

Quito 20 years' experience in building an urban-centred Agro Food System

The case study¹ has been put together by the Dhaka Food System project, with support by the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and in association with the Bangladesh Institute of Planners. The case studies provide relevant international references to stakeholders, to inform how to best integrate food system considerations into urban planning.

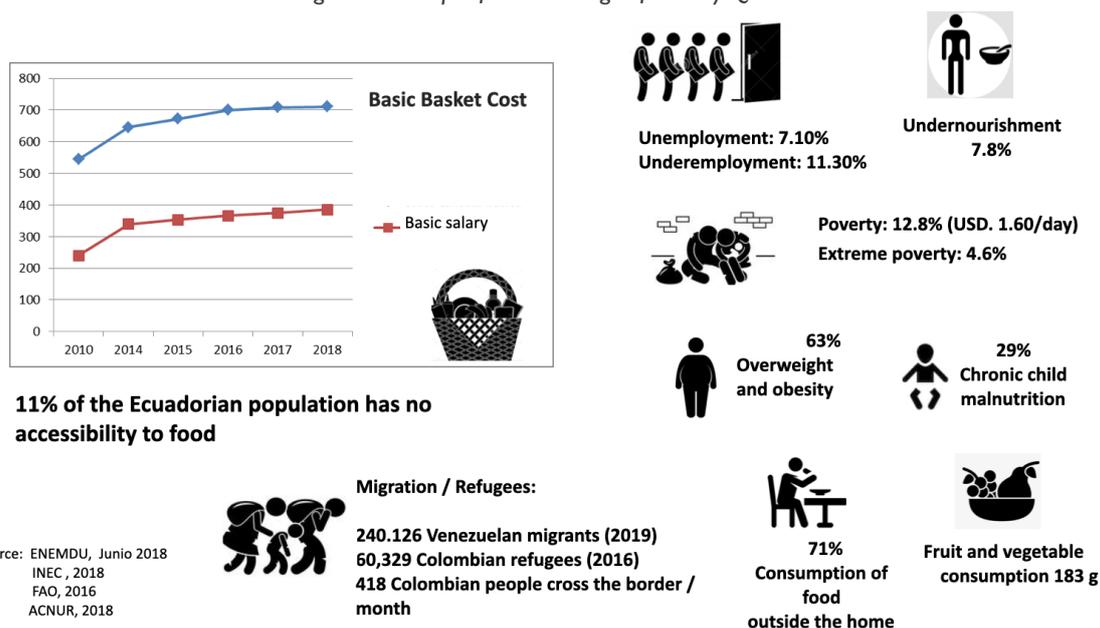
Introduction: what is this case about?

The Quito, Ecuador case study highlights the story of promoting agricultural practices in urban areas to improve food security, ensure sustainable ecosystem, establish better commercialization of organic food, create livelihood opportunities and ensure social inclusion. It summarizes various actions points in building Quito's resilient agro-food system with its timeline. It provides the context in which the city decided to start working on a sustainability plan for eco-agrifood system. It also draws similarities between the context of Dhaka and Quito and briefly describes some of the aspects of Quito's experience and International Forum for Urban Poor (IFUP) that is relevant for Dhaka city.

1. Context: Quito urban and food challenges (figure I)

Quito has a population of 2.5 million with 72% living in urban areas. Also, similar to Dhaka, a significant percentage (around 37%) of Quito's population lives below the poverty line. Nutritious food is in short supply as six out of ten residents between the ages of 25 and 59 are overweight and 29 percent of children suffer from malnutrition. In vulnerable neighbourhoods, that number even rises to 46 percent. The city is expanding discontinuously with low density. Though different in nature, Quito also resembles to Dhaka in terms of its vulnerability to various hazards. Quito is highly vulnerable to volcanic eruptions, landslides, forest fires and various other weather events.

Figure I. Multiple food challenges faced by Quito



Source: Agrupar Quito, based on different sources

¹ This case study draws from multiple presentations from and exchanges with AGRUPAR Quito team, official texts, references cited, early exposure to the case by author and material gathered to build up a case study for the FAO / HIVOS- RUAF course on integrating food into urban planning.

3. Highlights on Quito Urban Agriculture and Food Program

3.1. Brief introduction

In 1999, Quito began the effort to bring together multiple actors in the food system to discuss and develop the first ever a food consultation beginning with urban agriculture (UA) and food security in selected neighborhoods. It mapped stakeholders, established connection with stakeholders, and identified potentials and problems of urban agriculture. It developed a specific set of action plans. In one of the neighbourhoods, 4 pilot activities were undertaken- formulation of micro-credit system for UA, proposals for land use, production and dissemination of information and formulation of upscaling project. These action plans aimed to improve food security, create job opportunities and generate income, improve urban environment, contribute to social inclusion, and institutionalisation and legislation of UA and microcredits.

