

# Women and Community-based Urban Agriculture: A Multi-case Study in Bogotá, Colombia

## Mujeres y Agricultura Urbana Comunitaria: un estudio de caso múltiple en Bogotá, Colombia

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**Abstract:** The study aims to delve deeper into the role of women involved in community-based urban agriculture initiatives and to recognize their practices of resistance in seven collective initiatives of the northwest of Bogotá, Colombia using a qualitative methodology and a multiple case study approach; the study highlights the importance of an intersectional analysis of women's experiences. The analysis shows a commitment to food sovereignty, as well as the transformation of relationships with nature, expanded life and the resignification and appropriation of public space. It concludes that women play a significant role in community self-management, with a high recognition of their knowledge and achievements; furthermore, networks of affectivity and intergenerational exchange, strengthen female autonomy and leadership, which extends to other scenarios of socio-political participation. All of the above turns the initiatives into counter-hegemonic positions and resistance practices to the capitalist and androcentric model.

**Key words:** urban orchards, ecofeminism, gender, food sovereignty, community organization.



**Resumen:** El artículo se orienta a profundizar sobre el lugar de las mujeres vinculadas a iniciativas de agricultura urbana comunitaria y a reconocer sus prácticas de resistencia colectiva en siete iniciativas ubicadas en el noroccidente de la ciudad de Bogotá, Colombia, a partir de una metodología cualitativa, con un estudio de caso múltiple y resaltando la importancia de un análisis interseccional en las experiencias de las participantes. Se encuentra que, junto con una apuesta por la soberanía alimentaria, se persigue la transformación de las formas de relacionamiento con la naturaleza y la vida ampliada, así como la resignificación y apropiación del espacio público. Se concluye que las mujeres juegan un relevante rol en la autogestión comunitaria con un alto reconocimiento de sus saberes y quehaceres; las redes de afectividad y el intercambio intergeneracional fortalecen la autonomía y liderazgo femenino, que se irradia a otros escenarios de participación sociopolítica. Todo lo anterior las convierte en apuestas contrahegemónicas y de resistencia al modelo capitalista y androcéntrico.

**Palabras clave:** huertas urbanas, ecofeminismo, género, soberanía alimentaria, organización comunitaria.

## Introduction <sup>1</sup>

Currently, food sovereignty has gained prominence on the global political agenda as an element capable of influencing various dimensions of Sustainable Development. This approach, advocated by organized civil society, represents a form of resistance to the neoliberal economic model. While the latter prioritizes industrialized food production and large-scale global markets that maximize efficiency and profitability, food sovereignty initiatives focus on local and regional food production, distribution, and consumption. This approach not only ensures nutritional security but also strengthens the autonomy and self-determination of communities regarding their own development and agro-food systems. It aims to preserve consumption and production practices that align with the cultural elements of the communities, emphasizing self-management processes that are both environmentally and economically sustainable.

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This issue predominantly concerns rural communities, indigenous peoples, and ethnic groups, as these populations are especially affected by free-market economic policies and the industrialization of production. However, cities have also increasingly engaged in various food sovereignty initiatives (Ruiz Serrano, 2018) in search of alternatives to transition toward fairer agro-food systems. These efforts aim to counterbalance the effects of rapid demographic growth, deepening inequalities, and food insecurity evident in urban areas, while also addressing the adverse environmental impacts.

Within this framework, community urban agriculture initiatives, also known as community urban gardens, have emerged as potential strategies for comprehensive urban environmental management. They serve as platforms for local and community development, producing:

Synergies and complementarities between the conservation and recycling of natural soil and water resources, the landscape and ecological restoration of degraded areas, the provision of food and job creation, and the promotion of social interaction among various urban actors through the establishment of recreational, educational, and productive spaces centered around agro-cultural activities in the city (Moreno Flores, 2007: 4).

Studies such as those conducted by Solari-Pérez *et al.* (2019) in Peru and Moreno-Gaytán *et al.* (2019) in Mexico converge in analyzing how these initiatives, beyond serving as strategies for establishing sustainable urban areas, contribute to a positive appropriation of public space, strengthen community cohesion, and represent efforts that transcend economic growth logic. They are linked to the expanded reproduction of life, contributing to environmental improvement through the development of agroecological techniques.

When discussing the role of women in these initiatives, reports from international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2011), the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2019), and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2011 and 2016) have highlighted that women constitute a significant portion of the agricultural labor force and make substantial contributions. However, their work is often rendered invisible, unpaid, and there are various gaps related to land ownership, access to productive resources and inputs, credit and financing, education, technology, and innovation, as well as inequities in the distribution of time between productive and reproductive activities, which limit their participation on equal terms. This issue is not confined to

rural women alone; studies on women and community urban agriculture, such as those conducted in Sudan by Daoud (2020) and Daoud and Behari (2021), have reached similar conclusions regarding these gaps. In addition to these barriers, Martins de Carvalho and Bógus (2020) identify limitations such as low educational levels, unequal distribution of domestic work, and lack of recognition from public authorities.

A broad range of studies has explored the role of rural and indigenous women in agricultural production and marketing chains, highlighting how these practices serve as forms of resistance to the hegemonic economic model, particularly in Latin America. For example, research conducted by García Rocés and Soler Montiel (2010), García Rocés *et al.* (2014) in the Amazon region of Brazil, Ortega *et al.* (2017), Rincón *et al.* (2017) in Mexico, Rodríguez-Avalos and Cabascango (2017) in Ecuador, Bonilla Leiva (2018) in Costa Rica, and Vásquez *et al.* (2020) in Mexico converge on the observation that women play a crucial role in subsistence family and community economies. They are involved in the entire cycle of production, circulation, exchange, and conservation of local seeds, the preservation of diverse agricultural practices that protect biodiversity, and the reconstruction of identity and cultural reproduction. All these studies highlight that many women have had to contend with processes of territorial encroachment by transnational corporations, new trends in land and productive resource concentration, and acculturation processes.

Some research has also emphasized the relationship between community agroecological processes and the transformation of gender inequities. Studies by García Rocés and Soler Montiel (2010), García Rocés *et al.* (2014), Delgado (2017), and Bonilla Leiva (2018) highlight that women's control over productive assets and food resources for consumption, exchange, or sale becomes a means of achieving autonomy, greater visibility, and social recognition of their work. These studies, along with those by Arias Guevara (2014), Díaz Pérez and Silva Niño (2019), and Martins de Carvalho and Bógus (2020), also underscore the intergenerational processes, enhanced social networks, and the cohesion, dialogue, and exchange among women that occur within these community agroecological spaces. Such interactions facilitate awareness of the asymmetrical power relations within their communities, allow women to challenge the violence they have survived, and contribute to breaking traditional gender structures. Furthermore, these networks help

strengthen women as political actors, expanding their participation into broader municipal governance arenas. Complementing these findings, studies by Slater (2001) and Olivier and Heineken (2017) in Cape Town, South Africa, reach similar conclusions, noting that, in addition to contributing to food security, women's involvement in community urban agriculture acquires additional meanings related to safety, community development, and the establishment of support networks that expand their social and economic reach.

