parque*.

→ **Why** is it relevant, **why** here, **why** is it happening?

- This was probably the most difficult question to answer, since there are so many points and such varied aspects to touch. We all ask ourselves **why?** **Why** all this misery? **Why** is it all still happening? **Why** can't we halt it? Seems so simple to solve... However, apart from those aspects that we can understand and describe, there are several others whose surface we merely scratch due to their inner complexities.
- We concentrated on **why** it so happens that there is so much poverty and **why** we must tackle the problems at hand.

- Because... in this particular zone, as in many other similar irregular dwelling aggregates, where there is mainly a very low income and resource distribution, there are serious disease risks due to dense population concentration, which favours the spread of such medical entities as Tuberculosis, which is rampant in big cities in Brazil; improvised housing, many times with no sewage systems; extremely poor sanitation, deficiency in continuous and adequate drinkable or usable water and electricity supplies; precarious and sometimes non existent health services; insufficiently staffed and equipped educational establishments; lack of access to proper transportation; poor chances of reaching a minimally decent income, deficient provision of healthy affordable food products and, therefore, imbalanced eating habits.
- Moreover, there is rampant environmental degradation due in great part to little awareness of the importance of preservation of one's surroundings; there is urgent need for public policies that can recognize and tackle these challenges, and thus something must be done immediately to preserve these areas.



Dotted line indicates Degraded area transformed into communal vegetable gardens through proposed initiatives and shared labor.



Collaborative cleaning activities in front of communal vegetable gardens - *Horta Comunitária do Pocinho, Adilson, one of the gardening leaders in the center, along with kids and other residents - April 14 th, 2024.*



Event for celebrating the approval of Favela Parque projects, how highlighting William, one of the contributors from Horta do Pocinho, *03 de fevereiro de 2024.*

- There is much pollution, inadequate garbage disposal, litter accumulation, risks of landslides that may wipe out all buildings and precarious constructions in cases of intense rainfall, which, not rarely, wash away and completely destroy neighborhoods in their entirety, many a time while their residents are still inside.
- There is a fundamentally pressing issue which is the extreme violence to which this population is exposed, perpetrated by outlaws, drug dealers and as a consequence of everyone's harsh living conditions. The widespread settling of dealers gangs inside communities has a long history. The fact that favelas are generally built on top of the hills gives a strategic advantage to those who wish to maintain territorial control. A very sordid power struggle happens within favelas and inhabitants are many a time victims of cross fires between gangs and police raids, turning daily life into a battlefield. Young children are particularly susceptible to being attracted and join the ranks of drug distributors since this is a way for making "quick and easy" money. Many are enticed while they are idling away outdoors and may enter a path from which there is no return. In this respect, common vegetable gardens may offer a protective atmosphere that transforms young people's vulnerability into an empowering means of gaining control over one's destiny. Different futures are envisioned, in which it becomes possible to break vicious circles that end up perpetuating themselves since, for lack of alternatives, many young kids end up involved in criminal deeds which, if untouched, plunge them into a marginalized life that, more often than not, ends up tragically and precociously. Thus, fight against several forms of violence, psychological, physical, abuses of all sorts may be substantially hindered by implementing communal vegetable gardens as part of a multifaceted approach to diminish inequalities and build bridges that deal with social gaps.
- Because of the gradual disappearance of solidarity, especially where there is plenty of suffering; we feel interventions must take place that can transform this harsh reality and break the current vicious cycle.
- Due to unequal competition and individualism that characterizes modern urban societies and undermines efforts to envision a common shared Good.

→ **Who** is involved? **Who** is benefitting from the project? **Who** is supporting the idea?

- We may say that there is a combination of efforts by several different actors going into this endeavor.
- Local residents participate in each and every phase of the implementation process, from the clearing and cleaning till the collection of the yielded fruits and vegetables.
- Volunteers come to help, some of whom are students, some live in other parts of town, others already take part in similar activities elsewhere and come to share their knowledge; by the same token they may experience new realities, learn new practices and techniques.
- Professionals such as environmental and agronomic engineers, who give lectures (on how to cultivate the land, sow the seeds) and organize varied workshops that multiply knowledge and share wisdom. University students from varied backgrounds.
- School pupils and teachers come and bring their youthful energies to the gardens, learning how they may cultivate land in their own institution, thereby reproducing and multiplying the novelties they have acquired.
- All of them are both participants in the project, helping to care for the land and the recovered terrains and benefit from the experience of making real change happen, seeing the product of their work actually come to life.



