

THE PROJECT



The mobile kitchen, built with the same techniques used by local street vendors. A two-day workshop was held, during which the team built a mobile kitchen to host weekend community lunches. The kitchen also serves as a social space, and is used to help sell produce—being mobile, it can move from the garden into the neighbouring streets.

São Paulo is Brazil's largest city. Hyper-urbanised and far removed from the exotic image of a laid-back tropical country, it is a multicultural metropolis full of dramatic contrasts and resulting social inequalities. The diversity of São Paulo is expressed not only by the many layers of its society, but also by the numerous cultures and ethnicities that comprise its very mixed population.

The district of São Mateus, located in the East Zone, about 20 kilometres from the centre of São Paulo, is made up of houses hiding behind walls and fences, with a distinct lack of open or greened public spaces. The local population is a mix of middle and lower income residents, most of who work in the city centre and

commute daily. The area is characterised by strong cultural expression, especially through music such as samba and funk. While São Paulo often promotes the urban development of its central areas as an exemplary model of good planning, it was in the East Zone of the city—a place that feels rather backward and underdeveloped—that the urbanxchanger team found the most appealing innovation.

Cities without Hunger's work consists mostly of organising and maintaining community and school gardens, as well as agricultural greenhouses. Apart from guaranteeing a livelihood for some of the poorest families in São Mateus, what is unique about this community initiative

SÃO PAULO

PROJECT DESCRIPTION



A Sunday lunch hosted in the garden provides an enjoyable social occasion for invited stakeholders—from government agencies, policy-makers and architects, to professionals from the fields of culture and gastronomy.

is that most of the gardens have been developed on unused and neglected public and private land, such as servitudes normally reserved for use by major utility companies.

Cities without Hunger is currently in the process of expanding operations at some of the community gardens in São Mateus, so as to allow for other revenue-generating activities. Proposed new ventures include developing local products to sell to neighbouring communities, cooking, hosting events and offering weekend meals with an educational flair.

THE GARDEN

Mr Genival is the person responsible for starting one of these food gardens under the electrical power lines of AES Eletropaulo. The 64-year-old Genival started out working alone,

but was later joined by three other families, followed by Cities without Hunger, who offered their support to the project. The garden makes an impact at a local level by greening 8,000 square metres of previously vacant land, generating income for local residents, and supplying affordable organic food to the

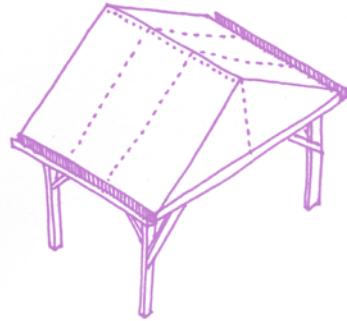


community. It also protects and maintains the land around AES Eletropaulo's transfer lines, as defined in the concession agreement signed by both parties. The agreement also stipulates other restrictions, such as the prohibition of the cultivation of tall plants and trees, and the building of permanent structures.

Genival and his wife work full time in the garden and sell some of the produce they grow in a small shop at the entrance to the garden. They also sell their produce at the local street market once a week, as well as in shops outside São Mateus. The founder of Cities without Hunger, Hans Dieter Temp, believed that there was a need for a building of some description, so that they could expand their activities beyond growing and selling their food. While the project offered garden tours for visitors, and organised educational workshops, without a structure it was difficult to properly receive people or host functions where food made with



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local products could be sampled. A space was needed where people could at least sit down and chat.

Working together with the community, the designers established what the gardeners would need from the building, both in the immediate term and the long term. To meet the needs of local stakeholders, and, at the same time project the future of the initiative, the team arrived at

THE PLAYGROUND

The garden can also be used as a place to play, entertain, and be entertained—not only for children, but for people of all ages. The playground facilities are created by repurposing or activating existing elements in the garden. These include spatial elements (the terrain, different site levels, boundaries and shade screens), material elements (tyres, waste wood, metal objects and equipment, tree trunks, foliage, sand and earth) and the very products from the garden (herbs, flowers and vegetables).

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THE GYM

The garden doubles as an outdoor gymnasium, a place for physical activity. As well as the more exerting activities, such as digging, ploughing and harvesting, the 'gym' also offers therapeutic activities like planting, pruning and watering. Gardening is also successfully used in various occupational therapies, particularly with the elderly, children, sufferers of depression, and recovering addicts. In this scenario, the garden contributes to both physical and mental health, helping to improve the quality of life of its users.

a plan containing five layers: the Roof, the Toilet, the Gym, the Playground and the Garden Goes Outside.

The aim of the plan was to change peoples' perspectives and interpretations of the area, and to bring new life into a previously neglected part of the city.

THE ROOF

The infrastructure needed to enable the garden to act as an event space was broken down into individual elements: a roof, a mobile kitchen, tables and benches. These elements were designed and built by the team in four days, after which a pilot event was held. People were invited from the central areas of the city to share food, and talk about their work and day-to-day experiences. The event allowed the team to understand what

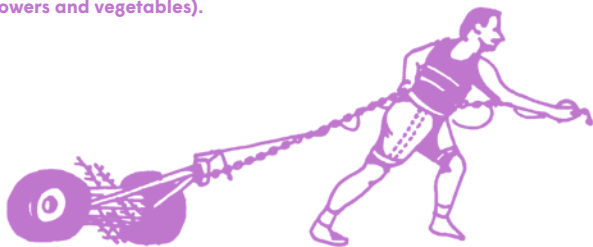
worked well, and which aspects of the project still needed refinement. In the context of the five-layer plan, the roof was the starting point and also of symbolic value: a physical example of a joint effort, reinforcing the strength of the project.

THE GARDEN GOES OUTSIDE

By extending the garden beyond its current physical limits, the team envisioned it becoming a kind of 'hub' for the community. The garden can extend into the neighbourhood in a number of different ways. The mobile kitchen is able to move around, and serve different functions: it can be used

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as a cart to sell tapioca (as suggested by Dona Sebastiana, one of the gardeners); as an alternative pharmacy; or as a stand to sell vegetables or food prepared using produce from the garden. Part of the garden could also be used as a semi-public space containing, for example, a playground and public toilets, or serving as a contemplation or meeting area. The garden products could also be sold in local shops, restaurants, bars and pharmacies.

On a larger scale, this project is intended as an inspirational example—not only for the other gardens managed by *Cidades sem Fome*, but also for the rest of the city. It highlights the potential for underutilised areas to be converted into productive spaces—in every way: economically, socially and creatively.

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Project Credits

PARTNER COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

Cities without Hunger

SÃO PAULO TEAM

Vapor 324, Andrea Bandoni and Julia Masagão

BERLIN TEAM

ConstructLab

Team participants: Alexander Römer and Pieterjan Grandry

CURATOR AND LOCAL RESEARCHER

Marcos L. Rosa