**City Blossoms**

**THEORY OF CHANGE**

**Core Problem**
City Blossoms is addressing the core problem of the inequitable access to safe, engaging, community-driven green spaces and garden-based education in Washington, DC. There is a critical need for children, families, and people living in urban environments to engage in the natural world. Green spaces that are available often lack the opportunity for children to explore, engage, and connect with others. School gardens and garden-based education are often not activated or safe due to lack of community investment. School gardens and garden-based education are often thought of as a "nice feature" rather than a necessity for a healthy and holistic life.

**City Blossoms Model**
City Blossoms’ mission is to cultivate the well-being of our communities through a path of programming in kid-driven gardens. Our target audience is children in marginalized communities, particularly Black, Latino, and children from immigrant backgrounds in Washington, DC. Gardens and green spaces are critical for thriving communities. Our model for garden-based programming provides opportunities for exploitation, learning, and healthy identity. Our gardens are designed and led by children and their families who are interested in community cohesion and creative cultural expression. Gardens and green spaces provide a canvas for storytelling and genuine connection. We believe in garden-based programming that promotes youth voice and leadership and provides opportunities to facilitate deeper learning on a simple and accessible subject.

**Inputs**
- Staff: Child and youth staff and volunteers
- Community members: Neighborhood, Land, Schools, Early Childhood, and Partnerships

**Assumptions**
- City Blossoms needs human capacity to effectively implement physical spaces in a critical aspect of providing access to nature.
- Community engagement through partnerships, the board of directors, volunteers, etc., is critical to effective programming.
- Child and youth are primary partners in creating change.

**Activities**
- **Early Grower Program**: Connects young children aged 2-4 to nature and food.
- **School Garden Partners Program**: Creates gardens and garden-based programming in partnership with K-12 schools.

**Outputs**
- Number of children and youth who participate in the program.
- Number of gardens and garden-based programs created.
- Number of schools and early childhood centers participating.
- Number of hours of programming provided.

**Outcomes**
- **Short-term**: Refractorate outreach from parents, partner organizations, schools in and opportunities for collaboration with nature, opportunities for exploration.
- **Medium-term**: Increased levels of ownership where spaces have increased knowledge of cultural identity of community. Increased levels of knowledge of environmental connection to increased levels of understanding the importance of nature and increased gardening behaviors.
- **Long-term**: Increased holistic community, increased physical, mental, spiritual, social, and health of people participating as well as the environment.

**Assumptions**
- Providing opportunities for every age group from 2-19 creates a pathway for children to engage with nature at every stage of their development.
- Adult engagement is critical for sustainability of these activities.

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**Impact Goal**
Children and youth are physically, mentally, and emotionally healthy.

**Vision**
We envision a future in which all children and families can easily establish a sense of place, ownership, and identity in their environment. Children and communities can take on new roles as stewards and leaders through garden-based programming. In this future, we believe city gardens will be more inclusive and synonymous with healthy, resilient spaces where children can engage in active, healthy, and sustainable activities.