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## TRUEQUE VERDE PROGRAM

An incentive mechanism that motivates people to recycle and eat healthier local food  
by exchanging 1kg of local produce for 4kg of recyclables.

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**TO:** SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICY BOARD  
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**SUBJECT:** DESCRIPTION OF THE GREEN BARTER PROJECT & ITS POTENTIAL TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN AUSTIN  
**DATE:** 5/23/2011  
**CC:** LUCIA ATHENS, CHIEF SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER FOR THE CITY OF AUSTIN

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Aligned with this board concerns about the need to *improve the availability of fresh, nutritious, locally and sustainably grown food at reasonable prices for all residents, particularly those in need*, I would like to present to you the *Trueque Verde/Green Barter* Program program, and explore possibilities to replicate this program in Austin.

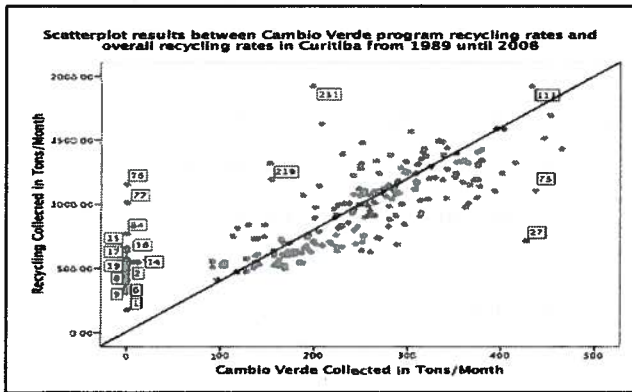
**What is it?** Trueque Verde motivates people in low-income communities to recycle while encouraging more nutritional, balanced diets. It provides fresh produce in exchange for recyclables to people who separate their recycling waste and take it to an exchange point once a week. For every 4 kg of recyclable materials (PET, paper, aluminum, glass, etc.) participants collect, we trade them 1 kg of food (onions, tomatoes, green tomatoes, apples, limes, chilies, rice, beans, oats, etc.) produced locally.

**Where did it start?** Green Barter is an environmental policy to increment recycling rates at the local level in low-income settings. This program has been in place in Curitiba since 1989 and it has grown successfully and steadily having now 89 exchanging points throughout the city exchanging an average of 15.25 tons per day. The program has been widely accepted by the citizens who **participate proudly** in the program in Curitiba. This city claims to have the highest recycling rate of a local urban city in Brazil and in Latin America as well. The inclusion of this program in my thesis was possible after an internship with the Environmental Department of Curitiba's local government in 2008. The thesis inspired several grant proposals and a pilot was successfully implemented in Morelia, Mexico thanks to one grant obtained from the Clinton Global Initiative as an outstanding award on 2010.

**Task:** Waste Reduction, Better Diets, Local consumption of produce, Sustainable Efforts.

**How:** Trueque Verde distributes produce and collects recyclables. The produce is bought directly from local farmers. In the "Cool Season", from November through April, there is local and regional head lettuce, spinach, chicory, cilantro, celery, carrots, beets, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, hard squash, garlic, onions, radish, parsley, potatoes, and by the end of the season strawberries. During the "hot season", May through October, there are tomatoes, garlic, potatoes, onions, beans, squash, melons, peppers, sweet corn, cucumbers, basil, okra, hard squash, and pears available locally and regionally.

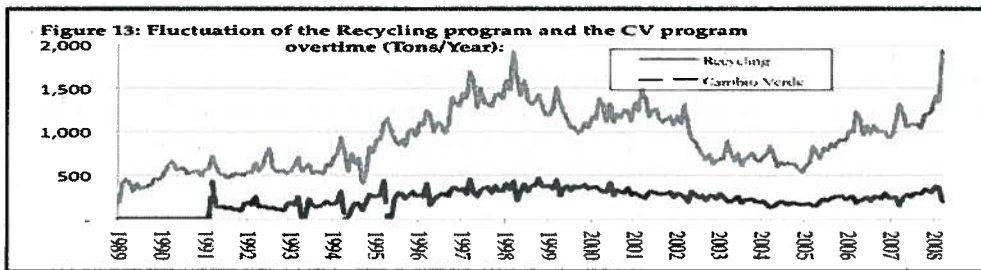
I will work with local gardeners and farmers already stable and consolidated who want to participate in the program with preferential but fair prices. On the other hand, we will sell the recycling materials to recover some of the investment needed for the produce. We would partner with existing recycling organizations that would be authorized by the local government.



**How it was measured:** Through a mix method analysis I was able to prove that there is a correlation between the amounts of recyclable waste collected in Curitiba with the Cambio Verde Program and the overall recycling rates in the city throughout the last two decades (1989-2008).

