



FOOD *for* THE CITIES

Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture/Horticulture

Challenges...

The world urban population is expected to double in 30 years leading to a growing number of urban poor. The urban population expansion is more pronounced in developing countries as result of the immigration from rural areas, as people flock to the cities in search of food, employment and security. The trend is accelerating, and by the year 2030, it is expected that about 60% of the world's population will be living in cities. Such rapid urbanization and the harsh reality of urban poverty require *ad hoc* strategies to ensure adequate food supply and distribution systems to address escalating levels of urban food insecurity. Besides the growing demand for food, there is a rapid increase of poverty, unemployment, hunger and malnutrition in the urban and peri-urban environment around the world - issues that are of great concern to central and municipal authorities.

Within this reality, urban and peri-urban agriculture/horticulture (UPA/UPH) has become a key component of the survival strategies of poorer sections of the population while also providing a significant contribution to the urban fresh food supply chain. UPA/UPH is also a source of employment and income, and has the potential to improve the nutrition of disadvantaged urban residents. A key challenge is developing policy, strategies and technical support mechanisms *ad hoc* for the sustainable management of urban and peri-urban agricultural systems, addressing production issues and marketing needs within a broader framework of environmental planning and management, water supply and utilisation schemes, and food safety assurance.



Major environmental benefits and synergies can be achieved when agriculture and green zones are planned for as part of the urban landscape, including safe recycling of waste.



W.O. Baudoin

Urban and peri-urban horticulture contributes to food availability - particularly of fresh produce - in cities, and provides opportunities for employment and income.

FAO 's response...

Since 1999, FAO has been formally mandated by its membership to deal with UPA as an integral part of agricultural production systems, and to specifically consider its contributing role in feeding the cities, creating employment and generating income for the urban poor. FAO is committed to assisting member nations to integrate UPA as a component within national food security programmes, and to supporting capacity building for their successful implementation. A multidisciplinary approach has been adopted within FAO to respond to the need for effective development and management of urban and peri-urban agriculture systems, with several departments and divisions involved in supporting programme and project activities. The Organization also engages with local authorities and policy makers to support the development of policy advice, strategies and technical guidelines within an integrated approach to the sustainable management of agriculture in urban and peri-urban zones.

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FAO's action...

UPA and the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS): FAO is providing guidance and assistance to member countries, through the incorporation of urban and peri-urban horticulture into existing agricultural development and National Food Security Programmes (NFSP), as well as assuring technical support for on-going local project delivery in urban and peri-urban agriculture. The SPFS, in particular, is a multidisciplinary programme that combines expertise and experience from a wide range of fields to promote an integrated and participative approach to food security. Its design includes an element of urban and peri-urban agriculture, aimed at improving access to food and advancing the livelihoods of people living in and around cities.



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Cheap and simple micro-garden technologies enable city dwellers without any land to grow healthy greens.

Support for Capacity Building: FAO is working with decision makers in member countries with the objective of strengthening national capacity for policy and strategy development related to urban and peri-urban agriculture. Regional workshops held in Asia and Southern Africa with strong support from Norway, Belgium and other donors have recently provided opportunities for sharing experiences among countries and cities of the South, and sharpened focus on the actual techniques and strategies for improving small-scale horticulture and its value chain in, and around, urban areas.

Strengthening National Pilot Interventions and Projects: FAO plays an active role by interacting with the donor community to mobilize funds and assist member countries to initiate or strengthen national initiatives on UPA/UPH through the implementation of short- and medium-term projects. Recently, opportunities for "decentralized cooperation" offered by some countries of the North have been captured, enabling a broad stream of benefits to flow from city-to-city programmes of assistance.



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Partnership Activities and Linkages: The character of the "Food for the Cities" multidisciplinary area is mirrored in FAO's links and partnerships with other organizations that are actively working in the field of UPA. Furthermore, within the implementation of a related programme - the FAO/WHO **Global Fruit and Vegetables for Health Initiative** - UPH and horticulture supply chain improvement are being supported as key components. IDRC and RUAFA are long-standing partner organizations, and a close partnership has recently been forged with CIRAD (French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development) and its programmes in the area of urban and peri-urban horticulture. FAO is also pursuing opportunities for joint cooperation with the "Urban Harvest" Initiative of the CG System, the International Society for Horticultural Science (ISHS) and the Global Horticulture Initiative (GHI) in order to address emerging researchable issues related to UPH.

Good agricultural practices are the foundation of capacity building efforts to ensure that UPH is environmentally sustainable and that the produce grown is of high quality and safe for consumption.



Food for the Cities – Multidisciplinary Area
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