Fresh produce directly obtained from Horta do Pocinho (2024)

→ **How** can we go on to actually fight poverty and its repercussions?

We propose that Poverty Alleviation in Morro dos Prazeres as in several other similar communities should begin by:

- Caring for the local environment and thereby fostering the local economy.
- Promoting ongoing educational, cultural and leisure activities.
- Ensuring a healthy way of life, increasing outdoor activities, for both body and soul through daily contact with Nature, working the land, caring for the surroundings and environment as a whole, growing fresh foods, contributing to biodiversity.
- Fighting food insecurity: Fresh locally planted and grown produce may be consumed by the community's inhabitants, exchanged for other goods, sold or used for healthy local school meals.
- Educating and empowering community leaderships; providing training and practical aid.
- Through the implementation of Communal Vegetable Gardens, a homemade solution with relatively low costs, which is easily reproducible in several other similar and also entirely different settings, can be learnt and multiplied by people of all ages.

- A Communal Vegetable Garden is a space that provides a living platform for learning new techniques and providing workshops such as composting, proper garbage disposal, creativity and solidarity. It provides for the productive and creative use of terrain bringing ecological awareness and opening doors for alternative lives that include hope for clean, safe environments, where all generations and backgrounds may come together in order to foster a brighter today and a possible tomorrow. A space where life is multiplied and the true fruits of labor may be produced and reproduced.
- Such a garden is not only a self sustaining endeavor, in the sense that, once it is under way, it yields new fruits, seeds, has the potential of becoming a large compost producing area; it also fosters multiplication of techniques and possibilities, so that people may wish to implement them in their own backyard or common flower beds. It beautifies the environment, promotes biodiversity as many species come together to enjoy the green spaces. Musicality is brought in from birds singing and colourful sceneries are a reality where butterflies roam about happily. It is life bursting with joy.



Sharing knowledge in a local field work workshop



Kids learn from volunteers and local residents who promote project continuity

In the above picture, from March 2nd 2024 from Horta do Pocinho Archive - Local children handling the beauty and the life contained in a little pumpkin, product from Horta do Pocinho. The engagement of all ages in this project is a powerful way of fostering intergenerational exchanges, solidarity, respect for self and others and seeing the results of common efforts. Education is one of the strongest aspects of local communal vegetable gardens implementation and its most reality changing impact. The possibility of a peaceful fruitful life is physically touched, making it real.



Preparatory steps and initial planting in Horta do Pocinho - 2024



Autumn 2024 - Produce from the Horta do Pocinho fields are being separated for distribution

- Meant as a solution that encompasses all generations, much of the initiative was youth based in the sense that young professionals took the lead and coupled opportunities found in governmental projects to start a completely new era where ideas leave printed paper and become reality.

- The innovation here is, first and foremost exactly the act of bringing traditional ways of subsisting and weaving it into urban life while incorporating agriculture into the city fabric of those towns in which, otherwise, what is valued is mainly higher and tighter apartment and office buildings made of cement, steel, and rarely any vegetation or living creatures around.

- We must bear in mind the importance of fighting against several modes of pollution. In this sense, green and productive areas serve as purer breathing atmosphere providers, lending densely populated areas more oxygen, less landslides, soil protection, less littering, more conscient garbage disposal and respect to the surroundings.

- Following is a sample of the teaching ambiance shared in the Composting Workshop promoted by Agronomical Engineers at the Horta dos Prazeres facilities. They show the ones attending the activity, the full trajectory of waste products as well as the costs and hazards involved in inadequate garbage disposal on the one hand and the ways to combat and alter this reality by adequate selection and use of house leftovers and litter.

- The knowledge multiplication factor of these initiatives cannot be overlooked. Each attending participant becomes a more knowledgeable individual, who spreads the acquired concepts and turns them into real, palpable reality transforming tools.

- Communal Vegetable Gardens such as Horta do Pocinho make these enriching gatherings possible and are a living schooling ground, capable of bearing natural and intellectual fruits not only for locals, young and old alike, but units for replication purposes.



September 2024 - Composting Workshop at Morro dos Prazeres - Knowledge is being shared and care for the environment promoted as adequate garbage disposal and proper use of waste products is fomented.

