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In this issue

Making Public Markets Work: Street food vendor relocation in two Indonesian cities 16

Photo by Dennie Ramon

Community-Led Urban Agriculture Policy: A view from the United States 18

Photo by Community GroundWorks

Linking Urban Farming and Urban Planning in Times of Crisis 38

Photo by René van Veenhuizen

Navigation

Cover

The 596 Acres team labelling lots in Weeksville, Brooklyn. Photo by Murray Cox. Sign design by Partner & Partners

Opinion - The Strength of Local Communities of Stakeholders

Luc Mougeot

I was requested to reflect, as a non-expert, on community activism in relation to the integration of agriculture into our cities. Three messages come to mind, out of more than a decade of experience as a grant-maker, as well as continued scholarly activity in this area.

1. Local solutions must strategically address several problems at once. It is at the local level that people are most affected by absent, inadequate or contradictory public policies. The local scale is where all levels of planning and policy come to bear on everyday life. This is where coordination and collaboration must take place for private, public and civic investments in economic growth, food provisioning, education and public health, water and sanitation and social cohesion, to improve local living standards. Through their ability to cater to multiple purposes at once (or over time), urban agriculture initiatives lend themselves to helping a growing number of local communities to tackle – all at once and cost-effectively – a wide range of local development challenges.

2. Communities effective at problem solving are communities of stakeholders. Communities that are effective at making positive change share membership in larger and ever-varying teams of actors: their champions or leaders, their core of activists or volunteers and their larger circle of supporters and allies. But engaging only with residents usually is not sufficient for robust change; more often than not, planning and policy matters touch on interests, livelihoods, jurisdictions and mandates of actors from outside a particular area or sector. Thus it is equally important, if not more critical to engage constructively with a wide variety of stakeholders. Solutions proposed gain political support when endorsed by credible and respected representatives from government, industry, civil society and academia. For this reason, inclusive city consultations and action planning initiatives in urban agriculture have sought to mobilise stakeholders from a wide spectrum of sectors. And they continue to do so.

3. Local communities are the testing ground for innovation and larger-scaled initiatives. It is precisely at the local level that innovative responses can best be tried and refined to inspire more ambitious policy changes. Such innovations are more likely to emerge – because of the greater 'creative capital' there – in larger urban centres.

Over time, lessons from community initiatives in urban agriculture accumulate and are shared. These lessons then become paramount to the development of initiatives at municipal, regional and national levels. For example, monitoring and networking lend significance to ground-level results by specific communities, providing the foundation for citywide programs. In turn, collections of city experiences inform the introduction of nationwide programs. As well, ICT is transforming the way urban farmers operate, coordinate, collaborate, advocate and participate in planning and policy. Applications are diversifying rapidly and include: modelling of production and yield scenarios under different farm sizes and produce combinations; crowdsourcing of funding for start-ups; sharing of seeds, implements and recipes, bulk purchasing, event planning, produce swaps, rosters of local skills, tool libraries. Networks (e.g., business networks) are developing everywhere to replicate models, with ICT tools supporting outreach activities, setting up satellite and partner locations and produce-marketing networks, as well as exchanging with young rural farmers and teaching new techniques.

Given that large private operators – including capital-intensive innovators – are set to increase their presence on the urban farming scene over the next decade, it is almost certain that the way stakeholder communities are defined, how they engage in planning and policy exercises, and also how they bring together interests and share niches of action in a wide range of spheres will give rise to new risks and opportunities for how we further integrate agriculture into our cities.

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Community Involvement in Urban Planning and Policy Development to Strengthen City Region Food Systems

Samina Raja
Femke Hoekstra
Cecilia Delgado
René van Veenhuizen

Street food vendor in Indonesia. Photo by Dennie Ramon

Urban agriculture (UA) and city region food systems (CRFS) are fast gaining the attention of planners and policy makers across the Global South and North, because of persistent food insecurity and rapid urbanisation. UA includes a diverse set of practices and offers a multitude of benefits ranging from increased food security, social territorial cohesion, greening of spaces, and other opportunities at local, regional and national levels. At all of these levels, cities are hubs of economic opportunity. The CRFS integrates flows of products, services, people and capital across urban and rural regions. The urban food system – from producers to distributors, processors, retail, wholesale and informal markets, restaurants, institutional food service and waste management – represents a majority of workers in many towns and cities. Socio-economic inclusion and equity can only occur with a clear commitment to generate decent work opportunities for all urban and rural dwellers through active labour market policies. Today UA, as a key component of CRFS, is recognised as a legitimate land use in cities in the Global North and Global South, and many cities and regions are exploring CRFS and implementing food and agriculture related activities (see various earlier UA Magazines, especially 29 and 30).

Although a number of different urban planning and policy initiatives to include and support UA have emerged in communities across the Global South and North, the work is far from complete. Food is still not part of mainstream urban or regional planning, and in the rare instances where urban plans and policies do address food they fail to integrate social movements and civil society initiatives that promote food sovereignty and food justice or daily food shopping practices (see articles p16 and p51). Innovations supported by local and regional government authorities that aim to strengthen rural-urban linkages, protect the environment and respond to climate change, under catchy labels like "smart innovation" or "green economy", may even undermine the interests and rights of communities struggling for their right to livelihoods, land, housing, water and food.

Policy and planning discourse on CRFS is largely dominated by bureaucratic, technical or academic approaches, giving short shrift to the efforts and perspectives of civil society. In fact, local and regional government authorities are struggling to engage meaningfully with community initiatives focused on food. The extent to which community stakeholders are purposefully participating in shaping urban food plans and policies for UA and urban food systems remains unclear. In short, despite their interests – and perhaps even good intentions – local and regional government planners and policy makers have a long way to go in order to create the proverbial and actual space to plan for food in cities *in partnership* with community residents, civic groups and community advocates.

This magazine explores the issue of community engagement in shaping urban and periurban agriculture and food

policies and plans. Key questions explored in this edition are how communities are engaging in urban food policymaking and planning and how local governments are responding to community demands for food policies and plans. This is illustrated by various case studies across the globe.

Urban and territorial planning for city region food systems

The profession of urban planning aims to create more resilient places where people can live full and healthy lives. Although planning theory and urban development practice does typically address a wide number of issues, including land use, housing, green (but not productive) spaces, transportation, it scarcely addresses food. While UA and urban food systems continue to receive attention worldwide, urban planning practice and theory continue to lag behind.

Considerable progress has been made in the Global South since the early days of this magazine (see UA Magazine 4). Several cities have developed a city strategic agenda on UA as a general basis for local policies and programmes (see article p29). In some cities and regions, food has also been integrated into formal urban planning processes, such as in Toronto, Seattle, Rosario and Belo Horizonte where progress has been made in the domain of public health and poverty eradication (Viljoen et al., 2016).

Integrated territorial planning and development has the potential to play a key role in UA and CRFS across cities and regions. Effective planning in this role – which includes visioning, assessment, development of solutions, implementation and monitoring – can 1) strengthen urban-rural linkages in food systems; 2) connect urban markets with agricultural and other economic activities in periurban and rural areas to generate regional economic growth, decent jobs and livelihood opportunities; 3) reduce regional disparities; 4) promote economic equality; and 5) address climate change mitigation and adaptation (see UA Magazine 29). Planning processes, from neighbourhoods on up to national levels, offer opportunities to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), notably SDG 11 (promoting inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities). Urban and territorial planning for food systems is a cross-sectoral process: it involves multiple government departments as well as participatory processes, including community and other stakeholders. The process also considers the entire food system including food production, processing, distribution (wholesale and retail), acquisition, cooking and eating, as well as management of food-related waste. In the USA, for example, most formal food policies are still addressing a single sector of the food system, such as food production *or* food acquisition. Community engagement processes must engage stakeholders *across* the multiple sectors of the food system. Finally, such planning considers both informal and formal sectors of the food system, recognising that informal and non-market-based transactions are at the heart of food systems, especially in developing countries.

As illustrated by the articles in this issue, cities that have innovative UA and food systems plans tend to have at least one of the following characteristics:

- community actors with a track record of community-based practices *prior* to the establishment of planning (and policy) processes;
- a planning process involving multi-sectoral partners including the public, not-for-profit and private sectors from idea to development to implementation (see article p29);
- local governments with a dedicated staff assigned to UA/the food planning process;
- a political champion in local government who understands the link of UA to other functions of government (e.g., youth development, job training), care and social therapy, health and nutrition, poverty reduction, etc.;
- realisation of the long-term commitment required for community-based planning to fully engage the community.

Massachusetts Avenue Project in Buffalo, New York, USA, is a civil society organization using advocacy, education, training, and community-based efforts to create a more equitable food system. Photo by Samina Raja and Jennifer Whittaker

A number of the characteristics of municipalities that are innovative and have such policies point to the important role of community engagement, yet there is still limited recognition of and discussion on the role of community engagement in planning processes (Raja et al., 2014). To improve the landscape of UA policies and plans so that they are systemic and responsive to community concerns, a new kind of community engagement must be imagined. It is essential to have a "systemic institutional design for collaborative planning" (Healey, 2006) that facilitates a continuous flow between formal planning processes and community residents, as is well illustrated by planning in the city of Belo Horizonte (see box).

Certain key factors underlie the unique achievements of Belo Horizonte in its 20 years of municipal food supply and distribution:

- A strong and successful collaborative planning approach;
- A sustained political will throughout the last twenty years (and before);
- Political awareness;
- Pushing the boundaries between a non-permanent and a permanent food supply system, and shifting from the informal to the formal;
- Continuous assessment as a self-learning tool.

Belo Horizonte has included the above factors since the beginning, and it continues today under the municipal food

Belo Horizonte: integrating food into municipal planning

Belo Horizonte, is planned Brazilian city from late XIX century that differentiated urban and peri-urban zoning, as well as a productive rural belt. However, the city expanded swiftly from 25.000 inhabitants in 1897, to close to 2.5 millions today, eating up arable land and bringing a dramatic impact on food production and informal distribution channels. To address these challenges and regulate market food price, in the 1990s, the city created a powerful planning and policies device under the umbrella of what is known now as the Municipal Secretary for Supply, Food Security and Nutrition (SMASAN) in charge of the Belo Horizonte Food Security Programme.

The program begun formally in 1993 and address multiple food security challenges still active today:

- *Integrating supply chains in the entire food system;*
- *Linking local producers directly to consumers to reduce prices and increase food sovereignty;*
- *Using government purchasing to stimulate local, diversified agricultural production and job creation;*
- *Educating the population about food security and good nutrition and*
- *Regulating markets on selected produce to guarantee the right to healthy, high quality food to all citizens.*

At the same time, in the 1990s, the city had under discussion it first Municipal Master Plan, approved in 1996, beneath strong popular participation as well as two Municipal Councils, one on Food and another on Urban Planning. This new groundbreaking Master Plan set up a Food Supply and Distribution sub-chapter ensuring for the next decades a food spatial frame.

