

MIDDEN EARTH INITIATIVE

CLEARING OF OLD "JUNGLE" REFUGEE CAMP IN SAMOS

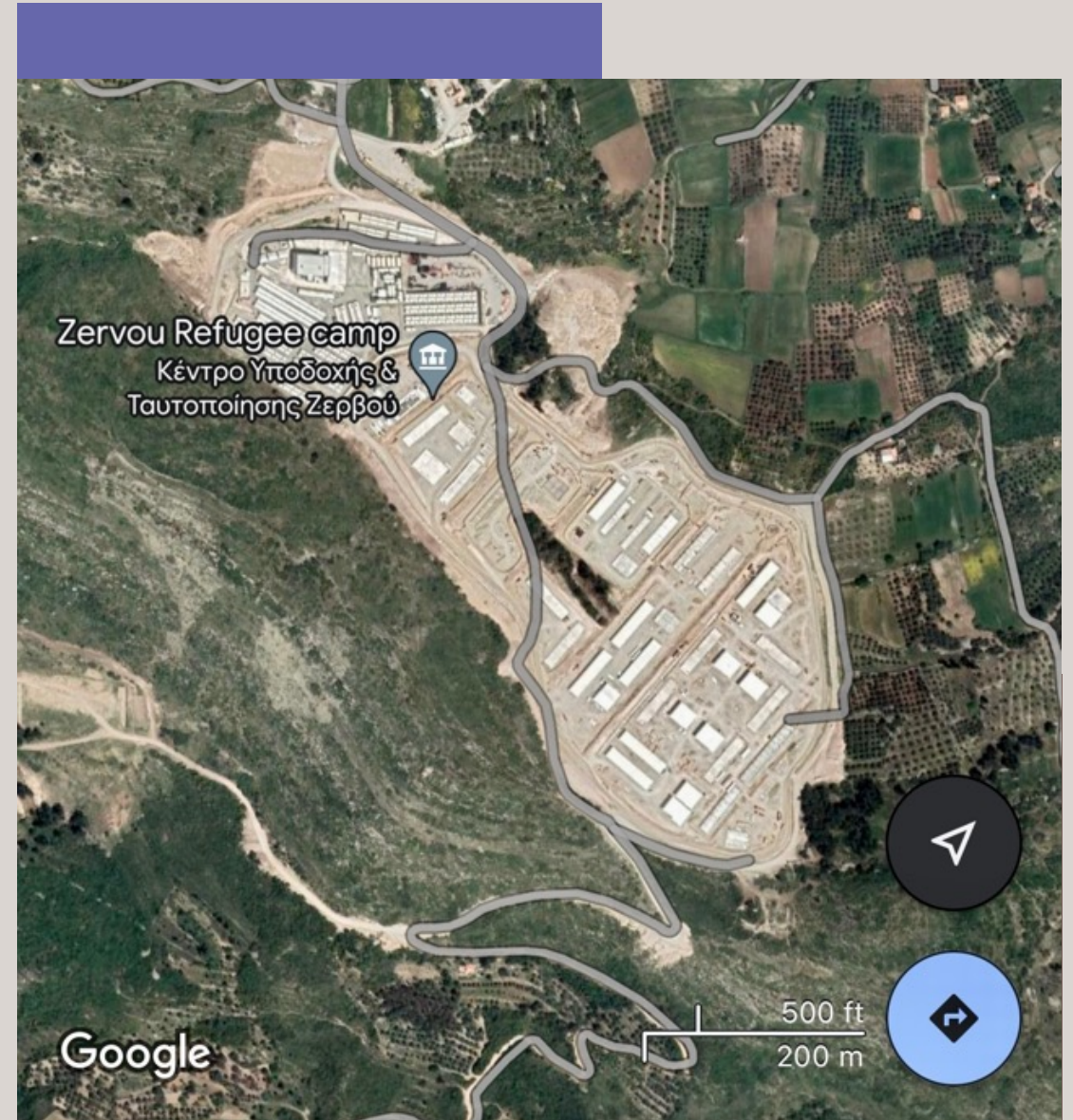
26 JUNE 2022

PROBLEM #1



With the opening of the Zervou Refugee Camp in Sep'21 with capacity for 3'000+ residents, the previous facility near the capital of Samos (Vathi) was almost completely abandoned - creating a significant health hazard to thousands of nearby residents due to vermin now infesting the area. It is also an eyesore in an area which could be leveraged for the benefit of the island's population as a community garden and more.

