Engage a Community Through a School Garden – Shenzhen Practice

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The City of Shenzhen

- Southern China, close to Hong Kong
- A City of Development and Innovation
- Population of 17 million
- High population density
- Over 65% new residents within 10 years

Community Overview

- Xinsheng Community, Longgang County, Longgang District (龙岗区龙岗街道新生社区)
- Population of 53,000, more than 50,000 are new Shenzheners
- Industrial area, soon will be renewed and develop
Education is a big issue for young parents in Shenzhen.

- Lots of newly built schools
- Nice building, but lack of greening and natural environment

Lack of quotas in public elementary and middle school in Shenzhen (Data of 2018)
Shenzhen Xiantian Foreign Studies School

• Newly opened in 2019
• K12 school in Xinsheng Community
• 48 classes in Elementary School, 24 classes in middle school
• Motto: Look up at the stars, put foot down to earth
Outdoor space that can’t be used

**Site Analysis**
- Area: 520 m²
- Open floor
- Surrounded by classrooms
- Fixed flower beds
- Low use
# How to build a Co-Building Garden?

## Planning
- Plan making
- Find key stakeholders
- Decide executive team
- Find appropriate garden location
- Prepare the fund

## Construction
- Collect Info
- Design
- Construct
  - Survey, observation
  - Design workshop
  - Building event, garden open ceremony

## Maintenance
- Garden Maintenance
  - Watering, pruning, planting, inspecting facilities, etc.
- Volunteer Management
  - Recruit, manage and maintain volunteers
- Garden Events
  - Planting events, nature education events, signage making events etc.
Users opinions matter!

**Students:**
“We want to plant our own flowers!”
“I want stairs so I can come up to the garden.”

**Teachers:**
“Vegetables and fruits are better for the course.”
A both small and big garden!
Action!

- Recruited almost 100 volunteers, including teachers, students and families
- Finished most of the garden construction
Action!
Finally, we have the garden!
It’s a hot topic on campus!

• The origin of the name Xiantian Banmu (仙田半亩)
• Let’s design the logo of our garden!
The garden becomes students' “first farmland”. 
The garden becomes an outdoor classroom. Teachers actually use it!
The garden becomes a bridge between school and families.

- Families come to help every month.
- Garden is the easiest to recruit parent volunteer. They even have to “fight for it”!
The garden becomes a bridge between school and families.

Seeding at home, plant in our garden!
We won a prize!

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获奖共建花园名单
(11个)

1. 龙华区“爱心农场”
2. 大鹏新区“公交巴士花园”
3. 龙岗区“仙田半亩”
4. 南山区“南国绿云”
5. 宝安区“立园”
6. 盐田区“鹏湾社区艺术花园”
7. 福田区“七彩花园大道”
8. 光明区“清风园”
9. 坪山区“清林小镇”
10. 罗湖区“容融乐园”
11. 深汕特别合作区“新寨村社区共建花园”

木平台+雨水花园！龙岗区“仙田半亩”花园获评大奖！

龙小城 美丽龙岗Plus 2022-08-08 21:29
发表于广东
So proud!

“Mom, see! This is my class’s field. I plant this!”
We build a second garden together!

• Xianzong Lvlang(仙踪绿廊), “a linear green garden in Xiantian”
• Biodiversity and climate change themed
• Insect house, rainwater collecting, composting, plant observation
• Cooperated with charitable organization Friends of the Nature
3 Years, 45 Gardens in Longgang

1 in Park
4 in Urban Villages
5 in Survey Agencies
35 in Schools

Public Library
Urban Village
Shopping Mall
Park
Special School
Early University
Nursing Home
List of Participating Schools

Elementary Schools
- Longgang Experimental Elementary School
- Flower City Elementary School
- Pinghu Second Elementary School
- Wuyutian Elementary School
- Shitan Foreign Language School
- Dongxing Foreign Language School
- Longcheng Elementary School
- Longgang Experimental Primary School
- Ganli School
- Tongle Main School
- Daoan School
- Xianian Foreign Language School
- Huazhong Normal University Affiliated School
- Pinghu School
- 13 Gardens

Middle Schools
- Experimental Middle School
- Longgang Initial Middle School
- Longgang Middle School
- 3 Gardens

Universities
- Shenzhen Institute of Technology
- Shenzhen Information Technology College
- Shenzhen University Longgang Campus
- 3 Gardens

Kindergartens
- Longgang District Center Kindergarten
- Yijing Central Kindergarten
- Ziyuan Kindergarten
- Ke Yuan Kindergarten
- Baxianling Kindergarten
- Heaoshan Kindergarten
- Jiayue Mountain Kindergarten
- Zhanbei First Kindergarten
- Sunny Tianjian City Kindergarten
- Baitian荣汇幼儿园
- Baitian Street Center Kindergarten
- 11 Gardens

11 Gardens
Different methods to work with young people at different ages
Our practices in learnscape
Shenzhen School Garden Forum
Longgang Co-Building Garden Celebration and Gathering

2023.3.5
Schools as a community centers, gardens gather families to connection

- As a city full of new residents, we need different strategy to build up our community;
- Education is high priority in most families, especially in Shenzhen;
- Many parents are willing to support their kids and schools in various way;
- School gardens has shown to be an effective way for young parents to participate in public affairs.

How a child grow up
School gardens as students’ practice in civic engagement

- With heavy workload, students have rare opportunity to participate in local public issues;
- School gardens give them a chance to redesign part of their campus, bringing them a new perspective - we are capable of (and encouraged to) making the campus a better place!
- Ongoing watering and planting teach them responsibilities.
Education through Actions

- Environmental Education is NOT only about learning, but more about action;
- Practice and action matters;
- Garden is too big? Try something small and easy!
- If it’s a public issue in your community, better! Try to solve it!

Tbilisi Declaration, 1977
Echo the strongest need in your community by Environmental Education
New Age, New Community Form

- The internet and mobile shorten physical distance (but haven’t destroy).
- People with similar minds can connect easier than before.
- But only people in close neighborhood can share off-line social life, especially for parents and kids.
- Our experience: a group living within 10km (20min drive) is easier to maintain bi-weekly or monthly gathering.
Ning Zhang

**Education Background**

- Environmental Science @Qingdao, China
- Environmental Engineering @Guangzhou, China
- Public Affairs @Indiana, US

**Professional Experience**

- 2014-2015 @New York City Parks and Recreation Department
- 2015-2018 @Gingko Foundation, Beijing
- 2018-2022 @Shenzhen Green Foundation
- 2022-now @DreamEcoLand
DreamEcoLand

- A professional but non-traditional landscape team based in Longgang, Shenzhen
- Expertise: Eco Landscape Design, Learnscpe, Natural Playground, Participatory Design
- Work with governments, educational institutes and charitable organization
Thank you for watching!

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