

Urban Agriculture Socio-Environmental Synthesis: An Integration of the Ecosystem Services and Livelihoods Approaches to Evaluate the Multifaceted Role of Urban Agriculture in Contemporary Latin America

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In today's era of rapid urbanization in the developing world, Urban agriculture (UA) demonstrates a renewed potential to alleviate poverty, food insecurity, and enhance urban communities economies and ecosystems. To illuminate the role of UA in society and nature, it is necessary to employ interdisciplinary and integrative methods that account for the complexity of UA systems in their entirety. This proposal suggests a simple, yet innovative, approach: the integration of the ecosystem services framework, which assesses the material and non-material benefits people obtain from nature like food, water and the potential for community engagement, and the livelihoods framework, which can evaluate the relationship between UA and humanistic and societal advancements like poverty alleviation and a community connection to agrarian heritage. In order to combine the livelihoods and ecosystem services frameworks, we will synthesize case study reports as well as spatial, qualitative and quantitative data on UA, drawing from three case studies in Latin America: Mexico City, Belo Horizonte, and Lima. The integration of these two approaches will bridge existing scholarly gaps and help identify some of the many social and environmental outcomes associated with UA.

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