Beyond urban-rural linkages, the defense of territories and cities for life

Global Platform for the Right to the City

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Content

A.
Context, evaluation and challenges

A critical look at the current context

The current world order is marked by inequality, environmental deterioration, exclusion, displacement, violence and uncertainty, and it is the direct result of a colonialist, capitalist, patriarchal and anthropocentric civilizational model, which places people in a scenario of systemic crisis and risk to life on the planet. In recent years, this model, hand in hand with industrialization, market globalization and economic liberalization, has drastically accelerated the volume of production and consumption, which has generated economic growth and accumulation of wealth in unfair and unsustainable ways. This process has particularly affected populations which are historically marginalized, exploited and oppressed, and has also highlighted the fragility of democratic institutions in the face of transnational corporate and financial powers (See Figure 1).
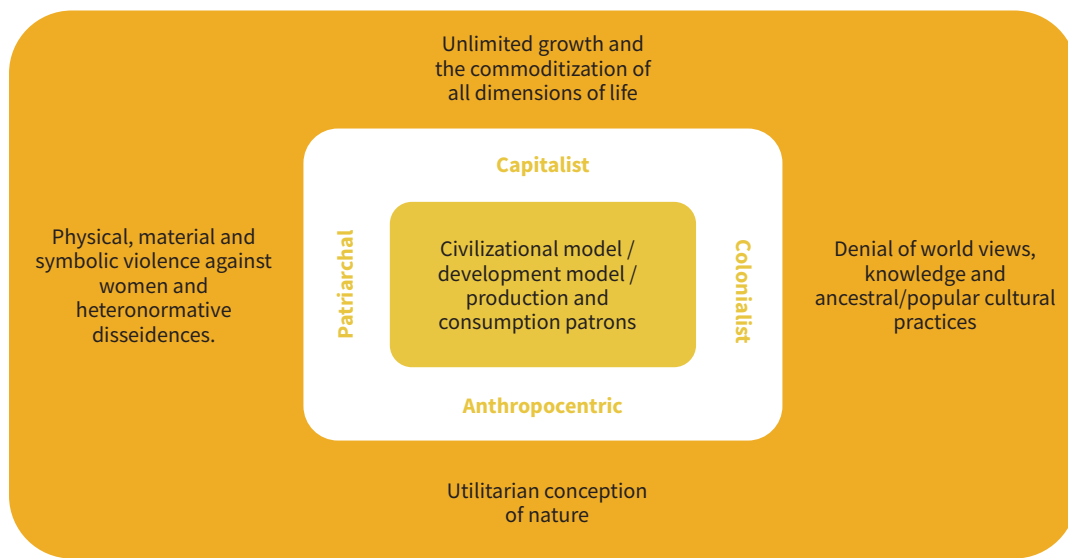
Unlimited growth and the commoditization of all dimensions of life

Capitalist

Patriarchal

Civilizational model / development model / production and consumption patrons

Colonialist

Physical, material and symbolic violence against women and heteronormative disseidences.

Denial of world views, knowledge and ancestral/popular cultural practices

Anthropocentric

Utilitarian conception of nature

Figure 1: Current model of development

Furthermore, industrialization produced an accelerated urbanization[2] on territories that needed to rapidly adapt to accommodate populations displaced from rural areas by the incursion of agro-industrial technologies and market logics focused on productivity and competitiveness, which to this day continue to disrupt vernacular practices.

A shortsighted optimism considering the progress in the field of science and technology[3] has more recently promoted "green revolutions" which, linked to an intentionally misleading narrative of food security, have sought solutions based on international markets and the industrialization of food production benefiting large corporations.

2. In this regard, it is estimated that 56.2% of the world's population currently resides in urban areas and will see an increase to 60.4% by 2030 (UN 2020) and urban land will increase by 1.2 million km^2 during the first third of this century (Creaf, 2021). Furthermore, despite the decline in population growth in cities, they continue to expand toward the peripheries, generating dispersed and low-density territories. According to a study developed by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy in partnership with UN Habitat and New York University in 2016, in which a sample of 200 cities in the world is considered, the urban population of these cities grew by an average of 2.8% and their urban territories expanded 4.8% while their density decreased by -1.6%, annually, between 2000 and 2011. It is worth noting that according to the same study, the built-up area in suburban and rural areas grew each year by an average of between 3.9% and 3.8%, respectively (Angel et al., 2016).

3. This is in reference to the techniques implemented in agriculture in order to maintain lucrative businesses of transnational companies which generate dependencies, mainly related to biotechnology, genetically modified seeds, chemical pesticides complemented with biotechnology and synthetic biology, digital agriculture and other high technology (Altieri, 2021).

5.

This dynamic does not take into account the enormous amount of energy required[4] to sustain an increasingly "deterritorialized" model of production, marketing and consumption, and the negative impact this generates on local economies.

Data demonstrates as well the ineffectiveness of this corporate-centered model of food production.

According to Guenard (2021), despite the expansion of industrialization in agriculture, the number of people affected by hunger has increased and it is estimated 2 billion people in the world did not have general access to safe, nutritious and sufficient food in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic and the multiple economic and political crises in which it is immersed in have exacerbated these structural fragilities and existing injustices in our food systems.

The reconfiguration of territories and cities based on technological-industrial progress and driven by capital interests has deepened the dependence of territories and their communities on onerous infrastructures and technologies which are sustained only through high levels of energy consumption and pollution. Such infrastructures and technologies depend on large-scale state (public sector) management or, increasingly, are handed to private sector management, thus stripping communities of their capabilities for greater local territorial management and autonomy.