In a nutshell Belo Horizonte food supply and distribution system covers several spatial levels: It main distribution asset is the Municipal Distribution Food Centre which manages food reception from producers and distribution all over the municipality; Also allocated on municipal level is the Food Bank, this one receiving and donating food; Under district level we will gather Food-stores and Popular Restaurants covering city centre and some outskirts and low-income neighbourhoods settlements; At the neighbourhood level we find the street open-air food markets, historically rooted on the planned city and later spread according to people needs.

Since it formal beginning, the food supply and distribution system has remarkable increased, nowadays it is active in 116 different locations spread out over the city: 33 are permanent assets e.g. popular restaurants, markets and other covered spaces, while 83 are non-permanent e.g. numerous open-air food markets.

It may be assumed that in 20 years of food-collaborative planning the city was able to mainstream food in its planning system and policies, an astonishing example that should be replicate by other cities. (Delgado, 2016).

Cecilia Delgado

Organic Market in Belo Horizonte. Photo by Norma Gonçalves

council (under the Zero Hunger Programme). The innovative approach, put into practice in Belo Horizonte, testifies to what Healey (2006) called the "flow between planning and practices" (Delgado, 2016).

Policy opportunities

Currently, various policy opportunities at the global level merit critical attention from UA advocates and practitioners. City governments increasingly recognise both their responsibility and opportunities for building more sustainable urban, and city-region, food systems. This is made evident with the signing of the *Milan Urban Food Policy Pact* (UFPP), which encourages participatory decision-making with civil society and small-scale food producers. However, the pact can only gain full legitimacy and transform food systems when the role of communities and civil society is fully recognised, extended, and utilised meaningfully in the policy process. Better understanding and identification of how civil society movements and initiatives are already defining and shaping their food systems is crucial to the success of policies.

Another global driver for innovation in urban planning is the impending passage of the *New Urban Agenda (NUA*, see box). The current draft of the *NUA* has both strengths and weaknesses. On the plus side, the draft mentions both food and territorial approaches to planning. However, although the *NUA* draft makes an extraordinary number of commitments, it does not fully address agriculture, and in particular small-scale agriculture. Importantly, the draft also lacks a systemic view of food systems as an essential infrastructure for urban settlements. Attention to city region food systems is vital to the implementation of the *Agenda 2030* and the *NUA*. Key issues to consider are (under- and over-) nutrition and healthy food access; the food sector as a driver of urban economy; linkages to the environment and disaster risk reduction; the informal food sector and its key role in fresh food accessibility; social inclusion; access to food for internally displaced people and refugees; urban-rural linkages; security of land tenure and multilevel governance related to food and urban planning.

City food systems are also important sources of formal and informal *employment* for both men and women, and while more evidence is needed it is clear that food systems provide significant income in cities and beyond. Linking up informal and formal food chains and encouraging healthy food, and vitality and affordability of food in the informal sector, is a key goal for achieving food security and nutrition, together with economic growth, in urban areas. It is important not to hinder informal systems, but rather to integrate them within formal systems. This may require, on occasion, loosening of regulations or modification of bylaws and ordinances to support informal sectors (see article p13).

Engaging diverse communities

Cities contain many different "communities" (Bailkey et al., 2007), poorer and richer neighbourhoods, recent immigrants or refugees. Community members hold varying opinions, political claims, and influence. Communities may emerge around shared interests (such as common beliefs, goals, training), shared circumstance (such as identity, race, ethnicity, physical ability), and shared spatial space (such as neighbourhoods, camps, institutions). Community members may or may not recognise these commonalities. Effective community-based planning for UA or urban food systems requires processes that fully recognise and engage these layered and multiple communities.

Because development and implementation of UA and urban food systems with purposeful community engagement plans takes a long time (in the USA: about 10 years), a community engagement process that articulates the role of community from idea to implementation is essential. This is especially important because community stakeholders have limited resources for long-term processes, and their roles must be clear from the outset. Moreover, concerns about racial and economic disparities motivate community action in food systems, yet formal public policies and plans fall short of addressing these disparities.

Planning and policy for UA and urban food systems should address the concerns of the community rather than operate from a pre-determined agenda. For example, USA formal food policies tend to be driven by public health concerns, even when communities may be concerned about issues such as poverty (illustrated by the preoccupation in USA policy with removing the so-called "food deserts" rather than addressing underlying problems in the food system, see article p18). It is imperative that public policies address the economic, social-justice, or ecological concerns that drive

The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and the New Urban Agenda

On 15 October 2015, 115 cities from around the world signed a pact to create a governance framework for local food systems. The Milan UFPP *covers multiple thematic areas including governance, social and economic equity, sustainable diets and nutrition, food production, supply and distribution, and food waste and loss.*
(http://www.foodpolicymilano.org/en)

The New Urban Agenda

The New Urban Agenda (NUA), *which is to be adopted at Habitat III, the third UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development in October 2016 in Quito, Ecuador, will establish goals and guidelines for sustainable urban development for member countries. Thus the* NUA *intends to move forward the targets formulated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) adopted in* Agenda 2030. *Territorial approaches for city region food systems and urban-rural linkages are included in* Agenda 2030 *as a separate sustainable development target with a new urban agenda.*
(https://www.habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda)

Street food vendor in Indonesia. Photo by Dennie Ramon

food insecurity in urban settings.
Access to appropriate food and nutrition is a fundamental right. Community processes for urban (agricultural) planning will continually have to engage new stakeholders, including cross-border migration of populations – such as political and/or climate refugees from agrarian communities into urban communities. Among the vulnerable urban dwellers, over 60 per cent of refugees now live not in refugee camps, but in towns and cities (UA Magazine 21, Bradford and Van Veenhuizen, 2016). Refugees and internally displaced persons encounter many of the same challenges as the local urban poor in accessing the services and opportunities to meet their basic food needs (see article p38). Additionally, the challenges experienced by refugees and other migrants may be amplified because of limited legal rights in their new communities. Populations coming from agrarian backgrounds are a potential resource for strengthening UA in cities. Efforts to build policy and planning to shape UA must recognise these power disparities within cities.

The Urban Life Quality Index (IQVU) is a tool designed and used in Belo Horizonte in the early 90s. The first set of data was made public in 1996 and the last one in 2012. In a nutshell, IQVU consists of a set of indicators, organised by sectors or dimensions that gives a spatial image of the access to services by each one of the 80 planning areas that together cover the whole city. Once collected, the data corresponding to each one of the dimensions are "spatialized" and, when summed up, allow one to see which zones are better served and which need higher priority for improvement. This planning tool has been extremely important to channelling resources from participatory budgeting, one of the planning instruments developed by Belo Horizonte in the mid-90s. Access to food was selected as one of the nine IQVU dimensions that compose the historical IQVU set. This dimension is a score for the area of hyper- and supermarkets, as well as local food markets for every 1000 inhabitants. The other dimensions are culture, education, housing, infrastructures, environment, health, urban services, and urban safety.

(Delgado, 2016)

Community planning tools
Given the dynamics outlined above, new and innovative tools for community engagement are required to prepare purposeful urban food policies and plans, which need to be adaptive and accommodative, and include participation of various stakeholders. These tools should be designed to shift the locus of power and knowledge to community residents, or these communities should design their own methodologies (see article p49). Typologies and planning and design tools are being developed and defined, and include the use of participatory GIS, open-access data sets like the citizen-led, open access dataset for regional food systems in Buffalo (www.oneregionforward.org/data-tools/mappingmetrics) or the one described in the article on page 43, or various social and economic tools, such as exhibitions, local design workshops, food councils, community food forums, etc. Other important tools are those that measure how UA and urban food systems impact cities' quality of life (an example is the IQVU: Urban Life Quality Index, discussed in the box). Measuring its positive impact can provide evidence that food can be the key to resilient cities – thus making politicians and technicians

eager to consider food as an essential piece of city planning. Community and civil society best practices form crucial building blocks for supporting local food systems and realising the right to food, but they are too often still constrained and frustrated by inconsistent local policy frameworks and lack of political support. In recent decades, food sovereignty has proven to be the unifying concept for diverse struggles and initiatives for food system change around the world, though it was mainly developed and applied with reference to rural contexts and the concept still needs to be extended to urban settings. Similarly, in North America, the idea of food injustice is largely viewed as an urban idea, and must be extended to periurban and rural areas.

The importance of partnerships and multi-actor planning and involvement of communities is often recognised. However, the role of various actors (e.g., governmental and academic institutions, planners and civil society) should also be explicit in order to establish a multilevel system of governance. A collaborative governance mechanism is essential to defining the right institutional framework at local levels in order for food to be integrated and made operational in relation to sustainable urbanisation. Urban producers are often poorly organised. In addition to the facilitation of platforms where different actors, entrepreneurs, civil society and government can meet, it is necessary to support existing informal networks and groupings of different types of urban producers, and pro-actively involve them in urban planning and development processes.

Many cities have created, and actively support, platforms (food councils) and specific agencies for UA, and are implementing related policies and programmes. RUAF facilitates such platforms with its Multi-Stakeholder Action Planning and Policy formulation (see p29), and is supporting CRFS. As well, a food policy council (or similar mechanisms, depending on context) is an emerging model in participatory food system governance. Although there is a clear difference between consultative and deliberative councils, political recognition and support is in itself important.

Conclusion

Urban agriculture and urban food systems are an important vehicle for the development of, or the transition to, productive and sustainable cities. Since urban food systems vary widely, from purely subsistence to commercial food systems, there is a need for a multi-actor and transitional approach that caters to the development needs of multiple communities.

The municipality needs to facilitate and enable its residents to explore new ways of co-creating city region food systems including UA (see articles on p16, p41 and p46). Given the challenging urban conditions, support for urban food systems and UA requires a firm focus on offering scope and room, and building the problem-solving capacities of the main actors: producers, consumers and entrepreneurs in food value chains. Similarly, the urban space must also allow for residents to fully engage in policymaking and planning processes all the way from problem analysis, and analysis of specific requirements of various market segments, to identification and testing of alternative solutions, and building of strategic alliances. Such an approach requires that municipalities support grassroots initiatives, provide public financing, and facilitate active networking across the food system, especially among growers and entrepreneurs in the food system.

Community-based urban planning policy for UA and urban food systems has the potential to reconnect farmers with urban dwellers, and to bridge the gap between industrial agriculture and increasingly demanding urban consumers. Thoughtful planning for UA and food systems can not only meet urban consumer demand but also open ways for residents to engage in urban food systems as co-producers and co-creators of urban agriculture practices (in terms of finance, labour, market insights, etc.), and as co-creators of urban plans and policies.

