



FOOD *for* THE CITIES

Emergencies and crisis in urban areas

Selling vegetables in the local markets provides vulnerable people with a source of household income in Liberia



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Challenges...

The human population is growing at an exponential rate in some African urban centres due to a large number of refugees and Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs), fleeing violent conflict, poverty, drought and hunger. The rural population, drifting away from the land in search of safety and food security, increasingly challenges the capacity of cities' infrastructure

FAO's response...

Increasing demographic pressure in urban areas in crisis, where the strain on the land is already intense, requires rapid, appropriate and effective responses. One way FAO responds is by supporting peri-urban farming, which can provide food security for families and can be a source of income. Market gardening is advantageous as it has a small surface requirement and short vegetative cycles for quick outputs. The vegetables produced have necessary nutrients and can complement other food items obtained at local markets or supplement emergency food aid. Capacity building is given a central focus - with the aim of strengthening the impact and making the beneficial results last. Given the numerous female IDPs and the major role played by women in providing households' basic needs in crisis situations, FAO also makes strong support available to women headed households and to widows undertaking agricultural activities. Young people and orphans are also specifically targeted beneficiaries in the urban areas. The aim of peri-urban gardening projects is to induce food crop production, increase available household food supply and reduce malnutrition which particularly affects children. Peri-urban gardening also aims at helping vulnerable populations secure a reasonable income level in order for them to meet their daily needs.



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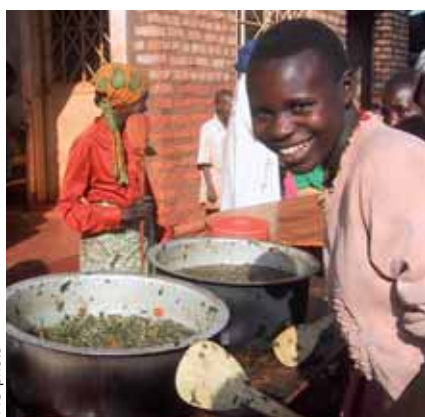
Internally Displaced Peoples in Burundi learn how to manage limited resources

and economy to feed the fast growing population. Significantly, although most of these newly settled people are very young, they still mostly rely on agriculture to earn a living when settled in urban and peri-urban areas. The challenges to support the growing population are numerous and include providing a sufficient and balanced food diet, basic social services, a source of income, land and energy. In many cases these challenges are further exacerbated by discrimination, disease, and lack of structural support.



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Peri-urban gardening generates income opportunities and the social integration of Internally Displaced Peoples in Bujumbura, Burundi



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In Burundi, FAO also conducts training workshops on simple food processing techniques for market gardening products, which preserve the nutritional quality of the food

FAO's action...

Burundi

The populations of Burundi's urban centres are growing quickly as the economy slowly recovers from the disastrous effects of twelve years of war. Cities must find ways to provide basic necessities to IDPs, repatriates and rural families, who migrate to escape poverty and violence. Discrimination against women, ethnic minorities, and people living with HIV/AIDS makes poverty and malnutrition even more difficult to combat. In the capital, Bujumbura, vulnerable people and groups, the bulk of them being women headed households and youngsters, resettled under precarious conditions and often had to set

up associations in order to rent a plot of land or obtain the right to use it. FAO chooses to support these associations with the aim of improving household economies, particularly of the most vulnerable people. Gardening in small plots available in urban areas provides vulnerable people with a critical source of nutrition and incomes as vegetables are both eaten and sold on local markets. In Burundi, FAO alone has been supporting about 5 percent of the active households involved in home gardening activities. Small animal husbandry in towns, notably the distribution of ducks, also

helps fight malnutrition and improves livelihoods. Because of the federative effect of associations, these projects take on significant social dimensions in the post-crisis context of Burundi. While creating new income generating opportunities, like hand tools production and maintenance, they play an integrating function in peace consolidation to people on the brink of becoming marginalized.



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Livelihoods of vulnerable rural people settled in cities in Burundi is based on agriculture, which also provides local markets with basic food products

Liberia

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 can not 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 to 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.

Fresh vegetables harvested and consumed have contributed to the nutrition of beneficiary farm families in Liberia



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Food for the Cities - Multidisciplinary Area
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