

“From Seed to Table”

A Novel Approach to Strengthen Urban Farmer Organizations and their Market Capacities

Being an agricultural country, Sri Lanka has to continuously adapt to emerging challenges of rapid developmental processes. Many rural landscapes are fast becoming urbanized and many farmers are facing difficulties in continuing with their livelihoods. While many government and non-government organizations are implementing programmes and providing guidance to develop agriculture in rural regions, the city farmers are often neglected.

Rapid, urbanization poses many difficulties to urban poor farming communities. Often, the support services that are accessible to the rural sector are not available to the city farmers. Realising this need, the RUAF Foundation (Resource Centres for Urban Agriculture and Food security) has set up a programme that promotes urban farming, jointly implemented by the International Water Management Institute, and Practical Action. This programme is called “From Seed to Table (FStT)” and is aimed at strengthening the urban poor farming organizations and their market capacities in the Gampaha Municipal council area. The programme is being implemented during the period 2009 -2010, with the support of the Divisional Secretariat, Nagarika Haritha Balakaya (NHBK) [a multistakeholder forum, formed of the Municipal council of Gampaha and 7 government departments - Agriculture (western province), Education (Gampaha zone), Health (western province), Botanical Gardens, Agrarian Services and Development, Animal Production and Health and SANASA Bank] and the University of Wayamba. The NHBK of Gampaha, has developed a City Strategy Agenda (2008-2012) which promotes sustainable urban farming towards a clean, green and food secure city. This would provide an enabling environment to implement the FStT project in the next two years.



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The program will be implemented through developing producer groups with the support of already existing associations or groups of urban poor farmers.

The programme has a number of phases. However, the main aims of this project are:

- Rapid market analysis to select a product with high market potential that is either already produced by the urban farmers or that is new but fits well in their farming system (“most promising product”)
- Identifying “critical points” in the product market chain (“from seed to table”) of that product: possible technical and organisational improvements in that chain that may lead to higher producer benefits and enhanced sustainability of production.
- Organisation of an “integrated innovation project” to realize the identified organisational and technical changes needed to improve the critical points in the production, processing and marketing of the selected “most promising product” as well as to enhance the innovation and entrepreneurial capacity of the producers and their organisation.

We would like to encourage urban producers who are willing to produce marketable products to join and work with us.

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