

INTERNATIONAL REGENERATION WORKSHOP

Food sovereignty and urban orchards: community-led initiatives for sustainable food environments.

Barrio 'La lucha de los pobres', Quito. Ecuador

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Workshop Coordinators:

Master International Cooperation Sustainable Emergency Architecture (MICSEA)

UIC Barcelona

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SUSTENTO 'Enhancing the resilience of alternative food systems in informal settings in Latin America and the Caribbean through bottom-up initiatives in the built environment.' A project funded by Canada's IDRC

Local actors:

AYRIWA: Vanesa Guerrero, Paulina Alulema, Maria Elvira Lopez and Michelle Herrera

Community neighborhood council: Christina Villacis, Alexandra Gonza, Janneth Espinoza and Margarita Jumbo

DESCRIPTION

Power relations impregnate environmental change, production, and reconfiguration as well as impacting communities, which are affected in different ways amongst demographics such as class, gender, and race. In other words, climate change impacts some more than others, and is navigated differently by those who are structurally less vulnerable or have the capacity to adapt to it. In this same way, environmental policies can produce good or bad outcomes and further exacerbate conflicts whilst diminishing others. Therefore, there is a need for critical perspectives on (urban) environmental issues. With this in mind, it is important to understand how green urban environments are produced and how they embody and express social relations. Food sovereignty related to environmental issues are becoming increasingly linked, and make a vital part of the green infrastructure of a settlement and its food production. This is the case of the neighborhood 'La lucha de los pobres' in Quito, Ecuador, in which its landscape and green networks are linked to the community's means of subsistence through the development of urban orchards. Located in a territory which is part of a vast urban to



rural fringe, the aspects related to climate change, risk assessment, and green productivity are of crucial importance and must be understood as part of the future urban plans of this area in Southern Quito.

UIC WORKSHOP/FIELD TRIP OBJECTIVES

The intent of the workshop is to enable students to learn how to:

- Perform effectively in a team situation
- Develop appropriate written and oral communication skills for addressing community members' concerns
- Work with urban and architectural methodologies/tools to target different needs felt by diverse social groups, and apply practical skills and knowledge learned elsewhere in the curriculum
- Work at multiple scales: from the territorial down to selected case study areas in the neighborhood responding to varied conditions
- Learn to act ethically while maintaining a balance between independent and critical professional work and responsiveness to the partners in the project
- Build the capacity of community members to carry out strategic open space betterment projects as well as acknowledging ecological and risk reduction strategies in El Barrio Lucha de los pobres, Quito, Ecuador.
- Ensure that all work developed respects and responds to ongoing urban betterment, food security and food sovereignty initiatives
- Develop and work on site on a specific advocacy action in order to contribute to the urban betterment and integration of the existing urban orchards in El Barrio Lucha de los Pobres, Quito, Ecuador.

OBJECTIVE

The workshop's objective is to develop an integrated (from landscape to urban orchards) and social diagnosis developed through community participation to deliver specific regenerative and risk prevention proposals for the 'Barrio Lucha de los Pobres' in Quito, Ecuador. Specifically, we will be involved in the regeneration and mapping of green infrastructure and urban orchards (collective and individual) as well as the systemic documentation of the overall food environment of the community spaces and households.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological process will follow five steps:

STEP 1 - OFFSITE SPATIAL DIAGNOSIS: Spatial Analysis developed before the site visit which includes:

- Analysis of existing planning documents and socio-economic data of the neighborhood and sector of Quito.
- Research, critique, and analysis of ongoing proposals, initiatives, projects, and studies by local government officials, NGOs, professional and academic researchers.
- Spatial analysis of the following urban layers and elements in the following groups:

Group 1. Green infrastructure Landscape, topography, natural elements, open spaces, parks, plazas, urban orchards; Blue infrastructure (rainwater collection, stormwater drainage, sewage systems, natural freshwater sources).

Group 2. Environmental conditions: climate change risks, natural disasters, temperature/rainfall/wind, resource availability, farming and irrigation methods. Initial risk assessment.

Group 3. ; Urban fabric and activities homogenous fabric, typology and density; urban facilities and activities (commercial, markets and food production/distribution, circular economies, industry, etc.). Informal and formal borders and typologies.

Group 4. Mobility and accessibility (public transport, roadway system, accessibility); safety, the relationship of La Lucha de los Pobres with respect to the new mobility of the Metropolitan plan.

STEP 2 - PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT ONSITE:

The verification of the OFFSITE physical analysis of the groups will continue in La Lucha de los Pobres with the four initial groups focusing on the following specific topics:

GROUP 1. Urban orchards as a connective network of the green infrastructure of the barrio. Map the existing orchards and as part of the open space system and spaces of social interaction (Civic Network). Productivity of each orchard and related to the alternative food systems. Economic model. Waste and recycling, composting. Explore how bottom-up informal solutions (particularly those initiated by women) interact with food systems.

GROUP 2. Climate risk assessment and regeneration of the 'Bella Argelia' creek. Look into the diverse existing risks: flooding, heat increase (related to the type of crops, etc.). Rainwater collection systems. What community based initiatives are implemented in order to better the creek and how the community deals with climate impacts through community based initiatives.

GROUP 3. Activities and Markets. Prototype of a possible market for the local production of the neighbourhood linked to the community or other communities' examples. Relationship of informal and formal commercial activities. Analyse existing communal activities related to the market: communal kitchens, etc. **Culturally relevant alternative food systems.**

GROUP 4. Physical connectivity. Analyse the three different topographical levels of the neighbourhood. Map the perceived physical barriers of the neighbourhood: safety, sanitation, water, lighting (electricity), social and physical infrastructure. Find strategic meeting points or public areas or voids between the three levels of La Lucha de los Pobres in order to enhance connectivity.

STEP 3 - SOCIAL APPROACHES:

- Share research and analysis of precedents of other cooperative systems that may reveal opportunities and/or limitations for the site at hand.
- Incorporate the results and recommendations already developed by the local institutions and collaborators regarding the community's perception with respect to the existing urban orchards and landscape.
- Conduct semi-structured interviews with local stakeholders and existing NGOs as well as community members to support and fill gaps in the research conducted to date by others and specifically through a spatial urban and landscape lens.

STEP 4 - SOCIO-SPATIAL INTEGRATION OF THE DATA COLLECTED AND STRATEGIC PROPOSALS:

- Assess the information regarding the physical and social input in order to develop specific proposals by groups which bridge the physical and socially based findings regarding each group's topic.
- The proposals must explain how they intend to be implemented and developed (stakeholders and actors involved, phases, budgeting ideas, etc.) as well as which are the limitations and reflections.

STEP 5 - JOINT SMALL SCALE URBAN ACTION:

A small scale advocacy project (to be determined and discussed between all participants) will be developed with stakeholders on site in order to contribute to the betterment of the area. It could also be a project where we will join forces with an existing local initiative.