

# URBAN AGRICULTURE AS A TOOL FOR CREATING SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES, THE ISRAELI EXPERIENCE

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**T**he phenomenon of urban agriculture is expanding as a reverberation of population and urban growth. In Israel 91% of the population lives in cities, and only 2% are working in agriculture. The unfavourable conditions for agriculture in Israel, especially scarcity of water and competition over arable land, brought to decrease in agricultural areas, and subsequently to production of food far away from its consumers. The various new methods and technologies that exist today (hydroponics, aquaponics, aeroponics), allow urban farming to be integrated in an easy, accessible and efficient way in the city, and can provide urbanities with a series of benefits that foster new communities. Various projects of urban farming were executed in Israel, among them: educational programs in schools, horti therapy in geriatric and rehabilitation centres and social and economic empowerment projects in refugees' neighbourhoods. All these successful examples show how urban farming has the potential to influence and benefit economy, environment, society and health in the city.

### Biography

Ronit Golovaty is an Agronomist and Natural Resources Management Specialist, with a BSc and MSc from the Hebrew University in Plant Protection, and MSc from Oxford University in Natural Resources Management. She was for 7 years the Director of the Agrotechnology and Environmental Technologies sectors in the Israeli Export and International Institute, promoting joint ventures and cooperation (PPP) between Israeli agrotechnology companies, governments, international organizations and NGOs, and was sent to overseas long term missions as a Project Manager in Ethiopia and Brazil. She has experience of more than 25 years in development and adaptation of innovative agrotechnologies, for increasing the productivity of the agricultural sector, and today is an international Consultant in agricultural extension and urban farming.

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