ANTANANARIVO

URBAN AGRICULTURE AND NUTRITION EDUCATION THROUGH SCHOOL GARDENS

Antananarivo's pilot responded to severe urban food and nutrition challenges: chronic malnutrition affects 37% of children, while poverty and inadequate diets contribute to learning difficulties and school dropout. The project therefore tested a model linking agroecological production, nutrition education and sustainable school canteens across six public primary schools, reaching more than 3,600 pupils.

The intervention combined training for school staff in urban agriculture and agroecological techniques with the co-design and installation of six school gardens. Pupils and teachers participated in cultivating the gardens, while nutrition education was delivered through classroom activities and interactive learning tools. Pupils also emerged as genuine agents of change within their communities: the activities helped foster a stronger sense of responsibility, respect for common goods, cooperation, cleanliness and hygiene, while gradually encouraging healthier eating habits. They also contributed, at their own level, to shifting gender perceptions at school by promoting more equitable participation of girls and boys in urban agriculture activities.

Garden harvests, parent contributions and additional project support enabled the organisation of school canteens, serving 9,160 meals to 3,085 pupils. The participatory approach generated strong ownership and an unexpected ripple effect, with neighbouring households adopting urban agriculture themselves.

Looking ahead, the Municipality of Antananarivo, the Ministry of National Education and partners envisage extending the model to 12 additional public schools, while strengthening community autonomy, agroecological farming and local partnerships. The municipality also plans to support the transition of urban family farms, develop larger-scale peri-urban production and establish a permanent training facility at Antanimena.

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