“Do you know where your home garbage is disposed of?” - this is the question posed by the agronomy engineers at the workshop, while giving an overview of the available disposal facilities from a historical perspective and new options for economically and environmentally friendly domestic waste handling.

→ According to official numbers, 50% of domiciliar waste is composed of organic matter. Every Rio de Janeiro citizen generates a mean daily waste quantity estimated at 1,35 kg *per capita*. Thus, we are talking about 8.700.000 kg of waste products that need to be handled daily at extremely high costs, which must be made by trucks, hence impacting heavily on the environment and the public budget.

→ As secondary gains from the aforementioned teaching contents, one is exposed to statistical perspectives upon the garbage composition of urban households and the costs of maintaining the present status quo; those are some of the red alerts as to the

dangers ahead. Enlightenment on the subject helps to ensure more people become aware of the current state of affairs, are capable of changing it and may take proper care of household waste, thus contributing to a better breathing air for the community as a whole and eventually to all humanity.

→ Organic matter in waste products is one of the main factors contributing to the greenhouse effect and global warming processes which are nowadays imposing a heavy burden on our planet.

Making the best use of acquired knowledge on garbage composition in the city of Rio de Janeiro and ensuring its adequate destination, fights improper handling of house wastes diminishing random littering, which is yet another one of the aspects that may be tackled through Communal Vegetable Gardens. Organic waste may be adequately transformed into rich compost material that enhances the soil's fertility and boosts crops while caring for the environment and its biodiversity and balance.

The vegetable gardens open space provides both a living school for compost production and a repository of fertilizing material where each resident may both contribute with adequate food remains to the composting process and enjoy from a high quality homemade, artificial chemicals free vegetable production enhancer.

An overview of the meaning of our proposed project - narrative of the above proposition

Communal Vegetable Gardens are actually institutions for applying Urban Agriculture as a solution to the main social and environmental problems created by the rampant urbanization. It may be regarded as a “social technology”, intrinsically connected to the surrounding space and capable of transforming the city (DIAS; MORALES, 2019); a privileged space for development and sociability (SANTOS et al., 2022), an inestimable platform from which one may observe change processes, community renovation, interaction and involvement, social cohesion, urban landscape that brings beauty to dwelling spaces and improve neighbourly relations. (SUVIMALI; HERATH, 2021).

Seedling Nursery produced by Horta dos Prazeres - Autumn 2024

The vegetable gardens we came to propose do not solve all the mentioned challenges at once. However, their existence in the urban context is in its way revolutionary, in the sense that it fosters transformation both in cities and their inhabitants and visitors, and therefore their implementation should be continued and constantly tested for improvements, since it is a potential and possible home made solution to several of the issues previously presented, tackling environmental and social challenges head on (OLIVEIRA, 2021).



Table laid for community activities. April 15th, 2024.

As to the main benefits, first and foremost we hold the gardens as an all encompassing strategy for guaranteeing better health in deficient communities (CAMELO et al., 2023), since they have the potential to directly confront physical, social and mental aspects of life in their complexities, giving access to nutritious foods that combat obesity and diseases related to ultra processed foods and provides opportunities for interactions, therapeutic contact with the soil and green areas, through gardening activities, fruit and vegetable caring, growing and sharing besides

local embellishment of surroundings (MICHELLON, 2016; PEDRO et al., 2020; CAMELO et al., 2023).

An example for the potential of the Vegetable Gardens for health promotion is reported in a critical research work in social and community psychology in communal vegetable gardens in the interior of the State of São Paulo which aimed to confer a higher level of socio environmental awareness to dwellers. The study found significant group organization consolidation, personal development of the participants and improvements in interpersonal relationships as well as reduction of shyness, fostering of self confidence, setting common goals and support and affection networks that went much beyond the gardening activities in themselves. (SANTOS et al., 2022).



Separation of vegetables for distribution by the Horta dos Prazeres Team (Luiz, Adilson and Luisa) April 2nd, 2024.

Besides, vegetable gardens may be understood as “educational environments” (CAMELO et al., 2023), while providing tools for acquiring substantial nutritional information, education and self care (BATITUCCI et al., 2019); they are a collective laboratory for the exchange of socio spatial practices and knowledge (DIAS; MORALES, 2019). They are places that promote ecological and sustainable awareness through practice, workshops and courses which resignify the garden as a classroom, where different curricula and fields of study are shared (PEDRO et al., 2020).