The context outlined above supports the purpose of this article, which aims to delve into the role of women within community urban agriculture initiatives by examining seven collective experiences developed in the northwest of Bogotá, Colombia. The goal is to recognize and highlight the resistance actions undertaken by these collectives, particularly by women, to promote food sovereignty processes within urban settings. Additionally, the article seeks to determine whether these actions and forms of participation have any impact on the transformation of gender inequities, based on the experiences and perspectives of the participating women.

In the research underpinning this article, three specific objectives were formulated: 1) To delineate the collective bets that form the foundation of the community agriculture initiatives of the seven participating programs; 2) To understand the resistance actions undertaken by women within these initiatives; and 3) To comprehend the contributions of these forms of participation to the transformation of inequitable gender relations.

The paper begins by delineating certain theoretical and conceptual precisions based on the analytical categories of gender, resistance practices, and community gardens. It then presents the methodological aspects, the sample characterization of the initiatives, and the women participants in the study. Subsequently, in the results section, the main findings are detailed and organized into five key themes: 1) food sovereignty as a practice of collective resistance; 2) environmental care practices and knowledge aimed at fostering agroecological awareness; 3) the redefinition of territory, social appropriation of space, and the construction of social fabric; 4) self-management, solidarity economy, and network articulation as forms of resistance; and 5) autonomy, self-care, and the development of more supportive and equitable relationships. The final section of the article presents the discussion and conclusions, which are further organized into four themes in alignment

with the specified objectives: 1) the role of women in urban community gardens; 2) collective resistance practices; 3) urban community gardens as a means for transforming gender relations; and 4) the need for an intersectional approach in understanding women's participation.

## **Theoretical and Conceptual Clarifications**

At a theoretical level, the research is situated within the conceptual framework of resistance practices, the understanding of community gardens from their political dimension, as well as gender studies and ecofeminism, which problematize and interrelate the experiences of oppression faced by women and nature.

Regarding resistance practices, the research draws on the work of Linsalata (2014), who situates social resistance within its emancipatory nature. According to Linsalata, through a critical and reflective process, individuals can transform a desire for change into concrete goals and collective practices aimed at transforming reality. In this context, the author argues that resistance is characterized by an anti-individualistic and even anti-capitalist sense:

Resistance to the deforming and homogenizing effects of capital occurs in multiple, contradictory, and ambiguous ways within society. It emerges in areas of social life where concrete work (human activity directed towards a goal), in its various historical and social expressions, has not been entirely subsumed and refunctionalized by capital. It manifests in cultural, political, and imaginative experiences where the social subject retains or recovers the capacity to shape and give meaning to reality in their own terms (Linsalata, 2014: 339).

Regarding the delimitation of Urban Agriculture, it will be understood from its political rather than spatial or productive character (Ernwein, 2014). This implies considering it as a tool that facilitates community building, social integration, and the re-creation of public spaces. Ernwein (2014) asserts that gardens cannot be viewed outside of the social framework, as they are embedded in the micropolitics of the city and must be analyzed based on their relational dynamics, their transformative, cohesive, or potentially divisive effects on these relationships. For example, this includes how they foster new solidarities, new experiments in citizenship and governance, and the emergence and construction of new groups and communities.

Finally, to analyze the role of women in urban agriculture initiatives, we begin by positioning gender as a key social category in the analysis of social relations and employ the concept of the sex-gender system (Rubin, 1975) as a framework. This system encompasses the arrangements by which a society takes what are human constructs and treats them as biological realities, thereby enabling the examination of the power relations underlying the differentiations and hierarchies that result in social inequality between men and women. This perspective leads to the understanding that oppression is not inevitable but rather a product of specific social relations (Osborne and Molina, 2008: 153).

From an ecofeminist perspective, it is possible to analyze gender oppressions in conjunction with environmental oppressions, thereby linking the sex-gender system with capitalism. In this regard, we draw on Puleo (2013), who argues that the domination of nature by men and the domination of women by men are two sides of the same coin. Therefore, any attempt at social transformation must address both issues concurrently. This necessitates a transformation of the androcentric model of development, conquest, and exploitation.

## Methodology

The research was conducted in 2022 in Bogotá, Colombia, involving seven community urban agriculture initiatives located in the northwestern area of the Capital District. It was developed from a qualitative approach, utilizing the multiple case study method. The techniques employed included participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. The term “multiple case study” is understood as an effort to jointly study a specific number of cases to analyze their common, similar, or distinct characteristics from the perspective of the social actors involved (Galeano, 2012: 71).

Concerning the techniques employed, participant observation was conducted around various activities organized by the collectives. This technique was chosen because it allowed access to the field of social practices, we were interested in exploring in depth. In this regard, it facilitated an understanding of the collective endeavors in concrete practice, the interactions and dynamics of collective work, as well as the ways in which the social space is appropriated. In-depth semi-structured interviews and focus groups, as narrative techniques, enabled a detailed and contextualized understanding of each woman’s experiences concerning



her engagement with the community garden spaces, the impacts they perceive from their participation, and their subjective evaluation of the roles they occupy within the initiatives. Overall, the use of these three techniques allowed for the triangulation of data with the information obtained, forming the basis for the analysis presented later.

The articulation of these methodological strategies and techniques aligns with the dialogue within feminist qualitative research, as understood by Olesen (2012):

It refers to the study of issues, theoretical, political, or action frameworks aimed at achieving justice for women in specific contexts, with the intention of generating new ideas to produce knowledge about oppressive situations for women, in order to take measures or continue research (Olesen, 2012: 113).

In this sense, the women participating in the urban garden process are considered active subjects in the development of the research, subjects of knowledge and understanding.

Within the ethical considerations, the research obtained informed consent from the participants, provided clear and truthful information about the objectives and scope of the study, respected the voluntary nature of participation, ensured the proper, secure, and confidential use of the data obtained, and maintained anonymity for the dissemination of the results.

The data were systematized and analyzed using Atlas-Ti software, coded based on two pre-established categories: “practices of resistance” and “collective endeavors.” Other categories emerged during the analysis, particularly those related to the significance of participation for women in this community setting and the impact on gender relations. The analysis of results presented later is organized around these categories.

### *Participant Population: An Intersectional Analysis of Women within Urban Gardens*

The seven urban gardens were selected through a purposive, non-probabilistic sampling method, based on a survey of active community urban agriculture initiatives. A preliminary approach was made to these initiatives, and ultimately, following discussions with their leaders, the possibility of conducting fieldwork was established. It is important to note that a member of the Gender Studies research group who formulated the research project is an active participant in one of the urban gardens. Through this member, the process of contacting several



other initiatives was initiated using a snowball sampling technique. This is because there is existing networked work and communication among the various gardens, which facilitated the identification of key leaders and the approach to key actors in the process.

Two visits were estimated for each garden, participation in some community impact activities, and between two and three in-depth interviews were conducted for each initiative<sup>2</sup>. In two of the gardens, discussion groups were held with an average of four participants per group. Table 1<sup>3</sup> presents the general characteristics of each participating garden.

This study aims to highlight the participation of women who are highly heterogeneous in terms of life stage, urban-rural origin, ethnic affiliation, formal educational level, and experiences of various forms of gender-based violence. This underscores the need for an intersectional approach to examine the different positions from which women's experiences in community urban agriculture initiatives are situated. Table 2 provides a detailed sociodemographic characterization of the women participating in the study.

