

WRITTEN REPORT

“The ultimate goal of farming is not the growing of crops, but the cultivation and perfection of human beings”

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Introduction (150 words)

Urban gardens have been growing faster in Bogota in recent years. For 2024 the district government had announced the strengthening of more than twenty thousand of them. However, citizens don't have enough information about how they work and all the benefits that urban gardens can bring to society.

Food security, environmental education and well-being are just some examples of the several areas in which urban gardens can impact in a positive way. In this way, misinformation is one of the biggest obstacles the city has to enhance.

Organizing information and sharing with people can totally change the actual perspective of agriculture and begin the journey for developing sustainable cities and communities, the objective 11th of the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) by the UN.

Due to this, this project is designed to weave networks between urban gardens in Bogota through accessible information and to facilitate the coordination of training that will enable their implementation.

Influence of the Urban Gardens (background) (200 words)

According to Worldometer, 80.51% of Colombia's population in 2025 is urban, and this number continues to grow due to migration in search of better quality-of-life opportunities.

Nowadays, urban gardens have attracted growing interest, particularly from the UN, due to their multiple benefits highlighted in numerous studies. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to urban gardens include Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-Being, Reduced Inequalities, Responsible Consumption and Production, and Sustainable Cities and Communities.

Reflecting this global interest, Bogota has become an international reference thanks to various programs and increasing community awareness. Institutions such as the Jardín Botánico de Bogotá have implemented educational programs and community projects with notable success.

Besides, highlighting the social dimension of urban gardens, a 2018 study by Diego Rodríguez and Tomás León-Sicard found that 80% of urban agriculture participants are

women, 65% have rural origins, and 74% belong to social strata 1 and 2. As Editora Bogotá notes, "...the garden has become not only an instrument for guaranteeing access to food for those who cultivate it, but also an expression of social and environmental struggle, a search for identity, community, and connection with the territory."

In short, urban gardens have the potential to impact a large part of society, yet public information about them is limited. Therefore, this project proposes a strategy to improve access to useful knowledge on the topic.

Our motivation (Rationale) (200 words)

Until now, the importance of urban gardens has been widely discussed, but at this moment it is necessary to consider how they are currently managed, how accessible is information about urban gardens for citizens, and what kind of information people need.

To answer the first question, it's necessary to mention the significant work that Jardín Botánico has done. For instance, the implementation of seed banks that allow urban farmers to manage their reserves; and other initiatives including workshops and training in agricultural techniques.

However, it is a public institution which means that they have an established budget given by the government that sometimes can be insufficient to cover more programs and expansion to other parts of the city. In addition, they have limited scope; so even when they try to reach all the citizens the information usually doesn't arrive to all the people that have interest in the area.

Even though the Jardín Botánico publishes information on its website and social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, reaching a wider audience remains a challenge. Citizens need not only information about the events but also practical guidance, resources and especially, an understanding of the social and environmental benefits of urban gardening. By combining accessible information with active community participation, the impact of urban gardens can be expanded beyond the current limitations of institutional programs.

Weeding the Network(Method and Design)

In accordance with what was mentioned in the previous sections, the first step was to carry out a survey regarding the prior knowledge that residents of Bogotá have about urban gardens. Based on these results, we identified that the greatest need lies in the organization and dissemination of information.

With this in mind, our main objective was the creation of a website that compiles all information related to urban gardens—from where to find them in Bogotá to how to establish a garden in one's own home.

To achieve this, we conducted a series of interviews with different communities that already have an urban garden in place. As expected, the first step was to locate the various existing gardens in Bogotá. The National University of Colombia served as an excellent starting point, as we found a wide variety of gardens there, including the largest one, which features an area known as “El aula viva.” In this place, we were able to interview one of the key promoters of the initiative (see link).

We also gathered a number of written interviews that were directly included on the website, where they are publicly accessible and the community can consult them to learn more about the importance of these projects. Additionally, several tutorial videos were included as quick and clear guides on how to create a home garden; these videos were sourced from YouTube.

External participation in areas outside of Bogotá further highlights the impact that these types of gardens have in other regions of the country and in society as a whole. We conducted research in different cities and interviewed educational institutions where similar projects have been implemented, including in Manizales and other places across Colombia.

Our main idea is to present this information in a clear and concise manner. Therefore, another tool we implemented was the creation of an infographic outlining the objective of this project and the key points to consider, which then directs readers to the website.

Significance and Conclusion (150 words)

This project offers a meaningful improvement over previous studies by creating an accessible and organized network of urban gardens in Bogotá. While earlier research has described their benefits, little attention has been given to how citizens can actually find gardens, learn from them, or connect with others.

Therefore, our web platform fills a critical gap by centralizing locations, practical guidance, and interviews with gardeners. As a result, the project makes information easier to understand and encourages people to participate in urban agriculture.

In addition, the initiative strengthens community ties by allowing users to exchange experiences, learn how to start their own garden, and discover local projects that often remain invisible. This contributes directly to sustainability goals and promotes social impact in urban areas.

In addition, the interviews conducted in the Aula Viva of the National University and in several schools show a strong interest in urban gardening among students and community members.

Overall, the project is worth support because it strengthens community participation, supports environmental education, and promotes sustainable and connected urban communities.

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