This is also linked to an urbanization model which generates high costs in terms of infrastructure, connectivity, consumption of natural and energy resources, pollution, loss of biodiversity and social segregation (Rogers, 2000;

UN Habitat, 2016), because its logic does not respond to collective interests, but instead is conditioned to a variety of private interests, mainly linked to the real estate and financial sectors. There is no doubt that the predominance of speculative logics in the land market, associated with deficient urban planning regulations, has been a fundamental factor in urban sprawl.

The expansion of cities and associated infrastructure will have an impact on the conversion of forests to other uses until 2050 and the current model of urban life is linked to higher impact activities such as the demand for food, water, wood, fiber and fuel (MEA, 2005).

According to the World Cities Report (2016), dysfunctional urban forms generate between 60% and 70% of energy consumption and 70% of greenhouse gas emissions produced by humans (UN Habitat, 2016).

Additionally, a significant number of urban human settlements have a high vulnerability index due to their dependence on the resources of other territories to meet their high levels of consumption, as well as the almost non-existent possibility of self-producing the essential goods and services they rely on, which are linked to resources in nature.

These forms of organizing and transforming urban and rural territories have demanded extensive and intensive exploitation, among others, of mineral, hydrocarbon, agro-industrial, livestock and forestry resources, generating major socio-environmental conflicts and deepening displacements, marginalization and exploitation of local communities. Despite the negative externalities produced by these processes, the impact caused by these factors has not been remedied or fairly compensated, and the work, knowledge and effort of contributing communities has continued to be undervalued (See figure 2).

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4. It is important to note that, if energy efficiency is incorporated into the analysis, traditional agriculture is more efficient than agro-industrial agriculture, since the latter obtains 3.8 units of energy for each one invested, while traditional agriculture obtains 10.7 units of energy for each one invested (Delgado, 2014).
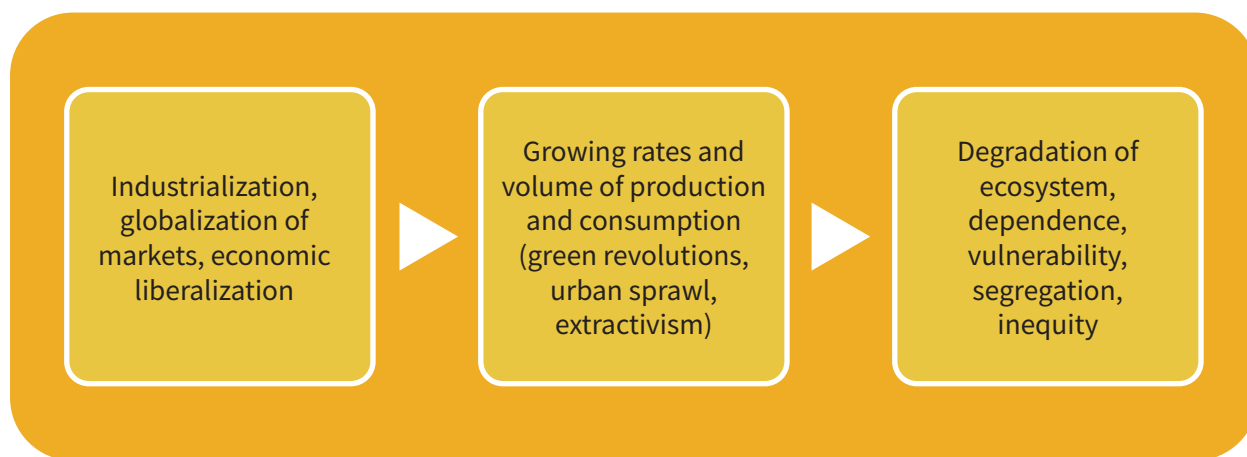
| Industrialization, globalization of markets, economic liberalization | ▶ | Growing rates and volume of production and consumption (green revolutions, urban sprawl, extractivism) | ▶ | Degradation of ecosystem, dependence, vulnerability, segregation, inequity |

Figure 2: Impacts of current model of development

The urban and rural conception in the global development agendas

In the context described above, Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda seeks to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, proposing inclusive urbanization and participatory, integrated and sustainable planning and management of human settlements, as well as the fostering of positive economic, social and environmental linkages between urban, peri-urban and rural areas. The 2030 Agenda also states that the sustainable management of natural resources (Goal 15), responsible consumption and production (Goal 12) and the achievement of food security of the population (Goal 2) are some of the development priorities when committing to the delivery of resources for the development of rural areas (UN, 2015 a).

In line with these objectives, the Paris Agreement on climate change raises, as a priority, the safeguarding of food security from the adverse effects of climate change, proposes to endorse the reduction of emissions caused by deforestation and forest degradation, and identifies the resilience of communities, livelihoods and ecosystems as one of the areas for action (UN, 2016).

For its part, the New Urban Agenda (NUA) refers to cities and human settlements for all, with equality in their use and enjoyment, emphasizing inclusion, non-discrimination and an intergenerational perspective. The Agenda frames its common ideal in the right to the city. The NUA envisions cities and human settlements which fulfill their social function, as well as the social and environmental function of land, in addition to territorial functions that go beyond administrative boundaries, acting as centers to promote balanced, sustainable and integrated urban and territorial development at all levels. Also explicit in this ideal is the protection, conservation, restoration and promotion of ecosystems, natural habitats and biodiversity, considering environmental impacts and the need to modify production and consumption patterns within the framework of sustainability (UN-Habitat, 2017)[5].

This instrument also explicitly points out the need for linkages between urban and rural areas from the perspective of territorial systems which integrate functions, as well as spatial frameworks of different levels

5. Numerals 11 to 13. letters a, e and h.

and scales, to generate equitable regional development and the reduction of social, economic and territorial gaps, through the sustainable management and use of natural resources and land (UN-Habitat, 2017)[6].