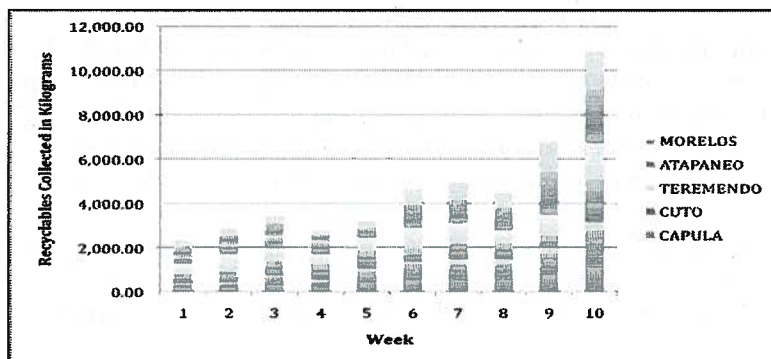
This Scatter plot shows the influence that the exchange performed through the Cambio Verde program has over the entire city ability to increment their recycling rates.

This study in conjunction with the schools of thought shown that the combination of an appropriate marketing and media campaign including an exhaustive educational strategic among different sectors of the society have been key for Curitiba's solid waste management and recycling success.



The program's nature of exchanging recyclables for food, allows the city to engage in a transversal effort with other entities. It provides the opportunity to create public private partnerships with local and regional farmers. It also provides a space to collect bulky items as obsolete domestic appliances and other harmful materials as cooking oil and old tires. For all these reasons, I would like to encourage the City of Austin to implement a pilot in partnerships with this board to further determine if this program would be beneficial for Austin residents and for the local government to exercise transversal policy actions.

**Morelia's pilot program results from July to September 2010:**



## Trueque Verde Program Overview

Factors	Advantages	Obstacles	Implications
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Stable demand for regional farmers “food-mile” concept</li> <li>•Savings for participant households, poverty alleviation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Annual budget restrictions</li> <li>•Program finance</li> <li>•Weak infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Inter-department coordination among the different departments involved with the program throughout the government and the farmers involved</li> <li>•Investment required for running the program</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Maximization on Solid Waste Management efficiency (collection cost including HH and Bulky items, diversion and landfill savings)</li> <li>•Potential partnerships could reduce cost</li> <li>•Job creation</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Reuse of materials</li> <li>•Cleaner spaces</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Droughts and floods and winter storms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Exhaustive educational and promotional campaign to launch and explain the program at the local level</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Energy savings</li> <li>•Better diets</li> <li>•Health improvement (obesity)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Proximity and capability of recycling industries</li> </ul>	
<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Human capability</li> <li>•Community involvement, minorities inclusion</li> <li>•Increment in family interactions and common goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Ignorance, lack if environmental awareness</li> <li>•Apathy of the population as a whole</li> <li>•Informal sector opposition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Inclusion and participation</li> <li>•Strategic location of the exchange points in the less favored communities</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Partnerships/Solid Waste Management ZERO WASTE GOALS</li> <li>•Job creation</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Citizens empowerment</li> <li>•Pride for the Municipality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Election times</li> <li>•Lack of interest from policy makers</li> <li>•Partisan interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Understanding of environmental needs</li> </ul>
<b>Social</b>			
<b>Political</b>			

Being Austin one of the pilot communities for the STAR program. This mechanism offers an opportunity to tackle several of the First Measures Released as:

- ✓ Food Access & Nutrition
- ✓ Educational Opportunities
- ✓ Equity Assessment & Planning
- ✓ Natural Resource Inventory & Planning
- ✓ Comprehensive Planning
- ✓ Greenhouse Gas Reduction
- Industry Sector Development & Revitalization
- Workforce Development Planning

And within the Food Access & Nutrition one several categories would be tackled as well:

1. Local Food Production
2. Food Procurement
3. Food nutrition Literacy
4. Food Assistance
5. Access to Food
6. Prevalence and Availability of Health Food
7. Limiting Unhealthy Food
8. Housing Food Security
9. Nutrition and Health of Residents

**What the S.F.p.b can do?**

1. Provide feedback about the program to us at [solurso@gmail.com](mailto:solurso@gmail.com)
2. Help with contacts for the research assessment stage to determine Austin's local food capability/cost projection for the pilot.
3. Help with partnerships with local farmers to start the pilot.
4. Support the program as one of the initiatives to be included in the Zero Waste Master Plan:  
[swsmasterplan@ci.austin.tx.us](mailto:swsmasterplan@ci.austin.tx.us)
5. Recommend the program to the CoA if you considered it appropriate,
6. Share, vote and comment for this program at [speakaustin.org](http://speakaustin.org)