However, many challenges remain, as noted in past UA Magazines and in a forthcoming book by the FAO (see the next article). The efforts of only a handful of cities to address food through planning have been institutionalised or formalised. General policies and strategies on UA, when adopted, are rarely translated into concrete regulations, action plans, budgetary investments, or design at the local level. Attention to food is often the result of a crisis rather than a proactive effort. And – because planning reflects existing power relations, resource mobilisation and distribution in cities (Viljoen et al, 2016) – attention to particular (and often conflicting) interests is often the result of the prevalent political landscape.

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Some Challenges to Integrating Food into Urban Planning: Lessons from the field

Yves Cabannes
Cecilia Marocchino

Photo by Yves Cabannes

This short communication addresses two issues closely related to the central theme of this magazine, *community involvement in urban food planning*:

[I] How to guarantee that the diverse and sometimes contradicting "*community*" interests expressed through a participatory planning process are respected and implemented. This is in our opinion a critical issue, as many planning documents that have been formulated in a participatory way are losing their community edge (or their community substance) when turned into reality. Our central argument is that City Food Councils, as an expression of democratic governance, are essential.

[II] How to address in food planning the needs and specifics of the *informal sector* that is largely involved, at least in cities in the Global South, in urban and periurban agriculture, food distribution and simple processing of locally produced food. Addressing this question forces us to differentiate between two relatively blurry notions, "community" on the one hand and "informal food sector" on the other. The second element of our argument is that, unfortunately, despite innovative efforts in some cities, the multiple expressions of the informal sector remains a stranger in urban food planning exercises. Much is yet to be done at this level.

The three articles on the next pages bring evidence and partial answers from regional capitals and intermediate cities on different continents: Bobo Dioulasso in Burkina Faso (500,000 inhabitants), Tamale in Ghana (250,000 inhabitants), Mar del Plata in Argentina (700,000 inhabitants) and Yogyakarta and Solo, two intermediate cities in Indonesia. These papers are either a shorter version of chapters from the book *Integrating Food into Urban Planning* (to be published in 2017 by UCL Press) or an extended version of abstracts that could not be part of the book. These cities' related experiences are complemented by a view from the United States, on Community-Led Urban Agriculture Policies, that is extended and developed in the book (also see the article on p18).

Despite the importance of feeding people properly, food planning is an underappreciated topic when considering the agenda of international organisations. For example, food is rarely part of planning agendas, whether the planners are from cities and local governments, United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) members, or international organisations such as the *Cities Alliance*, funded by a wide array of bilateral and multilateral organisations. Even the UN Habitat, the agency of cities, does not mention food as one of the persistent issues. While Habitat recognises emerging urban challenges due to increased urban population in its State of the World Cities for 2016, food system planning does not appear as a programmatic element integrated in its vision of *"a city that plans"*. Hopefully the *New Urban Agenda* that is currently under discussion in the perspective of Habitat III will integrate the recommendations on Food, and the necessity to integrate food into urban planning, that

INTEGRATING FOOD INTO URBAN PLANNING

This book, coordinated by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU) of University College London, will be launched early 2017. *The multiple academic and non-academic contributions illuminate how food can shape our cities and what planners should consider to better integrate food into their practices. Although urban food security and food systems are receiving growing attention worldwide, the issue of food and urban planning is insufficiently covered by existing literature. How food is produced, processed and distributed, and how local food systems complement rural agriculture, are issues that relate closely to urban planning, which can be either an opportunity to better feed cities or an obstacle to making food systems work sustainably. While literature on this topic is limited, and very few planning manuals properly consider food planning and the integration of local and non-local food systems which may be part of formal and/or informal food systems, some cities and regions have made huge progress over recent years. This book aims to address this gap.*

INDEX

were made during the Expert Group Meeting that took place in March 2016 in New York and to which various authors of the book were invited.

Decisive role played by City Food Councils

One of the major lessons learned from the upcoming book and from the cities analysed is the critical role played by City Food Councils in generating participatory urban food plans – but, more importantly, in *implementing* such plans without losing too much of their community or informal sector, and the proposals that these two groups made during the planning process. The experiences of Belo Horizonte in Brazil, Providence in the USA or Toronto in Canada are of prime interest to better understand the essential role played by City Food Councils, one that exists under quite different names and forms and that certainly deserves proper comparative research.

As explained by Lauren Baker in her book chapter (see the box for reference), the Toronto Food Policy Council established in 1991 has a made significant contribution to key documents such as the Toronto Food Charter and the Official Plan.

Interestingly, the City Council also plays another key role in planning as it links up with the metropolitan level – *"... it facilitated city engagement with the Greater ... and Farming Alliance"* – and with the community level through community asset mapping.

Similarly, as described by Cecilia Delgado in another chapter, in order to capture why the first municipal master plan in Belo Horizonte, Brazil in 1996 included quite an innovative Food Supply and Distribution subchapter, one needs to recognise the critical role of the multi-stakeholder Municipal Council called COMASA. This food council composed of members from *"the municipal executive, the civil society, consumer organisations, workers, inhabitants and entrepreneurs"* played a critical role in policymaking. In both cases each Council, tailored to the complex local institutional landscape, provided conceptual guidance so that plans could be implemented over long time frames without losing the original visions and plans.

The Providence narrative contained in another of the book chapters illuminates the progression through which local actors started by grouping together to advocate for local food systems, then creating an Urban Agriculture Task Force in 2004 that became instrumental to formulate the Providence Interim Comprehensive Plan. Later this task force guided the development of the final Comprehensive Plan approved in 2014 that *"provided even more robust treatment of food systems and strategies related to various components of the food system"*. Food planning appears, in most narratives, not only as means to get a proper plan, but just as importantly as a catalyst for gathering local food champions and actors together into a formal entity, in most cases a food council.

The lack of a strong and legitimate food council, involved in food planning and to remain a driving force when the plans are implemented, largely contributes to the partial failure of street vendor relocations in Solo and Yogyakarta. What is remarkable is that in Solo, as narrated in this magazine by John Taylor (p16), a strong participatory process was put into place and *"over 50 open dialogue meetings were held between the municipality and the mayor with street traders and other stakeholders"*. Despite this genuine and unique effort, a couple of years later, *"almost all of these relocated traders had abandoned the new market for the streets"*. This points out the limits of participatory planning and it seems that new forms of democratic governance such as Food Councils can be a place where problems can be anticipated and discussed, and solutions found. At the same time these councils turn out to be unique spaces for monitoring the implementation of an urban food plan, to formulate specific policies to implement the plans and, just as importantly, to take adaptive measures to guarantee that the interests of, among others, the community and the informal sector are not set aside. It goes without saying, and is noted in several articles, that strong permanent political will is critical for successful implementation.

It is interesting to note that both John Taylor and Cecilia Delgado are, in their own words and from distant backgrounds (Brazil and Indonesia), highlighting the importance of more democratic forms of urban food governance. For Belo Horizonte, it seems that collaborative governance forms that took place all through the twenty-year process largely explain the success of the food policy. Conversely, Taylor suggests a shift from top down to adaptive and collaborative governance to avoid the failure of the food-market relocation in Solo and Yogyakarta. More precisely, these changes should happen first among vendors (promoting vendors' organisations) and second between vendors and civil society groups. It is only then that *"vendors will be in a position to engage with government planners"*. What remain to be discussed and envisioned, however, are more permanent forms of collaborative governance that should survive and become stronger once the planning exercise takes place. Lessons from experience in the field and beyond the book *Integrating Food into Urban Planning* tend to suggest that City Food Councils should be broad and inclusive enough to gradually provide proper space to organisations, institutions and actors, both formal and informal, not dealing only with one particular stage of the food chain, such as the street food vendors here, but to all those having a stake along the food chain, from production to transformation and distribution, and from distribution to consumption and waste recycling.

The article *Experiences from Stakeholders' Dialogues in Tamale, Northern Ghana* contained in this magazine (p33) illuminates the key contribution of the Multi-Stakeholder Policy Formulation and Action Planning process (MPAP, see also p29) in kicking off a process that could end up generating long-standing democratic governance that will be instrumental to properly implementing a city agenda resulting from MPAP. The experience highlights difficulties and limitations despite apparent huge efforts to keep the process as participatory as possible. A multi-stakeholder platform and a core working group such as the one that was set up in the capital city of Accra (AWGUPA, Accra Working Group on Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture) for the MPAP could not be put into place, and this probably explains the shortfalls and some difficulties in implementing the city agenda that was formulated in Tamale. This facilitation role is central for establishing a city agenda or an urban food plan that mirrors, and takes into account, diverging and converging interests from the various groups. However, the true challenge facing MPAP processes and, more broadly, community and multi-stakeholder planning processes is whether or not these forums, working groups will have the capacity to transform and consolidate into a more permanent governance structure such as Food Councils. A second challenge is how to keep the energy contained during the planning stage beyond the approval of a City Agenda or a Urban Food Plan. Some cities, even beyond those indicated in this paper, are illuminating the way and show that a food planning process can be a facilitator for generating new forms of democratic governance that in turn are indispensable to the implementation of urban food plans.

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Local Actors Building Urban Food Strategies in West Africa and South America

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Mamadou's production of cabbages in Bobo-Dioulasso. Photo by Ophélie Robineau

Feeding cities is assuming ever more importance on the political agenda. But beyond the required willingness of political actors to develop urban food strategies, initiatives driven by local actors also play a central role in the long-term construction and consolidation of these strategies. Through describing experiences in West Africa and South America, we emphasise that taking into account informal relationships in designing public policies can improve food production and distribution in urban areas.

Introduction

Because of their lack of visibility, informal initiatives and informal interactions among local actors are seldom considered in support policies and actions that target the food issue. It is, however, of importance to take them into consideration in order to design appropriate urban planning policies and food systems suited to local community expectations. Take for instance the example of two southern cities situated in contrasting contexts: Bobo-Dioulasso (500,000 inhabitants, in Burkina Faso) and Mar del Plata (700,000 inhabitants, in Argentina). Informal interactions are part of everyday practices among food producers, buyers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers in both cities. These interactions are developed to fill the gaps of the formal system in providing a sustainable livelihood for everyone and they go beyond economic issues, involving social and cultural factors. Each case study provides interesting examples of how actors in the local food system develop initiatives that have little or no political visibility yet meet local expectations.

Urban food production in Bobo-Dioulasso: a set of informal interactions

In sub-Saharan Africa, urban and periurban agriculture (UPA) is practiced by many families. However, this is threatened by rapid urbanisation processes and is perceived as inconsistent with the vision of urban modernity that prevails in urban development policies. In Bobo-Dioulasso, international organisations (such as RUAF, IAGU and UN HABITAT) have developed projects in collaboration with the city council to support the creation of collective gardens on public land. In addition, urban farming activities that already exist – which represent the very large majority – are tolerated but receive little or no formal political support because public actors take no interest in supporting them, and their legal status is unclear. Nonetheless, thousands of farmers find ways to make a living from agriculture within the city.