When considering the interaction and connectivity between urban and rural areas, the NUA also proposes to strengthen sustainable mobility and transportation systems, as well as technology and communications infrastructure networks, to make the most of the territorial potential, improving productivity, social and economic cohesion and environmental security and sustainability, based on planning instruments which focus on integrated urban and territorial development (UN-Habitat, 2017)[7].

The agenda has several other entries on urban-rural linkages related to comprehensive territorial issues[8], although it does not mention them explicitly. Additionally, in 2019, UN-Habitat issued a document containing guiding principles for the generation of urban-rural linkages as a framework for action to advance integrated territorial development. This document proposes 10 principles which offer guidance on the implementation of the guidelines established in the NUA and articulated to the SDG. The principles revolve around: local interventions, integrated governance, spatial and functional systemic approach, financial inclusion, balanced partnerships, human rights, social protection and non-violence pact, environmental sustainability, active participation and data-driven decisions (UN-Habitat, 2019).

Undoubtedly, some progress can be recognized in these global agendas which contribute to the realization of the right to the city and territory. The importance given to cities and human

settlements; the sustainable management of natural resources and food security[9]; the call for attention on the increase in emissions caused by deforestation and forest degradation; the resilience of communities, their livelihoods and ecosystems; responsible production and consumption, as well as the understanding of territory as a system; and the principles mentioned in the NUA on rural-urban linkages, which are guidelines that generate important commitments for public action. However, it is still necessary to rethink the role of economic growth within global agendas to strengthen the prevalence of human rights and the rights of nature.

The accelerated process of urban expansion has shaped diverse territorial realities, and urban-rural differentiation is becoming increasingly complex as differences evolve into blurred and intense interconnections. Therefore, it is essential to expand the reflections about urban-rural linkages from an integral vision of the territory.

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6. Numeral 49.
7. Numeral 50.
8. See numerals 65, 72, 88, 95, 96, 123.
9. Although, as we have mentioned, food security linked to corporate interests present dangerous dimensions which must be denounced and combated.

B. The right to the city framework and other complementary approaches to analyze territories

Cities and territories are common goods produced collectively and fulfill vital, social and environmental functions for the communities that inhabit them. Not only they produce wealth, but they also create meanings and use values which resist being functionalized in market-based and capitalist logic. In this context, the right to the city defends and guarantees the social and environmental function of territories over their economic function, and it is defined as "the right of all inhabitants, present and future, permanent and temporary, to inhabit, use, occupy, produce, transform, govern and justly enjoy inclusive, safe, sustainable and democratic cities, towns and human settlements, defined as essential common goods for a dignified life, which must be shared by all members of the community" (GPR2C, 2016: sp).

It is important to highlight that the conception of the right to the city is not exclusive to one type of human settlement; it refers to all types of settlements and encompasses their rural environments, populated or not, given the social, environmental and economic interdependencies existing inside a territory. In general, categories such as "urban" and "rural" were used to refer to administrative areas that consider implied land use, construction and population density, among others. However, this classification ignores systems such as watersheds, biological corridors, food systems, and economic and social flows, and, in doing so, makes other ways of understanding territories invisible.

The right to the city framework emphasizes "(…) a sustainable model of society and urban life, based on the principles of solidarity, freedom, equity, dignity and social justice and based on respect for different urban cultures and the balance between urban and rural" (HIC, 2005: 188).

The notion of justice is a fundamental element within the conception of the right to the city and must remain so within the understanding of the territory and urban-rural linkages, particularly in relation to social, environmental and cognitive justice[10].

The right to the city framework has been taken up and contextualized by organizations and social movements of the Global South which, rooted in subaltern traditions and perspectives, enrich and deepen it as a tool for disputing territories and for rethinking and transforming current developmental processes towards other forms of territorial planning and management.

The right to the city defends the social and environmental function of territory and the equitable distribution of burdens and benefits of economic processes generated in said territories, including urbanization. This interacts directly with other rights and frameworks of analysis and action which question the current development model.

FULFILLED SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

5

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10. This is in reference to the recognition of other forms of knowledge that exist beyond those formulated from the hegemonic technical and scientific discourse, which get over the epistemological frameworks of the sciences and conventional academic systems, because they are founded on different ontological bases. In this regard, the Epistemologies of the South, which recognize the need to decolonize being, knowledge and power, provide elements for analysis and discussion. See: Santos (2010) chapters 1 and 2; and (2019) for an introduction to the Epistemologies of the South.

For example, the recognition of the rights of Nature and the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth add to human rights a relational and indivisible dimension with natural and cultural territorial contexts, and make it possible to address current social and environmental problems from a more holistic perspective of life and its multiple forms.