In the backdrop of 2002 economic crisis and widespread food insecurity, poverty and malnutrition, the Municipality of the Metropolitan District of Quito established the AGRUPAR Participatory Urban Agriculture Project. The objective of AGRUPAR was to create food security and job opportunities, especially for women and vulnerable communities. It created the opportunity for marginalized communities to produce fresh food for themselves. As urban agriculture practices grew, the communities begin to sell their surplus. For effective commercialization of organic food, urban gardeners needed shorter supply chain to build trust and keep the price of food items to an affordable level. Introduction of local fairs created the opportunity for the gardeners to connect directly with consumers.

In 2015, Quito under City Region Food System (CRFS) project took an integrated approach develop an agri-food policy for the city-region through participatory approach (figure 6). A multi-stakeholder platform conducted analysis of food system dynamics, submit proposals, and formulated the agri-food policy that reduces food waste through changes in food processing, transportation, and consumption. It created a high level of awareness and activism among actors within the agri-food system and helped to define a common objective and vision. Quito also collaborated with Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) and RUAF, supported by FAO and the Water Land and Ecosystem Programme (WLE), in a pilot to start working with the MUFPP monitoring framework locally and shared what they learned with other cities.

The support of the RUAF Global Partnership and its participation in the CRFS project and the MUFPP framework brought clarity to the food situation. A multi-actor city team is working to ensure a sustainable and resilient agri-food system envisioned by Quito Agri-Food Pact (PAQ). Quito subsequently signed an Agrifood Charter and published Agrifood Strategy (figure 2). Currently, the multi-stakeholder committee is working towards the inclusion of Agrifood strategy in a city ordinance and raise the multi-stakeholder platform to a food council for the city.

Figure 2. Pillars of Quito Agro-food strategy



Credit: Agrupar, in Estrategia Agroalimentaria de Quito, 2019

3.2. Highlights on relevant aspects for Dhaka context and IFUP

- **Food is grown along the rural-urban continuum (figure 3 & 4):** Dhaka is highly dependent on its surrounding regions for its supply of food. The connection between rural and urban areas is essential for the availability of safe food at an affordable price. Dhaka can follow Quito's example of connecting multiple actors within the food system for development of a shared vision and ensuring connection between rural and urban areas.
- **Urban agriculture can serve a variety of purposes:** generate income, improve ecosystem, ensure social inclusion, create opportunity for leisure. Depending on the need of the communities, Dhaka can choose different forms of urban agriculture for different community.

Figure 3. Where food is grown in Quito?

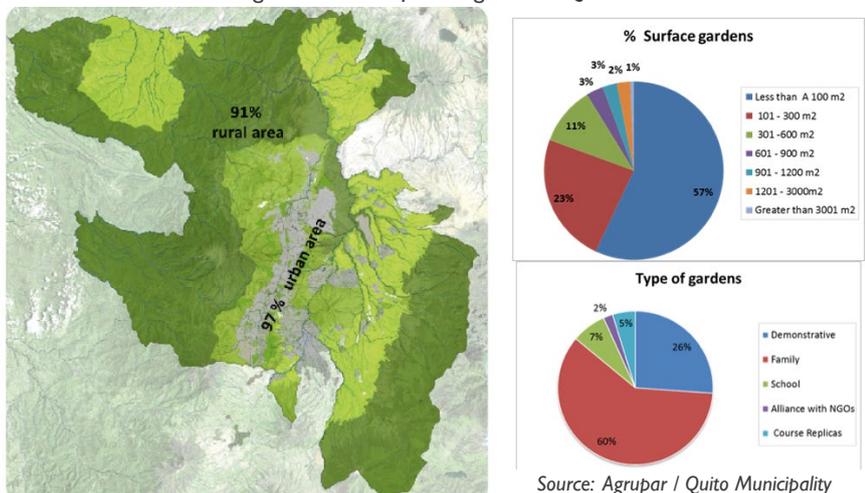
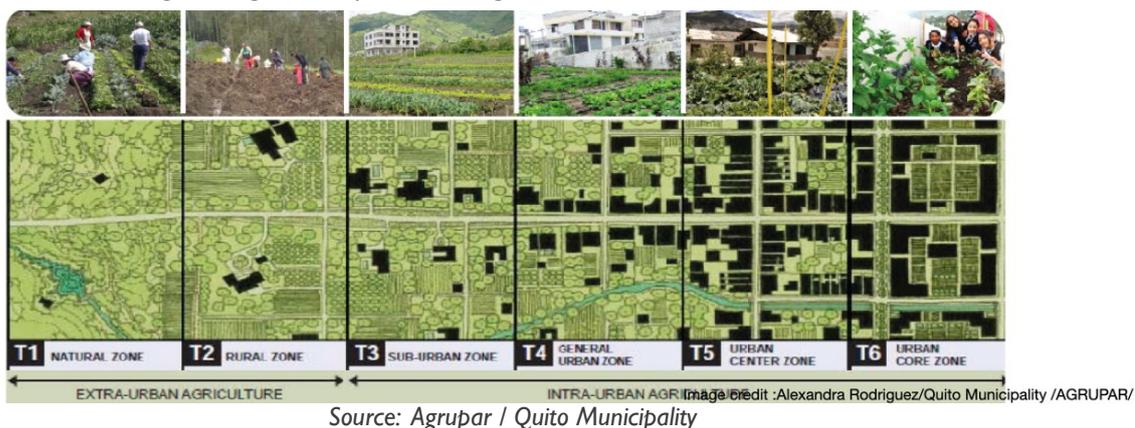


