



# Community Gardening and Mental Health Resilience in Zimbabwean Slums, Tanzania

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## Abstract

Community gardening initiatives have been recognised for their potential to enhance physical health and well-being in various settings. However, their impact on mental health resilience, particularly in vulnerable urban populations such as Zimbabwean slums in Tanzania, remains understudied. The study employed a qualitative approach involving semi-structured interviews with participants ( $n=20$ ) *in four randomly selected communities*. Data were collected over a period of six months, analysing themes related to gardening activities, community engagement, and psychological outcomes. Participants reported significant improvements in mental health scores following the introduction of community gardening initiatives, particularly noting enhanced sense of purpose and social connection within their neighborhoods. Community garden programmes show promise as a low-cost intervention for improving mental health resilience among urban slum dwellers. Findings suggest that fostering community engagement through shared activities can lead to positive psychological outcomes. Further research should focus on replicating these findings in diverse settings and evaluating the long-term sustainability of such initiatives. Policy makers could consider integrating community gardening into broader urban development strategies as a mental health support mechanism.

**Keywords:** *African geography, resilience theory, community psychology, action research, qualitative methodology, mental health promotion, social support networks*

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