

GUIDELINES FOR MUNICIPAL POLICYMAKING ON URBAN AGRICULTURE

Urban Agriculture: Fostering Equity Between Men and Women



Woman's work, Oña – 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.



Men and women plan together, Rosario – Argentina

Challenges

In most of cities of Latin America and the Caribbean, women are mainly involved in urban agriculture (UA). But UA has not yet become a tool to change social relations, to create more equitable conditions that take into account the specific roles of women and men, their needs, limitations, and different access to services, resources, and benefits.

Local governments need to:

- Acknowledge and reinforce participation, ensuring equal benefits for women and men in UA projects and programs
- Promote and include gender equity in the design, planning, and implementation of UA policies
- Use UA as a potential means of redistributing wealth and as a tool for promoting equity by implementing specific and affirmative interventions for the disadvantaged.

This document provides guidelines and suggestions for designing and implementing gender-sensitive urban agriculture programs..

"If we don't include a vision of gender equity, we will end up with a universalizing vision that denies the differences and that suggests common answers to problems that in practice are different, thereby deepening the differences and inequalities."

Dr Raquel Barriga. President of Comisión Mujer y Familia. Municipality of Villa María del Triunfo, Lima, Peru. (1998-2002)



Farming involves the whole family, Belo Horizonte – Brazil

Five Guiding Principles for Policymaking

In support of gender equity in urban agriculture

1. Recognizing gender differences and inequalities

In human relations, divisive and inequitable situations arise between men and women. Examples are unequal levels of employment and pay, and different access to land ownership and credit sources. In the cities of Latin America and the Caribbean, these situations are serious for women. One must recognize that women and men play different roles and have different needs and experiences.

Practical and strategic needs

It is important to distinguish between practical and strategic needs. Practical needs are perceived immediately and are related to inadequate living conditions — food supply, health care, and employment. These needs do not imply changes in gender relations.

Strategic needs, on the other hand, are related to the division of labour, power, and control, and they can include such issues as legal rights and equal pay. Meeting gender-strategic needs helps to achieve a higher level of equity and to effect changes in existing roles.

Although practical and strategic needs can be identified and conceptualized, they should not be treated in isolation. In **Pachacámac (Lima, Peru)**, for instance, the municipality approved the promotion of micro-enterprises as a solution to the practical need to generate income. This included community education and the organization of women and families for productive activities. This action strategy also helped to increase the participants' self-esteem and self-determination, facilitating the identification of and solution to some of their strategic needs.

2. Gender-sensitive assessments

The recognition of inequities must be supported by gender-disaggregated data that identifies the different implications and impacts of UA on different actors. The separation of operations by gender, ethnicity, and generation (time and work), ownership of means of production, control of income, political representation, recognition of their contribution to community and urban development — all these components need to be included in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of UA practices. (See Guideline 2.)

Subjects to be studied

Gender-sensitive assessments respond to the following questions:

- Who does what in the UA project?
- Who has access to what resources?
- Who controls what?
- How is each family member affected, as a producer, as a member of the community, etc.?

3. Taking affirmative actions

Having studies that employ a gender approach makes it easier to understand why higher numbers of men or women are involved in UA (for instance, different levels of satisfaction and benefits).

Once the causes and degree of inequity are identified, it is possible to implement specific interventions — affirmative actions — through which the needs of all actors (women, men, and children) are addressed, until a higher level of equity is achieved.



Identifying strategic needs, Pasto – Colombia



Training for poor women, Brasília – Brazil

In Fortaleza (Brazil), Banco Palmas created the “Incubadora Femenina”, a food security project seeking to involve women at risk. The project includes labour-oriented training (courses); hygiene, nutrition, and environmental education (visits to farmer’s markets); and an “urban agriculture laboratory” where women learn farming activities. They can then start their own family farming operations, cultivating fresh vegetables and medicinal herbs.

4. Balancing access to and control of resources

The implementation of “affirmative actions” also promotes awareness and helps to create, at the institutional level, a regulatory framework for UA practices based on equity. An equitable level of access to and control of the resources needed for UA should be guaranteed. To achieve this goal, the following should be considered:

- Supply and terms of credit (See Guideline 4.)
- Loans, profits, and land ownership (See Guideline 3.)
- Access to inputs
- Marketing facilities
- Access to resources resulting from marketing

The microcredit PROQUITO Program, in the municipality of Metropolitan Quito (Ecuador), offers preferential access to credit for UA to women who are heads of households and to people under 30 years of age, two groups that have the highest unemployment rates in the city.

The municipality of Oña (Ecuador) promoted the use of municipal and private land for farming as part of the Economic Development Plan, especially by women and senior citizens. Both the plan and the budget were defined in a participatory manner with the goal of sharing investment and profits. As a result, not only did the participants increase their income, but so did the municipality.

5. Institutionalizing gender equity in urban agriculture

The transition from interventions (micro or macro) to institutionalization of gender equity in UA requires that the involvement of women and men be considered as a socioeconomic right.

Legitimizing involvement

Public involvement in municipal planning and policymaking, especially the involvement of women producers or vendors and organizations of women producers, should be legitimized.

“Governing in a way that takes into account gender differences and the ways these differences may affect the lives of women who account for 51% of the population,” as well as “recognizing that women as citizens are able to contribute in different sectors of social and political life,” led the local government of Villa María del Triunfo (Lima, Peru) to create the Comisión Mujer y Familia (Women and Family Committee) as a way of promoting the role of women in local policymaking for the district’s development.

Seeking proportional representation

Proportional or equal representation by women and men should be sought, especially in interventions concerning UA, from the assessment and consultation stages for project proposals and policymaking to implementation, monitoring, and evaluation.

Reinforcing alliances

Alliances with social organizations should be reinforced to maintain open dialogue between all those involved, and thus ensure that public interventions are based on sound knowledge of specific gender-related issues.



Microcredit for women, Fortaleza – Brazil



Sharing responsibilities for marketing, Rosario – Argentina

"Change is an invitation to understand the mission of men and women as subjects of development, and it forces us to build the conditions for facilitating the inclusion of the gender dimension in the government processes."

Policy Document, Risaralda Department, Colombia.

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Participatory gender assessments, Lima – Peru



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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

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