Figure 4. Agricultural practices along the rural-urban continuum



- **Women and communities play a central role:** One of the highlights of Quito's urban agriculture experience was the involvement of women and minorities. It created income generation activities for refugees and women. In Bangladesh, women are excluded from agricultural activities. Urban agriculture can create the opportunity to engage in agriculture and generate income for their households (picture top page 1 & figure 5).

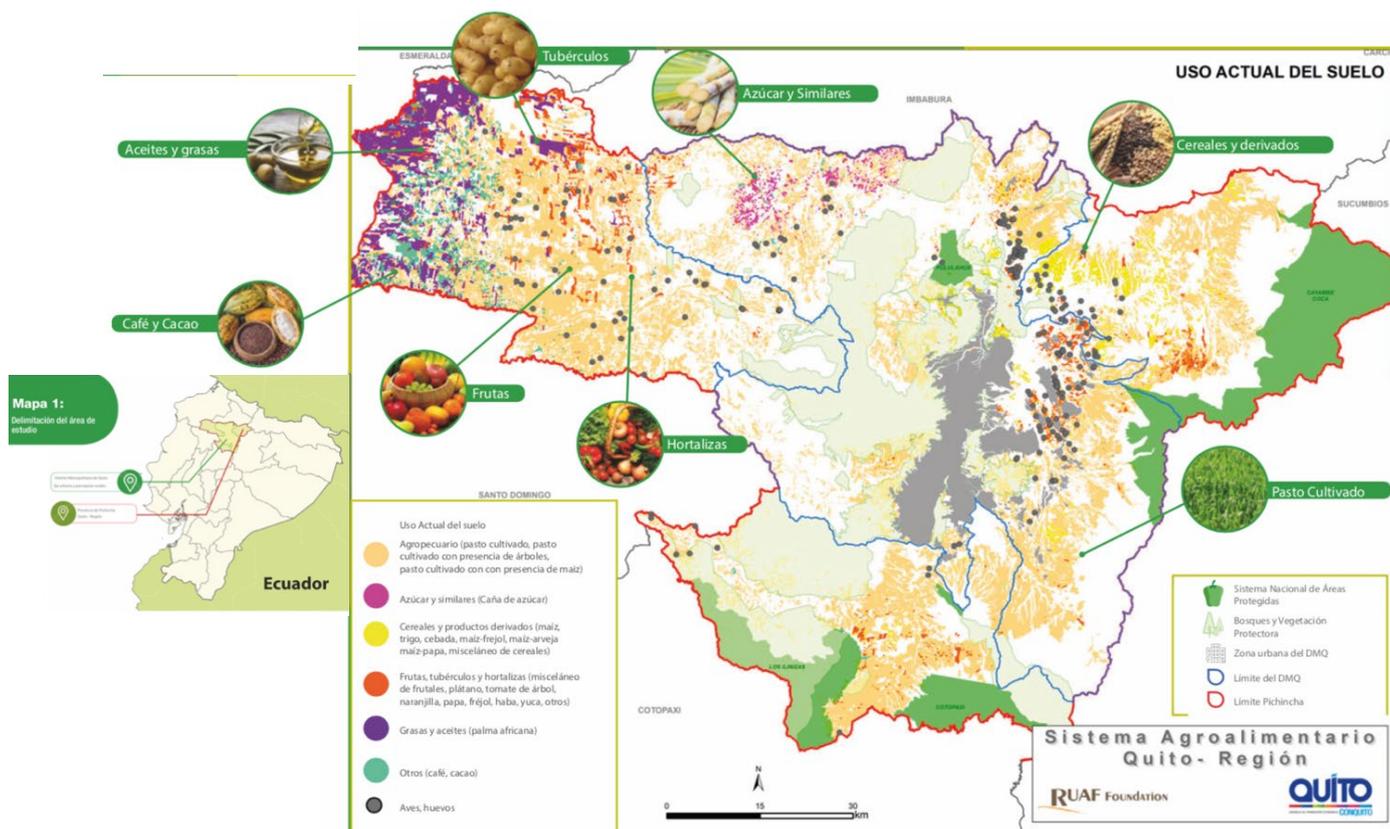
Figure 5. Women in action: The Participatory Urban Farming Project of the city-AGRUPAR