https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/opening-first-new-reception-centre-samos-zervou-2021-09-28_en

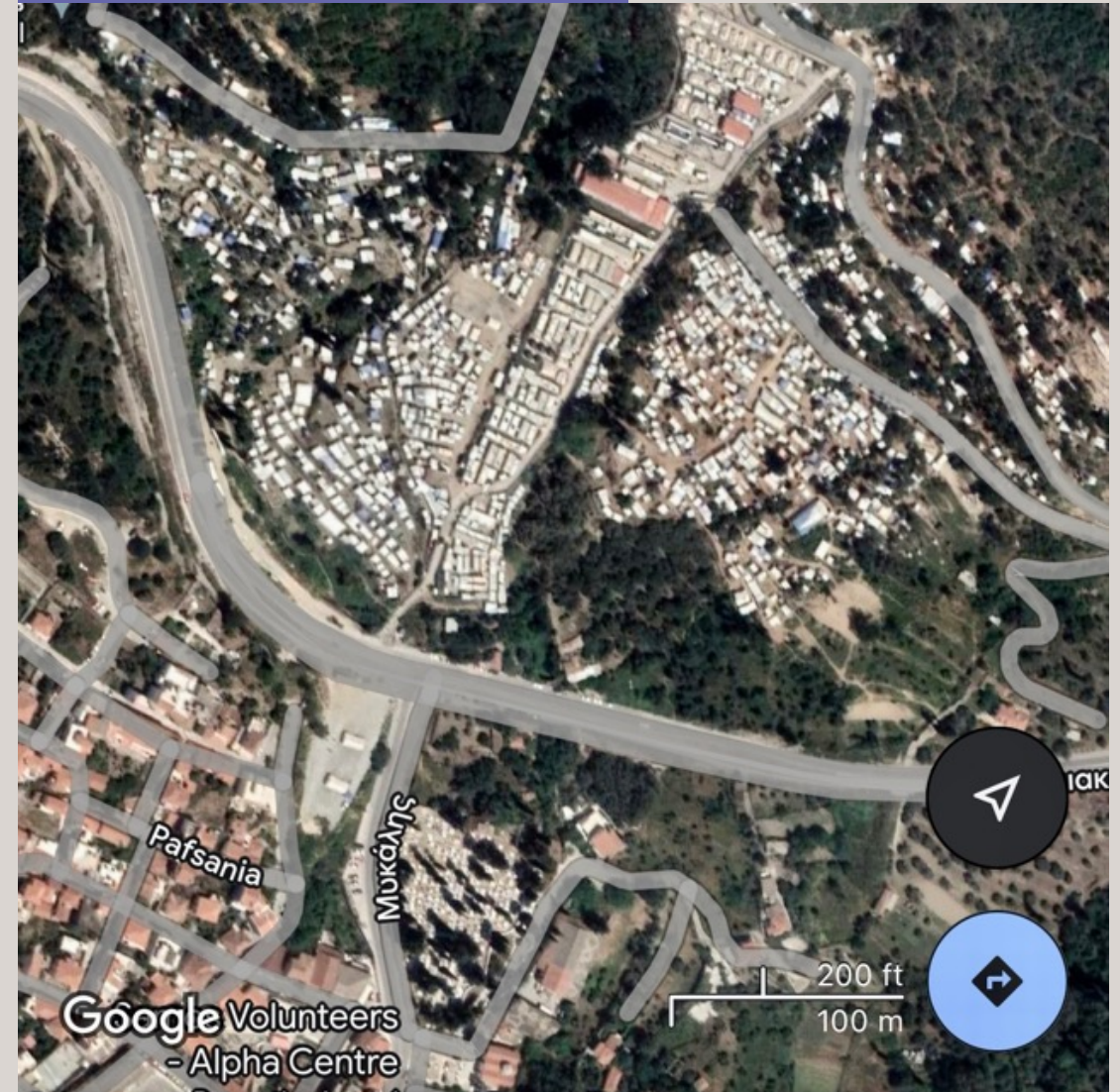


Samos' new Zervou Refugee Camp

PROBLEM #2



The comprehensive upcycling of the old “Jungle” camp is far from a trivial matter as there are so many complexities involved due to its significant size (it has hosted up to 8’000 people), lack of clarity in terms of current land control (Military? Ministry of Immigration? Private Sector?) and which key stakeholders should become involved in the proposed transformation process (Samos Sanitation Services, power company, mobile operators, mainland recycling companies, etc).

