



PROJECT BRIEF (draft)

Project name: Semillas

Team: Akash (LDN), Mateo (B), Muneezay (LDN), Nubia (B), Sam (B)

Location: Usme, South West Bogota. (T.B.C)

Background:

The city of Usme is located in South West Bogota. Although its urban area is separated from the main urban area of Bogotá, the locality includes neighbourhoods of south Bogotá. It was only in 1972 that it became the 5th locality of Bogota D.C. (this could give it complex characteristics). The locality of Usme was founded in 1650 as "*San Pedro de Usme*" and it became a centre for the rural areas nearby dedicated to agricultural activities that supplied food to Bogota. During the 20th century Usme was designated as the "city quarry" due to an abundance of natural resources and the establishment of industries dedicated to the production of construction equipment. Today despite its wealth of diverse natural resources and despite having contributed largely to the making of the city of Bogota, it is one of the poorest areas of the city. Some of the problems in Usme (and potential risk factors for our project):

- Illegal origin of land tenure
- Approximately the same terms since land occupation began
- Lowest socio-economic strata
- Initial difficulty in access to public services, networks and the transport system.
- Civic strikes (water shortages, esp in the 90s) The situation changed following the agreement between the EAAB¹ Division of Community Action and a group of seven irregular settlements of the Usme locality to introduce an alternative system of water supply co-financed by the community.

Project Aim: Strengthen and empower the local community through the establishment of a community-led, small-scale urban agriculture project.

Objectives:

1. Incorporate sustainable agriculture practices, such as permaculture, into how food is grown and communities are organised.
2. Engage young adults in activities, so they are able to develop skills that can lead on to securing a livelihood for themselves. These skills can be woodworking, building work.

1 Water/ utilities board

3. Enable marginalised people and communities to become self-sustaining and reduce food expenditure.

This project involves a team of like-minded individuals; experts in the fields of NGO management, sustainability and design. We have the option of being affiliated with a similar project in Colombia, on the outskirts of Bogota, offering permaculture design courses. The community where the project is situated will be involved in the design process of the garden, identifying what needs to be grown, if they want any features (such as a pond- these are excellent for maintaining a rich biodiversity). A building structure will be provided to hold community meetings, events etc.

Some examples of how permaculture design principles that can be incorporated in the Semillas.

Permaculture Ethics & Design Principles	How they can be incorporated in Bogota Project
Land & Nature Stewardship	Seed saving, natural farming, sustainable production methods.
Built Environment	Natural construction materials, Earth constructions
Tools & Technology	Recycling, renewable technology, irrigation methods?
Education & Culture	Art events? Nature- education, reviving local knowledge about growing sustainably.
Health & Spirituality	Medicinal plants, _____
Finances & Economics	Farmers markets/ linking with community supported agriculture schemes
Land Tenure & Community Governance	Consensus decision making, participatory approaches to design, voting at community meetings. _____

Comentario [1]: Need Sam/Mateo to describe the importance of medicinal plants etc.
Love this concept
Maybe add two more points here – real hammer home the idea that this project for them and will be run by them – identify that it will provide for generations to come?

Sustainability & Longevity _____

We can assure sustainability & longevity for this project:

- The food grown will be consumed by the families involved in the project- therefore the quality of inputs ensures a better harvest
- Excess harvest can be sold in markets, and money can be plugged back into the project. This will reduce reliance on outside/ public funding
- Permaculture gardens are as less invasive as possible; therefore the project is less time consuming and requires little maintenance.

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Potential Relationships to form for community embeddedness:

[Bogota Studio](#)

[Plataforma Ambiental](http://plataformaambiental.blogspot.co.uk/2010/02/propuesta-mesa-ambiental.html) (Environmental Platform) esp:
<http://plataformaambiental.blogspot.co.uk/2010/02/propuesta-mesa-ambiental.html>

Usme has one of Bogotá's natural parks called "Entrenubes" destined for ecotourism and preserving the local wildlife.

