CONCEPT NOTE

SDG Local Solutions

REGISTER HERE

TOPIC

Local governments around the world are working to ensure food supply while preserving their local ecosystems. Rapid urbanization, land degradation, and the negative impacts of climate change are disrupting food supply chains and exacerbating food insecurity. This has a clear and quick impact on the more vulnerable living in cities, where access to food is very different from rural areas.

Within this context, **agroecological food production,** or the application of ecological principles to food systems, is one of the solutions cities are looking at. This technique that promotes biodiversity, sustainable use of resources, and increases local participation is emerging as a solution to enhance food security, sustainable livelihoods, and climate resilience in urban and peri-urban areas.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 266 million urban households work in crop production (in developing countries) with 68 million hectares of land within 20 km of urban centers being under cultivation worldwide. Forty per cent (40%) of urban dwellers in African countries are engaged in some form of agricultural activity, and this percentage amounts to 50 % in Latin America.

Around the world, local and regional governments are implementing agroecological food production systems in urban and peri-urban areas. For example, they are training citizens to develop home-based gardens in small spaces such as balconies, backyards, or patios. They are also providing space to create communal gardens, often located on public or open land in cities, like parks and other green spaces.

Local initiatives include **gardens for self-consumption**, leisure, and job creation, as well as **commercial farms for profit and economic growth.** Urban and peri-urban gardens can save on food expenditure and increase their income by selling surplus yields. Commercial farmers can earn a living or create jobs, contributing to the formal or informal economy of the city.

Agroecological approaches also offer a pathway to **reshape urban and peri-urban landscapes** by turning vacant or underutilized land into productive, biodiverse spaces. Beyond food production, they contribute to environmental restoration, climate mitigation, and inclusive economic development. The expansion and preservation of green areas create a healthy living environment for urban dwellers while enhancing the potential for pollination and biodiversity conservation in and around cities.

For example, in Argentina, the city of **Rosario's "Sustainable Food Production Programme**" promotes the use of underutilized land for agricultural plots and vegetable gardens, establishing urban farming as a new livelihood. It supplies residents with farming tools, seeds, and training to grow food locally. **Oosterwold**, a suburb of the city of Almere in the Netherlands, designates a completely self-sufficient area where half of each plot must be dedicated to urban agriculture.

In **Vancouver**, some NGOs in alliance with the city government created "Community Gardens," providing resources to facilitate the creation and operation of personal gardens, and established a data portal to improve interaction between garden owners and interested parties.

In **Querétaro**, Mexico, the city promotes urban and peri-urban farming to counteract the adverse effects of urban sprawl, while enhancing species richness (agrobiodiversity) to build resilience in food and farming systems. In **Leuven** (Belgium)**,** some institutions organized community-supported agriculture (CSA) to support urban dwellers' access to UPA practices. The municipal government rented land to institutional producers while considering the provision of ecosystem services.

This webinar aims to showcase two examples of how local governments can drive food system transformation through innovative approaches.

CASE STUDIES

Rosario, Argentina: green belt initiative for a resilient Rosario

The city of Rosario, Argentina, has become a global example of how urban agroecology can drive sustainable and inclusive transformation. Through its Urban Agriculture Program, the municipality has successfully reclaimed vacant public and peri-urban land to promote healthy food production, improve food security, and strengthen climate resilience. Initially launched in response to the 2001 economic crisis, the program has since evolved into a central strategy for addressing urban vulnerabilities such as flooding and extreme heat.

By supporting over 2,400 families in the development of environmentally sustainable gardens, particularly in low-income neighborhoods, Rosario has reduced its dependence on food imports and lowered greenhouse gas emissions associated with vegetable transport by up to 95%. The city's holistic approach—recognized with the 2020-2021 WRI Ross Center Prize for Cities—demonstrates how urban agriculture can simultaneously promote public health, climate action, and social equity.

Belo Horizonte, Brazil: growing sustainability in the city

Since the 1990s, the city of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, has been a national and international reference in urban agroecology and food security. Through a strong alliance between civil society and the local government, the city has developed an institutional framework that includes pioneering legislation, public infrastructure, and support programs aimed at promoting family and urban farming. In 1993, the creation of the Municipal Secretariat for Food Supply (SMAB) marked a turning point, enabling the implementation of innovative initiatives such as community gardens, agroecology learning centers (CEVAEs), and urban food markets.