A sound example is found in the book “*Urban Vegetable Gardens: when sustainability meets the city*” (OLIVEIRA, 2021), which proposes that education be approached through action based on interdisciplinary science and popular wisdom, upon dialogues and associative cooperation between popular and academic knowledge.

The agronomic engineer Jay Van Amstel and Maria José Teixeira Carneiro contribute profoundly to thinking about the potential of communal vegetable gardens in fostering education. According to them, community dwellers hold a particular kind of knowledge, they call “intercognitive”, which goes much beyond adaptation and is forged by dealing with social challenges, present in their settings, on a daily and creative basis.

It means, thus, independently from all the hardships they face, favela residents will find their own means for making it through. However, it is necessary for these same residents to participate in discussions about improvements in their territory, along with preventive measures for environmental preservation. Their participation is essential since they know their own spaces in a unique fashion and are immersed in them on a day to day basis, actually living an approach that is *bottom up* e estão inseridos neles diariamente, where demands from residents are being raised primarily by themselves.

Amstel says it is necessary to “graft” sustainable practices and green technologies into favelas, like domestic composting, vegetable gardening, green backyards, green ecological sanitation; all this through community based environmental education. These fashions of education are called “multiplications”, networks of mutual help which take place in favelas (SARDAN, 2005), which value the most those actions that take place within the community, headed by local community agents and mobilizers, who promote them through their roots and their feeling of belonging that enables an open dialogue with the territory.

Another relevant point is that, the fact of thinking of the Favela and Nature as opposite poles, results in a separation between human beings as transforming agents on the one hand, and Nature as an objectified and crystalline structure on the other. This dichotomy must be overcome through a resignification that understands the Favela as a landscape that associates Nature and residents engagements with the environment through several activities such as herbs cultures, fruit trees planting and animal breeding (CARNEIRO, 2020).

This scenery constitutes a testimony to the lives and works of past generations, those who had previously inhabited those grounds and is, consequently, symbol of a production shared by

Man and Environment, where balance is essential so that a very special type of knowledge remains alive, such as herbal cures, agricultural hints, that concerning native seeds, ancestral practices and land care rituals.

Urban communal vegetable gardens may, moreover, play an essential role in restoring environmental balance in urban communities by improving water drainage and avoiding overflow caused by concrete's low permeability, which is directly responsible for floods and accidents, (BATITUCCI et al., 2019); contribute with restoration and nutrition of com a biodiversity, capable of balancing and controlling microclimate, creating an enjoyable atmosphere for both work and land labouring (SUVIMALI; HERATH, 2021; PEDRO et al., 2020).

The sustainability of these gardens is guaranteed through adequate practices that involve composting and organic cultures beside efficient resource management, that include reducing, recycling and reusing plastics, which may involve the entire community. The different sorts of gardens eventually meet with knowledge on seeds and their sowing acquired in multiple workshops and updating courses. Responsible use of resources, such as water collection, is essential for maintaining balance in garden functioning. Moreover, it is fundamental that there be a support network made of institutions that may provide capacitation and resources such as working tools, seeds, fertilizers and soil as they may be necessary.

Besides, the creation of such gardens generates complementary income, develops and enhances the value of local services and links production to community needs (BATITUCCI et al., 2019), thereby contributing to reduction of local residents expenditures with foods and medicine. They make for a strategy for personal income increase through the vegetable garden crops and derived products (SUVIMALI; HERATH, 2021; PEDRO et al., 2020; CAMELO et al., 2023).

Dwellers in favelas generally have limited self sufficiency and must ever be wandering about in search for subsistence and bringing it into the community (MENDRAS, 1976). A communal vegetable garden shortens distances, and offers a more nutritious and organic food alternative, according to differentiated planting strategies. Whatever exceeds local use may be commercialized and donated, which may signify a substantial aid to many who are in more financially critical conditions.

Last but not least, these gardens are spaces for recreation and coexistence (CAMELO et al., 2023), promoting collective activities and multifaceted socialization, where experiences are shared and diversified, multicultural e multigenerational worldviews may be interchanged. (PEDRO et al., 2020). As shall be seen, scientific research shows that the mere presence in green areas improves well being, fosters social cooperation and empowers peripheral populations and local leaderships, thereby lessening the need for reaching out for support without the community (BATITUCCI et al., 2019).