Following this line of thought, frameworks of analysis and action such as environmental justice, responsible production and consumption, food sovereignty, and solidarity economy, among others, highlight forms of relationships within territories based on justice, sustainability, democracy and responsibility, contributing to the realization of the right to the city and the rights of nature. (See Figure 3) In the following paragraphs, these fundamental principles and proposals are further explained.
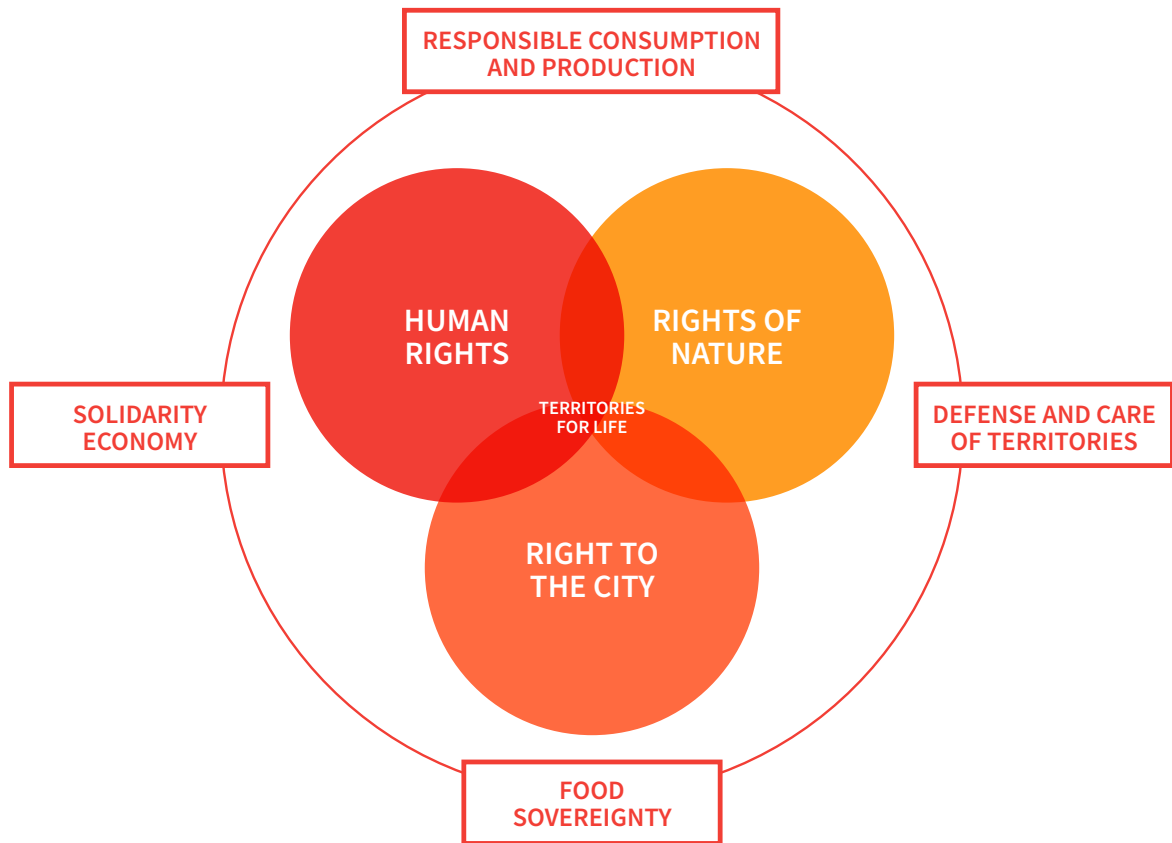

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

HUMAN RIGHTS

RIGHTS OF NATURE

TERRITORIES FOR LIFE

DEFENSE AND CARE OF TERRITORIES

RIGHT TO THE CITY

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Figure 3: The right to the city and the rights of nature

The right to the city is interrelated and interdependent with all human rights and cannot be achieved without guaranteeing the rights of nature. Action frameworks such as solidarity economy, responsible production and consumption, food sovereignty and defense and care of territories contribute to the articulation of these rights and their principles, seeking to assure territories for life.

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

In the face of large-scale consumerism and its negative impacts on the environment and society, the transformation of production and consumption patterns is essential. Responsible consumption focuses on a critical and conscious attitude from consumers to opt for goods and services which not only satisfy real needs, but also favor the protection of the planet and the guarantee of human rights. Therefore, it implies an informed and responsible act in buying only what is defined as necessary, using efficiently what has been acquired, avoiding waste and disposing of products and services in an appropriate manner, considering their final disposal from the moment of purchase. However, responsible consumption is closely linked to responsible production, where companies and governments play a fundamental role. Businesses and corporations must adopt environmentally and socially responsible practices, and States must regulate their actions appropriately for the common good. Likewise, transparency is required in the information handled by corporations regarding their processes and products, and States must guarantee access to this information by the general public.

SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

Within a solidarity economy framework, economic actions aim at satisfying the needs of human beings rather than prioritizing capital profits. This fundamentally changes how the social and environmental function of territories is considered in relation to economic development. Thus, the wellbeing of people and nature is the main objective of this form of economy and its principles[11]. This is a project of successively transforming economic relations, to the extent that civil society agents appropriate spaces in which the values of cooperation and equity materialize, instead of competition, hierarchy

and individualism (Singer, 2009). The solidarity economy allows for fairer forms of inclusion and economic exchange, and in different contexts plays an important role in challenging territorial inequalities.

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

A central axis from the perspective proposed in this text is food sovereignty, which is based on the following principles: 1) focusing on food for people; 2) valuing food providers; 3) localizing food systems; 4) making decisions locally; 5) building knowledge and skills; and 6) working with nature[12]. Food sovereignty raises seeds, land, water, knowledge, biodiversity as common goods and as material, symbolic and spiritual sustenance for peoples. It recognizes the interdependence between (agro) biodiversity and cultural diversity, opposing the homogeneity of agro-industrial systems, while also fostering solidarity between producers and consumers (Gutierrez, 2019). Along these lines, resonances and coincidences exist with the postulates of energy sovereignty which opposes extractivism, corporate energy monopolies and mega-projects that are harmful to the environment, defending the right of people to decide what source of energy to exploit, how much to produce, how, by whom, where and for whom (Del Bene, Soler and Roa, 2019). Both food sovereignty and energy sovereignty demands considerations about territories as a result of coexistence relations between communities and nature.

MOVEMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND TERRITORIAL JUSTICE

The struggle, resistance and mobilization in defense of territories and for the protection and care of common goods are a fundamental line of action in cities and territories. These struggles are evidenced in the socio-environmental conflicts generated by asymmetrical power relations between, on one hand, communities that inha-

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11. According to the Ripess network (global network of continental networks committed to the promotion of Social Solidarity Economy) the Solidarity Economy is based on the principles of voluntary cooperation, self-organization and mutual aid (Giegold and Embshoff, 2008). In the document Vision global (2015), RIPESS highlights the values which sustain the SSE: humanism, democracy, solidarity, inclusiveness, subsidiarity, diversity, creativity, sustainable development, equality, equity and justice for all, respect, integration and plurality.
12. For a detailed explanation, read more at: _http://grassrootsonline.org/sites/default/files/The-6-Food-Sovereignty-Principles.pdf_.

bit, care for and give life to territories; and, on the other, economic agents linked to multinational corporations who see territories as fields of extraction and accumulation. These struggles are expressed through protests, public demonstrations and mobilizations that arise from territories, and question the imposed order, as a reminder of the symbolic and political value of taking and appropriating space, streets, plazas and institutions. Rather than demand more "inclusive" urban-rural operational relations, these demonstrations draw our attention to

the urgent need to eliminate the causes that destroy the material, social and cultural bases of a relational, dignified life in territories. What these movements ultimately demand is recognition, respect, equity and justice.

The following section maps some initiatives that are exemplary of what it means to articulate the right to the city and the rights of nature, allowing us to move beyond rural-urban linkages and towards the defense of territories and cities for life.

INCLUSIVE RURAL-URBAN LINKAGES

8

C. Other ways of acting in territories

Across the global south and the global north, many inspiring efforts exist that seek to disrupt the unfair distribution of burdens and benefits of conventional development processes.

In this section, we shed light on examples regarding the aspects of solidarity economies, food sovereignty, responsible production and consumption, as well as movements focusing on bringing environmental and territorial justice. These experiences are rooted in the defense of the social and environmental function of territories, and present alternative actions based on more equitable, collective, and complementary approaches. Such examples make it possible to identify the types of actions needed to transform current patterns of production and consumption, and to reexamine the planning and management of territories (See Figure 4).
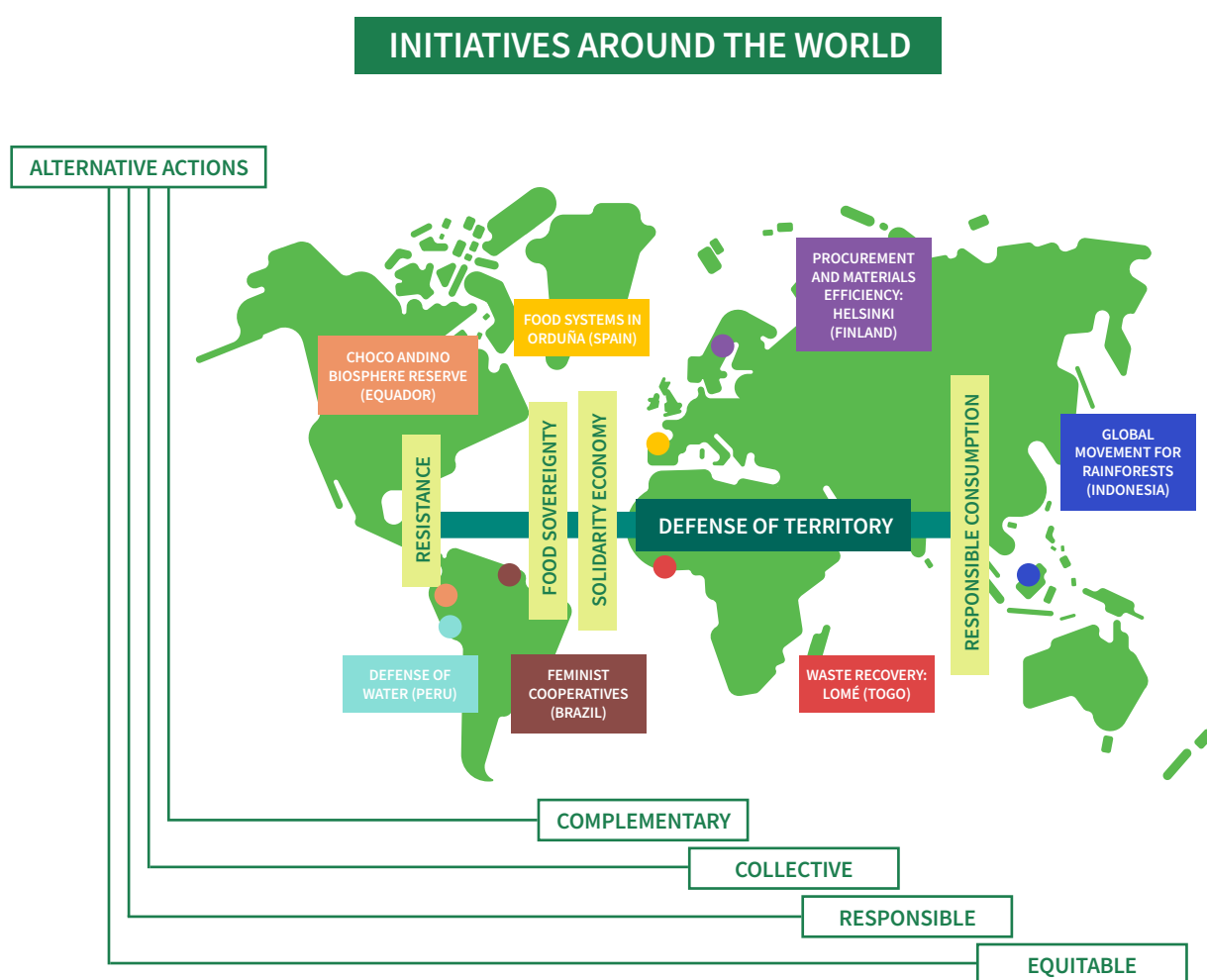
INITIATIVES AROUND THE WORLD

