

Chapter 1: Introduction



Purpose of the guidelines

These guidelines set out the main problems and issues related to low income Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture (UPA). Suggestions are provided for each issue to show how UPA producers can work together and with other stakeholders for the benefit of all.

UA	Urban Agriculture
PA	Peri-urban Agriculture
UPA	Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture

Improving the capabilities of producer groups and organizations can lead to higher incomes for producers, safer food production for the cities and an increased overall contribution of UPA to a better city environment.

Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture

In recent years, due to the explosive growth of cities, food production both within the cities (Urban Agriculture - UA) and in the peripheries (Peri-urban Agriculture - PA) has been receiving increasing attention as a means of contributing to city food supplies, alleviating poverty, providing employment, improving the environment and improving diets in both urban and peri-urban areas.

For the purpose of these guidelines, the term 'producers' includes farmers who directly grow the agricultural produce, people who collect, process and market the produce and others who participate in the marketing/trade chain in the context of small-producer organizations.

UPA has existed for as long as there have been cities. As cities grow, however, the use of land for UPA activities comes into conflict with city planners and developers



since the value of land for sale is generally far higher than its value for production of food. At first, agricultural production is pushed out to the periphery of the cities – the peri-urban areas. These areas then come under pressure for other uses of the land and agriculture is gradually pushed further and further from the cities.



*Between 1980 and 2025 nearly half of **Egypt's** agricultural land will be lost to informal settlements. The reasons for such informal urbanization are:*

- The value of agricultural production is low. Land prices for house building yield higher profits than does agriculture.*
- Existing ground water, even when highly polluted, allows for urbanization while waiting for public water networks.*
- Agricultural land is privately owned. Land markets exist.*
- Red tape allows for building on agricultural land in spite of prohibition.*
- The local branches of the Ministry of Agriculture provide clearance for non-agricultural use.*
- Informal housing develops close to existing communities and social and economic networks.*
- There are no alternatives for poor and low-income families on desert land.*

(City case studies, Cairo, Egypt)

In many cities Agriculture is banned or heavily restricted but continues to exist without controls or permits. Producers within the cities and in the city peripheries, are often not only under pressure from land development, but also often in conflict with city authorities over use of land and water and over health standards of production. As part of the informal (and often illegal) economy, UPA producers have limited support and access to advice, training, credit and other resources.

UPA, however, continues to exist and to grow – in some cases as a survival strategy, in others out of a deliberate policy of integration by city planners to provide urban green spaces for agriculture, horticulture and forestry and agroforestry. In such cities, land may be set aside for urban agriculture and its production promoted on urban areas of land that cannot be built upon (flood-zones, road-sides, alongside railways, land under electricity lines, etc.), or that will not be built on for several years.



Not just Fruit and Vegetables

*In **Nairobi, Kenya**, Livestock keeping is a major component of UPA. They produce 45,000 goats and sheep, ~250,000 chickens, and 24,000 dairy cattle.*

*In **Bangkok, Thailand**, edible aquatic vegetables and farmed fish are produced intensively around peri-urban areas and play an important role in the livelihoods of many urban dwellers working as farmers and vendors. Production from aquaculture in peri-urban Bangkok is estimated at around 80,000 metric tons in 2002, (Department of Fisheries, 2004) and generates an estimated income of nearly 3,000 million Baht (US\$ 75 million) a year.*

(UA Magazine n.14 (edited))



*In **Accra, Ghana** the general observation is that every second household is engaged in some form of backyard or front yard gardening (Drechsel et al., 2004).*

"...last season I obtained about 200 kg of maize from my back yard...this could last the whole year for my family of five but I gave some out to friends and relatives around as green ears...as for the cassava it is still in the ground; I uproot it when its time for fufu..." (Wofa Atta, Urban Farmer, Accra)

(City case studies, Accra, Ghana)

In some cases, urban agriculture may also be integrated with other uses such as multifunctional parks and green belts.



On the positive side, produce from UPA can make a significant contribution to urban food supplies. While much of the produce is for self-consumption, increasing amounts are also sold for income and are a source of fresh produce for those who would otherwise have no access to it.



In **Hanoi, Vietnam** 80% of fresh vegetables, 50% of pork, poultry and fresh water fish as well as 40% of eggs originate from urban and peri urban areas

Dakar, Senegal produces 60% of the national vegetable consumption whilst urban poultry production amounts to 65% of the national demand, 60% of the milk consumed in Dakar is produced in/around the city

In **Accra, Ghana** 90% of the city's fresh vegetable consumption is from production within the city

In **Dar es Salaam, Tanzania** urban agriculture forms at least 60% of the informal sector and urban agriculture is the second largest urban employer (20% of those employed)

(RUAF "Why is Urban Agriculture important? (Edited))

Transport requirements and transport costs are low or non-existent and there is a ready market for the produce. Medicinal plants and derived products provide access to health care particularly for the very poor and marginalized. UPA provides employment, income, and food and can contribute to waste management through composting of organic waste and the development of a greener and more pleasant urban environment.

On the negative side, food in many cases is produced, processed, transported and sold under unsanitary conditions, and can at all stages be a health risk to those involved.

This contributes significantly to the negative attitude of many consumers to UPA produce. For many city planners, urban agriculture also clashes with the image of a modern industrial city and is met with hostility.



Emergencies

In Liberia the civil war forced thousands of farmers to migrate to Monrovia in search of safety and food. Displaced people settled with relatives or in camps in the peri-urban communities, straining the available food supply and social services in these areas. Overpopulation and unemployment means many families cannot adequately feed themselves and children are malnourished.

