



SP0157 Final Report

Please answer the following questions and return the completed form to the [SPF Staff](#) via e-mail.

Project Title: SSMU Courtyard Garden

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Actual Project Start Date: May 15 2017 **Actual Project End Date:** September 30 2017

1. Please summarize the project and its key accomplishments in 1-2 sentences.

(400 characters maximum)

The SSMU Courtyard Garden project established a flourishing and ecologically sustainable vegetable and fruit garden in an underutilized space on McGill University's Campus. The project successfully engaged students, community members, administrative staff, and other groups on campus to take part in educational and ecological activities surrounding the garden.

2. Your team listed the following goal in your application:

To transform a relatively unused community garden in the courtyard adjacent to the SSMU office. The primary goal of this space will be to spread awareness and skills related to urban gardening. We aim to grow a variety of crops to prepare individuals to grow their own crops at home. Our goal is also to generate produce that can be used by Midnight Kitchen Collective.

Did your team achieve your project's goal? In your answer, please describe the impact your project had on McGill's structures, processes, and/or systems. Also, please specify how this positively transformed people's behaviors/perspectives/habits on McGill campus(es).

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

Throughout the duration of the project, we were able to accomplish the various objectives of the project to differing degrees.. In the short time available, we were able to acquire the necessary materials to start planting a diverse and productive garden plot and employ sustainable cropping techniques (such as companion planting, composting). We were also able to assemble a volunteer group of volunteers of considerable size with whom we held educational workshops that were relatively successful. The less successful areas of the project included the establishment of sustainable commitment of personnel to the project and of sustainable economic supports for the garden. Nonetheless, the garden is a beautiful space which, by the simple virtue of being planted contributes to improved air quality, aesthetics, and well-being of those who spend time in the garden. Now that both the McGill CPE and and the First People's House are utilizing the planter boxes, they have individually come to use the space of the garden as areas for educational activities and social gatherings. These new partnerships forged between these groups and SSMU hold the promise of exchange, learning and collaboration in the future of the garden. We also hope in the future to contribute to the circulation of locally and sustainably produced foods on McGill's campus by circulating the crops grown in the garden in the ecological food networks on campus such as McGill Farmer's Market and Community Supported Agriculture baskets.

3. Please describe the key successes and challenges of your project. (Minimum of two examples for each)

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

The biggest successes of our project included the procurement of the necessary tools, the planting and proliferation of the physical garden and the recruitment of a volunteer team. We were hired at a late stage of the year, which presents significant challenges for planting a crop garden in the Montreal summer, in which

time is of the essence. Nonetheless, both the hired team as well as the volunteers (who were also recruited on very short notice) acted rapidly to build a garden that flourished by the end of the summer period. We were able to establish a base operating system for the garden - with the composting, the volunteer schedule, and the crop order, there is a ready set up available for whomever becomes in charge of the garden in the future. We also formed successful partnerships with two other groups on campus - the McGill CPE and the First People's House - which brought diversity and new lessons for the garden and which will proliferate into the future. All the while, considering the overly short period of time allotted and minimal support from SSMU staff, we encountered various challenges. While our main priority this year was to get the garden running, we recognize that a large component of the sustainability of the garden remains its ability to generate revenue to maintain functioning into the future. While we hoped to successfully organize Minicourses in the fall, we were unable to establish a secure and steady economic revenue for the garden nor an entity to whom we could sell or donate our produce. This year, the plan to have the MiniCourses fell through due to the changeover in staff at SSMU. In addition, while we did assemble a considerable group of volunteers to work in the garden, there were only a couple of them who seemed to be truly committed to the work of the garden (who studied the materials provided, contributed to our activities, and completed their tasks) - we were forced to put much more effort into motivating and babysitting the volunteers than previously planned. Furthermore, we are unsure about the future participation of volunteers as we do not believe that any were sufficiently involved to carry out the management of the garden once the paid team are no longer involved.

4. What key points of advice or *lessons learned* would you give to other SPF teams either regarding your experience managing your project or the project itself?