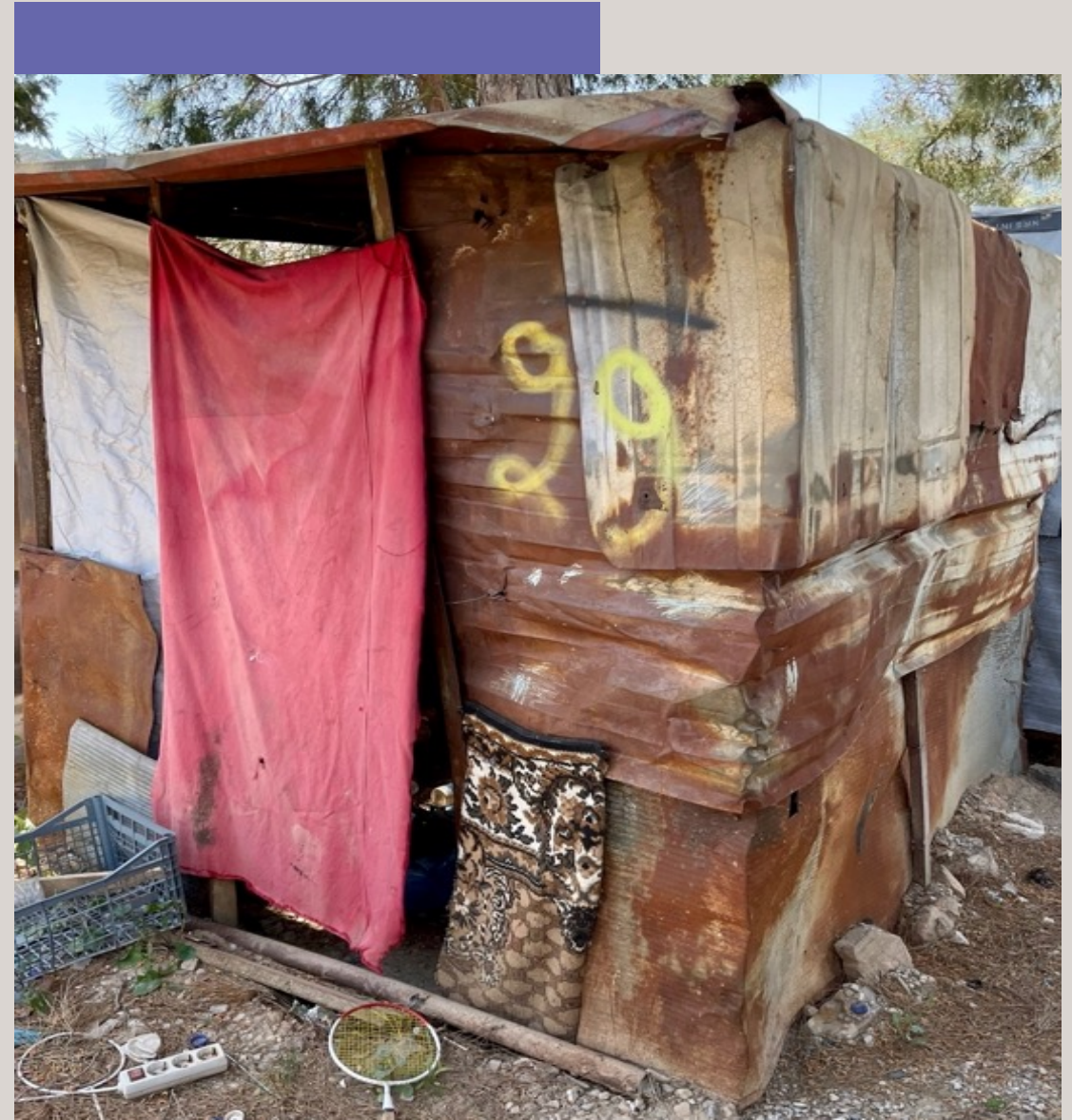


Samos' old “Jungle” Refugee Camp

PROBLEM #3



After officially being granted asylum, refugees are told they must leave the new Zervou camp – but several cannot afford to travel anywhere as their camp monthly allowance is of only EUR70 and alternative sources of income don't always exist. Some of them have no choice but to move back to the old "Jungle" refugee camp and become homeless, therefore making it significantly more challenging for them to rebuild their life and integrate into Greek society.