A common aspect observed among all participants is a noticeable interest and concern for environmental issues. Additionally, in several cases, there is a prior or concurrent experience in other community or collective action processes, which aligns with their subsequent involvement in urban agriculture.

Regarding the different axes of difference, including life stage or life course, the study includes young women, adults, and older adults. This dimension is also related to their origin or background; generally, women over 40 years of age report rural, agrarian origins and have been residing in the city for several years due to labor migration or forced migration due to armed conflict.

This rural background leads some women to engage with these urban initiatives as a means of reconnecting with ancestral knowledge or continuing agricultural practices that accompanied them in their childhood and/or youth. On the other hand, there are also young women, born in an urban context and with limited knowledge about agricultural consumption and production, who become involved in these settings due to their concerns as new generations about

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2 Except for one of the gardens, where only one in-depth interview was conducted with a participant and an open interview with one of the initiative's leaders.

3 The tables can be found in the Appendix at the end of this article (Editor's Note).

environmental degradation and the harmful effects of mass food consumption and production. They have had the opportunity to reflect on the importance of collective work for territorial defense, the development of environmentally responsible practices, and the integration of children into this process.

Regarding educational levels, there are women who have completed primary education, particularly those over 40 years old with a rural background. However, there are also young women with undergraduate and graduate degrees who are engaged in community work, resulting in very diverse experiences in terms of their involvement in collective action. Most of those who have achieved a university education are associated with professions in Social Sciences and Agricultural Sciences, although there are also professionals from Communication and Law who seek to align or integrate their political commitment with the community garden.

We encounter women with histories marked by multiple forms of gender-based violence, from childhood within their family contexts, as well as during their youth and adulthood with partners or in their work environments. Not all recognize experiences of violence, and not all cases have been analyzed from a gender perspective. However, those who shared these experiences highlighted how the community setting, and the networks of affection formed there have helped them understand and reframe these experiences.

In several of the collective initiatives we engaged with, it was interesting to observe that the collective fabric among women facilitates intergenerational exchanges, where younger generations of women contribute new perspectives on gender relations, contrasting with the traditional gender views prevalent among women over 40 years old.

## **Analysis of Results**

### *Food Sovereignty as a Practice of Collective Resistance*

For the majority of the participating community gardens, food sovereignty emerges as a key axis in their actions. This implies that, in addition to contributing to the food security of the initiative's members and, in some cases, the neighborhood community, there is a broader commitment to defending the right to food. This includes an approach to food production and consumption from alternative and solidarity-based economies, prioritizing the freedom to choose the foods consumed,

and fostering greater awareness of how food is produced, where it comes from, and its quality:

Something we also want to emphasize from the garden is the freedom of food choice. We support the right to sovereignty and to choosing what I want to eat and how I want that food to be produced. [...] the food production chain and starting to recover knowledge where we do not use any type of agrochemicals or chemical fertilizers, as they end up devastating the life of the soil and all the beings in it; we begin to understand that nature itself has a balance (Diana Marcela, E4-Huerta Siembra Mundos; personal communication, 2022).

The conservation, exchange, and free circulation of native seeds and plants, the preservation of fauna and flora in the garden territories and surrounding areas, as well as the recovery of ancestral practices and knowledge related to nature care and food production, are also part of this political commitment. This seeks to distance itself from the agro-industrial model, the privatization and commercialization of genetically modified seeds, the restrictions on their exchange, and the privatization of land. This perspective is not only economic and nutritional but also cultural, as it aims to recognize and recover identity and tradition, ancestral knowledge, and its intergenerational transmission within the inhabited territories:

When we talk about food sovereignty, we are talking, first, about what types of food as a community we want to plant and consume. It is one of the main commitments of the garden, although there is still a long way to go. [...] I think we have fought a lot, for example, to rescue native seeds, we have planted many native plants. [...] We have red chard, purple chard, yellow chard, and orange chard, and they are native, they are from our land. For example, we want to rescue seeds like quinoa, amaranth, and chia (Eliana Sofia, E3-Huerta Angelita; personal communication, 2022).

That struggle, right? of resistance against the crops, eh, like cubios, broad beans, amaranth itself, quinoa, crops that have been very ancestral from our indigenous people, from our parents that are being forgotten. Today, a lot of the variety that existed in the past, that fed us and was our food source, can be said to be on the verge of extinction, and many young people today have not tried it, do not know what it is. So, this political commitment is also about recognizing our identity, our culture, appropriating it, making it visible, and living it in the territory (Gloria Elena, E2-Huerta Angelita; personal communication, 2022).

### *Agroecological Awareness: Practices and Knowledge for Environmental Care*

Another fundamental axis is oriented towards promoting agroecological practices that contribute to the conservation and protection of the environment. These practices are part of the daily lives of the active participants in the gardens, and spaces are also sought for the construction of popular knowledge within the collective and with the community inhabiting the territory:

The garden is a space for the dialogue of knowledge. In the garden, people who know various things about urban agriculture, organic waste utilization, biopreparations, and many other topics come together. Together, we weave knowledge, first to understand the garden as an exercise in food sovereignty, which is one of our commitments, but also to learn how we relate to nature, as it is a bond we have been historically disconnected from in the city. [...] Another commitment is the zero use of fertilizers, insecticides, fungicides; it is an entirely organic process. We take care of preparing biopreparations and look for the best alternatives for the care of insects and our plants (Andrea Carolina, E6-Huerta Colibrí Dorado; personal communication, 2022).

Actions stemming from popular education aim to raise greater awareness regarding the ecological impact of our consumption practices, waste management, and more broadly, the hegemonic development models that exacerbate environmental degradation. Concerning recycling and the utilization of organic resources for composting, several interviewees point out that there is still a need to foster greater community awareness. Despite being a significant initiative within various collectives, it is not always embraced in the neighborhood context, which does not fully understand the principles of this community work:

When we started, we conducted composting and educational activities every weekend. We would discuss aspects such as: What are the properties of this plant? What is its purpose? Why do we use it? We also covered composting techniques: How is the hole dug? How is the material added? Why is it done this way? What is the process that transforms organic matter into fertilizer? (Carmen Eugenia, E5-Huerta Angelita, personal communication, 2022).

We aim for people to understand the necessity of cultivating these relationships with the environment through gardening. This includes planting trees and utilizing organic waste. I believe this is one of our major goals: how we, through gardening, contribute to reducing the impact of our waste. Approximately 60% of the waste we send to the Doña Juana landfill consists of organic matter, which has significant potential. We also see this as a matter of respect for those living near

the landfill, acknowledging our responsibility towards them, as they endure the consequences of our waste disposal (Lucero, E16-Huerta Polinizadores; personal communication, 2022).