Source: AGRUPAR / Quito

- **City consultations bring people together:** The participation of multiple actors in the food system is needed to develop an effective food agenda that shares the concern and meet the expectation of all groups. City consultation in Quito helped to map and connect with the multiple actors in their food system, which eventually led to the formation of multi-stakeholder platform.
- **Adopting multiple agricultural practices supports sustainability:** Adopting multiple agricultural practices supports sustainability: To support the sustainability of urban agriculture practices, a variety of agricultural activities, connected to a circular economy, is necessary.

Figure 6. Quito Region Agri-Food System: expanding from Quito Metropolitan District to Pichincha Region



Source: Agrupar & RUAF Foundation, in Estrategia Alimentaria de Quito, 2019

- **Think at a large-scale beyond the city limits:** The recent city region perspective (figure 6) and the Food Pact City regional food system thinking is necessary to make Dhaka's food system sustainable. Dhaka is growing rapidly in terms of its population. The city needs to preserve agricultural land, conserve bio-diversity, and ecosystem of its region to ensure food supply in the future.
- **Indicators help to benchmark success:** In addition with a sophisticated set of indicators, using the Milan Pact framework, a set of very well selected indicators to measure progress very easy to be understood by communities, decisions makers, the media and international audience (figure 7, main achievements).

Figure 7. Main achievements of Quito urban agriculture and food program and international recognitions



Source: Agrupar / Quito Municipality

3.3. Time line and key dates over last twenty years

1999:

- Quito consultation on urban agriculture (UA) and food security in selected neighbourhoods

2002:

- City planning department included food as an aspect of planning
- AGRUPAR participatory urban agricultural project was established as a pilot

2006 and onwards:

- launched bio fairs and so far 6,663 bio fairs have been organized

2007:

- Established organic certification for garden groups

2009 and onwards:

- established certification of labour competencies

2008:

- Food sovereignty included in the constitution of Ecuador
- Rikolto conducted a study into consumer trends which showed that many are interested in organic food

2015:

- Quito became one of eight cities throughout the world to test and implement the City Region Food System (CRFS) project

2016:

- Joined the RUAF global partnership

2018:

- Signed an Agrifood charter

2019:

- Published Agrifood strategy

4. Key messages

- Integrating food into urban planning is a long process and takes time. It took Quito 20 years to build integration between food and urban planning. However, building on the learning from Quito, Dhaka can reduce the amount of time required for successful integration.
- The city consultation strategy adopted by Quito is ancestor to Multi-stakeholder Policy Making and Action Plan (MPAP). It provided that the project a strong base and helped the development of Agrifood policies and strategies.
- Quito focused on agro-ecology and organic food, including a wide range of traditional food product with high nutritional values

5. To deepen your knowledge on Quito outstanding experience

Jácome-pólit, D, Paredes, D, Santandreu,A, Rodríguez dueñas, A, Pinto,N. 2020, Quito's re-silient agrifood system, Isocarp: Review 15, pp 276-300, to download <https://ruaf.org/assets/2020/01/Quitos-Resilient-Agrifood-System-1.pdf>

RUAF Urban Agriculture and Food System, Quito's journey to better food security blog Feb 2021, RUAF blog <https://ruaf.org/news/quitos-journey-to-better-food-security/>

Vanderheyden M, 2010, Quito puts food on the agenda in What will we eat tomorrow? Rikolto International: Leuven, pp 112 – 123, <https://www.rikolto.org/en/what-will-we-eat-tomorrow>

6. FAO/BIP Case study series

Case 1. Multi-stakeholder Policy formulation and Action Planning, MPAP Learning from Accra, Ghana, January 2021 / Cabannes Y / FAO / BIP: Dhaka

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Case 4. Quito 20 years' experience in building an urban centred Agro Food System, January 2021 / Cabannes Y / FAO / BIP: Dhaka

7. Credits

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