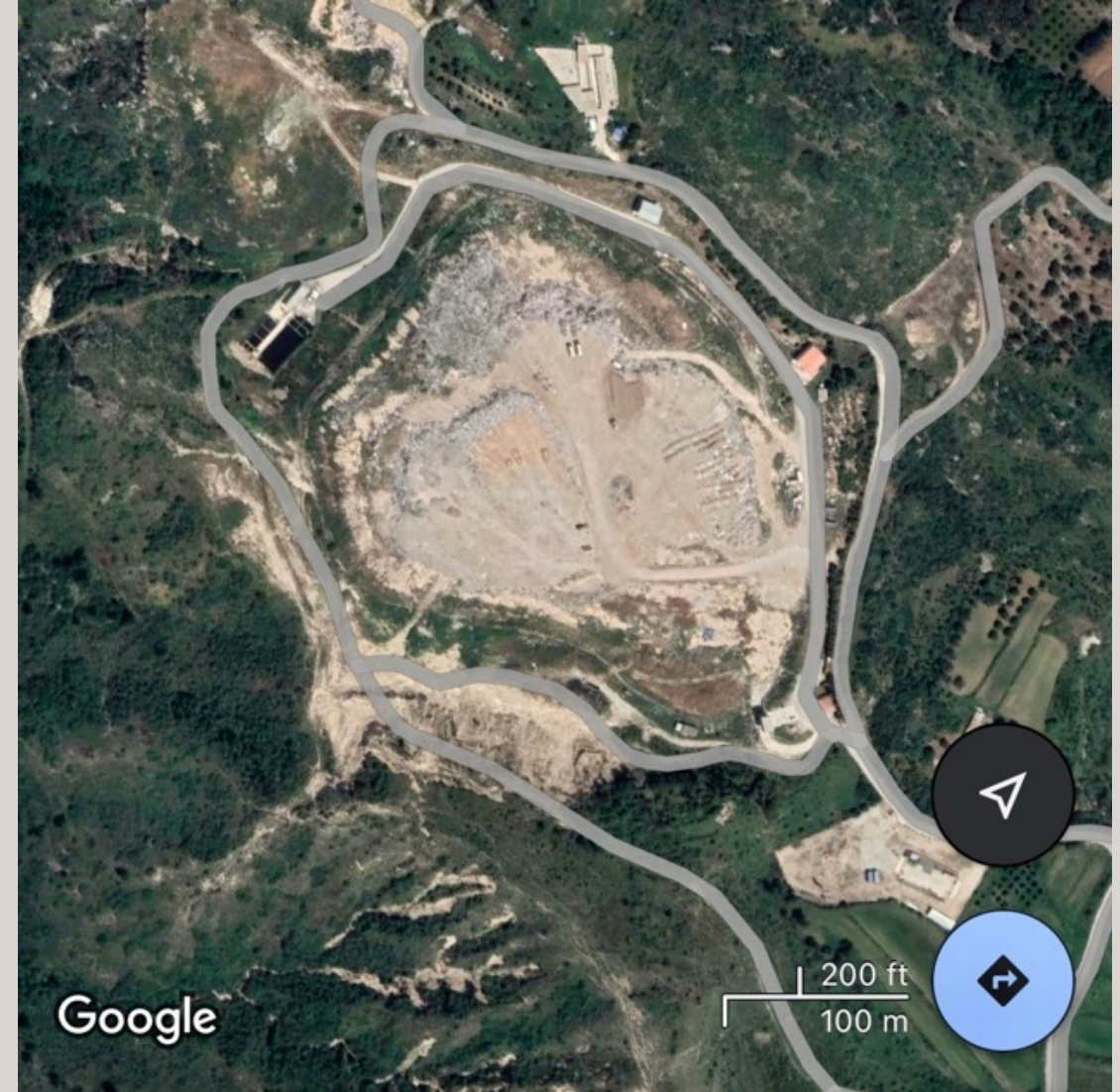


Typical shack at the Vathi "Jungle"

SOLUTION #1



The Samos Recycling Facility which was built on rocky terrain thus eliminating the risk of leaks into the local water supply could be used to dispose of any materials from the “Jungle” camp. Any valuable materials such as metals could be sold to mainland processing plants - helping cover some project costs such as market rate salaries, hiring of sanitation equipment plus transportation fees/fuel. Additionally, we strongly recommend establishing a collaboration with universities and experts to study novel landfill technologies.