Intergenerational education is also a significant focus and is realized through work with children, adolescents, and young people. Consequently, many activities are directed towards creating participatory spaces for these age groups. For some of the gardens, a key objective is to transform human relationships with nature by shifting from an anthropocentric view of development to a more ecocentric perspective, centered on the preservation of nature and life:

From my perspective, one of the main efforts should be to start understanding that life is a matrix of relationships, like a web of connections with numerous intersecting points. It is essential to recognize that human beings are not at the center; rather, we are just a small part of a vast network of relationships. In this regard, I believe one of the political commitments should be to decentralize the prominence of humans, which is ultimately what leads to devastating decisions such as: “I don’t like how all those trees look, so we will remove them, plant new ones, and build a bike path.” It is also about beginning to dismantle those ideals of development and progress that are extremely destructive (Diana Marcela, E4-Huerta Siembra Mundos, personal communication, 2022).

As evidenced throughout this section, urban gardens have become spaces where collective actions contribute to the generation of agroecological awareness processes, not only among their members but also in institutions such as kindergartens and schools. More importantly, they have facilitated interaction with neighbors. These contributions materialize through processes such as environmental classrooms, visits to the gardens, the creation of biodigester bales, collective composting, and planting activities, thereby contributing to the development of agroecological pedagogical actions among participants and other individuals in their communities.

### *Resignification of Territory, Social Appropriation of Space, and Construction of Social Fabric*

A third effort relates to the resignification of urban territories where the community agriculture initiative is implemented. In several cases, these are spaces that are abandoned, privatized, used for garbage disposal, the consumption of psychoactive substances, or simply not appropriated by the community. The community garden activity thus allows for a new

meaning to be given to these areas, fostering the construction of social fabric, strengthening support networks, and promoting spaces for interaction. The appropriation of territory and public space relates to the actions mentioned in the previous points, along with others such as tree planting, protection of wetlands, and vermiculture:

We are committed to resignifying the territory because this space is a public space. We are even expanding it to a part of a so-called pasture that is intended for a road. We are making the community understand that these spaces are very close to the wetland and have special soil characteristics [...]. We sometimes have issues with homeless individuals, who are also part of the community, and some are still involved in micro-trafficking. They leave these items in the garden or use the space for their needs. We also had a conflict with a person who was letting their cows graze there, and the cows eat the trees, and the planting of trees is also part of this reforestation process, right? That has also been a challenge (Ana Camila, E9-Huerta Colibrí Dorado; personal communication, 2022).

Those of us who are there caring for and maintaining the plants know that the community is not just the 10 or 20 of us who go and work in the garden every eight days; it is the entire community that is already becoming empowered. I always emphasize to people that this garden is not ours; it belongs to everyone, to the community, and anyone can come and help and care for it. The fact that people are already watching to ensure the products are not stolen and the plants are not damaged is already a win for us because we are empowering the community to care for and protect that space (Eliana Sofia, E1-Huerta Angelita; personal communication, 2022).

This initiative is not without conflicts, as it is not always received positively by the residents of the area or is perceived as being against their interests. Therefore, several urban agriculture initiatives report tensions with community action boards, neighbors, and even representatives of public and private entities present in the area. These representatives often approach during the activities to question what is being done, claiming, for example, that the initiatives are increasing the problem of garbage and pollution, delegitimizing community action, threatening to take legal action against them, and even taking measures such as destroying plants or starting fires to halt the efforts of grassroots collectives leading the urban agriculture initiatives.

Consequently, continuous negotiation and agreement exercises with these actors are necessary, as well as strengthening popular education platforms and involving neighbors in collective processes that are often worn down by the neoliberal individualistic logic, which tends to prioritize the defense of private property.

### *Self-Management, Solidarity Economy, and Network Coordination as Forms of Resistance*

It is observed that collective work organization forms become, in themselves, a form of resistance; here, community self-management and the implementation of solidarity economies are highlighted as key strategies. Financially, these approaches also serve as a means of managing resources for sustaining the initiative, thus reducing or eliminating dependence on governmental or external bodies. These strategies range from solidarity funds built through voluntary contributions to the commercialization of products or services to generate income:

We have organized fairs and sold plants to buy tools or other necessary items. The truth is it often comes out of the pocket of whoever can afford it. There is a more consistent financing for our food; some things come from here, but other things do come from our pockets (Sara Valentina, E10-Huerta Hishasue; personal communication, 2022).

Our objective is to cultivate, continue with organic practices, and also to exchange produce. When one person does not have cilantro, another does. Initially, when the garden started, we did not commercialize; everything was more for household use. Now, with more land and new members, commercialization has become more feasible because the area is larger. In one way or another, it has been a team effort to keep the garden looking so beautiful (María Cecilia, E12-Huerta Guerreros y Guerreras; personal communication, 2022).

The commercialization of products (such as compost, seeds, ointments, and other plant-derived goods, prepared foods, and plant sales) in community gardens represents a form of self-management, although not all participating gardens have reached this level of production for commercialization.

Thus, most initiatives produce primarily for the self-consumption of their members, while some manage to generate a surplus for commercialization or barter of seedlings or seeds with other gardens. This is a significant form of resistance, as it not only reduces consumption costs but also provides an income source for the members:

It is also closely tied to food security. We must ensure our food supply, and this is one of the goals of the garden. As you know, gardening is a long process to ensure food, but we are achieving it little by little” (Ana Camila, E9-Colibrí Dorado; personal communication, 2022).

The primary requirement is for us to consume our own products. During the pandemic, we were blessed and were able to share many baskets of love with



people in need. [...] We had a harvest at that time, and here the garden must be self-sustaining (Josefina, E11-Huerta Guerreros y Guerreras; personal communication, 2022).

Guided tours and educational processes offered to educational institutions and the public often serve as sources of funding for initiatives that have been established for longer periods and are more structured. Community self-management is also characterized by practices of voluntary contribution in terms of labor, knowledge, or in-kind donations by each participant, with the aim of addressing the needs of the members or the sector and fulfilling scheduled activities. Through resource exchange and the coordination of efforts, the sustainability or expansion of the garden's influence within the territory is facilitated:

We have a solidarity fund; you always have to contribute, and this savings, at the end of the year, can be used to buy seedlings for the garden, or for a raffle, or to organize a fair. Additionally, rotating the money is something we haven't established yet, but there is a process to it. The idea is to create a long-term dream with this savings, like buying a piece of land or going to explore a páramo together. That's the vision (Mónica Yulieth, E7-Huerta Resiliencia; personal communication, 2022).

We prefer not to have hierarchies; instead, we divide the work and try to rotate these responsibilities. For more specialized tasks, such as managing social media or photography, someone with more expertise takes charge. If someone has more knowledge about agroecological practices or medicinal plants, that person explains it to the group, and everyone listens. [...] There is a wealth of knowledge, and this is how we divide the work (Diana Marcela, E4-Huerta Siembra Mundos; personal communication, 2022).

The establishment and strengthening of networks become a crucial strategy; these networks form between collectives and grassroots social organizations with similar missions related to urban agriculture, as well as with organizations pursuing other goals, such as youth or gender organizations, operating within the locality or in other areas of the Capital District:

For instance, many times seeds and various items we acquire are obtained through barter. We are also reviving these ancestral traditions like barter. So, we might say, 'Oh! I have so many seeds of a particular crop,' and then we meet another garden that has different seeds, and we exchange them. With some organizations, for example, if there is an event and we don't have sound equipment, we approach them to borrow it. In turn, they might need a hoe or a shovel from us. We lend them items when they need them, and they reciprocate when we need something (Gloria Elena, E2-Huerta Angelita; personal communication, 2022).

