



Tropentag, September 18-20, 2019, Kassel

“Filling gaps and removing traps  
for sustainable resource management”

## Urban Agroecology for Health and Wellbeing

MAI ABBAS, ALEX FRANKLIN, CHIARA TORNAGHI

*Coventry University, Centre for Agroecology, Water and Reilience, United Kingdom*

### Abstract

The number of people who are living in urban areas is constantly increasing. The historical rise of urbanisation alongside industrialisation has produced a rift between humans and nature and a rupture in soil nutrient cycling between town and country; these are some manifestations of what in literature is known as the metabolic rift, a concept originated in Karl Marx work. This rift detaches people from their own land, knowledge, and food. Accordingly, few citizens in urban areas have direct experience with growing food and the number of people who are lacking the knowledge to prepare their own food from basic ingredients is increasing. Conditions of urbanisation largely subject people to dependency on processed, non-seasonal/fresh food. This attribute of urbanisation is negatively reflected on the population's health and wellbeing. Maintaining the health and wellbeing of a city's population can be considered the drivers for food system change. Urban agroecology can be an approach to heal this rift and maintain a state of health and wellbeing among citizens. It is emerging as a specific type of urban agriculture that includes the ethical, social, cultural, political and productive approaches typical of peasant agroecology. The goal of urban political agroecological practices is to change the often un-resourceful, day-to-day functioning of urban life particularly in relation to soil care, socio-economically just food systems. The focus in this research will be on the power of these practices to create a change and help people to adjust and respond to various stimulations in their life. This helps them to reconnect and redefine their relationship with food and having a sense of wellbeing. The target group of the research is pregnant women or/and with children up to two years old (a stage in life that induces reflections on the link between food and health). A series of action learning workshops (kitchen waste, growing food and cooking healthy meals) will be carried out. The aim of this paper is to report on a review of literature and provide insight into the relationship between agroecology, food knowledge and wellbeing. It is expected that this research will provide an evidence base for policy intervention to promote community-based urban agroecology and to focus on transformative life moments for building awareness.

**Keywords:** Food knowledge, nutrition, urban agroecology, wellbeing