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum ½ page or approximately 250 words)

In this particular project, it would have been beneficial for the paid team (and some of the volunteers) to be involved at the earlier stages of planning of this project. As it happened, we were unable to plan in advance for the garden, the construction of the garden took place at a very late stage, it was too late to plan distribution channels for the produce, and it was more difficult to engage volunteers as they had not been involved in the important brainstorming phase of the project. In projects that are meant to be sustainable and volunteer-based, it is extremely important for every phase of the project to be done in a collaborative manner to ensure that all participants are stakeholders in the ultimate outcome and understand the direction and the basis for the project. It is also important to organize more formal channels of communication between the group of garden volunteers and the SSMU staff, as it was often unclear what exactly needed to be reported to SSMU and what the garden volunteers needed to know in return. As we were also leading a team of volunteers, we learned a lot from trying to organize a group of people - perhaps having more organized and various volunteer sessions and tried to get a stronger commitment from the volunteers. Although we created informational pamphlets and guides for the volunteers, this was insufficient to secure their commitment to the garden work. Perhaps having more rigorous recruitment requirements could have aided in this as well.

5. What recommendations do you have for the future of this project to be continued and are there any opportunities for complementary projects? Who will take responsibility for the project's future and how can interested persons be in touch? The SPF team will also be in touch with this contact for updates on the project's progress in coming years, if ongoing.

(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

We think there needs to be a focus on ensuring the economic sustainability of the project, as it cannot continue to survive simply on SSMU funding. At this stage, we think that the SSMU Minicourses could be a viable source of income to sustain garden activities in future years if volunteers and SSMU staff are able to coordinate it efficiently. We have also gone through the initial phases of establishing a relationship with the McGill Farmer's Market and we hope that this can bear fruit in terms of a consumer of garden produce that could potentially bring revenue to the garden. However, if there are other sources of income, it would better fit the mandate of the garden to be able to donate the food or have it enter a mutually beneficial (but perhaps cash free) trade with other groups on campus or in the community. We hoped to create a team of volunteers who would be equipped to continue managing the garden but we are not confident that any of the current volunteers are committed or informed enough to do so and as such we expect that the SSMU VP Operations will take responsibility for the project and form a team of students to continue the garden tasks into the new year. Contact for the garden will now be made through the president@ssmu.ca email.

6. Would you or your project team member(s) be willing to serve as a mentor to SPF project teams?

Please choose one. If yes, SPF Staff will contact you with more information. (800 characters maximum)

Yes No

7. In your application, you listed the following sources of funding: The SSMU will continue funding the project following completion.

Please confirm if you received this funding in the space below. In your response, please list the actual amount (in dollars) that you received. Note: If you received funding from a McGill Department or Unit, please attach a letter from its Financial/Budget Officer confirming the actual amount of support.

(1,800 characters maximum)

As the project has not reached its official completion date yet, we have not received any funding from SSMU. This will be managed by the SSMU President and VP of Operations.

8. Did you purchase equipment or make an installation on campus? Yes No

If yes, please briefly describe how these items will be maintained and used in the future.

(1,800 characters maximum)

The construction of the garden was the first step of this project, and the garden will be maintained as stated above. The two planter boxes will continue to be operated by the two partners - First People's House and McGill CPE. The composter which was installed in the garden will be operated and cared for by future volunteers. The guidelines for summer care have been outlined to the volunteers as well as SSMU staff, who have access to the Garden Guide. During the winter, the composter will not be used and will be covered. Our continued collaboration with Jora Canada ensures that we will be able to hold more educational workshops in the future, if subsequent volunteers and work groups need re-education on how to utilize it.

9. The following Key Success Indicators were indicated in your project application and selected for tracking. Please indicate the actual results that you have achieved in the “Actual” column.

Selected Key Success Indicators	Target	Actual
Daycare children participate in a tiered, interactive educational program about sustainable gardening.	20	0
Participants learn about horticulture into SSMU minicourses.	50	0
SRC vegetable import reduction.	10%	0

If there is a significant difference in the target numbers and the actual numbers achieved, please explain. If you have any additional information to share about these success indicators, please also include it below.

