Submit Your Environmental Justice Case Study Today!

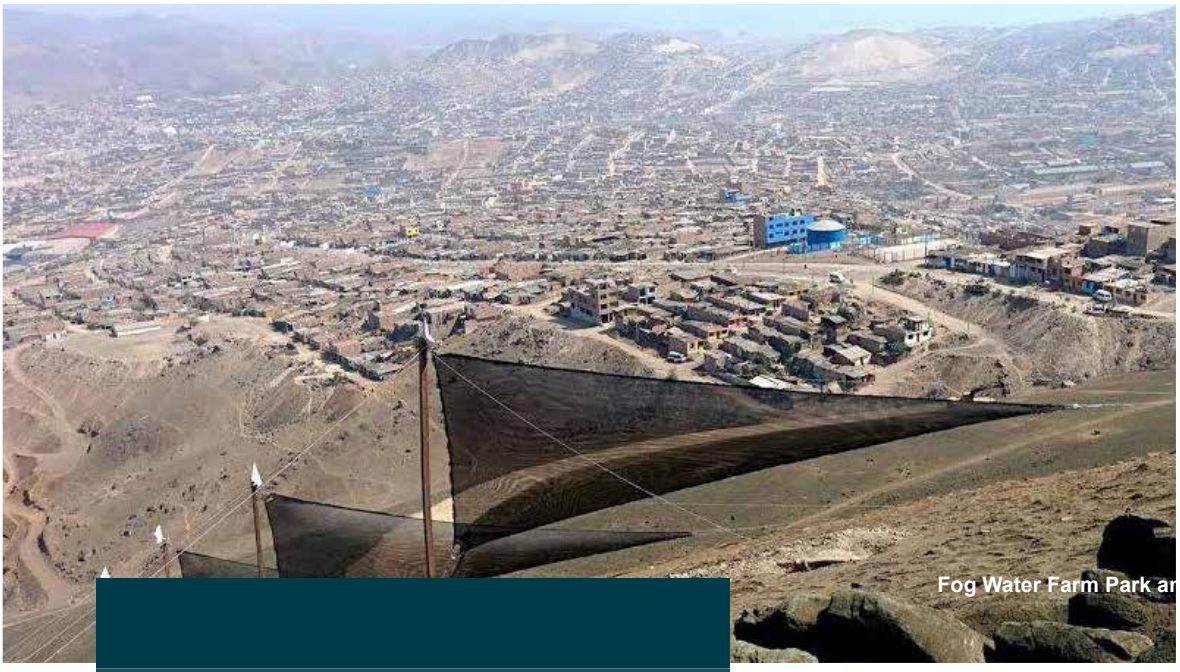
ASLA Environmental Justice Professional Practice Network

The ASLA Environmental Justice PPN is seeking case studies related to environmental justice and landscape architecture. The goal is to create a series of one-page case studies that promote best practices guided by the Principles of Environmental Justice in order to ensure an equitable, just, and inclusive process across all projects. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Acknowledging environmental racism and understanding historical contexts centered on the unequal distribution of environmental resources and burdens
- Meaningful engagement that centers the community, including frontline communities to climate change
- Community-based research highlighting environmental justice issues impacting neighborhoods and communities
- Long-term stewardship and advocacy for landscapes and communities
- Please consider sharing your research, built work, or on-the-boards projects!

Visit www.asla.org/justiceresources or click the QR code below to access the online submission form.

ASLA



Fog Water Farm Park and Gardens / Image: Traction

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUE

The Community of Eliseo Collazos is an informal urban slum settlement in Lima, Peru. Residents experience food and water insecurity, extreme poverty, poor mental wellbeing and a lack of basic public services including extremely low greenspace per capita. In addition, Lima gets <10 mm of rain/year, and the primarily glacier fed water source may deplete in as little as 15 years, leaving slums even more vulnerable. Yet Lima has fog up to 6 months/year. The Fog Water Farm Park and Gardens is a project phased over five years that addressed these health issues through community-driven projects. Projects included a fog collector system, recreation park, terraced farm and 50 home gardens with plants for food, medicine and beautification.