Two important types of market-oriented farming are vegetable production (about 1,200 urban market gardeners) and pig

rearing (more than 500 farms). Access to inputs is essential to developing these activities. Through localised social networks and informal arrangements, farmers ensure input supply in sufficient quantities and at low cost, in a context of high demand and no formal options. As movement is difficult (especially for carts in the city centre) and the cost of transport is high, market gardeners and livestock holders prefer to source supplies nearby.

Market gardeners require large quantities of organic manure to maintain soil fertility. To ensure they get it, they make informal arrangements with livestock holders and with actors in urban waste collection. These arrangements are based on interpersonal relationships and on trust. All parties benefit from this system: market gardeners, who guarantee their own supply of manure; livestock holders, who can dispose of animal waste unpleasant to their neighbours; and cart drivers, who make a living from transporting this material.

Pig farmers feed their animals with food residues, notably brewers' grains. They have oral contracts with traditional and industrial breweries that ensure they will get sufficient quantities to feed their pigs (an average of five pigs per farm have to be fed daily). This arrangement benefits three parties: farmers ensure their supply; brewers dispose of a product that rots very quickly; and the municipality does not have to be in charge of managing this residue.

The involvement of public actors in informal negotiations has been crucial to the permanence of urban agriculture in Bobo-Dioulasso. For example, there are negotiations between urban pig holders and the municipality to circumvent the municipal order that prohibits rearing pigs within the city; in the absence of economic alternatives for poor families, urban authorities allow them to generate income through pig rearing. However, formal land-planning actions question, in the medium term, the permanence of suitable spaces for UPA since they threaten the network of access to organic inputs for market gardeners – because future land planning will isolate market gardeners from pig breeders and urban waste providers. Public policies have reflect awareness of informal arrangements to maintain these essential socio-spatial interactions.

Food distribution in Mar del Plata: informal adaptation to local community expectations

In Argentina, various vegetable distribution channels coexist. The dominant channel involves conventional producers (i.e., using agrochemical inputs) and major volumes sold through the circuit "wholesale markets–small retailers". This channel meets needs in terms of volumes and low prices but is increasingly farther removed from the community's expectation regarding food quality and health. Therefore an alternative channel is being developed through institutional programmes. It involves small-scale agro-ecological producers and direct selling. However, it represents small volumes and is not accessible to many producers (due to lack of systematisation of knowledge, a bottleneck for commercialisation), nor to the large majority of consumers (due to reduced availability and often higher prices). Thus, intermediary forms of production and distri-

Piles of cow dung ready to be sold, area of the livestock market of Bobo-Dioulasso. Photo by Ophélie Robineau

bution persist or emerge that seem better suited to community expectations. This is what happens in Mar del Plata, a city surrounded by the second main horticultural belt of Argentina.

Mar del Plata hosts three wholesale markets. Two are located outside the city. One, which is smaller, stands within the city. Its localisation in the urban space makes it nearly inaccessible for large trucks, and large volumes can hardly come in or go out. For this reason, most producers/retailers operating through this wholesale market are, on average, smaller-scale than the ones operating through the two other markets. Urban location and alternative functioning (it opens in the afternoon whereas the two others do not) are seen as a strategies for competition with other wholesale markets. Small retailers enjoy certain advantages: a) they can go and buy small quantities at any time without spending time and money in transport, and b) they often do not have good transport services for going outside the city (many do not have a driving licence or vehicle insurance, and prefer using secret routes within the city rather than main roads with a higher probability of inspection). Although no data can confirm it, some municipal agents assume that the vegetable supply in Mar del Plata is abundant thanks to the existence of this wholesale market (about 3,000 vegetable stores identified). Also, many small retailers agree that vegetable quality is higher in the city: smaller-scale producers (perceived as having less intensive practices and better harvesting practices), face-to-face transactions as well as anchoring in the local food supply are mentioned as possible explanations for such different quality in this wholesale market. Its suitability to local community expectations means that this wholesale market plays an important role in the local food system. Be that as it may, there is a political scheme to move wholesaling activities to urban peripheries, which casts a shadow on the future of this market.

Farmer and consumer preoccupations with food prices and food quality have led some farmers located near urban settlements to develop direct selling through informal channels. These channels do not increase the demand for products free of agrochemicals; however, direct contact with consumers is an incentive to use less agrochemical inputs. It is thus a win-win situation. Small-scale farmers are better anchored in their neighbourhood through social interactions, they improve their farming practices without being constrained to specifications, and they have a better income; consumers trust producers for the quality of vegetables they buy at a lower price.

Discussion and conclusion

Both cases illustrate that informal arrangements and interactions among actors are key to the existence of forms of production/distribution that match local actors' expectations. In Bobo-Dioulasso, UPA maintains and develops through a set of informal processes involving both local stakeholders and public actors. These processes ensure the functioning of the local food system through the creation of a synergy between city, agriculture and food, and ensure the integration of actors of limited economic means.

In Mar del Plata, public actors and public policies support strong and well-identified models – conventional and alternative ones. Intermediary initiatives do not achieve visibility in that political landscape and receive little or no political support; they are developed and maintained through local actors' practices, apart from institutional programmes or political support, and bear more local community expectations than a political vision. The flexibility of these intermediary initiatives meets producer, reseller and consumer expectations. However, these initiatives remain scattered and fragile in the face of urban policies and rapid transformations in the urban fringe.

In both cities, informal initiatives enhance local small-scale food production, food quality and integration of actors with limited economic means. Spatial proximity and social interactions are key to the development of these initiatives. Both experiences demonstrate the capacity of local actors to face challenges and improve their practices. This calls for more consideration of local actor practices to promote and support the social construction of sustainable urban food systems. Although formal processes such as urban food policies are required to construct sustainable urban food systems, it is essential that they neither challenge nor disregard local informal processes that offer the necessary flexibility to urban constraints. Promoting land planning strategies that integrate the local food issue therefore calls for a global approach that takes into account these informal initiatives and local practices.

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Making Public Markets Work: Street food vendor relocation in two Indonesian cities

John Taylor

Photo by Dennie Ramon

As informal street vending has proliferated in many Indonesian cities, some local governments have sought to relocate food vendors from the streets to public purpose-built markets. Most incidences of relocation involve physical force and coercion although a number of instances have received widespread recognition for being undertaken through engagement and participation, and with limited confrontation. However, further examination reveals that many relocated vendors return to the streets over time. This article illuminates why that happens and how urban policies and planning might better incorporate informal food distribution activities into the formal market.

Research was carried out by a team of five researchers from the local Indonesian NGO Yayasan Kota Kita, through a comparative study of four different vendor relocation cases in the two Indonesian cities of Yogyakarta (Taman Kuliner and Gajah Mada University Food Court) and Solo (Pasar [market] Notoharjo and Pasar Punggunrejo). These cities are known for having undertaken presumably 'successful' campaigns to 'remove' street vendors from public spaces through practices of engagement and participation. However, after as little as a few months many of the vendors eventually abandoned the public markets that they had been assigned to, and returned to the streets.

The research team conducted in-depth interviews with a total of 40 current and former (food) vendors, between May 2015 and January 2016, including those vendors who decided to remain in the new facilities as well as those who had returned to the streets (typically to their original locations, but also including new street market locations).

Findings

Aesthetic solutions with little functionality

Many street food vendor relocation policies aim to improve the visible quality of public spaces and purpose-built markets yet fail to take into consideration physical functionality and locational factors – key concerns of vendors. Respondents repeatedly indicated that markets better accommodated their needs around food preparation, storage, and waste disposal in addition to offering parking areas, public toilets, wi-fi access, and even places to pray, all of which helped attract some new customers. Still, such improvements were offset by shortcomings in site design and infrastructural elements such as low visibility from the street, and many markets lacked physical integration with their urban surroundings, inhibiting client access and patronage. For example, in Pasar Klitikan Notoharjo, relocated vendors complained that they were positioned in upper floors of two- or three-storey buildings where few customers ventured. Moreover, food vendors were arranged in long narrow rows, alongside non-food stalls, despite their preference for 'food court' arrangements where stalls face clients and where they had food preparation areas, storage, and drainage for better hygiene and presentation.

Street food vendors highlighted the importance they place on proximity and accessibility to large customer bases,

whether in residential or commercial areas. Mobile vendors can control their location and visibility by moving to strategic areas, whereas vendors in purpose-built markets are tied to specific locations and lose flexibility.

Relocation without preparing vendors for changing clientele and business environments
Most relocated street vendors lost their previous customer base, as food patronage tends to be highly location-specific. For instance, some interviewed vendors previously served students nearby local universities, while others catered to taxi drivers who took breaks on particular roads; when they moved, most often they lost these regular customers. At the relocation sites, new customers often demanded a higher quality of food, preferred to have more choices, and were willing to spend more time eating compared to those eating at street stalls. As relocated vendors had to adapt to their new clientele, those specialising in one type of food and cooking style struggled much more than those able to diversify offerings and accommodate different taste preferences of new customers.
New market locations also brought *new financial burdens* to relocated vendors. For some interviewees, lacking finance know-how and business experience and skills (e.g., accounting, marketing, inventory management) stymied potential benefits of having a certificate and a fixed location in the market. Despite possession of a formal certificate and access to bank loans, vendors risk losing everything – including their stall and right to occupy the market – in the absence of other collateral in the failure of loan repayment.

Among vendors who encountered success upon market relocation, some themes were associated with their success. Among these were the adoption of a competitive mindset, adaptability to new customer demands, and the ability to continue relationships with existing clients – which was not obvious since many vendors preferred the more relaxed, non-competitive environment on the streets where they could subsist on a daily minimum. On the streets, food vendors can gain competitive advantage through mobility and outperform competitors by finding superior sites. But at fixed sites, competition is more direct and businesses succeed through developing a brand or reputation, and winning repeat patronage, whether due to the quality or reliability of the offering or strengthening relationships with customers.

Policy and planning neglect the needs of vendors
Along with government commitment to vendor outreach and participatory planning, instrumental during the relocation process, continued support is also needed beyond the transition phase. In the relocation of street vendors from Solo's Banjarsari Park to Pasar Notorejo in 2007, Mayor Jokowi's deep engagement of vendors was critical to building trust, obtaining mutual concessions, and producing a satisfactory outcome.