FAO provided support to implement an emergency agriculture relief assistance project that targeted 2,500 war-affected farm families and aimed to significantly reduce malnutrition among children and help displaced families achieve a reasonable income. By using vacant city lots to cultivate food crops, rice production and the sale of seed rice became a major source of income. Additionally, the production of fresh vegetables, and their supply to the local markets contributed to Monrovia's food supply. The effect of these activities was an increase in vegetable production, better nutrition, and a significant drop of malnutrition cases in IDP camps.

(FAO Food for the Cities Fact sheet)



What can be done?

When stakeholders work together, the safety, quality and quantity of UPA produce can be improved for the benefit of all. For this to happen, the first requirement is for UPA producers to work together. Strong UPA producer organizations are able to increase their production, reduce their costs and work directly with city planners and other stakeholders. The majority of UPA producers today have very low-income and depend on UPA-related activities from production to small-scale processing, marketing and preparation and sale of street foods.

Lack of organization, in contrast, means that low-income producers are unable to bargain and negotiate with the authorities and other, better-organised, more powerful groups in society. This means that their access to resources, inputs, services and markets is reduced.

Critical issues are identified that affect UPA and in each case, guidelines are provided as to how UPA producers can work together with each other and with other stakeholders for mutual benefit.

Group Advisors (GAs) play a pivotal role in the process as initiators and catalysts for group capacity building activities and as intermediaries with other stakeholders such as the city authorities, government ministries, Aid Agencies, NGOs and the consumers of urban agricultural produce.



Urban Farming as a Livelihood Source

Nakuru (250,000 people) is a town in **Western Kenya**. The most common informal source of income in town is farming which provides employment, food and income. People farm on their own compounds, along streets and riverbanks, under power lines, or on any piece of unused space.

The crops grown are mostly for self-consumption and include maize, beans and kale (sukuma wiki). Livestock keeping is very common with an estimated 25,000 livestock (cattle, sheep, goats, pigs) and some 380,000 smaller animals (mainly chickens) in the built-up area of Nakuru alone.

It is estimated that at least 35,000 households are engaged in urban farming. For about a fifth of them it is a full-time job. Another 8,500 persons find work as labourers, either casually in crop cultivation or more or less permanently in livestock keeping.

For the majority of urban farmers, urban crop cultivation represents an additional source of food for the household, while for many of the poorer cultivators it constitutes a major food source. By growing (part of) one's own food, money is also saved that can be used for other essential expenses.

As one farmer explained:

"You know, if you manage to grow your own food for several months per year, then you can educate your children from your salary."

(African Studies Centre Info Sheet April 2006 (Edited))



Urban, Peri-Urban and Rural producers

Although the term *Urban and Peri-urban agriculture (UPA)* is used throughout this book, the emphasis is on *urban agriculture and urban food production* – i.e. production, processing and marketing of crops, vegetables, tree and other non-food crops, animals and fisheries within city boundaries or in the immediate surroundings.

Peri-urban Agriculture – that is agricultural production near to (in the periphery of) cities – shares many of the same problems as urban agriculture regarding legitimacy of land use, land tenure and pressure on land and water for other uses as cities grow.



The extent to which these issues are the same as for urban agriculture depends ***largely on the distance from the city***. The further peri-urban production is from a city, the closer it is to rural agricultural production.

The definition of the term 'Peri-urban', however, varies very widely (from the immediate city environs to up to 60km from a city). At the further distances from a city, there is little or no difference in between peri-urban agriculture and rural agriculture and the issues of rural agriculture are beyond the scope of these guidelines. As such, it was felt most useful to concentrate on the issues which specifically affect low income producers in, or in the immediate vicinity, of cities rather than agriculture in general and groups in general. While many of the issues dealt with by these guidelines will be of interest to low income producer groups in general – whether urban, peri-urban or rural – the main focus is therefore on the urban producer.

Who should use this resource book?

The resource book has been designed and written mainly for those working with low income urban and peri-urban producer groups such as the following:



- Producer groups and the group advisors who act as initiators and catalysts for group capacity building activities.
- Line ministries and NGOs who provide technical and material support such as agricultural extension, financial, health and/or educational services
- Aid and development agencies who work with the urban poor
- Local government and municipal authorities.

Structure of the book

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 provides a brief overview of the key issues that affect urban and peri-urban agriculture. Examples are given of each of these issues from case studies drawn from around the world.

Chapter three covers the overriding issue of how and why groups form. The main emphasis of the guidelines though, is on capacity building for groups once they already exist. The process of group formation is referred to in Annex I but detailed guidelines on group formation are beyond the scope of this book and are already covered elsewhere.

The subsequent chapters of the book (Chapters 4-7) then deal in detail with the other specific issues identified in Chapter 2, covering the situation, what can be done and specific suggested actions which can be taken by the Group Advisor (**GA**) or other stakeholders.

Some issues will need discussion with partners, institutions and other organizations for possible action by them. Other issues will require discussion with and action by the UPA groups themselves. All suggested actions will, of course, need to be adapted to the specific circumstances of the group.

Illustrations

A number of characters are used throughout the guidelines to represent different stakeholders in UPA as follows:



Mayor: this character represents city authorities in general, not specifically a town mayor.



Landlord: private or public land-owners.



Banker:
financial institutions of any description.



Consumers: all those who use the produce from UPA – they may be individuals, groups or families.

Group Advisor (GA): any government, NGO or other advisor working directly with UPA groups for capacity building.



Market Woman: all those directly involved in sales and marketing of UPA produce.

Farmer Representative: any one or more of the UPA group who can represent the group – this may be a group leader or any other representative.



Farmer Group: any single UPA producer group regardless of size and composition (gender and age).