Fog Water Farm Park and Gardens

Community of Eliseo Collazos, Lima, Peru

Traction

ENGAGEMENT

Residents were deeply engaged in each step of the project. Projects were defined from community identified needs, desires and priorities, and the design and construction process used a variety of community participatory implementation techniques.
[Spencer & Andrews 2014; Spencer, Bolton & Alarcon 2014]

OUTCOME

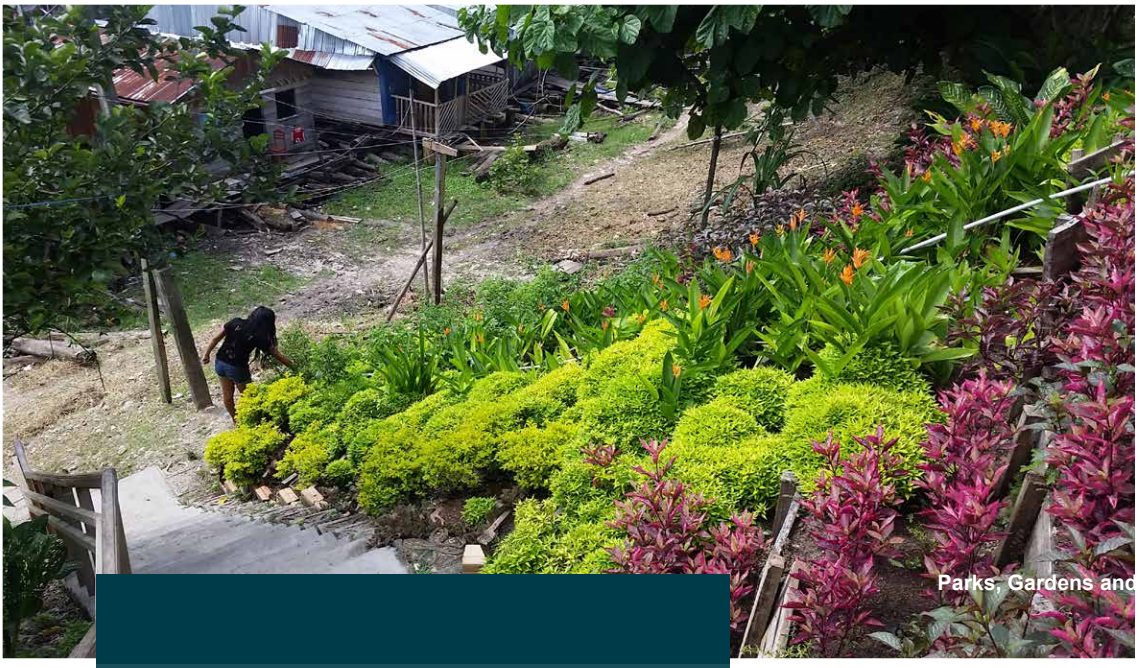
Over one year we found statistically significant improvements in quality of life, social capital and perceived stress (+48%), water security (up to 1,650 liters per day), access to recreation (soccer and volleyball court), and access to food and medicine (1,000 food and herb plants in the gardens and farm park). A Project Impact Assessment administered each year showed the projects met residents' expectations and community-identified goals. Gardens became expressions of culture and art and boosted economic opportunities.
[Korn et al. 2018; Spencer 2018; Feld, Spencer & Bolton 2016]

RESOURCES

Project partners include: Community of Eliseo Collazos, non-profits (Traction; Robert Rauschenberg Foundation; the Landscape Architecture Foundation; Architects Without Borders-Seattle; Peruanas Sin Agua), universities (University of Washington; Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos), and government agencies (National Institutes of Health; Environmental Protection Agency P3 Competition; the local municipality of Puente Piedra).

LESSONS LEARNED

Participatory techniques promoted stewardship, education, social cohesion, emotional investment and overall sustainability. Challenges included mafia and neighboring municipal interference with maintenance by organizing land invasions surrounding fog collectors.



Parks, Gardens and Greenspaces in Claverito / Image: Traction

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUE

The Community of Claverito is an informal slum settlement located in the urbanized Peruvian Amazon Rainforest. Claverito lacks access to basic public services such as water and sanitation, and is experiencing layered and severe health issues from degraded environmental conditions and negative public stigma towards slums. This program led by landscape architects examines how the built environment can be strategically designed to address One Health, or the health of humans, animals and the environment, simultaneously. Small scale community driven projects such as parks, gardens and social spaces are installed each year and a team of researchers is following the health of the community and environment over time.