Consistent maintenance, including the regular provision of basic services (e.g., clean water, sewage, trash collection), and also promotional campaigns are instrumental to continued operation and success. In Punggunrejo, the accumulation of trash as well as inadequate maintenance led to falling hygiene levels, site deterioration, and eventual abandonment decisions by many vendors. In both cases of the Yogyakartan markets, the discontinuation of promotional campaigns resulted in decreasing customer volumes. This underscores their importance, akin to factors like adequate parking and hygiene.

Maintaining viable and functional markets also requires the proactive involvement of civil society organisations and vendor associations, once local governments reduce their involvement. In the case of Solo's Pasar Notoharjo, such local organisations played an instrumental role in allowing the vendors to address common concerns as they arose. On the other hand, the city alternatively exploited differences among vendors in Pasar Punggunrejo in order to weaken their bargaining position.

Policy and planning implications

The following discussion builds on the three sets of findings presented in the previous section, including implications for policy and planning. Each implication reflects a transition from the prevailing approach to vendor relocation to a new, more inclusive and context-specific approach.

From aesthetic to pro-poor and inclusive spatial interventions
Pro-poor and inclusive spatial policy and planning would require attention to vendor rights to the city, including their proximity and connectivity to major residential and commercial clusters as well as major transport networks, along with their freedom of mobility – albeit tempered, to some extent, by regulatory agreements designating particular spaces and times. Incorporating their perspectives and preferences on stall arrangements and locations within the markets can promote the viability of new facilities.

From location-focused to vendor- and community-focused approaches
Beyond simply moving street food vendors to purpose-built markets, relocation policies are more likely to have lasting effects if they incorporate community needs and considerations in the decision-making and planning process, as well as technical assistance and training for food vendors to help them adapt to customer demands. Technical training, for instance to help them expand their businesses through branding and marketing strategies, would be particularly helpful. Food vendors might also benefit from collaborative efforts among vendors, such as the coordinated bulk purchases of ingredients and supplies, or complementary menu offerings within a food court or marketplace, which could help to reduce costs and collectively promote the market.

From top down to adaptive, collaborative governance
Promoting vendor organisation and social, political and economic empowerment in partnership with civil society groups would enable vendors to resolve emerging issues and engage with government planners on an as-needed basis.

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Community-Led Urban Agriculture Policy Making: A view from the United States

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Buffalo community garden. Photo by Samina Raja and Jennifer Whittaker

The practice of growing food for sustenance and sale is anything but new to city dwellers in the United States, and this is also true for the role of city policy in urban agriculture. As early as the late 1800s, officials in a number of cities, including Buffalo and Detroit, established agricultural programs to support the cultivation of urban land to address unemployment and hunger following an economic recession (Raja, Picard et al. 2014). Yet shifting planning and societal attitudes in the mid-1900s removed agriculture as a permitted land use in urban areas, trading food production for other types of land use. The romance of the City Beautiful movement which emphasised grandeur, for example, overlooked the importance of functional urban food practices, including production and butchering, in American cities. This was also the start of an era of industrialisation in the food industry, with Americans experiencing the advent of processed and convenience foods. The urban food system – including urban agriculture – was not seen as paramount to the quality of city life. This attitude carried into urban planning practices and policies for decades. In recent decades, the role of city governments in urban agriculture has been somewhat tenuous. Some city governments, motivated by neoliberal ideas of development, view urban agriculture as a temporary use of land. Still, many city dwellers hold a drastically different view on urban agriculture, and these views are quite heterogeneous.

Urban agriculture in US cities is most compelling as a movement of resistance. Yet a growing contemporary discourse presents urban agriculture as a desirable neighbourhood amenity attractive to millennials and economically upwardly mobile populations. This popular and often elitist narrative masks the origins of, and city dwellers' heterogeneous views about, urban agriculture. For many residents, especially in low-income neighbourhoods, urban cultivation remains a tactic of resistance and of reclaiming blighted vacant land in the face of local government negligence toward addressing urban challenges such as food insecurity, crime, deteriorating built environments, etc. Other residents view urban agriculture as a community-building opportunity, especially when the practice brings together people of diverse backgrounds. Yet many others, such as new immigrants, practice urban agriculture as a means to provide food for themselves. For some immigrants cultivation is also a marker of their agrarian identities from their countries of origin. No matter the motivation, urban agriculture initiatives, ranging from small-scale community gardens to large-scale commercial agricultural operations, have proliferated steadily across the United States in the last fifteen years.

As enthusiasm for urban agriculture has grown, city governments have had to take notice. In particular, city government planning agencies, which are charged with the responsibility for preparing and implementing official plans and policies, have had to grapple with residents' burgeoning

interest in urban agriculture. Some city governments have responded favourably by creating supportive policy environments that amplify the efforts of urban agriculture advocates, while other city governments remain averse to urban agriculture (Hodgson, Caton Campbell and Bailkey, 2011). City governments where policy support is relatively strong for urban agriculture include those of Baltimore (see also article on p25 (Whitton, Leccese and Hodgson 2015), Buffalo, Cleveland (Fodor and Hodgson 2015), Madison, Minneapolis (Hodgson and Fodor 2015), New York, San Francisco and Seattle (Whitton and Hodgson 2015). Yet these cities are exceptions. Many other municipal governments remain apathetic about the potential of urban agriculture, and offer limited policy support for urban agriculture even when it is being practised across their city. Cities' policy support, which depends on a variety of factors, is greater when there are strong community collaborative networks and a champion within city government (Raja et al. 2014).

In the subsequent sections, drawing on a national survey, we explore broad trends in how and *why* local governments and planners across the United States are engaging in urban agriculture. For more depth, we highlight case examples from two cities – Buffalo, New York, and Madison, Wisconsin – where community-led interest in urban agriculture has laid the groundwork for city government policy reform. We conclude with a discussion of what challenges might be encountered in creating city policies that sustain urban agriculture, and outline potential ideas for the future.

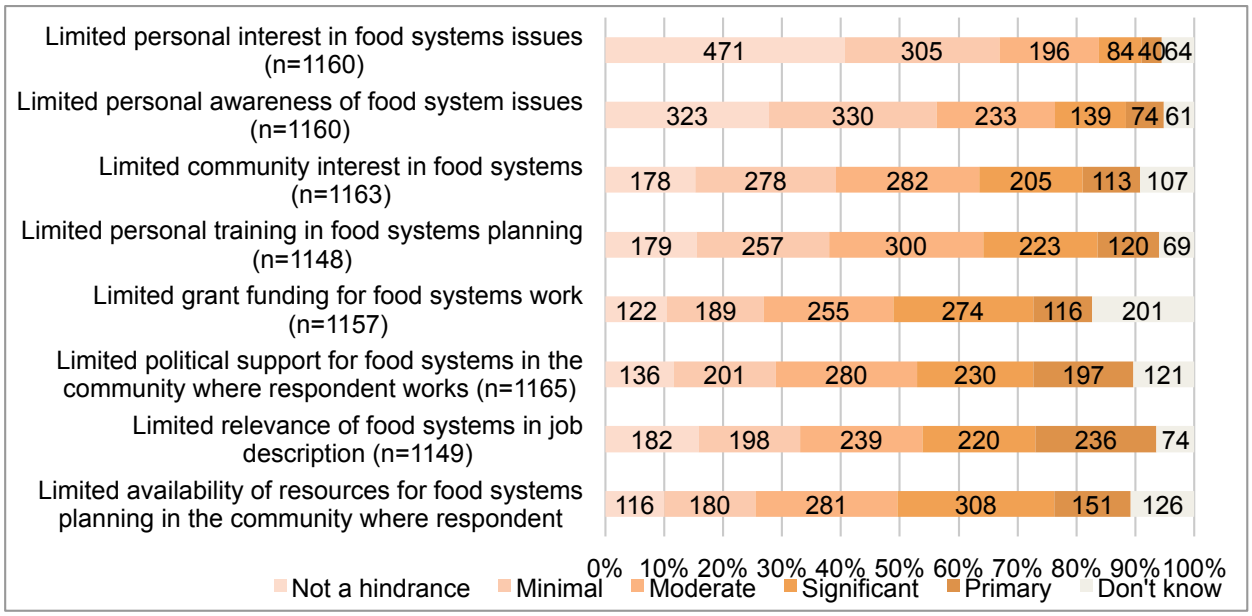
National survey results

In 2014, the Growing Food Connections project, a partnership of researchers and the American Planning Association (APA), conducted a national survey to gauge the extent of local governments' engagement in using public policy to strengthen food systems. The survey was administered to members of the American Planning Association, the largest professional association of planners in the United States. The full report of this national survey is available at: http://growingfoodconnections.org/research/state-of-food-systems-planning-in-the-us/; here we summarise the results. The data extracted represents responses of only those APA member respondents who work for or on behalf of local and regional governments.

Survey results suggest that food is no longer "a stranger" to the local government planning agenda, but that much work remains to be done. About 75 % of respondents report that, in their current position, they have no to minimal engagement in food systems planning. Fewer than 7 % of respondents report either that food systems work is a top work priority, or that they are significantly engaged in the work. Respondents' limited familiarity with food systems planning is a plausible explanation for their low level of involvement in the work. About 50 % of respondents reported that their familiarity with food systems planning was non-existent (9.2 %) to minimal (49.6 %).

This lack of familiarity with food systems planning is not the only explanation for why planners in the United States appear to be lagging in their engagement in food systems planning. Results from the APA survey point to a number of other hindrances, as displayed in Figure 1. Respondents point to lack of resources and no reference to food systems planning in their job description as key reasons for their personal limited engagement in food systems planning. In open-ended responses respondents noted that higher levels of government, such as federal and state governments, provide no mandate for engaging in food systems planning. The absence of state and federal mandates for food systems planning is a reflection of the overall structure of how planning unfolds in the United States, where consid-

Figure 1. Local Government planners' perception of hindrances to their personal engagement in food systems planning.



Source: 2014 APA Members' Survey, University at Buffalo, Growing Food Connections Project

Massachusetts Avenue Project engages neighbourhood youth to advocate for policy and planning change on urban growing practices. Photo by Massachusetts Avenue Project

erable planning power rests in local levels of government in many states. Other respondents' comments suggest that planners have a rather narrow view of planning as a profession, overemphasising design guidelines, regulatory frameworks and more traditional planning sub-topics, and this may hinder their engagement in urban agriculture and food systems. Such a narrow view is curious given planning's claim to be a broad, interdisciplinary field. Overall, although food is beginning to gather attention, structural reform, which would include food systems planning as a core function of planning, has yet to come to fruition – and the urban agriculture food movement continues to depend on the work of extraordinary leaders within city governments. Until city governments, and indeed all levels and sectors of government, recognise the importance of urban agriculture for civic life, and until they commit public resources including staffing, physical infrastructure and funding, urban agriculture will remain a marginalised activity.