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS

PROCUREMENT AND MATERIALS EFFICIENCY: HELSINKI (FINLAND)

FOOD SYSTEMS IN ORDUÑA (SPAIN)

CHOCO ANDINO BIOSPHERE RESERVE (EQUADOR)

GLOBAL MOVEMENT FOR RAINFORESTS (INDONESIA)

RESISTANCE

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION

DEFENSE OF TERRITORY

DEFENSE OF WATER (PERU)

FEMINIST COOPERATIVES (BRAZIL)

WASTE RECOVERY: LOMÉ (TOGO)

COMPLEMENTARY

COLLECTIVE

RESPONSIBLE

EQUITABLE

Figure 4: Initiatives around the world

INCLUSIVE CITIZENSHIP

3

Women's Group "Decided to Win of Mossoró" and Solidarity Marketing Network Xique-Xique (Brazil)

The Group of Women Determined to Win, from the Mulungunzinho Settlement in Mossoró, is committed to growing agroecological vegetables, seeking fair and solidarity-based forms of marketing and participating in the construction of the Xique-Xique Solidarity Marketing Network (Brazil), which is organized on the principle that production, marketing and consumption should be distanced from all forms of exploitation. Through the organization, they were able to create alternatives for marketing and conscious consumption which guarantee the social and environmental function of the territory and make it possible to generate networks that offer conditions of justice and equity, emphasizing on the inclusion of historically marginalized groups.

LEARN MORE

Empoderamiento espacial de las mujeres mediante la Economía Solidaria.

La construcción de la economía feminista en la Red de Comercialización Solidaria Xique-Xique

- Video *"As sementes" (Las semillas)*.

Waste recovery and public awareness through community actions in Lomé (Togo)

An integral conception of the territory requires the development of sustainable and responsible practices which allow those who produce waste to take responsibility for its management. Through ENPRO, a local waste recovery operator, and with the participation of families from Lomé, waste management has been improved based on raising awareness and doing a consultation process, acting on the various networks in the sector and involving neighbors and local stake-holders who have supported the cleaning of the area and the elimination of illegal dumps.

LEARN MORE

Valorisation des déchets à Lomé: une dynamique collective et inclusive.

Food systems in the municipality of Orduña (Spain)

Since 2003, based on participatory diagnoses regarding the state of the primary sector, the municipality of Orduña has activated socio-organizational processes around food sovereignty and followed an agroecological production model. In this case, a specific advisory service was created for training and supporting local producers, focusing on addressing issues of food, sustainable production, shortening market chains, and incorporating new generations of producers in agroecological production and conscious consumption.

LEARN MORE

Video *Regresando al futuro. Orduña hacia la Soberanía Alimentaria.*

La Declaración de Glasgow Sobre la Alimentación y el Clima.

Diez años de desarrollo agroecológico de Orduña Bizkaia. Del proyecto municipal al comarcal.

Transformando los territorios desde la economía solidaria. Herramientas para el impulso de políticas públicas locales.

A good food plan in Bristol (England)

The city of Bristol, England, is also putting forward an initiative to promote eating habits which are good for the environment, good for local producers and traders, good for health, and which will contribute to the local economy. It is based on a multidimensional strategy that includes transforming food culture; safeguarding food retail diversity and land for food production; increasing urban food production, composting and recycling; developing infrastructure for local sourcing; improving market conditions for local and regional suppliers, and improving the quality of food products.

LEARN MORE

A Plan for good food.

Who feeds Bristol? Towards a resilient food plan.

"Coltivando" & "Feeding Milan: Energy for Change" (Italy)

The "Coltivando" initiative originated within the Milan Polytechnic brings together local residents with a group of post-graduates from the university to collectively create a convivial garden. The project has two objectives: first, to stimulate urban agricultural practices with an agroecological perspective in public and private urban spaces in order to contribute to the qualitative improvement of life and the environment; secondly, it seeks to establish links within the community by building a place to share, meet and to facilitate access to information, stimulating discussions on health, healthy eating and food production. This initiative is also part of a broader initiative called "Feeding Milan: Energy for Change". This project seeks to connect local food production in peri-urban areas with consumers in the city. It gathers a series of autonomous projects related to local food production, trade proximity and community tourism, and has a digital platform to directly connect farmers with urban dwellers.
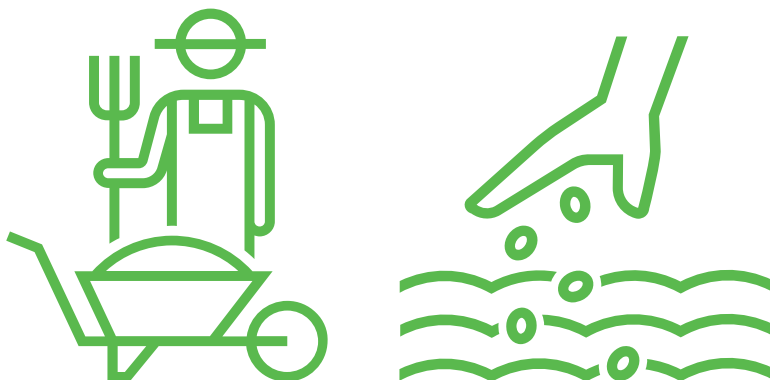
LEARN MORE
Coltivando.
A Theory of Transformative Social Innovation.
Design, When everybody Designs. An Introduction to Design for Social Innovation.
Design for Social Innovation as a form of Design Activism: An action format.
Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (2015).

