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No. 1

GUIDELINES FOR MUNICIPAL POLICYMAKING ON URBAN AGRICULTURE

Urban Agriculture: A Tool for Sustainable Municipal Development

Using residential spaces for urban agriculture, Ibarra – Ecuador

Four Reasons Why Urban Agriculture Matters

Hunger is growing
In less than 30 years, the number of people who go to bed hungry in Latin America has increased by 20%: as many as 65 million people are now affected. Feeding the entire population is a challenge that cities must meet.

Natural medicines for all
The poor spend between 40 and 60% of their scarce incomes on food and almost 15% on health care and medicine. The production of medicinal plants and derived products — infusions, extracts, and essences, — facilitates access to health care for the very poor and marginalized.

Recycling wastes and wastewater can help ensure food security in cities
Only 2% of the waste produced in our cities is treated properly. Thousands of cubic meters of wastewaters are not being used or are treated at a high cost. These can be transformed, however, into excellent sources of natural fertilizer, irrigation water, and nutritional supplements for animals.

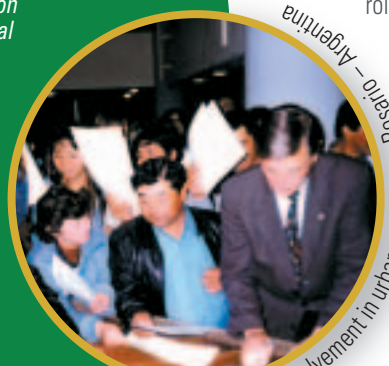
Creating low-cost employment and generating income
Urban agriculture (UA) generates employment at a low cost in relation to the estimated costs of other productive sectors. Creating on job in UA costs less than US $ 500, an investment that can be recovered through micro-credits.

The benefits in terms of food, health, the environment, and job creation explain why an increasing number of municipalities want to develop and modernize their urban agriculture programs.

This series of guidelines is based on current scientific and technological research and reflects innovative practices in cities in the region. These practices are a source of inspiration: we invite you to share them and, in turn, enrich the experience.

Happy urban harvesting!

Y.C.



Mayor recognizing involvement in urban agriculture, Rosario – Argentina

Challenges

Urban agriculture contributes to food sovereignty, Argentina

Urban agriculture (UA) is practiced inside (intra-urban) or on the outskirts (periurban) of a town or a city. While it focuses on raising food and animal crops, it includes recycling household waste and wastewater for agricultural purposes, the processing and distribution of different food and non-food products using human and material resources, products, and services that are found in the same or surrounding areas. In turn, UA supplies that area with resources and materials.

An increasing number of local and national governments are promoting UA in response to serious problems of poverty, food insecurity, and environmental degradation. Urban agriculture complements rural agriculture in local food systems. It can also become an important income supplement for urban families and it is an integral component of urban economic and ecological systems.

Obstacles such as limited access to land and water sources, as well as a lack of services and capital, are common among the urban poor, hindering their success in UA activities. UA also poses potential health risks: for example, the use of agrochemicals, nontreated organic waste and wastewaters, and lack of hygiene in food processing and marketing activities.

To improve UA and make it more sustainable, governments should recognize the role it plays in local municipal development. They should also promote and manage UA through policies and incentives that meet public needs, while promoting gender equity and social integration. Producers, on the other hand, also need to adopt better production and marketing practices. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), research centres, and private corporations should also support initiatives in these areas.

"Urban agriculture as a municipal program or policy is a recent phenomenon; therefore, it is a promising field for innovation."

Quito Declaration, signed by 40 cities. Quito, Ecuador. April 2000.

Guidelines for Policymaking

In support of sustainable municipal development

Urban agriculture as a tool for promoting gender equality, Camilo Aldao – Argentina

A growing number of local and national governments are increasingly committed to developing urban agriculture. They are assigning local resources for its development and including it within the structure of relevant government bodies, at either the municipal or the national level. The City Hall of **Rosario (Argentina)**, for instance, provides technical and financial assistance to periurban producers. (See Guideline 4.) The municipality of **Cuenca (Ecuador)**, together with several local institutions, supports the production and marketing of products grown using ecologically sound practices. The **State of Mato Grosso do Sul (Brazil)** is implementing a program for processing and marketing small agricultural production in support of family farming activities.