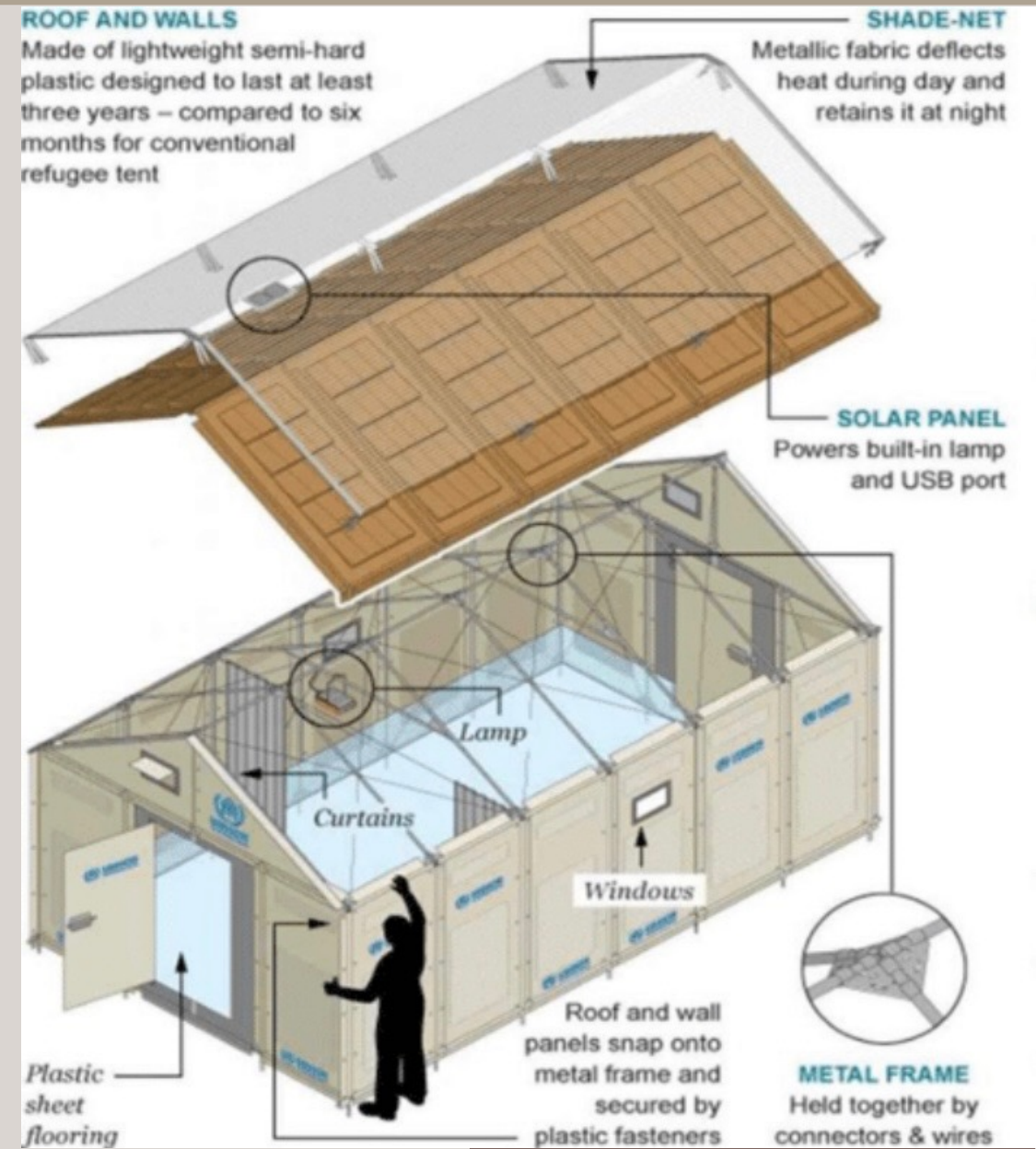


Samos recycling facility near Vathi

SOLUTION #2



The homeless residents currently returning to the old “Jungle” camp after receiving their asylum papers could be temporarily employed to remove the old camp debris and provided with better containerized accommodation or if enough funds are available even at a hostel instead of living in unsanitary shacks. An option to consider would be low cost units from [BetterShelter.org](https://www.bettershelter.org/) developed by the IKEA Foundation (winterized as needed) and connected to the power grid as well as to the internet – e.g. via mobile routers.