InterACTION Labs Iquitos

Community of Claverito, Iquitos, Peru

Traction

ENGAGEMENT

Projects are constructed based upon community identified priorities and a needs assessment., are community driven and use participatory techniques in design, construction and research. The program is framed in transdisciplinary action research, engaging professionals and students across disciplines, institutions and government agencies. [Alarcón, Alarcón, Andrews 2018]

OUTCOME

An ongoing project, the team of designers, ecologists and health scientists have been tracking changes in human and ecological health in Claverito since 2016. Preliminary outcomes show promising trends in food and medicine security, biodiversity, and mental and social health, with residents perceiving the projects to have met their goals and improved quality of life. [Andrews, Alarcón et al 2019]

RESOURCES

Project partners include: Community of Claverito, non-profits (Traction; LAF; 100,000 Strong in the Americas), research centers (Centro de Investigaciones Tecnológicas, Biomédicas y Medio Ambientales; Centro de Investigaciones de Recursos Naturales; Herbarium Amazonense; Green Futures Lab; Center for Global Health Nursing; Center for One Health Research; Derouen Center for Global Oral Health), universities (University of Washington; Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos; Universidad Nacional de la Amazonía Peruana), and government agencies (National Institutes of Health in Peru and U.S.; Municipality of Maynas).

LESSONS LEARNED

Interdisciplinary, community and institutional collaboration and pairing design activism with research is essential to critically and meaningfully address health, yet slum stigma and prejudice prevail.

Building the Melon Street Park
Baidi Wang/Staff Photographer

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUE

The proposed work of Park in a Truck (PiaT) is to investigate whether launching a community-operated green network, established through low-cost, fast-turnaround renovations of vacant lots, can not only improve environmental, social and physical health in under-resourced neighborhoods, but also unite advocacy efforts to slow displacement and allow communities to guide revitalization and reinvestment efforts.

Project Name: Park in a Truck

Location: 38th and Melon Streets, Philadelphia, PA

Project team:
Kim Douglas, Director, Landscape Architecture Program, Jefferson
Dr. Drew Harris, Jefferson
Richard Newton, OLIN, ASLA, RLA
Teddy Pickering, Student, Jefferson

ENGAGEMENT

We see ourselves as facilitators of the design process and start all projects by developing guiding principles and goals with the community. This serves as a road map to ensure the design process is meaningful and authentic for the community.

OUTCOME

In the short term, we successfully leveraged a cost-efficient urban park to break silos in community development. Our first park was built for our projected number. The community has fully embraced the park as their own shared responsibility. Our hope of a park network remains a long term goal.

RESOURCES

We received the use of two lots privately owned by a local developer. We were awarded a grant from a local foundation, received in-kind resources from the University and Mantua Civic Association and many, many hours of volunteer time.

LESSONS LEARNED

One local resident, who appreciated how involved the community had been in transforming a small slice of the neighborhood, said “This is about ownership.”

The stone “tree root planter” helps separate stimuli and create lots of “edge” conditions. / Image: Aaron Lietz

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ISSUE

Seattle’s Salmon Bay K–8 school has an autism inclusion program, and 20–30% of the school’s students have ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder. The existing playground with its focus on blacktop games and one compound play structure was a hostile environment for these and other kids who are easily overstimulated, distressed by direct contact, or just don’t feel like playing games. The goal was to create spaces that feel safe and provide fun, engagement, and respite for all kids within the community, while also meeting the requirements of a high-volume public school playground—all on a limited budget. This project is an example of equitable distribution of resources to all.

Salmon Bay K–8 Autism-Inclusive Playground

Location: Seattle, Washington

Project team: Johnson+Southerland

ENGAGEMENT

The Salmon Bay School Playground design is a result of effective meetings and workshops with engaged families as well as inclusive activities with kids and interviews with parents, teachers, and school principal. The design team egaged autism experts to develop design principles and answer the question–which characteristics make a playground autism-accessible?

OUTCOME

Community goals and principles of design—such as separation of stimuli, access to natural materials and textures, and things to count—led to a highly effective design. Post-occupancy evaluation showed much improved engagement among kids with ASD, while parents, kids, and playground supervisors gave rave reviews.

RESOURCES

In Seattle, there is a Department of Neighborhoods Matching Grant program for community-led projects. This grant program—along with a youth sports grant from King County and community donations—was the main source of funding for the project.

LESSONS LEARNED

Working alongside the community as a full project partner, the project results reflect community priorities. But the project’s success was also due to working with experts in the field of autism. In this public-school setting, access to teacher/experts was limited, so bringing in outside experts proved valuable.