To strengthen their urban agriculture projects and programs, the above-mentioned cities and governments, among others, have identified the eight key themes listed below as important in the promotion and management of urban agriculture and sustainable development at the municipal level. These themes have been ratified by consensus, through a series of participatory consultations with local actors and at a Regional Consultation held in Villa María de Triunfo- Lima, Peru, in 2002.

Presentation of diplomas for completion of a credited course, CEFESUL, Quito – Ecuador

1. Urban agriculture and citizen involvement

To promote a democratic and participatory management process for UA, the dialogue between the municipal administration and social actors must be facilitated and supported in the design and implementation of urban agriculture projects, as well as programs and policies at the municipal level. Municipal management planning should provide for local capacity building in UA in order to facilitate processes such as diagnosis, problem identification and resolution, and the systematic implementation and monitoring of UA activities.

The development of urban agriculture requires the concerted efforts of public–private associations, civil society, and actors at the local and national levels.

2. Urban agriculture: land use management and physical planning

Latin American municipalities, even those with a high rate of urban development, still have vacant lots that can be used for cultivation. It is important for them to find possible uses for those vacant plots as part of their efforts to promote alternative local development. To plan the use of those spaces and measure their value, a proper preliminary identification and evaluation is needed. In order to match the demands of urban growth with activities of maximum economic and social value, urban agriculture should be included as a multifunctional component in municipal land planning and standard development processes concerning land use and environmental protection. Policies that provide security and incentives for urban farmers, clear taxation rules, and facilitating legal frameworks should be promoted.

3. Microcredit and investment in urban agriculture

To ensure the success and expansion of UA, local producers need access to microcredit and investment programs. Local governments should implement credit and financing policies and instruments, especially for the poorer and most vulnerable groups, applying conditions that are compatible with the technical and productive nature of UA. The funding programs should be coupled with actions aimed at strengthening social organization, technical assistance, training, and marketing support.

4. Recycling organic wastes in urban agriculture

The large amount of waste generated by cities is increasingly causing environmental and health-related problems. Between 30% and 60% of the total waste is organic and can be used for UA. Ways of using solid organic wastes in UA in a sanitary manner should be further studied and validated. Training should also be provided to urban farmers on techniques for reusing wastes, and the community should be educated in preliminary screening at the source (formal and nonformal education). In addition, the creation or updating of efficient standards for fostering and regulat-ing recycling should be promoted.

5. Treatment and use of wastewater in urban agriculture

A large volume of wastewater is discharged, untreated, into bodies of water or is used for irrigation, which involves potential health risks. Research, awareness-raising, and training activities should be undertaken concerning the efficient use of water, the application of risk-management strategies, and the adoption of appropriate technologies for the treatment of wastewaters. The development of wastewater treatment and uses requires the adoption of a facilitating legal framework and the promotion of sustainable financing that would directly link water treatment to its reuse.

6. Urban agriculture: Fostering equity between men and women

Designing interventions to address the needs of particular disadvantaged groups requires that different urban actors recognize how UA can be a tool for promoting gender equity, which takes into account the specific roles of women and men, their needs and limitations, and their different access to services, resources, and benefits. It is important for local governments to recognize and reinforce equitable participation by men and women, promoting gender equity in UA policy design, planning, and implementation.

7. Urban agriculture and food sovereignty

To achieve food sovereignty and ensure that low-income groups will have access to food in adequate quantity and quality, UA should be promoted as a family farming practice that can help meet the family's own nutritional needs, within their own tradition. UA should also be included into formal, nonformal, and community markets: this will require specific interventions in such areas as price control, the creation of new trading opportunities, and ways of linking producers with consumers.

