



Strengthening Urban Farmers Organisations and their Marketing Capacities: From Seed to Table

Aim

The “From Seed to Table” project aims to facilitate the development of sustainable urban farming systems and contribute to urban poverty alleviation and enhanced urban food security, social inclusion and empowerment of urban disadvantaged groups in 21 partner cities around the world¹.

Background

Urban agriculture is not a new phenomenon. Many poor urban households engage in local production of food, food processing and vending and related activities (e.g. compost making, food and feed supply etc.) as main or complementary strategy to secure food supply for their families and/or to earn some cash income. The United Nations Development Programme UNDP estimated in 1996 that 800 million people are engaged in urban agriculture worldwide. Of these, 200 million are considered to be market producers, employing 150 million people full time. Since then, urban poverty and the number of families involved in some kind of urban agriculture have substantially increased.

¹ *Latin America:* Lima (Peru), Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Bogota (Colombia)

Africa: Pikine (Senegal), Bobo Dioulasso (Burkina Faso), Porto Novo (Benin), Accra (Ghana), Ibadan (Nigeria), Freetown (Sierra Leone), Bulawayo (Zimbabwe), Cape Town (South Africa), Ndola (Zambia)

Asia: Beijing, Chengdu and Shanghai (China), Hyderabad and Bangalore (India), Cagayan d'Oro (Philippines), Gampaha (Sri Lanka)

Middle East: Amman (Jordan) and Sa'ana (Yemen)

In most parts of the world, agriculture is still considered as a predominantly “rural” activity. However, with increased migration of the rural poor to cities and cities overflowing into rural settings, new challenges are being presented, where urban agriculture can play a benevolent role. Also, challenges like increased global food prices (India, various African countries), soaring fuel prices (e.g. Jordan experienced a 100% increase in fuel prices in 2008), security, food safety issues, and mobility, presents new opportunities, and emphasises the need to re-look at this practice in a holistic and formal way.

Urban agriculture effectively contributes to:

- Reducing food insecurity by improving access to fresh and low priced food
- Raising the nutritional and health status of poor and middle income households
- Household income and savings
- Social inclusion of disadvantaged groups
- Recycling of urban wastes
- Urban greening and improved urban micro-climates
- Recreational services for urban citizens, maintaining buffer zones

Constraints limit the development of safe and sustainable urban agriculture:

- Low degree support services
- Limited access to productive resources and insecure land tenure
- Low degree of organisation of the urban producers.
- Low productivity and profitability.

Expected outputs and results:

- The capacities of the RUAF regional resources centre on urban agriculture and food security have been strengthened and their continuity has been secured
- A comprehensive set of training materials has been produced and made available to regional and local trainers
- About 200 staff of NGO's, farmer organisations, training and research institutes and local governments have been trained in the FSTT approach to Farming System Innovation and empowerment of urban farmer organisations

- About 2000 urban producers have been trained in various subjects related to sustainable urban farming farmer led development of urban farming
- At least 21 farmer organisations (1 per partner city) have been strengthened (strategic development agenda, improved internal functioning, improved external relations, group savings scheme established, etcetera)
- The farmer based/led FSTT projects have been implemented leading to a 10-15% increase in income and nutrition in the participating households (around 100 households/project)
- At least 1 credit institution in each of the partner cities has started to provide credit to urban farmers with acceptable conditions
- In at least two-third of the RUAF partner cities a Municipal policy and/or a City Strategic Action Plan on urban agriculture has been formalised and is being implemented
- The local actors in the three RUAF partner cities as well as 10,000 subscribers to the UA-Magazine (2 issues a year) and over a million visitors/year to the RUAF website receive up to date information on urban agriculture
- The participating organisations are monitoring the FSTT projects to improve their performance regarding development of sustainable urban agriculture and to draw lessons from the experiences gained in the FSTT projects for use in the planning of future activities



RUAF Foundation

The central aim of the RUAF Foundation (the International Network of Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security (www.ruaf.org)) is to contribute to urban poverty reduction, urban food security, improved urban environmental management, empowerment of urban farmers and participatory city governance by enhancing policy awareness on benefits and risks of urban agriculture, capacity development, facilitating local policy formulation and action planning on urban agriculture, and promoting networking and exchange of experiences.

The ongoing RUAF-CFF programme (2004-2008) has attempted to integrate urban policies and programmes, and facilitate improved access to land, by capacity development among local authorities and other local stakeholders on urban agriculture. This is being realised in 21 partner cities, with coordinated activities of both public and private organisations focussed at supporting poor urban farmers to develop safe and sustainable production, processing and marketing systems.

The RUAF programme “From Seed to Table” (RUAF-FSTT) builds on the results of the RUAF- Cities Farming for the Future Programme (RUAF-CFF, 2005-2008) which was funded by DGIS (the Netherlands) and IDRC, with substantial contributions from the regional and local RUAF partners.



IWMI

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI, www.iwmi.org), located in 12 locations in Asia and Africa, is a member of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). With a vision of “Water for a food secure world”, IWMI’s mission is to improve water and land resources management for food, livelihoods, and environment. It seeks to achieve this through an international program of research and related activities largely carried out through collaboration with national and international partners, in a manner that contributes to strengthening capacities in developing countries. The RUAF-FSTT Project falls under IWMI’s ‘Water Quality, Health and Environment’ Theme.

The RUAF Partners

MDP Municipal Development Partnership (MDP). Harare, Zimbabwe
Institut Africain de Gestion Urbaine (IAGU), Dakar, Senegal
International Water Management Institute, (IWMI-Ghana), Accra, Ghana
International Water Management Institute, (IWMI-India), Hyderabad, India
Promoción del Desarrollo Sostenible (IPES), Lima, Peru
Institute of Geographical Sciences and Natural Resource Research of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (IGSNRR), Beijing, China
Environment and Sustainable Development Unit, American University (AUB-ESDU), Beirut, Lebanon
ETC Foundation, Leusden, The Netherlands

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RUAF-FSTT

Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture and Food Security : From Seed to Table

