



Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

Coletivo Nossa Horta creates urban green spaces

Region	Latin America and the Caribbean
Award Scheme	Shanghai Manual
Themes	Environmental Resilience Regeneration Social Inclusion Others
Sustainable Development Goals	Goal 2 - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Summary

Coletivo Nossa Horta (Our Garden) is a grassroots project initiated in 2019 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to tackle food insecurity, foster community cohesion, and promote environmental sustainability through urban gardens.

Background and Objective

Brazil has experienced rapid urban growth over the last few decades, which has led to the erosion of green spaces, the fragmentation of communities, and a rise in inequality. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated food insecurity, leaving millions struggling to meet basic needs. In this context, Coletivo Nossa Horta emerged to not only provide a solution to food shortages but to create spaces for environmental education and community engagement. The project's primary goals are to enhance food security by cultivating pesticide-free, local food, strengthen social bonds by involving residents in the management of urban gardens, and foster environmental awareness through sustainable agricultural practices. By involving local residents in every step of the process, the initiative empowers communities to address their own needs while promoting a broader sense of environmental responsibility.

Actions and Implementation

Launched in 2019, Coletivo Nossa Horta brought together youth volunteers and community members in Rio de Janeiro's favelas to establish urban gardens in neighborhoods affected by food insecurity. The gardens were designed with sustainability in mind, incorporating methods such as composting, natural pest control, and the innovative use of "keyhole gardens" to maximize space, water use, and soil fertility. Each garden is managed collectively by local residents who receive a small stipend for their work. Over time, the gardens have not only alleviated food insecurity but also provided an economic model where surplus produce is sold, generating income for the community. In addition to gardening, the project has hosted numerous educational workshops, covering everything from basic gardening skills to climate change and food sovereignty, ensuring that all participants gain the knowledge necessary to sustain the gardens long-



Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

term.

Outcomes and Impacts

By 2022, Coletivo Nossa Horta had successfully established five community gardens, benefiting over 800 families by providing them with fresh produce, reducing food insecurity, and offering an additional revenue stream through the sale of surplus produce and seedlings. Beyond the economic benefits, the gardens have had a positive impact on participants' mental and physical health, offering them access to nature and social spaces. The project has also contributed to environmental sustainability by reducing reliance on industrial agriculture and promoting local, organic farming practices. The success of these gardens has prompted plans for expansion to additional neighborhoods, aiming to establish gardens in all 763 favelas in Rio de Janeiro, potentially supporting 50,000 families.

Sustainability and Scalability

Coletivo Nossa Horta is built around sustainability in both its environmental and economic models. Its focus on organic farming, local seeds, and water-efficient techniques ensures that it has a minimal environmental footprint. The economic model, where half of the produce is kept for community use and the other half is sold, has proven to be financially sustainable and allows the project to reinvest in itself. Furthermore, the success of the initial gardens has made it possible for the project to scale, with the goal of replicating the model in other cities across Brazil and internationally. The scalability of Coletivo Nossa Horta is driven by its adaptable approach, which allows it to be implemented in diverse urban contexts with varying resources and needs.

Gender and Social Inclusivity

Coletivo Nossa Horta embraces inclusivity by engaging residents from all walks of life in the design, management, and growth of the gardens. The project is open to people of all ages, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to participate. Its focus on intergenerational knowledge transfer, where older residents share traditional agricultural practices with younger participants, fosters a spirit of unity and community solidarity. This participatory approach ensures that the benefits of the project are shared equitably, helping to bridge social divides and strengthen the fabric of the communities involved.

Innovative Initiative

agriculture. The use of keyhole gardens—compact, raised beds designed to conserve water and improve soil health—is one such innovation that has allowed the project to make the most of limited urban space.



Urban Agenda Platform

The global platform for sharing progress, action and knowledge on the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to achieve sustainable urban development.

Additionally, the project promotes the use of native seeds and organic farming methods, ensuring that its produce is healthy and environmentally sustainable. By incorporating an economic model that balances community consumption with market sales, the project not only improves food security but also contributes to the local economy. The combination of sustainable farming practices, community involvement, and economic self-sufficiency makes Coletivo Nossa Horta a pioneering initiative in urban sustainability.

Resources devoted to delivery

The success of Coletivo Nossa Horta relies on both human and financial resources. The municipal government of Rio de Janeiro has played a key role in funding and supporting the project, while local community members and youth volunteers have provided the labor and expertise necessary for its implementation. Educational workshops and training programs have also been crucial to ensuring that participants have the skills needed to manage the gardens and engage in sustainable farming practices. The project has also attracted support from international organizations, which have helped to provide additional resources for expansion and sustainability. By combining local effort with institutional backing, Coletivo Nossa Horta has created a model for urban agriculture that is both community-driven and financially viable.

Conclusion

Coletivo Nossa Horta stands as a powerful example of how grassroots initiatives can address urban challenges such as food insecurity, environmental degradation, and social fragmentation. Through its innovative approach to urban agriculture, community engagement, and sustainable development, the project has created a lasting impact on the communities of Rio de Janeiro, providing food security, economic opportunity, and social cohesion. With plans for expansion and replication, Coletivo Nossa Horta offers a scalable and adaptable model that could serve as an inspiration for other cities facing similar challenges. Its success demonstrates the transformative power of community-driven solutions in addressing complex urban issues and paving the way for a more sustainable and inclusive future.