Community struggle in Cajamarca for the defense of water (Peru)

The story of Máxima Acuña in Peru illustrates how communities defend territories against extractive enterprises. Máxima's effort against the Newmont mining company is a fight for her right to remain and live on her land, protecting common goods such as the water that serves the entire community and supplies the city downstream. Máxima cares for the landscape and the territory as sources of life and meaning for the community, and at the same time creates a community through their struggle, awakening the interest of organizations that — although not depending directly on the livelihoods of that territory — feel called to support a just struggle.

LEARN MORE

Frente de defensa ambiental Cajamarca.

Observatorio de Conflictos Mineros de América Latina (OCMAL).

Conga no va! The guardians of lagoons: defending land, water and freedom in Cajamarca, Perú.

PACHA: DEFENDIENDO LA TIERRA. Extractivismo, conflictos y alternativas en América Latina y Caribe.

Atlas de justicia ambiental.

Global movement for rainforests against the misleading "clean energy" discourse (Indonesia)

Large infrastructures, as is the case with geothermal plants, have a great impact on economic development, but can also affect the livelihoods of local people as possibly generating polluting effects. The Mount Talang area in Indonesia was designated as a protected area due to its important role for water catchment. However, in mid-2017, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources granted geothermal exploration and exploitation to a consortium of foreign and domestic companies without a proper consultation process with affected communities. This caused protests from affected communities, who demanded that the government restore their rights to a healthy and clean environment. The community has opposed the project and the local government and companies have answered with more repression. The community is now preparing a lawsuit against the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources.

LEARN MORE

Movimiento Mundial por los bosques tropicales.

Boletín 244 del WRM Movimiento Mundial por los Bosques Tropicales.

Indonesia y la triste verdad detrás de la energía geotérmica: un discurso engañoso de 'energía limpia'.

Choco Andino Biosphere Reserve (Ecuador)

Choco Andino is a biosphere reserve of 286,000 hectares that constitutes an area of unique and significant biodiversity, including thousands of species of flora and hundreds of species of birds, amphibians, reptiles and mammals. It is located less than an hour (100 km) from the urban areas of Quito. For several decades, communities in this region have worked to protect areas of conservation and promote processes of sustainable development in the face of unsustainable practices and threats of expanding extractivism. The establishment of the biosphere reserve has been a critical strategy in advancing the protection of the area. A key element in the successful organization of communities in the region was in the establishment of an "intermediate" territorial governance space known as the Mancomunidad — involving the Municipality of the Metropolitan District of Quito and six local governments (Calacalí, Nono, Nanegalito, Nanegal, Gualea and Pacto) — which is located within the area of the reserve. In early 2021, community organizations of Choco Andino, along with authorities from the Mancomunidad, presented a petition to the Constitutional Court of Ecuador to request a popular referendum which considers prohibiting mining activities in the Metropolitan District of Quito.

LEARN MORE

Mancomunidad del Chocó Andino.

Procurement and materials efficiency in the Municipality of Helsinki (Finland)

In accordance with Helsinki's environmental policies, all procurement processes must comply with environmental criteria set by the city's Procurement Center and Environmental Services to promote sustainable procurement, for which it provides training and advice. Based on this policy, Environmental Services has established an environmental procurement network, which aims to contribute in achieving the city's environmental objectives. This experience shows that governments can actively influence the market by promoting sustainable production and consumption models through execution of the State budget, which helps promote the social and environmental function of territories over its economic function.

LEARN MORE

Procurement and materials efficiency of the Municipality of Helsinki.

D. Recommendations for national and local governments

Considering the principles of the right to the city framework and the contributions produced by organizations and social movements such as those outlined above, it can be said that moving beyond urban-rural linkages which are inequitable/unjust and to advance the defense of territories and cities for life, public policies, territorial planning, public administration cannot ignore the ecological limits of the planet; nor deny the differences and diversity of ways of being, of knowledge and of power that acquire meaning in the very act of producing, interpreting, valuing, using and enjoying territories.

All forms of violence and discrimination of any kind and on any material or symbolic dimension must be rejected, especially if they are legitimized in cognitive, institutional and legal frameworks which favor the interests of minorities that hold power, and possess the means and resources to impose an order that extends their privileges at the expense of the marginalization and oppression of large population groups, ecosystems and life itself.

Binding mechanisms must be adopted in national, regional and global spheres to guarantee that human rights and the rights of nature will not be violated

by companies, transnational corporations, and financial organizations, demanding responsibilities and remediation in case of damages to rights and livelihoods of the communities that inhabit cities and territories. [13]

Based on the critical analysis presented in this document, as well as on the social and institutional practices studied, recommendations are organized as follows: in the first section, they are presented in relation with the same categories outlined in section 3; the second section concludes with general suggestions linked to participation and the integral management of the territories.

13. There are already initiatives following this principle that should broaden their spectrum towards the rights of nature. *https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/hrc/wgtranscorp/pages/igwgontnc.aspx*

Recommendations to strengthen alternative actions

RESPONSIBLE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION

Create institutional, legal and financial instruments that guarantee human rights and the rights of nature in production processes and the transparency of information provided to consumers, especially through regulations for large companies and multinational corporations.

Prioritize public investment in goods and products which come from ethical and sustainable production and consumption patterns, and create technical and financial mechanisms to encourage, strengthen and highlight local sustainable production initiatives.

Establish legal and financial instruments that contribute to the reduction of domestic and institutional waste through measures such as the prohibition of programmed obsolescence and single-usage materials. Provide incentives for good practices that reduce waste, stimulate waste separation, as well as reuse and recycling.

