



URBAN CONSUMERS

DID YOU KNOW?



SOCIAL

People living in cities have outnumbered people living in rural areas since 2007. While in the 50's, over 70 percent of the world population still lived in rural areas, 70 percent of the forecasted nine billion world population is expected to be living in urban areas in 2050, mostly in low-income countries and transition countries.



ECONOMY

By 2020, the proportion of the urban population living in poverty could reach 45 percent, or 1.4 billion people. By then, 85 percent of poor people in Latin America, and almost half of those in Africa and Asia, will be living in towns and cities. Food and nutrition security for urban dwellers is at stake. It is estimated that about two-third of the urban slum population is comprised of people who come from rural areas in search of better livelihoods.



ENVIRONMENT

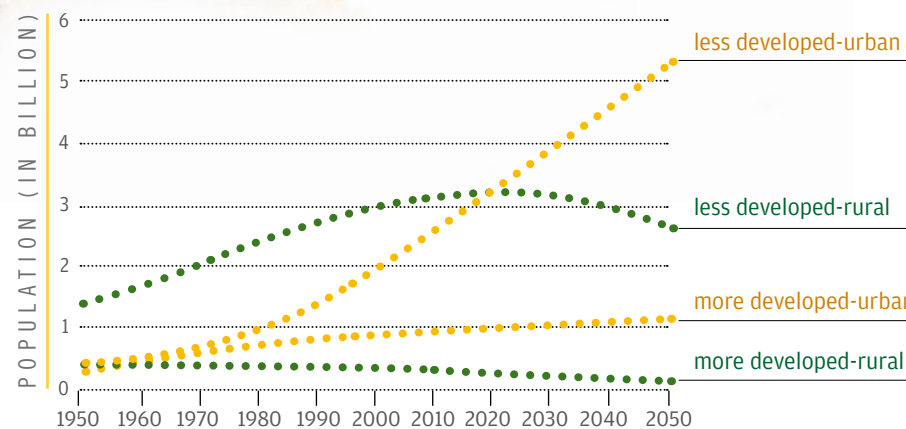
With rapid urbanization and increasing urban food and agricultural activities, urban food systems have become a nexus that addresses many issues simultaneously. Every year, 19.5 million hectares of agricultural land is converted to spreading urban centers and industrial developments, but urban space used for food production contributes to growing greener cities.



GOVERNANCE

In the late 1990s, at least 800 million urban dwellers were said to produce some of their own food, including 200 million urban families that sold their produce in local markets. A diverse range of food production activities can be accomplished within cities, ranging from micro-farming on rooftops, through community backyard gardening, to small-scale commercial agriculture, livestock, forestry and aquatic farming, processing and marketing enterprises. These enterprises differ in their characteristics, locations, motives, products, scales of operation, technologies and organizational modalities.

A GROWING URBAN POPULATION



RURAL AND URBAN FOOD PRODUCTION

RURAL
Agriculture



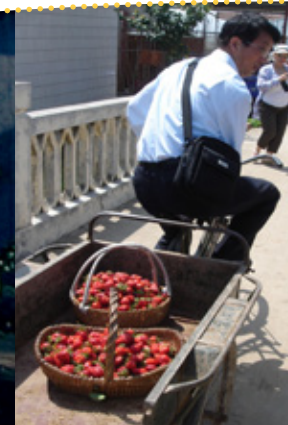
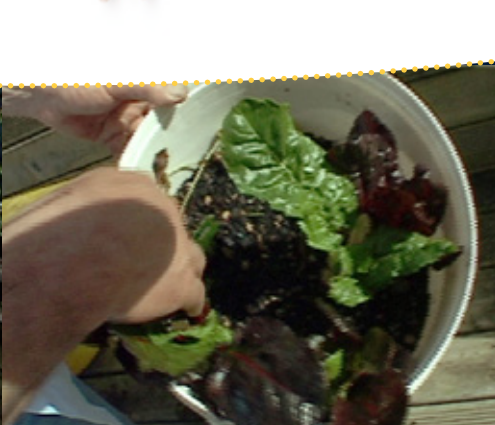
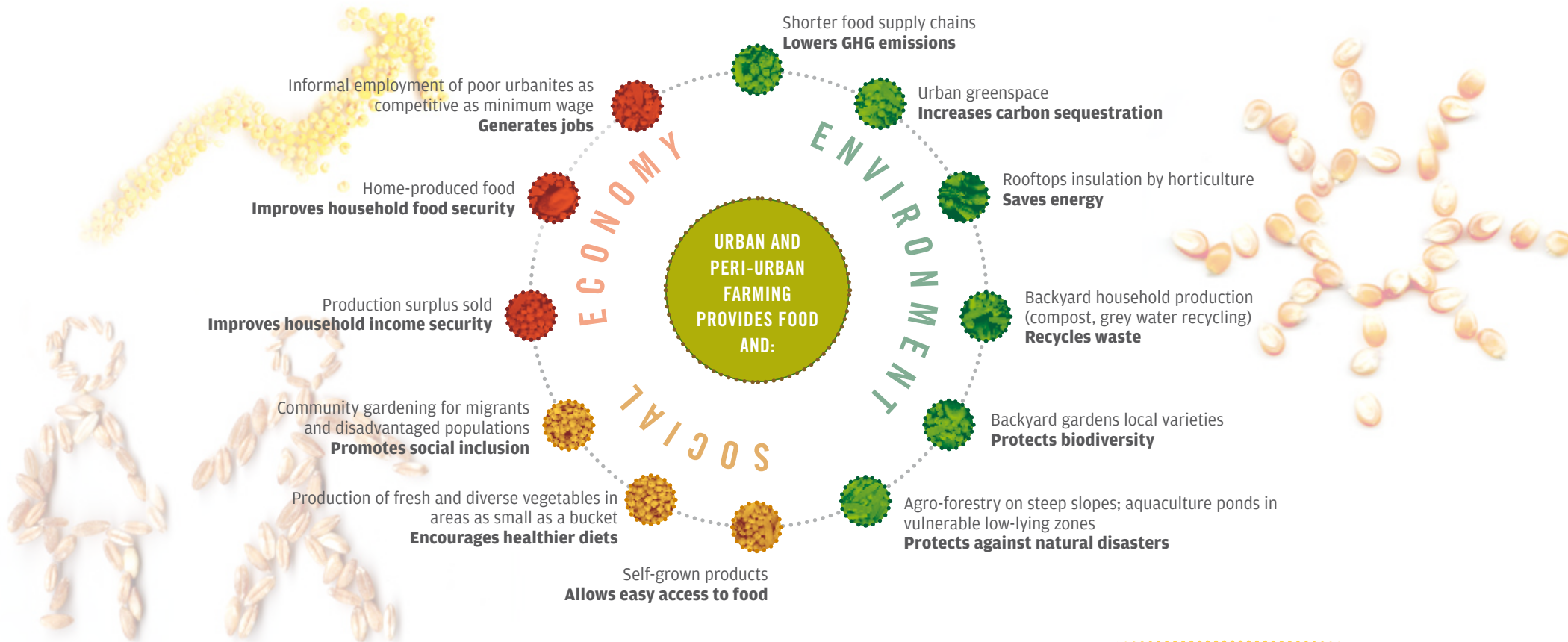
URBAN AND PERI-URBAN
Agriculture





