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GreenUP is a stimulating booklet edited by CrossingLab, a 'think-tank lab for culture crossing' created by architects and scholars at the University of Florence, Italy. It should be regarded more as a Manifesto than as a scientific essay. A Manifesto for urban rehabilitation coming after four years of research and design experimentation. It consists of an introduction, explaining the project keywords and its main references, a short chapter on urban farming, and eight chapters presenting a selection of GreenUP projects designed by CrossingLab in collaboration with a wide range of architects, scholars and artists from various countries and fields.

GreenUP's scope is wide, aspiring it to provide a tool for metropolitan government and to make a major contribution to addressing contemporary environmental challenges. Its core idea is that in many situations, from western high-density cities to urban slums in developing countries – vertical green can provide an alternative to horizontal green, up to creating true urban ecological infrastructures. In the GreenUP project – which aims in its author's words at being 'visionary but effective' – the vertical green network is determined connecting together and absorbing disused buildings and transformation areas. Refurbishment of disused buildings is intended to be accomplished avoiding their clearance and hybridizing them with green and vegetation. Transformation areas, targeting decaying urban voids, have a strictly temporary, flexible, and adaptable character, and are intended to be build with recycled shipping containers, variously connected each other and screened with vertical green structures. Such structures are aimed at reducing CO_2 emissions, embellishing the city, and producing vegetables and fruit. For these reasons for the book's title is also an acronym of the main project's keywords: Green Sprawl, Renewable/Recyclable, Energy, Environment.

The well-read game of references to which the reader is invited to partake is often the excuse for a distancing or a sense upset. To make an example, in one of the 8 ½ projects – the number being an homage to Fellini's namesake movie – a series of courtyards is built along a remnant of Florence's old town walls on the model of The Uffizi. Vasari's porch is transformed here into a green wall screening a temporary structure built with recycled shipping containers, whereas a natural promenade running along the walls connects the parallelepiped volumes on the rear providing access to the roofed terrace restaurant on a building facing the River Arno: a solids/voids Corbu/Vasari game ending with the rewriting of the famous Five Points: 1. On-Depth Unit, 2. Full Window, 3. Natural Promenade, 4. Photovoltaic Façade, 5. Vertical Garden. The GreenUP model seems flexible enough to allow application under the most different situations: from the old Santa Croce's Cloister – where vertical green structures are temporarily used in order to recreate the spatial and volumetric relationships preexisting demolitions of the Risorgimento era – to suburban social housing, from reuse without clearance of abandoned infrastructures to renewal of Sicilian 'Ecomostri'.

The idea of placing green vertically on buildings and facades is no new idea. Landscape historians cite the legendary Hanging Gardens of Babylon as the possible first example of vertical green. Between the nineteenth century and the twentieth century this same idea had some relevance within the Jugendstil movement and within the Garden City movement. Today vertical green is very popular, counting amongst its most well-known practitioners Patrick Blanc, with his 'Vertical Gadens', and Stefano Boeri, with his '*Bosco Verticale*' (vertical wood). Therefore, it is worthwhile spending a few words in trying to focus on how the Green-Up approach places itself with respect to the extensive literature and to the many other methods already existing. Three keywords can suffice for that purpose: recycle, community, design & default. Both Stefano Boeri's vertical woods and Patrick Blanc's vertical gardens, to make an example, are mainly conceived for new buildings – whose social acceptability they intend to foster – and are quite expensive. They necessarily require upscale buildings to be implemented. On the contrary Green-Up mainly elicits as its row materials to be worked on decaying buildings and situations, implying low-cost interventions to be implemented with the participation of local communities. One of its main principles is the complete reuse of existing buildings and materials. Vertical vegetation is not used to promote new developments but to re-signify existing situations.

GreenUP is conceived as an open and evolving project, whose developments can be followed on the website www.crossinglab.com. The challenges which GreenUP is going to face are many, ranging from technical and maintenance issues to legal and financial aspects. However GreenUP is a well-read and stimulating booklet which has the great advantage of looking at the main contemporary urban issues as opportunities. The potentialities and the innovative character of such an approach, moreover, should not be disregarded, as demonstrates the invitation on the project coordinator, Giacomo Pirazzoli, to speak at a TED conference in Germany in 2014. These are among the reasons for GreenUP is a definitely worthwhile reading.