Create spaces for training civil society agents on the function and importance of ecosystems and the alternatives for responsible production and consumption with respect toward people and the environment, aiming to multiply communities that adopt more sustainable lifestyles.

Prioritize public investment in strengthening and supporting community initiatives that promote citizen awareness of responsible consumption practices and promote sustainable waste management, instead of developing large investments focused solely on waste management infrastructure.

SOLIDARITY ECONOMY

Promote local production and strengthen local economies under the principles of solidarity, mutualism (mutual aid) and cooperativism. Allocate adequate resources to strengthen urban-rural linkages that are more balanced and just, specifically within the framework of integrated territorial planning.

Create regulatory and institutional frameworks that enable the participation of local social enterprises in the definition of public policies and operation of programs that promote solidarity economy. These mechanisms should prioritize the involvement of historically marginalized communities such as indigenous people, racial minorities, women, persons with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ individuals and groups, migrants, and refugees.

Facilitate the participation of local social enterprises in the production, management, supply and distribution of key sectors such as the providing of water, food, energy and essential services to encourage territorial autonomy and sustainability, and expanded access with adequate affordability.

Outline institutional structures, local regulatory frameworks, programs and projects that support indigenous peoples, nationalities and communities, in the care and reproduction of common goods, safeguarding forms of communal organization for production, marketing and exchange of products, goods and services, under the principles of sustainability.

Create incentives and ensure public funding for academia to work with local communities in researching and developing epistemological frameworks that include ancestral knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples and local communities, thus helping create alternative models of organization, creation, production and commercialization of common goods and public services based on social, environmental and economic sustainability.

DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES

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FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

Ensure meaningful participation of small-scale food producers, Indigenous Peoples and food system workers in decision making processes which impact their territory.

Facilitate access to responsible and adequate public financing, as well as incentives that promote sustainable small and medium-scale agroecological practices.

Implement technical assistance and training programs with an emphasis on sustainable production and less dependent on external inputs, recognizing and strengthening the role of women, and contributing to reducing existing inequality gaps.

Ensure that land use regulations include multiscale, transdisciplinary and intercultural approaches to safeguard the protection of ecosystems and to guarantee food and water sources. This must be done in the framework of planning decisions and processes that include and benefit communities, indigenous populations and small local producers.

Establish national and local public policies for food and agriculture to promote the observation, preservation and value of the ancestral knowledge systems in food production, the defense of land and the care for the environment.

Promote the preservation of sustainable food systems and the generation of green urban and peri-urban spaces for agriculture and forests in cities, particularly as a mechanism for building resiliency in face of threats such as COVID-19 and climate change.

Create urban land use regulations and support mechanisms that allow the development of family or community agriculture, as a complementary strategy to the provision of local food in cities.

MOVEMENTS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND TERRITORIAL JUSTICE

Establish legal mechanisms that focus on protecting human rights and the rights of nature under intercultural and gender-equality approaches, to protect communities and common goods that sustain life in rural and urban areas, particularly in the face of transnational capital and extractivist logics.

Establish binding consultation and social control mechanisms, according to international human rights normative frameworks, on projects that impact the habitat of communities, their livelihoods and life, that threaten food sovereignty, and that destroy landscapes and ecosystems.

Incentivize normative and institutional frameworks which will be open possibilities toward legal pluralism in instances of justice, but also in instances of territorial planning, management of common goods and economic-productive practices, understanding and respecting the cultural bases of communities, their worldviews, knowledge and practices.

Ensure legal recognition of territories belonging to ancestral communities, including recognition and protection of collective tenure of land, organizational forms and endogenous instruments of spatial and territorial planning.

General recommendations for territorial planning and management

Planning should be understood as a political process and should prioritize the participation of community organizations and civil society sectors in decision-making spaces, reducing power asymmetries as well as the influence of corporations in political decisions.

Rethink citizen participation mechanisms, developing tools and methodologies that facilitate discussion between various actors in conditions that favor those who have historically been marginalized in decision-making.

Information must be accessible to citizens, allowing them to monitor the actions of governments and companies that may affect their well-being and violate their rights.

Generate articulation mechanisms that allow balance the actions of different levels of government, ensuring a multi-scale, transdisciplinary and multisectoral approach in the implementation of public policies.

Land use regulation should be the result of a participatory planning process and a comprehensive and systematic understanding of the territory that recognizes the interrelationships generated by watersheds, biological corridors, food systems, and economic and social flows.
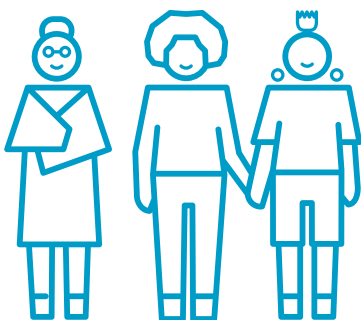
Figures

Figures

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Notes

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Credit photos

This Thematic Paper is part of a series of seven documents produced by the **Global Platform for the Right to the City** (GPR2C).

These documents are the result of a **process of collective learning** on the Right to the City. Each author was supported by a reference group formed by different organisations members of the Platform. These groups closely followed the drafting of the documents and provided assistance to the experts.

Additionally, a series of webinars were held for each topic in order to broaden discussions and collect suggestions and proposals from a wider range of organizations (including grassroots and social movements, NGOs, professionals, academics and local governments' representatives from different countries and regions).

The **Global Platform for the Right to the City (GPR2C)** is an action-oriented advocacy network committed to social change and with the promotion of the Right to the City as a core value for policies, commitments, projects and actions at the local, national and international levels. We gather organizations, networks and individuals from a wide range of backgrounds: local-based and international social movements, NGOs, forums, academics, representatives from local governments, and other institutions committed to create more just, democratic and sustainable cities and territories.