Use of wastewaters in urban agriculture, Ibagué – Colombia

8. Processing and marketing urban agriculture products

One of the most innovative ways of generating income and creating new jobs is adding value to UA through the processing and marketing of food. The public policy on UA should provide for access to capital, inputs, and marketing strategies for the poorer sectors, promote standards to regulate small business initiatives, support promotion strategies, and increase producers organizations' representation in government bodies.

The remaining eight Policy Guidelines in this series address these key issues in greater depth. We invite all cities and governments in Latin America and the Caribbean to study these guidelines and to establish a municipal urban agriculture policy as a means of improving the quality of life of their citizens and of promoting the sustainable development of their cities.

Use of organic waste in urban agriculture, Cuba

"Our urban agriculture activities promote production, increase competition, improve the quality of products, and allow us to identify discrepancies between local supply and demand, enabling us to consolidate processing and marketing processes. Our regulations accurately reflect our view that small producers and vendors, men and women, are important actors."

Washington Ipenza, Mayor of Villa María del Triunfo, Lima- Peru.

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Contacts:

Cities Feeding People Program Initiative, International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
Luc Mougeot, Team Leader. Tel.: (1) 6132 366163;
Email: lmougeot@idrc.ca (www.idrc.ca/cfp)

Urban Management Program – Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (PGU-ALC/UN-HABITAT).
Marielle Dubbeling, Urban Agriculture Advisor.
Tel.: (593 2) 2282361/364; Email: marid@pgu-ecu.org
(www.pgualc.org)

IPES- Promotion of Sustainable Development.
Jorge Price, Executive Director.
Tel.: (51 1) 4406099/ 4216684;
Email: ipes@ipes.org.pe (www.ipes.org)

Red Latinoamericana de Investigación en Agricultura Urbana (RED AGUILA).
Mario González, Executive Secretary.
Tel.: (51 1) 4406099/ 4216684;
Email: aguila@ipes.org.pe;
(www.ipes.org/aguila)

Centro de Recursos e Información sobre Agricultura y Foresteria Urbana (RUAF).
Henk de Zeeuw, Coordinator.
Tel.: (31 33) 4326000/039; Email: ruaf@etcnl.nl
(www.ruaf.org)

Iniciativa Estratégica del CGIAR sobre Agricultura Urbana y Peri-urbana (SIUPA). Gordon Prain, General Coordinator.
Tel. : (51 1) 349 6017; Email: g.prain@cgiar.org
(www.cipotato.org/siupa)

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This document was written by Marielle Dubbeling and Alain Santandreu (IPES/PGU-ALC).

Text copy-edited by *Mónica Rhon D.*

Advice on Communication and Design:
Roberto Valencia (Zonacuario)

This policy document is part of a series of nine guidelines on different urban agriculture themes:

1. *Urban agriculture: A tool for sustainable municipal development*
2. *Urban agriculture and citizen involvement*
3. *Urban agriculture: Land use management and physical planning*
4. *Micro-credit and investment for urban agriculture*
5. *Recycling organic wastes in urban agriculture*
6. *Treatment and use of wastewaters in urban agriculture*
7. *Urban agriculture: Fostering equity between men and women*
8. *Urban agriculture and food sovereignty*
9. *Processing and marketing urban agriculture products*

The series is available on the Web sites of the Urban Management Program ***(www.pgualc.org)*** *and IDRC* ***(www.idrc.ca)***

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IDRC CRDI
International Development Research Centre
250 Albert St, PO Box 8500
Ottawa, ON, Canada K1G 3H9
Tel.: (613) 236-6163, ext. 2310
Email: blwilson@idrc.ca
www.idrc.ca

IPES
Promotion of Sustainable Development
Jorge Price,
Executive Director
Calle Audiencia Nº 194, San Isidro
Apartado Postal 41-0200
Tel.: (51 1) 440-6099/ 421-6684.
Email: ipes@ipes.org.pe

PNUD
Programa de Gestión Urbana
Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
UN-HABITAT
Yves Cabannes, Regional coordinator
García Moreno 751 entre Sucre y Bolívar
Fax: 593-258 39 61 / 228 23 61
Email: pgu@pgu-ecu.org
www.pgualc.org

Canada