The balance between community participation and project management may be reached through an inclusive structure, where residents take active part in decisions despite clear leadership definition.

Group work and labor division into precise functions such as caring for seedling nurseries, composting, watering, in parallel with educational projects contribute to a smooth continuation of the communal gardening project. Community events and food fairs reinforce collective bonds contributing to shared knowledge buildup, healthy collaboration that makes for a safe space in which to sustainably march ahead.

Finally, the idea of these communal gardens is meant to transcend community borders and evolve into larger and merged projects that export novelties to other towns and even countries in the hope of creating a whole generation of multipliers of fruitful foresights that may be envisioned by each and everyone of us.



Example of Vegetable Garden Productivity in Horta dos Prazeres throughout the year. (Pepper, Beans, Pumpkin, Sweet Potatoes, Tomatoes). March 19th, 2024.

The need for greener spaces as multifaceted solutions to global urban questions - A contemporary and urgent issue

As part of our research, we have come to realize that, apart from being a powerful reality changing plan for poverty alleviation, the adoption of the ideas proposed in the text may reach farther and previously unthought of destinations.

Two very recent publications in world renowned Scientific Journals have brought to surface the importance of Urban Gardens in the promotion of healthier, happier and thus more meaningful and productive lives. The first one, “An Urban Farm - Anchored Produce Prescription Program - Food as Medicine and Economic Justice”, published August 17th, 2024 In New England Journal of Medicine, Vol 391 N 8 reveals that the endeavour is meant to “reduce high levels of food insecurity among Black and Latin residents of Chicago”.

The second one, “Making Green Spaces Accessible in Cities” - from Asian Scientist Magazine, January 8th, 2025 states at its outset that “it is no secret that spending time in nature is important to human health and wellbeing, so much so that the United Nations has declared access to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment to be a **human right**”. The issue reveals a reflection by the environmental scientist Uchiyama Yuta, from Kobe University that

“Megacities in particular suffer from a lack of evidence to drive policy making towards implementing measures to facilitate time in nature”. He and his team “discovered that spots of nature near locations frequented in people’s daily lives can facilitate more time spent visiting green spaces”.



Jan 2025 - Proposed Greening of Urban Spaces in major towns according to Uchiyama Yuta

These perspectives further highlight the immense potential of urban gardens in implementing significant changes in main towns, turning urban healthy and prolific lives possible and real.



October 2024 - Embellished Horta do Pocinho ready to receive Kids for “Dia das Crianças” Children’s Day) Celebration

Support through public policies and the strengthening of already existing communal vegetable gardens networks should motivate community leaderships to implement their own similar projects. Collaboration with residents willing to implement this type of approach is crucial for disseminating the aforementioned practices, ensuring that ever more communities adopt equivalent initiatives for promoting food security and environmental awareness.

We thus contend that the initiatives introduced in this document provide for a series of benefits to the territory, including the growing of food products, educational events, knowledge exchange and also perform a fundamental role in the reduction of poverty in low income communities, while promoting an immediate alleviation of food insecurity, generating new work

and income opportunities and strengthening community bonds, these initiatives actively contribute to the improvement of living conditions and the sustainable development of the areas in which they are implemented.

The above proposed plans are evidently far from being a complete and all embracing solution to Poverty Alleviation. There is growing awareness that, as a multidimensional problem, poverty must have differentiated approaches whose combinations may strengthen the power of actually transforming realities worldwide. Moreover, the combat against poverty must be a collaborative effort between nations and so must the understanding that poverty is not a local matter but a widespread problem in the Global community with serious implications, far reaching impacts and deleterious effects. What is done daily to change the state of affairs in this realm is a source for a possible healthy, suffering and misery free world today and tomorrow.

We believe one may begin by taking this simple step, planting something in our backyard and watering it daily. It is rewarding and helps us and the planet to breath and aspire the winds of change.



Thank you for the opportunity to share our insights. We will happily receive any comments and suggestions for improvement of the present document and project as a whole. We regard the present China Latin America Youth Challenge to Alleviate Poverty initiative as a blessed one in the sense that it fosters positive exchange and collaboration to promote wellness and awareness among young people and encourages

assertive and constructive steps can and will be taken to create a more balanced, flowering and fruitful world for all upon Earth.

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