Regarding the establishment of networks with public institutions, there are diverse and even opposing viewpoints on this matter. Two community gardens express significant alliances with the district administration, with which they work collaboratively and recognize positive impacts in areas such as technical assistance, resource acquisition, training, and expert environmental advisory, which have strengthened their grassroots organization.

In contrast, a significant portion of the visited collectives exhibit reluctance toward collaboration with district entities, arguing that these institutions impose restrictions and regulations on collective actions and community processes. They even believe that such institutions might negatively impact or exacerbate social injustice conditions. This leads them to prefer maintaining independence from institutional frameworks to retain greater autonomy in their organizational and management practices. Lastly, some organizations perceive that public institutions instrumentalize community work, focusing solely on data collection and characterizing initiatives, thereby seeking to homogenize urban agriculture practices across the territory.

### *Autonomy, Self-Care, and the Building of More Supportive and Equitable Relationships*

For women involved in community urban agriculture initiatives, this space holds various meanings, many of which are connected to ecofeminist principles, as detailed below.

One of the recurring themes in their narratives is the conception of this space as a realm for nurturing life and connecting with nature:

"I believe it is also a form of motherhood, because it involves care—care for life. It's about understanding other beings, engaging in dialogue, and connecting with the origins of life and the processes of living" (Diana Marcela, E4-Huerta Siembra Mundos; personal communication, 2022).

"I now believe I am more conscious of what I do, such as taking care of water, the soil, animals, and the ecosystem. One learns and understands that these elements are not mere resources for personal gain but are entities equal to oneself. I feel identified with this, and I am now more aware that nature is what provides us with everything and must be respected from that perspective" (Ana Camila, E9-Huerta Colibrí Dorado; personal communication, 2022).

It is important to note that some of the interviewees come from rural backgrounds, and therefore, their involvement in community

urban agriculture becomes an extension of practices and knowledge acquired in their places of origin, which they had left behind due to labor migration or internal forced migration processes. However, several participants, especially the younger ones, are women from urban backgrounds who report having no prior experience with these agricultural and rural traditions. Their engagement with the community garden led them to explore new ways of understanding and connecting with nature and the environment.

For many of the interviewed members, the community garden setting, in addition to fulfilling a collective political commitment, is a space for building emotional bonds among its members; several of them refer to it as 'a family,' in which, although disagreements and conflicts do arise, bonds of support and solidarity prevail as a form of resistance against the consumer society that has been eroding community ties and placing individualism at the center of relationships:

Here, I found a family; it is not the one you are born into, but a family I have chosen, and the people in the garden have chosen to be there and have chosen to stay despite the ups and downs we have had. Obviously, as in all places, there are moments of disagreement, of discussion, but we remain because, beyond being strangers who come together for a common cause, we create these bonds of affection, and I feel much more connected to these people, much closer than to my family of origin (Gloria Elena, E2-Huerta Angelita; personal communication, 2022).

Moreover, most of the interviewees emphasize recognizing this participatory space as a setting that has become an important source of personal development, a place for reconnecting with themselves, with a positive impact on their mental health, the release and processing of emotions. They also point out that this space fosters the recognition of their female autonomy and allows them to reclaim self-care practices:

For me, the garden is like a healing space, where you connect with the processes of the earth and its cycles. I came to the garden precisely because I was going through a strong healing process in my life [...] and during that process, I decided to join the garden [because] it is a space where I can feel safe, where I know I can come and be well-received, where I can have a family issue or any kind of problem and I can come here and talk to people I trust. It also somewhat frees me from that often-overwhelming reality we sometimes face, and I feel that this space gives me that (Ana Lucía, E1-Huerta Resiliencia; personal communication, 2022).

This development of female autonomy is thus related to an empowerment perspective from a gender viewpoint that is fostered in these collective spaces. For many of them, this has enabled the

exploration of new capacities, as well as testing their skills and self-confidence to take on challenges, lead processes, and self-recognize as leaders. They have developed a greater capacity for proposal-making, taken the floor to speak from their own knowledge, and concretely manifested their autonomy and individuality, recognizing their existence beyond dependence on or for others:

This has been about that self-recognition of what I can do and what I don't want to do; also starting to understand that I can handle many things, but I am still working on the confidence to say, 'I can do this,' even though sometimes I say: 'Oh, I can't!' So, it's a matter of try it, do it, persist, resist, and not give up (Mónica Yulieth, E7-Huerta Resiliencia; personal communication, 2022).

This recognition of wisdom and knowledge among the members has become highly valuable. For example, seeing women with significant leadership in this area, including myself; without intending to, we have gradually carved out space and now are seen as figures of power. This is a daily effort, every day (Carmen Eugenia, E5-Huerta Angelita; personal communication, 2022).

Some participants indicate that this is also achieved through the acknowledgment of the value associated with the various tasks performed by women both within and outside the garden, such as the recognition of their ancestral and rural knowledge, feeling recognized in their leadership by their peers, and, consequently, a strengthening of their social and political participation not only within the community garden context but also in other public spheres:

This helps in building self-esteem, as one can see the tangible results of their efforts. For example, if I managed to cultivate and sell several lettuces, it fosters a leadership mindset that benefits not only this context but also one's overall life. Here, I have learned to be a leader and to exercise leadership skills. This has also been the case for other colleagues (Luz Estela, E8-Huerta Guerreros y Guerreras; personal communication, 2022).

Collectively, several of the community gardens are committed to incorporating a gender perspective into their activities. However, it should be noted that in most cases, this commitment is not formally established, and in some instances, there is a lack of awareness regarding this approach or its integration. For those initiatives that do include a gender perspective, strategies such as "circles of dialogue" are employed, where women share experiences related to gender-based violence. Additionally, events and activities are organized on commemorative dates and participation in social mobilization actions within the district, addressing gender inequities and violence present in urban

areas, while also highlighting issues occurring in rural regions, campesino communities, and among Afro-descendant and indigenous groups, among other diversities.

## Discussion and Conclusions

### *On the Role of Women in Community Urban Gardens*

Regarding the role of women within the context of their participation in urban agriculture processes, the present study arrives at a fundamental finding: regardless of their background or prior knowledge of agroecology and food sovereignty, most women assume leadership roles within the gardens. This leadership is evident not only in the initial establishment of the collective endeavor but also in its development and consolidation. Women actively engage in activities related to plant cultivation and care, self-management, educational activities with the community, public space recovery, waste management, the production of bio-compost bales, and the promotion of community-level initiatives.

Simultaneously, many of these women engage in both productive work and caregiving, especially those who are mothers. This finding is consistent with research conducted by Ortega *et al.* (2017), Rodríguez-Avalos and Cabascango (2017) in Ecuador, Delgado (2017) in Portugal, Vásquez *et al.* (2020) in Mexico, and Daoud (2020) in Sudan, as well as conclusions drawn by the FAO (2014) in studies across Latin America.

