

Around the world, women and men are working together to build more solidary and caring economic relations around food, based on feminist principles.

# El Salvador

## Urban agriculture for survival

**A**s people in El Salvador struggle to survive, many vulnerable people have turned to cheap, highly processed and industrially produced foods, which has in turn increased the incidence of chronic illnesses such as diabetes, allergies and hypertension. The COVID 19 pandemic is amplifying this situation, particularly for people that lack formal employment and live on a day-to-day basis. However, at the same time, women are increasingly engaging in urban agriculture as a strategy to obtain healthy and chemical-free food and to survive the pandemic. While the practice is not new, it now finds greater relevance than before, and is emerging in backyards, neighbourhoods and schools.

Many initiatives are being led by not just women but also other vulnerable groups such as youth, the elderly, and people with a disability. Equipped with a horizontal or vertical space, seeds and their own labour, they are taking charge of a creative process of learning and experimentation. They do so by creating a green environment, producing healthy foods, using water conscientiously and, most importantly, nourishing solidarity and teamwork. The Urban Agriculture movement also negotiates with authorities to free parks and rooftops for food production and to create spaces where produce can be sold.

**For more info contact Emma Victoria Garcia Castellón of CESTA: ([cesta@cesta-foe.org.sv](mailto:cesta@cesta-foe.org.sv))**

# Nicaragua

## ‘Building agroecology networks’

**"A**ll living beings, women, men, society and nature, are interconnected. Therefore we must move away from the patriarchal culture of domination and control of women's bodies and of nature, and move towards new relations that care and protect life and that are characterised by recognition, appreciation and mutual respect." The creation of this feminist vision marked the beginning of the work done by local organisations, communities and farmers in the municipalities of Belen, Mateare and Villa El Carmen in Nicaragua. From 2014 onwards they embarked on a process to identify problems in the community and realise their dreams. They established a network of agroecological promoters, in which men and women work together to develop agroecological practices. Community ecological brigades carry out reforestation, community clean ups and awareness raising activities on the importance of environmental care. They have also established seed banks to preserve

native seeds and guarantee their availability to local producers, as well as setting up platforms to discuss the various roles of men and women. These activities, along with other initiatives, have helped to facilitate the establishment of agricultural practices that contribute to the improvement of soils and the wider environment, the recognition of women's experiences and knowledge in relation to land and nature, and the restoration of natural forests. It also led to the more active participation of men in household work and of women in community and productive activities.

**For more info and videos visit [canternicaragua.org](http://canternicaragua.org) or contact Anabel Torres ([anabeltorres27@gmail.com](mailto:anabeltorres27@gmail.com)).**



Photo from Pantera repository

# Zimbabwe

## Indigenous seeds fa(i)ring well

In the south of Zimbabwe women have become leaders in organising seed and food fairs and spreading knowledge related to indigenous, climate-resilient seeds. Mid-season dry spells and prolonged droughts make food insecurity an ever-growing challenge in Zimbabwe. To address this, since 2017 women farmers have begun to manage indigenous and traditional seed varieties that have the capacity to withstand and recover from extreme weather events such as droughts. These include small grain varieties such as rapoko, sorghum, and millet, as well as legumes and tubers. The women have also started to organise seed fairs: a collective system of conservation, sharing and renewal of traditional seed varieties which constitutes the cultural identity of communities. Traditional seed varieties are brought by women farmers to a seed fair. Farmers who have lost the associated knowledge or do not know the variety can then learn from them about the processes of production, selection, storage and cooking of the crop. Through the sharing and exchange of seeds, different households end up obtaining a diverse range of varieties by the end of the fair. These varieties and



Photo by Phumla Maduma

their diversity, in combination with agroecological water and soil management practices, have proven their worth having withstood Cyclone Idai-induced floods and El Niño induced drought in 2019. These successes also contribute to the recognition of the role of women, who now occupy positions of influence in various farmers' committees.

**For more information contact Edward Makoni, Trócaire (edward.makoni@trocaire.org)**

# Eastern Europe and Central Asia

## Building agroecology networks with peasant women

In Eastern European and Central Asia, peasant organisations are strengthening agroecology and peasant seed systems through cross-regional exchanges, with an emphasis on supporting the leadership of peasant women. Eco Ruralis (Romania), Elkana (Georgia), ADI (Kyrgyzstan), Zher Ana Astana (Kazakhstan), Zan va Zamin (Tajikistan) and Grandina Moldovei (Republic of Moldova) have come together to share their diverse experiences and expertise in agroecological trainings, movement building and advocacy. In collaboration with the European Coordination of La Via Campesina (ECVC), FAO REU and Cultivate!, these organisations are brought together to learn from and inspire one another. They thereby strengthen peasant agroecology and seed diversity networks in the Eastern European and Central Asia region by linking organisations working on those issues to existing networks, encouraging networking between initiatives and facilitating horizontal peasant-to-peasant learning processes with a special focus on the inclusion of

women. From this collaboration a strong, resilient and structured network is emerging in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, which is capable of advocating in national, regional and international policy making arenas for food systems based on agroecology and local seeds.

**For more info contact Olcay Bingöl, ECVC (info@eurovia.org)**



Photo from ECVC repository