Urban Gardens in Philadelphia, PA & Camden, NJ

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Research Question

What are the social impacts of community gardens in Philadelphia, PA and in Camden, NJ?
Past Research

  - Site Surveys
  - Weighing of Harvest
  - On-site Interviews
Literature Review
Impacts

Migrant Communities
A reflection of home to migrant communities

Networks of Social Support & Mutual Aid
The exchange of information and resources

Community Healing & Harm Reduction
Mental health benefits and recovery

Aging & Generational Succession
A culture space and place for low-impact exercise
Methods
Garden Observations - Site Survey

- What are the physical structures facilitating the social environment?
- An on-the-ground analysis of the built environment
  - Area
  - Size and number of plots
  - Level of use
  - Water source
  - Posted Rules
  - Indications of social support
  - Types of crops
Garden Observations - Interviews

- What are the social impacts of community gardens, as recalled by those utilizing them?
- Five part survey:
  1. Garden Tour
  2. Garden & Neighborhood History
  3. Gardeners
  4. Harvest & Community Food Systems
  5. Interviewee’s Gardening & Personal History

Data Analysis
Ms. Park’s Story

“Sometimes I feel like it's very tiresome work because of going all the way [to Home Depot] and back on the bus, but then I see my garden and I feel very proud of myself for growing all of these vegetables for my diet.”
Cultural Preservation

“If someone goes to Korea they get seeds and sell them to the rest of the gardeners. We can use those seeds for 3-4 years. We also get seeds from Blue Farm in New Jersey, which has Korean seeds… we are planting cabbage now for next Spring to make kimchi.”
A Space for Older Individuals

“Most people who garden here live at the 40th and Market senior housing center. But they don’t socialize there - they socialize here at the garden instead.”
Funding and Relationship with the City

“I don’t need anything except for water.”
Arising Issues of Generational Succession

“I never buy vegetables from the market. I eat everything from here except in the winter. I also supply vegetables for my children, but they aren’t interested in the garden. My granddaughter graduated from Washington State University and she studied agriculture. Now she works at a ‘planting school’ and she teaches people how to farm, but she doesn’t come to help out her grandma.”
Thank you

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