Using Participatory Design to Build & Enhance Community Gardens

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PARTICIATORY DESIGNER + PERMACULTURE DESIGNER
A little about me
A little about you.

How many currently run or participate in community gardens?

How many are working on starting/planning for a community garden?

How many have participated in an engaged design process before?

What are some words or phrases to describe the process?
What is participatory design?

an approach
to design attempting to
actively involve all stakeholders (e.g. employees, partners, customers, citizens, end users) in
the design process in order to help ensure the product designed meets their needs and is usable.
### What makes engaged design different?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Traditional Approach</th>
<th>Participatory Approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suits the needs and wants of a <strong>client</strong></td>
<td>Incorporates the interests and concerns of all affected stakeholders</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Designer has autonomy</strong> and ultimate decision-making authority within the bounds of the needs identified</td>
<td><strong>Stakeholder participation</strong> in the decision-making process throughout to assist designers in being responsive to collective concerns and suggestions</td>
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<td>A design that is <strong>beautiful, functional</strong>, and meets the client’s needs</td>
<td>Participants invested in the implementation and the future use of the re-designed space</td>
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What makes engaged design different?
When to use engaged design?

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<th>TRADITIONAL APPROACH</th>
<th>PARTICIPATORY APPROACH</th>
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<tr>
<td>Requires an ability to hear what the client needs and wants.</td>
<td>A public or communal space.</td>
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<td>Requires a confident and competent designer.</td>
<td>When you have sufficient time (takes longer)</td>
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<td>A much faster process.</td>
<td>Requires facilitation &amp; patience.</td>
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<td>Relies on the opinion of the design professional at main decision points.</td>
<td>When those in ‘power’ are ready/able to trust the process.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Requires an understanding of what is possible, what <em>can</em> change and an ability to</td>
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<td>communicate that clearly and frequently.</td>
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Engaged Approach

- Meet people where they are.
- Engage with people more than once.
- Follow up to show people how their engagement applies.
- If possible, invite people to help implement changes.

Individual Voice
Small group voice
Collective Voice
Use Images/Visuals
1. DEFINING PURPOSE
   “Why?”

2. DEFINING USERS
   “Who?”

3. USERS’ NEEDS
   Collecting on post-its

4. CLUSTERING NEEDS

5. SPECIFIC DEFINITIONS
   Defining scenarios

6. PROTOTYPING AND FEEDBACKING

Feature requirements and specifications
Participants invested in the implementation and the future use of the re-designed space.

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Feature requirements and specifications
Some Examples
Engaged Design in Action
St. Philip’s Community Garden
Participatory Activity

Put a * on your TOP priority for a new element in our community garden:

A) Murals  B) Seating/Shade  C) More flowers
10 Participants

6 Months

Garden Re-Design
Goals of Project:
Use community engaged design to integrate permaculture into the re-design of an existing community garden.

The objectives of the project were to

1. facilitate learning of permaculture principles
2. leave participants confident to use permaculture knowledge once designer is gone
3. design a more manageable community garden
Participatory Workshop Goals

1. Participants describe the current state of the garden
2. Express goals and priorities for change
3. Reflect what participants have shared
4. Participants approve proposed design
Revised Priorities:
1 Energy Efficiency
2 Water
3 Perennial plantings
4 Compost
5 Signage
6 Shade

Original Priorities:
1 Water
2 Perennials
3 Shade
4 Signage
5 Compost
6 Energy Efficiency*
Engaged Approach

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Participatory Activity

Choose your TOP priority for our community garden:

a) The garden will educate about sustainable and organic gardening practices.

b) The garden will be a beautiful green space place for the community.

c) The garden will connect food with people who need food.
Participatory Activity

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a) The garden will educate about sustainable and organic gardening practices.

b) The garden will be a beautiful green space place for the community.

c) The garden will connect food with people who need food.
120 Participants

10 Months

Garden Re-Design & Community Building
Project Planning

3 Workshops Planned over 2 months

Defined Community

20 Workshops with:
11 Community Groups
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Meet people where they are.

Individual Voice

3. **Users’ Needs**

**Collecting on post-its**

**WHAT DO THEY NEED?**

- **In the Neighborhood**
  - Fruit trees and flowers 3
  - Advertise throughout the community

- **Inside the Fence**
  - Fruit Trees 3
  - Seating/community gathering space that is welcoming 2
  - Children’s Garden 2
  - Animals 2
  - Outdoor Kitchen 2
  - Educational signage/posters 2
  - Community mulch supply for donations to SEEDS
  - Water feature
  - Some fenced area for community gardeners
  - Art
  - Group meeting spaces

- **Outside the Fence/Adjacent to Garden**
  - More free-pick space 2
  - Fix trellis on Elizabeth St.
  - Attractive display facing Holloway to advertise SEEDS
  - More welcoming/obvious entrance to the garden
  - Community Board
  - More sitting spaces outside the fence
  - No fence/low fence=More inviting
Small Group Voice

4. CLUSTERING NEEDS

- DOCUMENTS
- SECTIONS
- SOCIAL
- ADMIN

- fruit
- community
- garden
- trees
- classes
- fence
- signs
- seating
- spaces
- education
- provided
- fruit provided
- group garden
- neighborhood
Collective Voice

5. SPECIFIC DEFINITIONS
Defining scenarios

Feature requirements and specifications

DESIGN PROGRAM
(1) Support existing programs of SEEDS,
(2) Grow food,
(3) Reflect sustainability/permaculture practices,
(4) Connect to community/neighbors;
-MORE PEOPLE WILL KNOW THAT SEEDS IS HERE
-Accommodate outdoor events, fundraisers and workshops
-Reflect history & character of neighborhood

New entry on Elizabeth St.
Suggested entry off of Holloway
Increased focus on Elizabeth St.
Interaction & aesthetics: attention to the fence; seating on Elizabeth; pick your own plots on Elizabeth (food or flowers); murals
More signage & sign boards inside and outside the garden
More fruit trees

ELEMENTS TO INCLUDE:
*MAIN ENTRANCE
*CLEARER PATHS and smooth circulation through the garden for programs, gathering supplies, and tours.
*MORE SEATING INSIDE AND OUTSIDE FENCE, especially in the form of a variety of gathering spots for groups of sizes from 10 people to 30 people, occasionally 5 people
*FRIENDLY FENCE: we need a fence, but we want the garden to feel welcoming and open to passers by
Represent Visually & Gather Feedback

6. Prototyping and Feedbacking

DESIGN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY
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Resources for Participatory Design

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It’s not rocket science. But it does take committed communication.
Henry Sanoff – **Design Games**

Resources for Participatory Design

International Association for Public Participation (iap2) www.iap2usa.org/corevalues
Abbey Piner
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permaculture design + participatory design

CEFS NC 10% Campaign
Outreach Coordinator
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THANK YOU.