In this regard, several studies (FAO, 2011; CEPAL, 2016; Delgado, 2017; Bonilla Leiva, 2018; Daoud, 2020) highlight the need to enhance women's economic autonomy by expanding opportunities for access to financing and credit, agricultural inputs, and training processes, as well as the acquisition of productive assets, to reduce gender gaps. This research found that access to financing, technology, and innovation for community initiatives is limited. However, this issue is not only a gender factor but should also be analyzed from an intersectional perspective, as most of the initiatives approached are grassroots and, therefore, the constraints on access to these factors that could enable the growth and consolidation of community gardens must be examined in terms of social class intersecting with gender as axes of inequality. Land ownership for the development of urban community agriculture initiatives is typically not a priority, as these initiatives are conducted in public and communal spaces.

### *On Practices of Collective Resistance*

The results of this research highlight urban agriculture initiatives from a political perspective rather than merely spatial or productive (Ernwein, 2014). This perspective views these initiatives as tools for fostering community building, social integration, and the re-creation of public spaces. The present study emphasizes that, in the urban context, the goals of urban gardens extend beyond mere production for consumption. The commercialization of agricultural products is not always a strength of the gardens, primarily due to the generally limited space available for cultivation and the fact that the community initiative is not typically the main means of livelihood for its participants. In contrast, the findings reveal how community urban gardens prioritize promoting initiatives aimed at recognizing and building popular knowledge, collective work practices, and the sharing of products derived from such work. Additionally, these gardens focus on the recovery and exchange of native seeds, barter systems, and other community practices that have been weakened or even forgotten in the processes of urbanization and individualization.

These findings are also reflected in the analyses conducted by Rincón *et al.* (2017) and Bonilla Leiva (2018) concerning the impact of these initiatives on the reconstruction of identity and cultural reproduction. This leads to a significant emphasis on popular education processes with children, adolescents, and the surrounding community, as well as the establishment of networks and exchanges. Additionally, there are alignments with studies by García Rocés *et al.* (2014), García Rocés and Soler Montiel (2010), and Moreno-Gaytán *et al.* (2019), which indicate that these initiatives aim to strengthen community ties in vulnerable areas. Women, in addition to achieving household food self-sufficiency, learn and replicate agroecological practices aimed at environmental protection, new models for managing natural resources, and the development of alternative food sovereignty initiatives to the agro-industrial model.

From the perspective of social resistance, the findings support Linsalata's (2014) arguments, which consider community urban agriculture settings as social spaces where participants, through their activities, seek to shape and give meaning to social expressions not yet subsumed by capitalist logic. These spaces act as venues where social actors preserve and recover the ability to give their own meaning to their

reality. Through critical and reflective practices, participants transform specific objectives into collective practices of societal change.

Community gardens thus undertake an organized and sustained effort to highlight environmental and food sovereignty issues of public interest. Their collective action is associated with the identification of social conflicts, shared problems or feelings of dissatisfaction, which in turn enable the collective work of all participants. These participants become social agents seeking to influence decision-making, resource acquisition, and grassroots work, thus resisting what they perceive as unjust.

Although gardens share common elements, their efforts vary: some focus on waste management, others emphasize planting and self-consumption, while others prioritize the recovery of native seeds. Despite differing positions on institutional relationships and certain collective practices, it is important to recognize that this diversity is unified by a common thread—agroecological thinking and autonomous forms of food production.

### *On Community Urban Gardens as a Means for Transforming Gender Relations*

Ernwein (2014) suggests that urban gardens should be analyzed through their relational dynamics and their transformative effects on these relationships. For instance, these gardens create new solidarities, experiments in citizenship and governance, and new groups and communities that may emerge and develop. Thus, these settings should be considered potential avenues for transforming traditional gender relations, which have historically established hierarchies between the feminine and the masculine, and which, materially, translate into social inequality.

The findings of this research illustrate how these community participation and collective action settings enable the transformation of unequal gender relations in at least four ways: 1) the reevaluation of caregiving roles beyond the domestic sphere; 2) the development of female autonomy through the creation of networks of emotional support and solidarity among women; 3) the intergenerational transmission of new understandings of gender relations and relationships with nature from counter-hegemonic perspectives to capitalism and androcentrism; and 4) the need to incorporate an intersectional perspective to analyze women's participation, the impacts of these settings on the transformation of their relationships, and as a key perspective for



examining the oppressions and privileges that influence their engagement in these contexts.

Regarding the first point, it was found that the actions carried out by women are highly recognized, at least in terms of the social valuation of their knowledge and practices. This finding aligns with several studies (García Rocés and Soler Montiel, 2010; García-Rocés *et al.*, 2014; Ortega *et al.*, 2017; Rodríguez-Avalos and Cabascango, 2017; Vásquez *et al.*, 2020), which suggest that these community spaces facilitate changes in gender relations by making visible and fostering the social revaluation of women's work, particularly life-sustaining care work, beyond the domestic sphere. Furthermore, these spaces serve as platforms for empowerment. However, it is also noted that, on many occasions, the activities carried out by women in family and community agriculture are not recognized as productive work (ECLAC, 2016; Daoud, 2020) and therefore become an extension of unpaid care work—often informal work that remains invisible not only in the domestic sphere but also within the community.

With respect to the development of women's autonomy, self-confidence, and leadership, Lagarde (2005) points out that female identity has historically been tied to the care of others, above self-care. This results in others always being at the center of women's affection, thoughts, and activities, which is antagonistic to the development of female autonomy and self-care. When applying this premise to the findings of this study, it is possible to assert that this collective space allows women to position themselves from a different perspective, one that shifts toward self-care—a space that several participants define as a personal space enabling them to distance themselves, at least temporarily, from their reproductive and care roles assigned in the private sphere. However, we cannot categorically affirm that the female identity constructed here is an identity unbound from the “being-for-others,” since for many of these women, the collective setting continues to be viewed from the standpoint of “the familial,” the construction of a social fabric based on affectivity, and in several of their narratives, a continuation of life care at other levels.

The collective workspace among women transcends into other arenas of social and political participation. In this regard, we bring to light the observations made by Slater (2001), Arias Guevara (2014), Olivier and Heinecken (2017), and Díaz Pérez and Silva Niño (2019)

concerning the other meanings that this space acquires for women, which are more closely related to empowerment processes, the establishment of support networks, and the consolidation of affective bonds. These processes expand their social and economic spectrum, allowing them to symbolize a sense of security, foster community development, and even facilitate the exchange of life experiences, intergenerational dialogue, the management of various forms of gender-based violence, and the learning of their human rights. This is further problematized by Martins de Carvalho and Bógus (2020), who refer to how these spaces enable the expansion of women's political participation and the critical examination of the multiple oppressions that the participating women are subjected to.

Regarding the new ways of understanding and experiencing gender relations fostered by the spaces of encounter in community urban gardens, we find alignment with critical ecofeminist perspectives, drawing inspiration from Puleo (2013). This way of conceiving the garden setting is situated in the possibility of integrating agroecological education and food sovereignty, combining “reason and passion, justice and care, pedagogical and affective goals” (Puleo, 2013: 314). It advocates for environmental education that awakens empathy, fosters connection with others, and reclaims the importance of affectivity:

To educate ecologically, instrumental reason alone, which is constituted by excluding the affectivity that connects us to others, is not enough. Scientific knowledge, solidarity, empathy, and compassion must be integrated and interrelated (Puleo, 2013: 311).