(1,800 characters maximum)

We ended up actually collaborating with the McGill CPE, who were much more responsive to our outreach efforts. They were less interested in interactive activities with other volunteers as they had a policy about people who interacted with the children needing background checks, etc. Further, they had organized their own activities with their staff. Nonetheless, they utilized their planter box fruitfully and reported being exceedingly satisfied with it. In future, SSMU will organize collaborations with the McGill Daycare, who would like to build lessons around the garden. Part of the reason we did not collaborate with them in the first place was the late hiring process of the garden volunteers, making it difficult to reach the McGill Daycare before they closed for the summer.

The SSMU Minicourses were never established - this was under the auspices of the VP Operations and due to the switchover in staff, it was never completed.

The SRC closed down this year and as such we had no other entity who could consume the produce at this stage. Most of the produce was consumed by the volunteers themselves. Ultimately, this created an educational opportunity, as many volunteers were new to the types of fruits and vegetables we planted.

10. Please report on your results for the standard SPF Key Success Indicators in the “Actual” column.

Standard SPF Key Success Indicators	Actual #
# of volunteers directly or indirectly engaged in the project	14
# of people (student, staff, or other) trained in the context of the project	3
\$ raised for project activities subsequent to SPF funding	0
# of partnerships or collaborations developed between the project team and other McGill administrative units, student groups, community groups, other universities, and/or other groups/organizations.	2

Regarding the last Key Success Indicator, please list the groups and/or organizations that you counted.

(Unlimited characters; point form acceptable.)

McGill CPE, The First People’s House

If you have any additional information to share about the Standard SPF Key Success Indicators, please include it below. (1,800 characters maximum)

We think it’s essential to the future functioning of the garden that some source of income be secured.

11. Please indicate the McGill stakeholder groups that were involved with your project as a team member or collaborator/partner. Choose all that apply.

- Undergraduate
 Postgraduate
 Administrative Staff
 Academic Staff
 Alumni

12. Please rate your project team’s overall satisfaction with the support provided by the SPF Staff. Choose only one response.

- Very Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neither Satisfied Nor Dissatisfied Satisfied Very Satisfied

13. Please provide any feedback or recommendations regarding your team’s experience with the SPF.
(Unlimited characters, suggested minimum 1 paragraph)

Our experience with the SPF was quite positive but we did not honestly interact too heavily with the SPF other than for funding reasons, which was appropriate for this kind of project. Of course, we did lack a lot of support from SSMU and perhaps we could have sought out some additional support from the SPF but we didn’t and thus there wasn’t much that the SPF could have done.

14. If there is additional information you would like to share about your project, please use the field below.
(Unlimited characters)

15. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of professional growth? Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. (800 characters maximum)

- Yes No Prefer Not to Share

16. Has involvement in this SPF project positively impacted your team in the area of personal growth? Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. (800 characters maximum)

- Yes No Prefer Not to Share

We both learned a lot from this experience in terms of organization and leadership.

17. Which of the following skills or attributes has your team improved through involvement in your SPF project? Choose all that apply.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Budgeting | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Networking | <input type="checkbox"/> Systems Thinking |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teamwork |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict Resolution | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Problem Solving | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Time Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Listening | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Speaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mentoring | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Engagement | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify in the field below) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Negotiating | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder Identification | |

Other:

18. Since starting your SPF project, has your team improved its knowledge of sustainability?

Please choose one. If you would like to elaborate, please use the field below. (800 characters maximum)

Yes No Prefer Not to Share

Putting concepts we learned about in the classroom into practical use!

19. (Optional) If applicable, please list the total number of team members voluntarily self-identifying as members of marginalized communities:

Please identify the represented communities below. (e.g. women, Indigenous people, people of colour, LBTTQI, student parents, members of ethnic minorities, immigrants, people with disabilities)

(1,800 characters maximum)

Indigenous peoples, people of colour, LBTTQI, student parents, women

Thank you for completing your Final Report!

Please e-mail your report to the [SPF Staff](#) attaching any additional information that you would like to share about your project (e.g. other reports, research, documents, photos, etc.). Please note that this Final Report will be shared publicly on your SPF project's webpage.