Leadership in policy reform

Although the US survey results reported in the earlier section paint a somewhat dismal picture of planners' engagement in food systems planning, as noted earlier, many cities are witnessing considerable policy action in support of urban agriculture and food systems. Below we report two unique cases – Madison and Buffalo – with markedly different trajectories over the last fifteen years. The city of Madison, a fairly progressive affluent city in the Midwest, was a leader in the food movement in the US, whereas Buffalo, a post-industrial gritty city witnessed a rise in the urban agriculture movement as a response to severe urban decline. While Madison has matured, and some would argue, plateaued in its effort to address food *injustices,* Buffalo is just coming into its own.

Slow and Steady: Emergence of urban agriculture policy in Buffalo, New York

Jennifer Whittaker

Buffalo, New York, a post-industrial city with a population of about 260,000, is located on the Great Lakes, in the Northeastern part of the United States. A nineteenth century industrial leader, Buffalo played a historic role in the national, and indeed global, food system. In the 19th and early 20th century, grain grown in the country's Midwest arrived at Buffalo's ports from where it was transported, along Erie Canal, to the country's Eastern Seaboard and to the rest of the globe.

At one point the city was the number one grain port in the world, thanks in part to the invention of mechanised grain elevators. The flourishing grain industry (and other industries) led to rapid growth, with the population soaring to about half a million people in 1940. The city's prominence in the global food system continued until 1959 when the opening of an alternative transportation route, the St Lawrence Seaway, meant Buffalo was no longer a hub for the grain industry (Raja, Picard et al. 2014, One Region Forward 2014).

Throughout the middle to latter part of the 20th century, the city faced significant economic decline as major industries relocated, factories closed, and a great deal of industrial land became vacant, but with contaminated soils. Today, the city is rated the sixth most segregated metro area in the country, unemployment rates are persistently high, and nearly 30 per cent of residents live in poverty. Social inequalities are worsened by a physically deteriorating neighbourhood environment (One Region Forward 2014). Similar to Buffalo's historic efforts to provide food in times of economic hardship, such as through fully functioning urban farms during the Great Depression, some residents are growing food on the city's vacant public and privately owned land.

Buffalo's current thriving urban agriculture landscape, featuring nearly 100 community gardens, numerous urban farms, and an increasing number of food production-based businesses, is grounded solidly in community-led efforts to reclaim neighbourhoods destroyed by short-sighted policy and planning decisions that redlined certain neighbourhoods and built highways through others. Current urban agriculture efforts reflect the diversity and energy of a post-industrial city now recreating itself with limited, or glacially slow, municipal government support. Historic African American neighbourhoods are home to thriving community gardens, new Americans are raising plants and produce native to their countries of origin, community organisations are operating urban farms that employ neighbourhood youth, and private entrepreneurs are building hoop houses on vacant lots and selling produce to local restaurants. Elsewhere we have highlighted how these collective community efforts, based in ordinary, incremental and persistent practices, have transformed limited-resource communities and rebuilt the local food systems with little municipal government support (Raja, Picard et al. 2014).

The sustenance of community gardens signals community engagement in urban agriculture; without community interest, community gardens are unlikely to endure. Buffalo's community gardeners can be found tending gardens located in nearly every neighbourhood of the city, producing food in areas underserved by healthy-food retailers, beautifying vacant lots once trash-filled and overgrown, and planning block club parties and neighbourhood events in the park-like spaces they have created. In numerous instances, community gardens have sprung up in response to derelict conditions in neighbourhoods and have been a stimulus for positive change over time.

Sadly, in exchange for their labour, community gardeners have not received unequivocal support from local government agencies. The community-led campaign for land access and land tenure for community gardens has morphed depending on municipal leadership, but is currently hindered by persistent municipal inaction and foot-dragging. Residents want legal access to a number of the nearly 16,000 vacant lots, over 4,000 of which are city-owned, a right the city neither outright supports nor denies in a timely manner. Community gardens on much city-owned land used to operate under a master lease agreement held by Grassroots Gardens of Western New York (GGWNY), a not-for-profit community gardening organisation. In addition to being a signatory to the lease agreement on behalf of city's gardeners, GGWNY also provides liability insurance to gardeners. In the last lease agreement, which expired in 2010, gardeners would be given a meager 30-day notice to vacate property if the lot

Buffalo's community gardens, found all across the city.
Photo by Grassroots Gardens of Buffalo

were sold. After the lease expired, GGWNY tried in 2011 to create a new, fair lease agreement which would allow gardeners protection for the full growing season from March to November if the lot were to be sold. The city will not adopt this proposed lease and has simply extended the 2010 lease allowing only 30 days protection. In essence, community gardeners on public land are currently operating with an insecure land tenure arrangement by which the city has the right to take over the land at any time with only 30 days notice to community gardener members.

Municipal government has been particularly slow to grant land access requests in neighbourhoods with significant racial and economic disparities – reinforcing the ongoing municipal disinvestment even in the face of grassroots resident action. Citing potential food safety and public health concerns, municipal government has both ignored the positive benefits of community gardens and shed their own public responsibility to care for public lands. Deliberative action on the part of community gardeners, who have continued to maintain a gardening presence regardless of land tenure, has contributed to municipal government consideration of urban agriculture as a legal land use within their yet-to-be approved zoning ordinance. Boldfaced illegal gardening has ignited resident involvement in the political process – empowering residents to demand a fair lease agreement with the city for their gardens. Concerted advocacy work for a fair lease, with the leadership of GGWNY, continues to unite residents from diverse neighbourhoods around a common goal.

While community gardeners have advocated for policy change on urban growing across the city, non-profit urban farming projects too have incrementally nudged for change by engaging in farming practices both legal and illegal. By choosing to operate under-the-radar (or more likely, overlooked) gardenening facilities – chicken coops, aquaponics systems, greenhouses and rows of produce – one non-profit organisation, the Massachusetts Avenue Project (MAP), used ostensibly illicit action to prompt the city to reconsider their outdated zoning bylaws that disallowed many urban agricultural practices. MAP established itself within the city's west-side community and demonstrated the potential for urban agriculture as a tool for community-building, youth employment, and healthy food provision. As MAP gradually assembled more and more vacant lots within the neighbourhood, coalescing into a fully functioning urban farm, urban agriculture became a visible normalised practice in the city (Raja, Picard et al. 2014).

Community organisations' on-the-ground practices in conjunction with their work to reform policy, which lasted for more than a decade, has led to a new era for urban agriculture policy in the city of Buffalo. A timeline of action is available at http://growingfoodconnections.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/06/RustbeltRadicalPolicyBriefDraft_FINAL_2015.6.22.pdf), and here is a short list of policy reforms:

- creation of a city-county food policy council, one of only two recognised and codified into law in New York state (Raja and Whittaker forthcoming);
- development, by the regional transportation agency, of a regional sustainability plan which, for the first time in the history of the region's official plans, includes a regional food systems assessment that describes action for improving viability of local agriculture and reducing food insecurity (Raja, Hall et al. 2014);
- passage of a legal ordinance that allows, with some requirements, raising of poultry within city boundaries;
- agreement between the city government and a commercial farmer to allow the use of public land for Wilson Street Farm, a commercial farm;
- establishment of a rooftop community garden on a public market owned and operated by the city;
- inclusion of urban agriculture as an important practice within the city's new (proposed) land use plan which is expected to be adopted by elected officials this spring (Raja and Whittaker forthcoming);
- inclusion of urban agriculture as a permitted land use within most zones identified within the city's new (proposed) form-based zoning ordinance/bylaw which is expected to be adopted concomitantly with the land-use plan.

These changes in urban agriculture policy in Buffalo have been instigated by community organizations and should ultimately lead to lasting reform.

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Early Innovation, Deliberate Pace: Urban agriculture policy and planning in Madison, Wisconsin

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Madison, Wisconsin, the state capital and home of the flagship campus of the University of Wisconsin - Madison, is a rapidly growing Midwestern city of 245,000, steadily expanding across the rich agricultural land of Dane County. Many Madison residents are newcomers to Wisconsin, having first come as university students, or more recently to join the city's growing high-tech industry. Wisconsin's traditional reputation as 'America's Dairyland' endures, with the result that new and long-time Madisonians alike see close connections between their urban lives and the surrounding rural and periurban farmlands. This awareness, coupled with a largely progressive political bent at the grass-roots and local government level, has resulted in a high level of awareness of and participation in the national local-food movement. Dozens of community-supported agriculture (CSA) farms operate within 50–75 miles of the city, and Madisonians can visit one of several farmers' markets operating any day during the six-month growing season.

This commitment to local farms, coupled with the lack of a large inventory of vacant parcels – as is often found in other, older industrial or shrinking cities (such as Buffalo) – means that urban agriculture within Madison's municipal boundaries is not particularly widespread. Although Madison has an active community gardens network, dedicated urban farming is not advocated separately, but rather is nested within the larger local food movement. Thus, Troy Community Farm, at 5 acres the city's largest urban farm, is largely seen as a hyper local participant within the Madison CSA market (comprised of otherwise non-urban farms) and not as an example of urban farming per se.

Despite its outward prosperity, Madison shares with other US cities the presence of a growing, food-insecure underclass composed largely of people of colour, a fact that until only recently was overlooked by the city's white, highly formally educated, generally affluent majority (not coincidentally also the primary supporters of local food efforts). Recent studies have revealed deep social and economic disparities in Madison based on race, resulting in positive and generally productive examples of civic self-examination over the past two years. City government – particularly Mayor Paul Soglin, who has become a national leader in food advocacy among his mayoral colleagues, and the Madison Food Policy Council created by the Mayor in 2012 – has worked to bring disadvantaged segments of Madison's population into discussions on good food access, including healthier retail choices, and in-school meals of better quality. Urban farming – but to a greater extent, community gardens – have also been part of these discussions. Madison's effective system of public committees led by citizens and staffed by city employees is the current bedrock of food system advancement, although representation from low-wealth residents and people of colour in this system of governance is limited.

In particular Madison's community gardens, while long-thriving, lacked until recently an institutional base that saw their value in the aggregate, and not solely as individual elements in the city's neighbourhood fabric. In 2014, when a regional anti-poverty group decided to end its management of the majority of Madison's community gardens, a citywide community gardens support group formed as a partnership among Community GroundWorks (the non-profit organisation that manages Troy Community Farm), Dane County UW Extension and city government. Known as The Gardens Network, this group is now responsible for improving the individual and collective viability of Madison and Dane County's 60 community gardens, which cover some 30 acres of land and are used by over 2,000 households. Among other goals, The Gardens Network facilitates both the stability of existing gardens and the creation of new ones in ways that maximise community value. The group convenes annual citywide gatherings of community gardeners to network with supporting institutions (such as university extension) and provide technical services (gardening workshops, leadership trainings and access to liability insurance).