It also follows that, for many of the interviewees, one of the profound transformations occurs in their feelings and ways of relating to nature and life in all its forms. Their accounts bring us closer to what has been described elsewhere by other authors as an “ecofeminist ethic,” which aims to connect us, engage us, and relearn new ways of connecting with Nature (Wozna, 2021).

### *On the Need for an Intersectional Reading of Women's Participation*

As highlighted in the results and in alignment with several of the studies cited in this document (Delgado, 2017; Ortega *et al.*, 2017; Rodríguez-Avalos and Cabascango, 2017; Martins de Carvalho and Bógus, 2020; Vásquez *et al.*, 2020), intersectionality as a focus of analysis allows for the identification of common axes of oppression,

while also highlighting the axes that differently impact women's experiences. In this research, it was noted that dimensions related to the life cycle, rural-urban origin, ethnic belonging, educational level, socioeconomic stratification, care work, motherhood, and the experience of gender-based violence —whether more or less permanent, more or less normalized, among others— create differentiated experiences within the gardens.

This research brings to the forefront the necessary discussion on the revaluation of the social reproduction work carried out by women in these community agroecological settings, where fractures in traditional gender-based divisions of labor are perceived, but where the invisibilization and undervaluation of their contributions in the broader institutional and social contexts outside the gardens are still replicated. Hence, there is also a need, as Sachs (2013) suggests, to promote an intersectional perspective that recognizes and addresses these overlapping and conflicting dynamics of race, gender, class, sexuality, and urban-rural origin, and to employ feminist political ecology approaches to create a more environmentally sustainable agriculture. Thus, it is essential that public policy considers these intersectionalities in its design, planning, and implementation, incorporating these axes of social inequality.

In conclusion, it is noted that all the resistance practices outlined in this document reveal new perspectives on urban territory and challenge the prevailing territorial development logics. This is also connected to alternative proposals for environmental protection and a transformation of individualistic, anthropocentric development perspectives, advocating for a reconfiguration of our knowledge and values around responsible consumption/marketing practices, care for life, and concern for future generations, thereby fostering a more ecocentric and expanded view of life.

We could conclude that these approaches to urban agriculture, built on popular knowledge and the restoration of the social fabric through networks of affectivity, also represent counter-hegemonic alternatives to the androcentric model of development. Therefore, they generate ruptures or, at the very least, question the relationships of oppression concerning gender and the environment, where the ecofeminist perspective converges.

One of the limitations of this study, as well as a key recommendation for future research, is the absence of concrete qualitative or quantitative

data with a gender perspective on urban agriculture initiatives in the city and the country. A primary recommendation would be to conduct broad-based studies to determine whether women indeed have greater numerical representation in these settings. From an intersectional perspective, it is also important to acknowledge the limitation of this study, as the urban gardens involved in the research are in the northwestern areas of the city, in neighborhoods with medium to medium-low socioeconomic strata. Consequently, the composition of participating women may differ significantly from those in urban gardens in the southern and southwestern parts of the city, in peripheral neighborhoods with higher levels of marginalization and poverty. In these areas, the emphasis on production for self-consumption and commercialization may be more pronounced, and where processes of community organization and popular education have a historical character and are widely recognized both within the territories and at the district level.

This underscores the need for public policy to adopt a broader and long-term approach to community gardens that captures the complexity of the phenomenon. Such an approach, informed by an intersectional perspective, would allow for the analysis of the overlapping axes of inequality and oppression/discrimination that create differences in women's participatory experiences.

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### In-Depth Interviews

- Ana Lucía, personal communication, November 17th, 2022; Bogotá, Colombia.
- Ana Camila, personal communication, April 29th, 2022; Bogotá, Colombia.
- Andrea Carolina, personal communication, June 5th, 2022; Bogotá, Colombia.
- Carmen Eugenia, personal communication, April 15th, 2022; Bogotá, Colombia.
- Diana Marcela, personal communication, April 9th, 2022; Bogotá, Colombia.
- Eliana Sofia, personal communication, March 24th, 2022; Bogotá, Colombia.
- Gloria Elena, personal communication, April 21st, 2022; Bogotá, Colombia.
- Josefina, personal communication, August 29th, 2022; Bogotá, Colombia.
- Lucero, personal communication, August 31st, 2022; Bogotá, Colombia.
- Luz Estela, personal communication, August 29th, 2022; Bogotá, Colombia.
- María Cecilia, personal communication, August 29th, 2022; Bogotá, Colombia.
- Mónica Yulieth, personal communication, November 22nd, 2022; Bogotá, Colombia.
- Sara Valentina, personal communication, November 20th, 2022; Bogotá, Colombia.



Table 1  
Characterization of Participating Gardens

“Angelita” Community Urban Garden

This garden is located in a public space and defines itself as a platform that critically reflects on the dominant city model while engaging in actions to defend the territory, seeds, and life. It was established in 2019 as part of an initiative by young residents of the area and university students who were motivated to develop an agroecological and community project. Currently, several adult and elderly women, who hold significant leadership roles within the collective, are also involved. The garden operates in the Suba locality, in the Tibabuyes neighborhood. Its name commemorates a resident of the area with diverse abilities who was involved in community and ecological work and who passed away in 2019. The initiative identifies itself as a multigenerational space of resistance and political influence, promoting cultural and educational integration through activities such as workshops, agroecological training schools, commemorative events, community meals, film forums, and other events, all aimed at involving the community in the development of the garden.

“Siembra Mundos” Community Urban Garden

This community garden defines itself as an initiative dedicated to the defense and care of “Quebrada La Salitrosa”, the protection of the “La Conejera” wetland and micro-watershed against urban renewal processes that disrupt the ecosystem. They also focus on defending food sovereignty and protecting biodiversity in the Suba locality. In addition to agroecological activities, cultivating native plants, and protecting ancestral seeds, they organize cultural events such as the “Diversas y Nativas” gathering, as well as acts of resistance, care, and education like the “Carnival for Life,” which incorporates art, music, and creativity.

“Polinizadores” Community Urban Garden

They define themselves as: “We are a network of popular knowledge; as a community garden, we aim for the construction of a local and solidarity-based economy.” The strength of this garden, composed of both young people and elderly individuals, lies in composting. Located in the Aures 2 neighborhood of the Suba locality, it has a strong participatory character through the establishment of networks with other home gardens, preschools, and educational settings. They have an initiative called the Environmental Classroom, which facilitates knowledge exchange processes through workshops, composting sessions, seed recognition, and more. These activities enable learning about restoration, conservation, and the recognition of the territory, the latter understood from a social space perspective with an aim for multi-species preservation. Composting leads to micro-commercialization processes, where different types of soil for seedling cultivation are sold.