WHY DO URBANITES MATTER FOR SUSTAINABILITY?

With a growing urban population and related decline in the environmental health of cities (e.g. air quality, waste), as well as the increasingly hindered access to food by poor urban dwellers, home-grown food has become an important aspect of sustainability.





HIGHLIGHT

PROGRAMME FOR URBAN AND PERI-URBAN HORTICULTURE (UPH) IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, FAO advised on measures that regularized titles to 1 600 ha of garden areas operated by some 20 000 full-time growers in five cities. The project introduced improved vegetable varieties and installed or upgraded 40 irrigation structures, which extended water availability throughout the year. To ensure the quality and safety of produce, 450 growers' associations were trained in good agricultural practices, including the use of organic fertilizer and bio-pesticides.

Market gardens in the capital, Kinshasa, now produce an estimated 75 000 to 85 000 tonnes of vegetables a year, or 65 percent of the city's supply. This UPH programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has created about 40 jobs for every hectare cultivated, or 66 000 jobs, benefiting indirectly some 330 000 people.

In Lubumbashi, 6 000 female gardeners used loans to buy inputs and equipment. On average, annual income of each farmer has increased from around USD 500 in 2004 to USD 2 000 in 2010.

As their incomes grew, they invested savings in small-scale livestock, vegetable processing and dressmaking. The children of Lubumbashi market gardeners now eat on average three meals a day, compared to "less than two" before the project began. This programme has also increased per capita daily intake of micronutrients from different types of greens, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots and other vegetables, and as such is an enormous help in the fight against malnutrition, especially amongst children and breast-feeding women in cities.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo has created an effective institutional structure for national UPH development. Municipal committees chaired by city mayors manage the process of regularizing titles to land for horticulture and integrating UPH into urban planning, while the country's national UPH support service provides technical advice to growers through a network of offices in 11 provincial capitals.





PRODUCERS

- Demonstrate innovative models of urban food production.
- Advocate for urban greenspace and the creation of municipal food policy councils.
- Develop urban producers organizations and networks to enable sharing materials, coordinating business strategies and liaising with local governments on supportive policies and programmes.

CONSUMERS

- Become informed about where food can be locally grown and purchased.
- Engage in community potlucks to share healthy food products and traditions.
- Grow food in small-spaces such as community gardens and window boxes.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

FOOD INDUSTRY

- Identify opportunities for innovative processing for local ingredients and regional foods.
- Link food processors with local farmers, ranchers and fishers.
- Unify labeling that informs consumers of product origin.

POLICY-MAKERS

- Undertake strategic city planning to ensure necessary land and water resources for urban and peri-urban agriculture, including allocation of vacant plots to family and community farming activities.
- Convert non-constructed areas within and around cities to food production areas for the poorest residents, especially vulnerable female-headed households.
- Promote urban farmers' market development and community-based food networks.

RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS

- Develop sustainable agricultural inputs (e.g. compost, natural pest control, quality seed and planting material) adapted to urban farming and safety of urbanites.
- Create task forces to identify local food assets, including available land, innovative enterprises, local knowledge and infrastructure.
- Identify priorities for the implementation of improved rural to urban linkages and partnerships for sustainable food and nutrition security across the rural, peri-urban and urban landscapes.



The "Food for Cities" multidisciplinary initiative contributes to advocacy, information sharing and project development regarding urban issues and challenges. It includes a network that brings together global and local actors around main issues and policies. The "Growing Greener Cities" programme promotes urban and peri-urban horticulture.

For more details: www.fao.org/fcit