

# Community Garden Stakeholders (Before Edits)

By recently arrived immigrants to maintain cultural tradition for those who focused on maintaining vital stability and health. As we can see in this research project, the development of this agricultural practice has gained popularity across the nation serving to benefit many populations in modern day society.

Stakeholders are people, groups or even other organizations that have a vested interest or tether to a particular business project or organization. In the case of community gardens some stakeholders may include the homeless who may benefit from community gardens as they may offer resources and/or opportunities that provide rehabilitation. For example, “The Garden Project” -- a local community project oriented around gardening located in Santa Cruz, California, offers a rehabilitating environment that allows homeless people to work on an organic, three-acre farm to support agriculture and the community while providing open job opportunities and access to produce. (- ANONYMOUS TRAINEE; “PROGRAMS - SUPPORT SERVICES” PG. 1&4 ).

While the local community might receive the 'cream of the crop', there are many surrounding communities that may benefit from a nearby community garden as well, these effects can be seen in, but aren't limited to, the social atmosphere, the quality of living, the quality of education among neighboring educational institutions and much more. (- Besty; “Programs – “Volunteer and Community Education” pg. 7). Examples of these include lower crime rates in populations surrounding community gardens by fostering relationships with community members as the benefits remedy many factors following poverty as well as increased opportunity for hands on education for those wanting to study bioscience or agriculture.

## Community Members

Out of the most common community garden stakeholder's community members are usually among the top beneficiaries. Residents of communities surrounding a nearby food garden can experience improved nutrition and physical activity while improving public health”(Am J Public Health. 2003).

Further benefits such members may face are increased sustainability withing as they mitigate cases of malnutrition and starvation.

## Inhabitants of food desserts

Food desserts are becoming more of a widespread epidemic in America. According to the USDA as of 2022, the number of Americans living food desserts nationwide is 40.5 million Americans, (Colemen-Jensen et al. 2022). This is almost a seventy percent increase (68.75 to be exact) since 2017 when the number was still relatively low at only 24 million people. In relation, in 2017 the number of food gardens in America was around 18,000, and in 2022 the number increased to about 29,000 since 2022 coming out to about a 61 percent increase in the number of gardens developed. Taking a closer look, we can indeed see that there is a big deficit. Although many spaces such as New York City or Los Angeles may be more overcrowded than other rural communities' community gardens serve to provide unique remedies to problems specific to these areas; one such being reduced air pollution by absorbing carbon emissions. According to this data we can conclude that overpopulation affects local communities and their access to a sufficient amount of food. In addition, water retention may prove to be low in these areas because of this increasing risk of drought and other ramifications.

## Schools and educational institutions

Community Gardens can have a significant impact on not just the health of local communities but improve the way members of a community think about how resources can be more efficiently used in more ways than one and serve as a good hands-on learning experience as well as community gardens are safe and organic. This can lead to increased interest in the field of sustainable agriculture leading to significant improvements of garden projects across the nation. See the figure below for a more in-depth diagram on the effects of education on community gardens.

<https://environmentalevidencejournal.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/2047-2382-3-20/figures/1>

## Relation to water retention

As I emphasized the sustainability benefits of community gardens, including improved nutrition and physical activity for residents, when considering community gardens there we can conclude based on their ability to mitigate environmental issues that they can also prove useful in promoting a more sustainable urban ecosystem by introducing green infrastructure by promoting more permeable soil, accumulating bigger and more accessible rainwater harvesting systems, and plant species that require less water but still contribute to local food production. This, in turn, can help cities become more resilient to problems such as drought and other extreme weather events.

This paper also highlights how community gardens can aid people living in food deserts, who may not have sufficient access to fresh produce in areas that may be more prone to drought or where water is a limited resource. Community Gardens offer ways to deal with

these problems. Because community gardens support efficient practices by default, they can play a significant role in ensuring consistent food production despite water scarcity.

## Sources:

<https://homelessgardenproject.org/>

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC1447988/>

[www.seasidesustainability.org/post/food-deserts-in-america](http://www.seasidesustainability.org/post/food-deserts-in-america)