#### “Guerreros y Guerreras” Community Urban Garden

This urban garden has been established for over 17 years. It was initiated by a female leader from the Fontanar del Río neighborhood, who came from a rural background and was a victim of forced displacement. Together with her family, she began cultivating the land, which allowed other families in similar situations who arrived in the neighborhood to find a place in the garden where they could contribute to obtaining food. Since its inception, women predominantly make up the garden’s participants, though there is also some male presence, albeit in smaller numbers. The garden is also attended by the children of some of the participants. It is one of the initiatives with the most dialogue with state institutions and was the first of five agroecological routes promoted in Bogotá as part of the District Development Plan in 2021. It constantly collaborates with the Botanical Garden, which has supported training processes for older adults to continue their knowledge by establishing gardens in their own homes, in front gardens, and on terraces. Currently, they manage three production lines: vegetables and legumes, aromatic/medicinal plants, and fruits. The garden produces organic food for the consumption of its participants and for sale to local residents and external buyers

#### “Colibrí Dorado” Urban Community Garden

This collective initiative is located in the Suba district and is primarily composed of young people. It self-defines as a process that has leveraged and redefined public space through a community-based approach framed within popular education, agroecology, and environmental education. Its goal is to transform cultural perceptions of nature and the environment through pedagogical actions with the community, responsible waste management in homes and commercial areas, the transformation of public spaces, and the recognition of rural heritage and traditional agricultural practices within the community. Activities include planting, maintaining green areas around community spaces, re-signifying spaces, and recovering traditions through knowledge exchange, gardening work gatherings (mingas huerteras), and feminist and popular meetings. The initiative also participates in the annual “Diverse and Native” Encounter along with the Siembramundos garden. This event critically addresses feminized care work and women’s self-care from a political and community perspective.

#### Hishasue Urban Community Garden

This garden is located in the Engativa locality, specifically in the Minuto de Dios neighborhood. It is made up of both young people and senior citizens who collectively engage in initiatives such as native seed recovery, composting, weeding, workshops, agroecological fairs, and community kitchens. Among the self-managed crops, they cultivate are maize, potatoes, Swiss chard, yuca, guaca, cherries, and beans, as well as native trees like the “arboloco,” which is native to the Bogotá savanna. The initiative self-recognizes as a social and community process with a central focus on ecosystem restoration through seed conservation, cultural exchanges, and community-pedagogical actions.

### Resilience Urban Garden

This urban garden is located in the Engativa district, specifically in the “El Cortijo” neighborhood. It emerged as a community initiative to implement strategies aimed at mitigating the pollution processes that have affected the Juan Amarillo wetland, a natural area that connects the districts of Engativa and Suba. The garden is maintained by children, youth, and the elderly. Participants recognize the garden space as a place for recreation, socializing, and reconnecting with neighbors and families. Activities around the garden include composting and planting. One of the most important lines of action is the recognition of the community’s voice, as the garden’s origin is linked to the establishment of a park around the wetland. In this regard, the garden addresses the environmental issue in relation to the organization and reorganization of the territory. Meetings are held on some Wednesdays and more consistently on Sundays, and they have established a cooperative to promote solidarity-based economy. Regarding cultivation, they grow onions, lavender, corn, tomatoes, Swiss chard, zucchini, goldenberry, tree tomatoes, lulo, strawberries, and succulents.

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Source: Own elaboration based on data provided in interviews and information available on the social media platforms of each initiative.

Table 2

**Characterization of the Women Participants in the Research**

Interviewee <sup>4</sup>	Interview Code	Urban Garden	Relevant Sociodemographic Data
Ana Lucía	E1	Resilience	She is 21 years old, and she comes from an urban background. She is a third-semester student of Fine Arts. She lives with her mother and sister. She has been involved with the initiative for one year and eight months.
Gloria Elena	E2	La Angelita	She is 44 years old, from a rural background, and migrated to Bogota for work. She is an animal rescuer, artisan, and entrepreneur selling her crafts. Currently, she takes sporadic shifts as a waitress or in general services. She dedicates much of her time to household care. She has been involved with the urban garden for three years and lives with her husband and six children.
Eliana Sofía	E3	La Angelita	She is 26 years old, and she comes from an urban background. She works as a social worker through service contracts with NGOs and social projects. She is also dedicated to caring for her newborn child. She lives with her parents.
Diana Marcela	E4	Siembra Mundos	She is 29 years old and comes from an urban background. She is a communications professional and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Cultural Studies. She works in her field at a public university, overseeing the communications department. She lives alone and has no children. She has been involved with the community garden for four years.
Carmen Eugenia	E5	La Angelita	She is 55 years old, holds a high school diploma, and comes from a rural background. She has worked in various trades throughout her life and is currently engaged in household care. She has been involved with the initiative for two and a half years.
Andrea Carolina	E6	Colibrí Dorado	She is 25 years old and comes from an urban background. She is a cultural manager, feminist, and environmental activist. Currently, she lives in a cultural house, where she engages in ongoing political, popular, and community work. She works at a call center and she is also a university student.
Mónica Yulieth	E7	Resilience Urban Garden	She is 38 years old and comes from an urban background. She is a graphic designer and artist, working independently. She is the mother of two children, and she is responsible for their care. She has been involved with the community garden for two years.

4 The names were changed to pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of the participants.

Luz Estela	E8	Guerreros y Guerreras	She is 66 years old, and she comes from a rural background. She migrated due to forced displacement as a result of the Colombian armed conflict. She lives with her husband and has five children. She is a community leader in the area and founded the garden 18 years ago.
Ana Camila	E9	Colibrí Dorado	She is 22 years old and comes from an urban background. Currently, she is a seventh-semester student in Public Administration and Social Sciences. She lives with her father, mother, and brother. She works as a project coordinator for an IT service company, working remotely from home. She has been involved in the community garden for a year and a half.
Sara Valentina	E10	Hisahue	She is 22 years old and comes from an urban background. She is a student of Philosophy and Literature. Currently, she lives with her father, mother, and a brother. She is engaged in caregiving work, as she is responsible for her father. She has been involved in community work for several years and has had intermittent involvement in the community garden for a year and a half.
Josefina	E11	Guerreros y Guerreras	She is 55 years old, of rural origin, and of African descent. She migrated due to forced displacement within the context of the Colombian armed conflict. She has been involved in the community garden for 18 years.
María Cecilia	E12	Guerreros y Guerreras	She is 40 years old. She lives with her husband and children, and she is dedicated to household caregiving and independent entrepreneurial ventures. She has been involved in the community garden for 18 years.
Rosalba	E13	Guerreros y Guerreras	She is 45 years old and comes from a rural background. She lives with her husband, and she is dedicated to caregiving work in her home. She has been involved in the community garden for five years.
Tatiana	E14	Polinizadores	She is 22 years old, a university student in Agricultural Engineering. She lives with her family, she has previously been involved in various community processes, and has been engaged in the community garden for two years.
Lina	E15	Polinizadores	She is 25 years old, a zootechnician, and she has been involved in various community processes. She has been connected to the community garden for two years, joining the initiative through her parents.
Lucero	E16	Polinizadores	She is 40 years old, with a degree in Early Childhood Education and a specialization in Special Education. Due to health reasons, she is not currently practicing, and she works independently in a family sales business. She has two children, a young adult son and a teenage daughter, and lives with her children and partner.

Source: Own elaboration based on data provided in the interviews and information available on the social media of each initiative.

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