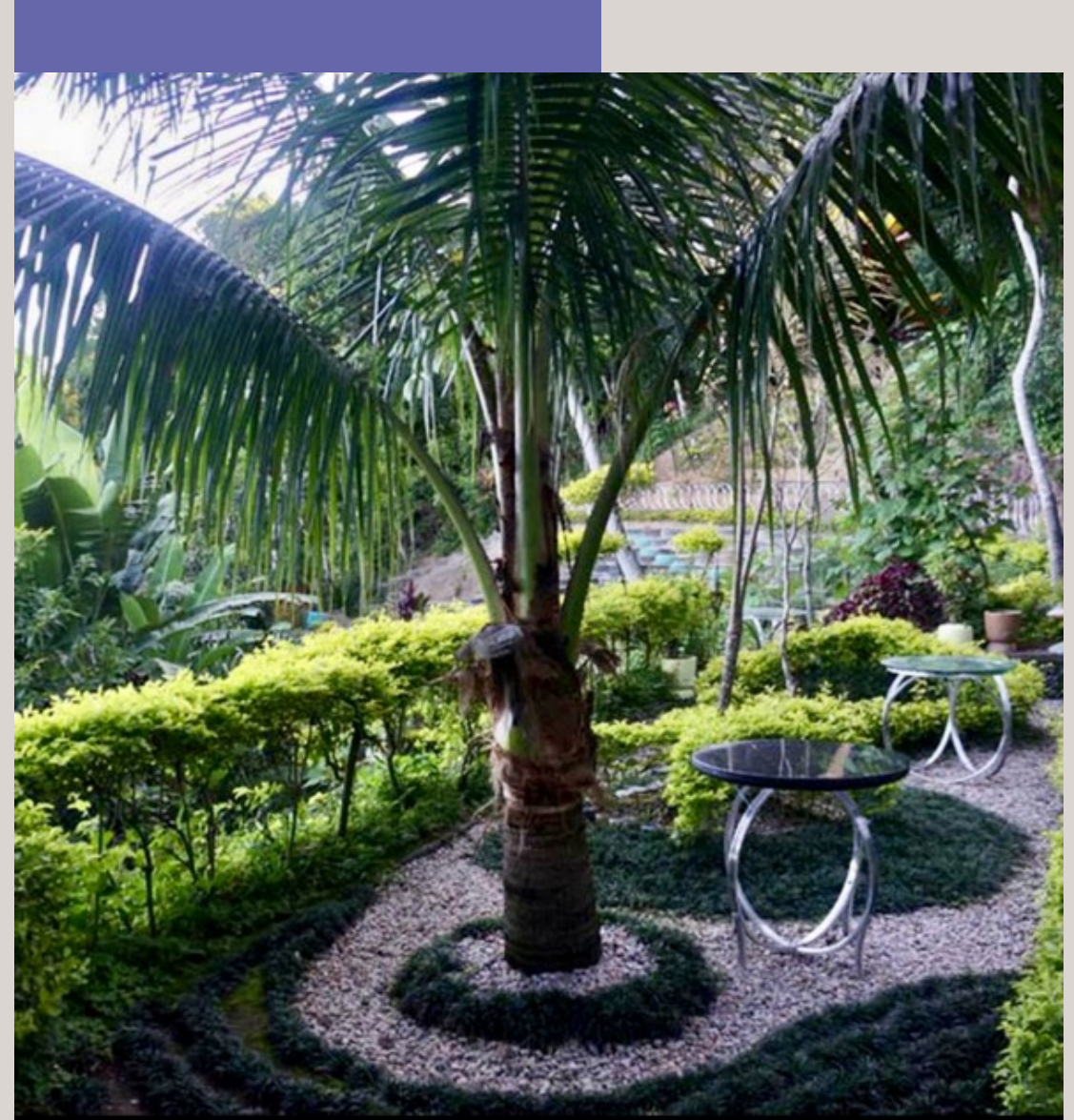
Schematic of a Better Shelter Unit

SOLUTION #3



The cleared “Jungle” camp area could at least partially (i.e. the publicly owned sector) be developed into a community garden similar to what was already done by the residents of a “favela” (slum) in Rio de Janeiro where a large garbage dump which had been used continuously for 20 years was remarkably transformed into a social gathering space - using trash components as part of the new structures and becoming a popular touristic attraction:

<http://dw.com/en/a-lush-green-garden-in-a-concrete-jungle/a-19320969>



Rio favela new community gardens

WHAT'S NEXT?



Some proposed next steps:

1. Identify similar ongoing initiatives for potential partnerships
2. Clarify legal ownership status of camp structures (all trash legally?)
3. Anything else preventing the camp from being cleared?
4. Who are the key stakeholders – Military, Ministries, NGOs, etc?
5. How to secure Recycling Facility equipment and vehicles access?
6. Reach out to landfill experts to assess best techniques to follow
7. How to get a (seed) grant to cover the multiple costs involved?
8. Assessment of the homelessness situation and suggested solutions:

How many people in this situation; Any container accommodation available?; Grant origination to fund their income; Trainings required (Health & Safety, Gardening, etc); How to make the area at least partially a city park? Minimum feasible budget plus volunteer work; Define action split between public vs private land (acquisition by the municipality possible?); would private land owners co-finance the clean up as it's in their interest? Public Relations drive?



Vathi harbour view from "Jungle"

FROM PAIN TO PRIDE

Please join us in this collaborative journey of transformation to rehabilitate a prime area of the Samos capital Vathi - allowing its residents and visitors to benefit from the panoramic harbour view while enjoying an urban garden and providing employment to those who need it the most.

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"A midden is an old dump for domestic waste" en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midden

