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Joining multiple
branches of knowledge
to rethink urban
agriculture projects:
urban farm challenge and
experiences

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Nowadays, with the current and foreseen scenario of urbanization and world population growth, urban agriculture (UA) represents an opportunity and a strategy to improve food production and supply, local economy, social integration, environmental sustainability as well as health conditions. Within this context, UA can reach and integrate the three pillars of sustainability: economic, social, and environmental. For these reasons, UA has become a popular and common urban land use form worldwide in many cities.

Indeed, in recent times, UA projects have spread across the world, guided as well as supported by governments and born by community-based initiatives. These projects may have a great variability: they range from low to high technological UA projects or they may have different purposes, being projects

with a purely social and educational purpose or instead mainly devoted to food production and environmental services. Therefore, UA brings together multidisciplinary fields and opportunities. To facilitate a wider uptake of innovative policies and instruments for the promotion of the sustainable goals associated with UA, it is fundamental to first create and raise awareness both between institutional stakeholders as well as civil society through innovative and interdisciplinary approaches.

The international student challenge UrbanFarm2024, which has now reached its 6th edition, is dedicated to the design of new spaces, activities, and solutions for the development of a new prison facility in Trelleborg (SKÅNE, Sweden): the aim is to integrate the prison's architectural design with agricultural facilities to facilitate inmates rehabilitation through farming activities, while, at the same time, reaching fruit and vegetables self-sufficiency within the facility. Similarly to previous editions, the teams had the task of bridging the most innovative strategies in urban farming as well as environmental technology and solutions with multifunctional planning of the prison's external spaces. Moreover, students also had the opportunity to discuss their solutions with the Swedish Prison and Probation Service (Kriminalvården) in Malmö. Through this challenge, teams must apply their knowledge in real contexts, dealing with the environment and spaces as well as with the local policies. Moreover, they gain a significant opportunity to exchange views and approaches with their peers from different countries as well as backgrounds. Their dissemination and soft skills may also take advantage and be improved, for instance in how to prepare a promotional video or how to orally present their project in front of an audience, making this challenge an important teaching tool.

This publication aims to summarize the main ideas, projects, and solutions that student teams brought together with enthusiasm, dedication, and effort. We believe that these kinds of ideas and projects may not only raise awareness on these topics but also inspire urban planners and institutions to foster the sustainability and liveability of their cities.



UrbanFarm Student Challenge 2024, group photo taken at Anlarp's Farm in Malmö. © Marie-Claire Feller