Risks

- Inability to obtain funds from donors.
- poor security measures on the project site- people growing drugs e.g.
- Lacking knowledge/ poor interest from the local community
- Will the local/ national government question the project?

Questions to be answered/ Tasks to be completed.

Community:

- who do we know from Usme?
- What is the nearest settlement/ neighbourhood. Characteristics of the neighbourhood: The number of households in the settlement? (estimate), livelihoods, ethnic mix?
- Who controls the region officially/unofficially? - Who has most influence?
- Can we contact the *edil* (town councillor)?
- how much interest would there be from the local community? - do we have to drum up our own interest in the project? (cost)
- Is there a local school ? (primary, private or government establishment) can they be approached?
- What are other ways of becoming a part of the local community ? (local school, academic institutions, environmental NGOs).
- Does the team want to see the project become community based? is there still a need for our influence?
- What is the biggest danger in USME?

Land

- what is the size of the plot?
- water source? (Usme had a few civic strikes in relation to water shortages), what about other utilities (electricity) on the site?

- Are there any healthcare/vegetation professionals in the region who we could consult about growing crops on the land? (other than Mateo)
- Do research into seasonality; what can be grown. what is the climate like. etc.

Misc/admin

- Distance from Mateo's project? can we establish a joint project?
- We need to set up a blog page- Spanish and English? then can make a website late on too.
- make a list of **similar and community-led projects** have been done in Usme and surrounding region. (evaluative/potential partnering)
- <http://www.usme.gov.co/> - the first link about unruly children etc - could we get them involved? if not why not? affiliated with gangs?
- We need a bit of data on the literacy/education etc. to justify actually putting something there. (indication as to how the project will contribute to varying areas of poverty)

Background Research Colombia Country Facts (mostly for AG and MJ)

Location: Northern South America, bordering the Caribbean Sea, between Panama and Venezuela, and bordering the North Pacific Ocean, between Ecuador and Panama

Capital: Bogota

Area: Land area is 1,138,910 sq. km

Climate: tropical along coast and eastern plains; cooler in highlands

Terrain: flat coastal lowlands, central highlands, high Andes Mountains, eastern lowland plains

Land Use: *arable land:* 2.01%,*permanent crops:* 1.37%,*other:* 96.62% (2005)

Irrigated Land: 9,000 sq. km

Population: 44,379,978

Life Expectancy: 72 years

GDP per capita: \$8,600

Under 5 mortality rate (per 1000 live births): 21

Agriculture

Agriculture has traditionally been the chief economic activity in Colombia. Colombia's diverse climate and topography permit the cultivation of a wide variety of crops, but coffee is by far the major crop, contributing 7% to the country's GDP. Colombia is also the 2nd largest exporter of cut flowers in the world. The illicit drug trade (Colombia is the largest producer of cocaine in the world) accounts for about 25% of foreign exchange earnings.

Agriculture Products: coffee, cut flowers, bananas, rice, tobacco, corn, sugarcane, cocoa beans, oilseed, vegetables; forest products; shrimp

Geography and Climate of Bogota

The city of Bogota is located in an Andean plateau, known as the "Sabana de Bogotá" (Bogotá Savannah), at an altitude of around 2,600 m, and an average temperature of 14°C. The plateau consists of flat land with hills to the east and the west, and wasteland. The region is watered by the Bogotá River, and it is in its basin that all the micro basins that form in the Savannah converge (DAPD 2000: 57-60).

Urban and peri-urban agriculture Colombia

In Colombia, in 90 municipalities in the district of Antioquia, production is underway at 7,500 urban and peri-urban family gardens and farms – more than 18 species of fruits, vegetables, and condiments, through a program that expects to grow to 23,000 gardens in three years.

In Bogota, Medellin and Cartagena, governments and international aid agencies have trained more than 50,000 people on establishing gardens in various types of urban spaces, including terraces, rooftops and backyards. It is estimated that the families involved save US\$1.30 per day by growing their own food.