Over the years, programs such as Cidade Cultivando para o Futuro and the Municipal Policy to Support Urban Agriculture have strengthened the integration of agroecological practices in urban planning. More recently, infrastructure such as the Central Supply Facility for Family and Urban Farming (CAFA) and participatory mechanisms like the Metropolitan Participatory Guarantee System (SPG-RMBH) have further supported sustainable food systems and market access for small producers. These efforts are accompanied by continuous training programs and social mobilization, reinforcing agroecology as a transversal principle for sustainability, income generation, and the human right to adequate food in Belo Horizonte and its metropolitan region.

MODERATOR

Bruno Lana

Bruno Lana has been an Economic Affairs Officer at the Division of Sustainable Development and Human Settlements of ECLAC since 2020. Previously, he served as Associate Statistician at the Economic and Environmental Statistics Unit of the Statistics Division. Before joining the United Nations system, he worked on issues related to mobility and transportation in the private sector. He holds a degree in Economics from UFMG – Federal University of Minas Gerais, as well as master's degrees in Economics from FGV-SP – Getulio Vargas Foundation in São Paulo, and in Transportation from UFMG.

SPEAKERS

Raúl Terrile

Raúl Terrile is an Agricultural Engineer with a Master’s degree in Rural Development and Agroecology. He currently serves as Coordinator of the Food Program within the Secretariat of Economic Development and Employment of the Municipality of Rosario, where he leads the Sustainable Food Production Program. In this role, he designs and implements strategies to promote sustainable agricultural practices, strengthen local food systems, and foster food security. His work focuses on integrating agroecological principles into public policies, supporting producers, and enhancing the resilience of urban and peri-urban agriculture.

Darklane Rodrigues

Darklane Rodrigues is the Municipal Secretary of Food and Nutritional Security of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, with over 17 years of experience in public policy, social development, and legislative advisory. She has led initiatives to strengthen food and nutritional security, family farming, and social and solidarity economy, including her previous role as Undersecretary in the same department for eight years. Her career spans work in the State Government of Minas Gerais and the Legislative Assembly, where she coordinated the Parliamentary Front for the Defense of Children's and Adolescents' Rights and developed public budget monitoring reports. Recognized internationally for her work, she has been honored in France and Israel for projects in food production and economic and social equity. She holds a bachelor's degree in Social Work and postgraduate studies in Legislative Power and Public Policy.

WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE WANT TO ADDRESS IN THIS WEBINAR?

- How can agroecological food production contribute to urban resilience?
- How can local governments balance land use for housing with the need for local food production?
- What financing mechanisms exist to support agroecological transitions in urban areas?
- How has your city's agroecological policy framework evolved over time, and what institutional mechanisms ensure its continuity beyond political cycles?
- What have been the most effective strategies to engage and sustain participation from vulnerable communities in agroecological food production?
- How do you measure the social, economic, and environmental impacts of your programs, and how is this data used to shape policy?
- In what ways have international cooperation and city-to-city exchanges influenced the design or scaling of your initiatives?
- How do you integrate agroecology into broader urban planning agendas, such as climate adaptation, public health, and social inclusion?

AGENDA

5 min	Presentation of the initiative: "Local solutions for local SDG action", translation, recording, use of chat, etc. Introduction of the moderator by Diana Lopez Caramazana, Advisor, cities and local governments, UNDP.
10 min	Moderator's introduction to the session.
15 min	First experience, followed by a question from the second experience.
15 min	Second experience, followed by a question from first experience
12 min	Questions and answers from the audience.
3 min	Closing and conclusions by the moderator.

Organized by UNDP in the framework of its work with cities and local governments, this series of webinars generate a conversation between cities to highlight local solutions to implement Agenda 2030. The lessons learnt will be shared globally through UNDP's SDG Local Action networks, webpage https://sdglocalaction.org/ and YouTube channel https://www.youtube.com/@sdglocalaction8192