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Challenges, resources, and ideas for future

The two case examples above, Buffalo and Madison, offer a stark contrast in how urban agriculture emerges and how municipal governments respond in the United States. In many ways, the historic and economic contexts of these cities explain why and what type of urban agriculture has emerged, and how public policy has responded. In 1940 Buffalo was home to nearly half a million residents, and a prominent hub in the global grain/food system, while Madison was home to barely 70,000 people in a Midwestern, largely agrarian landscape. Although the population size in both cities today is quite similar, about a quarter million, emergence of urban agriculture in Buffalo is a reaction to severe urban decline while in Madison its emergence reflects residents' aspirations for a greener, more sustainable city. Recognising these distinctly different motivations (though they need not be mutually exclusive) is essential for developing thoughtful, historically relevant urban agricultural policy.

Matching the trajectory of food movements with appropriate municipal plans and policies – Depending on the trajectory of the food movement, cities may need to develop different responses to support urban agriculture. In Buffalo, where urban agriculture was not recognised in municipal policy until recently, an important first step was to establish a governance structure – e.g., a food policy council – and participatory planning processes that facilitate community engagement in municipal policy. In the case of Madison, where there is a long history of urban agriculture, it is imperative for municipal government to continually examine the degree to which equity and public interest in municipal policy are being protected over time. In other words, the policy response has to match the needs within the urban agriculture movement.

Growing Food Connections among low-resource farmers and low-income consumers – Like Madison and Buffalo, a number of cities are exploring how best to support urban agriculture. Many are exploring how to connect small and medium-scale agriculture with food-insecure consumers. *Growing Food Connections (GFC)*, a national research project, is documenting the ways in which innovative local governments, or Communities of Innovation, are using policy to strengthen connections among the two vulnerable sectors in the food system. These lessons are being shared with other communities that are primed for change, or Communities of Opportunity. Resources developed by GFC are available to cities nationwide, and globally at growingfoodconnections.org. A key among these resources is a searchable policy database that contains the actual *adopted* policies from across the United States. Although these policies cannot be simply replicated elsewhere in a cookie cutter fashion — in fact, we strongly discourage that – these examples do point to possible ways for local governments to support food systems.

Necessity for multi-sectoral partnerships – Community residents understand the assets and challenges in their urban food systems through their lived experience. At the same time, residents (and their advocates) may not have the resources to build on the assets or address challenges. As seen in the case studies from Buffalo and Madison, multi-sectoral partnerships between civic groups, public agencies and – when appropriate – the private sector can create networks that can amplify assets to strengthen urban agriculture.

Building policymaking capacity among residents – Related to the above, given the limited amount of knowledge and resources on food systems planning, especially in low resource communities, it is essential that food advocates, including philanthropic organisations and academic partners, focus on empowering communities to engage in the political and policymaking process themselves. Until communities lead (rather than only participate) in policymaking processes, the policy tools will remain irrelevant at best.

Addressing structural disparities – Urban agriculture in many cities, such as in Buffalo, is emerging as a response to structural disparities. Therefore, unless urban agriculture policy addresses structural disparities, policies will have no long-term benefit for communities. For example, it is short-sighted to focus on simply setting aside land for community gardens in a low-income neighbourhood where residents work two jobs to make ends meet and may not have the time to engage in volunteer gardening efforts. In such a case, economic empowerment programs must complement urban agriculture programs (in Buffalo for example, teenagers participating in urban farming are paid for their time through a city employment program). In other words, on-the-ground urban agricultural practices to create change must be amplified and supplemented with citywide policies that address structural disparities in urban food systems.

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Homegrown Baltimore: Cultivating employee wellness through CSA support

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Employees pick up CSA shares at their office building. Photo by Andrew Cook

Baltimore, Maryland is a city focused on sustainability. The government has a Sustainability Commission, an Office of Sustainability and a Sustainability Plan. Adopted in 2009, the Sustainability Plan outlines strategies to "establish Baltimore as a leader in local sustainable food systems," including strategies to increase local agricultural production within city limits, increase demand for locally and regionally produced foods, and address access to healthy affordable food through the City's Food Desert Retail Strategy. Through the Baltimore Food Policy Initiative, Baltimore has created a strong precedent in the USA for considering food issues alongside sustainability. In October 2015, Baltimore signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact.

Homegrown Baltimore

Urban agriculture is one of several strategies the City promotes to turn its vacant land from liabilities into assets, as well as to accomplish other environmental, social and economic goals. In 2012, Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake created the Homegrown Baltimore initiative: Grow Local, Buy Local, Eat Local. Under "Grow Local," Baltimore City developed an Urban Agriculture Plan; created a land leasing initiative to promote five-year lease agreements to farm City-owned vacant land; changed the building code to allow for season-extending hoop houses; created animal husbandry regulations that allow for chickens, rabbits, bees and miniature goats; and adopted a soil safety policy to guide growers in how to assess and mitigate potentially contaminated urban soils. Recently, Baltimore also passed an urban agriculture tax credit for farmers on private land to provide a 90 per cent abatement on property taxes for five years. This credit is tailored specifically for urban farms, which often are not large enough to meet the five acre requirement of state-level farm property tax credits. With strong mayoral support, Baltimore has been able to create a policy environment that is friendly to urban agriculture. This has encouraged the creation of approximately 20 production-oriented urban farms. It shows that urban agriculture serves important ecological, economic and social roles in a city landscape.

As part of the "Buy and Eat Local" strategies, Baltimore City expanded the number of farmers' markets that accept and incentivise federal nutrition assistance programmes for food-insecure populations; streamlined the permitting processes for farmers' markets and their vendors; and created a Homegrown Baltimore Employee Wellness Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programme. The CSA was created in 2014 with initial support from the Abell Foundation and Kaiser Permanente of the Mid-Atlantic States. The CSA has two

primary objectives: to support urban and regional agriculture, and to improve employee wellness through increased produce consumption by making fresh food easily accessible through direct delivery to the workplace.

The Homegrown Baltimore CSA was designed to operate through a sustainable, decentralised model run by employees for employees, working directly with the farms. The drop-off locations are run by Site Coordinators, who are responsible for recruiting participants as well as managing the produce pickups each week. The farmers proposed that if Site Coordinators took over recruitment for the CSA, the farms would provide them with a free share. In a CSA model, participants pay for the full season in advance, and though the City coordinates this programme, participants pay the farms directly. The farms deliver directly to five City office buildings once per week for about six months from spring through fall. Each share consists of six to eight items (an "item" could be a bag of spinach, four tomatoes, or six ears of popping corn) per week, and many participants split the share and its cost with a colleague.

Urban–rural linkages

The Homegrown Baltimore CSA currently partners with two farms, which is a perfect example of developing urban and rural linkages to meet demand that cannot be met by urban agriculture alone. *Real Food Farm* is an eight-acre farm located in Baltimore City that provides experience-based education and job training on the farm, and addresses healthy food access for surrounding neighbourhoods through a mobile market. Real Food is a project of the non-profit Civic Works, which also oversees a rural farm as well as the Baltimore Orchard Project – which plants fruit trees and gleans from those around the city. These three entities often aggregate products for Real Food CSA shares to create a more robust and varied offering, though they are still limited in the number of shares they can offer to about 100 households.

The second farm, *One Straw Farm*, is located in rural Baltimore County. One Straw is the largest organic farm in Maryland and was an early adopter of the CSA model. With 175 acres and over 33 years in business, One Straw anchors the CSA programme while more urban farms work to increase their capacity to meet the demand. One Straw has the size and flexibility to accept as many CSA shares as the City needs, and has accepted members on a rolling basis as more employees learn about the CSA throughout the season. The two farms work in partnership to diversify the options for the employees and encourage agricultural production, both in and out of Baltimore City limits.

Improve employee wellness through policy

In addition to increased demand for local produce, the goal of the CSA is to improve the health of Baltimore City employees through increased fruit and vegetable consumption. Almost half of Baltimore City employees have critical or chronic illnesses. The US Centers for Disease Control state that fruit and vegetable consumption decreases risk of cancer and other chronic diseases. By delivering directly to the workplace, the CSA makes increased produce consumption more convenient, and encourages tasting and cooking with a variety of vegetables and fruits. Said one employee, "I absolutely love the CSA programme and how it has exposed me to vegetables traditionally not eaten in my household."

The true innovation of the programme has been that Baltimore was one of the first cities in the country to financially incentivise employee participation in a CSA through a wellness incentive offered by a labor union. Many labor unions may already have wellness incentives that reimburse employees for everything from eyeglasses to gym memberships. In 2014, Baltimore's Managerial and Professional Society (MAPS) amended its existing Health and Welfare Reimbursement policy to incentivise CSAs. MAPS employees can now be reimbursed up to USD 250, meaning that some pay as little as USD 50 for approximately 24 weeks of produce delivered directly to City offices. This provides maximum convenience at minimal cost. As more unions offer wellness incentives, this will become a viable option for other sectors and cities across the nation to link local food with wellness.

Outcomes

On average, 120 employees (of 1,750 eligible MAPS employees) participated in the first two seasons. While there were initial questions as to whether the programme would only accommodate and provide incentives for people who were already likely to participate in CSAs, over half of participants each season had not participated in a CSA before, and many returned between the first and second seasons. The wellness incentive proved to be a motivating factor for many employees. Over half of the participants have been MAPS employees, and the majority applied their wellness reimbursements to their shares. One employee stated, "The CSA Share programme is fantastic by itself. However, the MAPS reimbursement is a GREAT incentive, especially for employees eager to participate but unable to shell out the money out of pocket."

The outcomes from the CSA (based on survey data) show the following:

- 82 % ate more vegetable and fruits while participating in the CSA
- 90 % tried new fruits and vegetables
- 60 % cooked more meals at home
- 80 % were more likely to buy local produce.

Conclusion

Baltimore's commitment to promoting and facilitating urban agriculture exemplifies how a city can accomplish multifaceted sustainability goals. Programmes like the Homegrown Baltimore Employee Wellness CSA take existing assets, like the wellness incentive, and use them to accomplish broader goals around supporting local agriculture and employee health. These types of innovative solutions encourage cross-sector thinking and allow for urban agriculture to gain a stronger foothold in city landscapes and in the overall sustainability agenda.

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The Rise of Guerrilla Gardening: Unearthing the underground urban agricultural movement

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Photo by Anna Rogozinska

Guerrilla gardeners are individuals and groups who colonise land without permission and who aim to green – often dull – urban environments. The term is, deliberately, somewhat militaristic and mirrors the actions of a typical group which often practices at night to avoid detection. The movement brings together a variety of actors: students, academics, planners, architects, chefs, community workers and many more individuals. Simply put, guerrilla gardening is 'the illicit cultivation of someone else's land' (Reynolds, 2008: 16). Generally speaking, guerrilla gardeners either aim to beautify a neglected patch of land or (increasingly) are pursuing the cultivation of space. Many first meet virtually, before venturing out to partake in their planned actions. Guerrilla gardening is practised worldwide, from the 'trendy' and relatively 'soft' intransigent political movements in North America and Europe, to Africa and beyond. Despite this vast and varied movement, usually the subversive, illegal aspects of guerrilla gardening – young participants colonising land under the cover of darkness – are the ones featured in the media. Using a variety of tools, from social media to forums, Richard Reynolds has enabled guerrilla gardeners to communicate in multiple ways, especially through guerrillagardening.org and his book *On Guerrilla Gardening (2008)* with practical tips based on his many years of experience.

Research in the book *Informal Urban Agriculture* (2014) shows how guerrillas are growing on an array of scales: from small highway verges to large industrial spaces. Many of the world's successful urban agricultural projects started through guerrilla gardening. Such projects include many of New York's community gardens and the more recent global Incredible Edible movement. The latter spouted from Todmorden, a small town in England; residents began guerrilla gardening in 2008 and eventually legitimised their action by engaging with the local authority. The success of the guerrilla action demonstrated the positive impact of urban agriculture in the area and opened the eyes of the authority to the potential of the activity. Through legitimising, the former guerrilla gardeners could now access funding and further support to help grow their activities.

This approach has now been replicated in a variety of urban areas, with over 100 areas in the UK alone. The 'model' is quite simple: grow everywhere and anywhere while involving the local community. The Todmorden team has developed a toolkit to help replicate their approach. In Salford, a city in Northern England, the Todmorden story and toolkit inspired a group to form and use urban agriculture to tackle issues in one of the country's most deprived urban areas. Starting through guerrilla gardening, the group evolved, eventually legitimised, and now owns a farm along with multiple growing spaces. Incredible Edible Salford was so successful that it effectively employs several people full time, enabling them to carry out the work on a continuous basis.

Tracking guerrillas on the ground

We conducted research on guerrilla gardening predominantly in the West Midlands region of the UK and in other parts of the UK, Europe, Africa and beyond. Regardless of the context in which guerrilla gardening is practised, we found that an overwhelming majority of local authority officials embraced the idea, as it was often felt that such actors were doing 'good' for their communities and helped to improve forgotten urban spaces.

Another result was that many groups eventually legitimised their activities in order to grow and to take advantage of various local funds. As Reynolds (2008) states, guerrillas either pursue this formalisation path or eventually decline. In our research in the West Midlands, we explored three guerrilla gardeners: 'F Troop', a group of local authority employees who grew vegetables next to an inner-city dual carriageway; 'the women's group', a collection of female residents who did not understand how the planning system worked and so just 'got on with things', colonising an abandoned patch of land for an unpermitted community garden; and a 'solo guerrilla', a disgruntled elderly resident who created food corridors in neglected local authority alleyways. All three pursued the idea to use the produce for themselves or for their local communities. Raised beds were used by the women's group and the solo guerrilla gardener, but F Troop opted to grow directly in the soil. All three groups' actions were to raise awareness about the possibilities of urban agriculture and, in the case of the women's group and solo guerrilla, distribute the produce grown. F Troop operated more for symbolic reasons; this was fortunate, as there were concerns regarding the quality of the soil and possible contamination. This latter troop was particularly interesting as many involved were aware of the various ways of formally obtaining land for such activities but consciously avoided this path, primarily due to their perception that they would lose control and simply become part of a wider local authority volunteer base.

Why adopt an informal approach?

The majority of those pursuing guerrilla gardening do so due to their unhappiness or anger with local authorities. A lack of understanding about the planning system, coupled with previous negative experiences, resulted in their pursuing action without formal support. In addition, some of the guerrillas interviewed revealed how the idea of a 'buzz' and 'naughtiness' fuelled their action as they often feared the wrath of the authority or police, a feeling they would not obtain from a more formalised approach.

This initial informal approach gives guerrilla gardeners complete ownership of the site and enables them to pursue their urban agricultural ambitions. Furthermore, many of the guerrillas we studied argue that political concepts, such as David Cameron's 'Big Society', had pushed them down the informal route. The Big Society was a UK Government initiative to encourage greater ownership by communities and to devolve power to local levels. However, this is often viewed as a tool for merely recruiting free workers to perform government roles.

Formal urban agricultural projects often have the buy-in of local communities through consultation or direct involvement. This key attribute is missing from guerrilla gardening. Communities surrounding the guerrilla gardening sites were either unaware of the action or, when they were aware, angered by their lack of inclusion. In one case residents criticised F Troop's actions, as the group did not maintain their plot well, and vegetables would often be left for weeks without care or attention. Further exploration with other groups revealed similar findings, with guerrillas moving into sometimes foreign locations and transforming the land not only without the local authority's consent, but without the permission and knowledge of the local community too.

However, the overwhelming majority of community views were positive. On several occasions it was noted how guerrilla action opened the eyes of the nearby community to the idea of cultivation, triggering others to start practising urban agriculture. A good example was the women's group, which encouraged many to grow on their balconies and on grass verges adjacent to their properties; this, in effect, created a whole new local guerrilla gardening movement. A similar effect was seen with the solo guerrilla, who encouraged her neighbours to become involved and help with the maintenance of the edible spaces she created.

Should guerrilla gardening be encouraged?

Guerrilla gardening is generally positive and has acted as a springboard for some of the most successful formal urban agricultural projects in existence today. Indeed, these attributes have been realised by some local authorities, such as Salford City Council in the UK. In this case, they are encouraging guerrilla gardening through media and other outlets and see it as a way of regenerating neglected patches of land. Calls have been issued to encourage the community and others to take up the practice, helping to regenerate forgotten areas of the community and enable urban agriculture in the heart of the city. Since such encouragement is cutting-edge, it is yet to be determined whether this will discourage guerrilla gardeners due to the formalised nature of the action.

Ultimately, guerrilla gardening is happening now and the activity is an important part of the wider urban agricultural movement. While there are some negative issues regarding elements of the action, the majority of the movement is helping to push forward food in the city all over the world.

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Multi-stakeholder Policy Influencing and Local Urban Food Initiatives

René van Veenhuizen

A discussion with stakeholder groups in India. Photo by Sanjini de Silva / IWMI on Flickr

This article is based on earlier publications and the contributions of several RUAF partners, especially: Cai Jianming, IGSNRR, RUAF China on Beijing; Yves Cabannes, Cecilia Delgado and Alain Santandreu on Lima; Percy Toriro, MDP on Bulawayo and Cape Town; and Kim Otten and Hesham Omari on Amman.

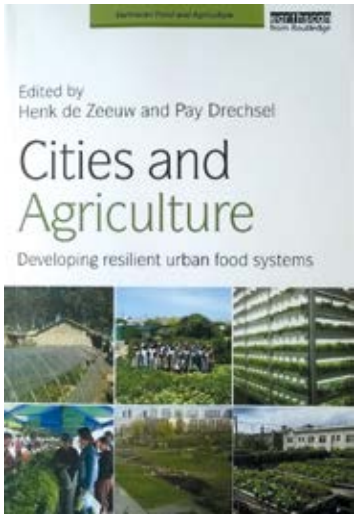
Urban agriculture takes place in a multi-sectoral environment, touches on a large number of urban management areas (e.g., land-use planning and social and community development), and involves a great diversity of food systems and related actors. When working in complex urban agro-food systems it is highly recommended to apply a multi-stakeholder approach in the analysis and planning of a sustainable food system, and further coordinating policy and planning.

Multi-stakeholder interaction has become a very popular mode of involving civil society and private sector in debates and decision making, as they provide a negotiating space for a diversity of interests. These approaches can contribute to several positive outcomes: 1) more participatory governance; 2) higher-quality decision making through a better understanding of complex food system; 3) improved coordination; 4) efficient mobilisation of scarce human, technical and financial resources and 5)enhanced acceptance and ownership. However, such approaches often take more time, and are often difficult to manage and facilitate (Dubbeling et al. 2010, 2011).

Cities Farming for the Future

The RUAF Foundation implemented the "Cities Farming for the Future" (CFF) and "From Seed to Table" (FStT) programmes in close cooperation with international, regional and local partners in 20 cities in 17 developing countries during the years 2004 – 2011 (Dubbeling et al. 2010; Amerasinghe et al. 2013). RUAF also builds on the experiences with Multi-stakeholder Action Planning and Policy influencing (MPAP) in other programmes, and facilitated similar processes in Liberia (with Welthungerhilfe), and with the WASH and UrbFood+ programme in Tamale, Ghana as well as in Ouagadougou, and uses these experiences in its work on City Region Food Systems (see UA magazine no. 29, 30 and for project descriptions: www.ruaf.org).

In this work, RUAF aims to build participatory governance (in the city and the institutions involved), to empower urban producers, and to create an enabling policy and institutional framework for urban agriculture (which are the immediate objectives of an MPAP process). The approach is adapted to



each local situation, and the duration also varies, influenced by the degree of commitment of the local partners (especially the local government) and the complexity of the issues.

The RUAF partners ideally follow a series of steps in implementing the MPAP processes, but each city or city region develops its own process, and approach, fit to the local conditions, needs and priorities. The results of the seven-year support by RUAF to multi-stakeholder action planning and influencing policies on UPA have been documented by Dubbeling, De Zeeuw and van Veenhuizen (2011), while a further development of experiences and approach is included in DeZeeuw and Dubbeling (2016).

In 2011, in 18 of the 20 cities a multi-stakeholder forum (MSF) on urban agriculture had been established, involving 272 organisations, showing the interest of the various stakeholders in these cities in actively contributing to the development of safe and sustainable urban agriculture in their city. In all cities a city strategic agenda (CSA), or urban food strategy, on urban agriculture had been agreed, and in most cases formally approved by the city council or a council commission and included in formal policies, by-laws and regulations. UPA had also been integrated within the city master or development plan in 9 cities, and in 13 cities an (urban) agriculture department or unit started coordinating the implementation of the agreed CSA, while in other cities UPA was coordinated by another department (e.g., Parks or Social Development). Monitoring showed that the communication and cooperation between local authorities, civil society organisations and other local stakeholders in UPA had improved, the participation of urban farmer groups in planning and decision-making processes had been strengthened and the services provided to urban producers had improved in most of the cities, due to organisational and marketing support (see UA magazines 24).

Ten years later

An informal survey among some RUAF partners ten years after the start of facilitating multi-stakeholder processes on UPA, shows that in most cities the forum still exists. In over half of the cities, the key actors still meet, although not always on a regular basis, and issues are presented and discussed among them. Some new actors have joined the MSF, as in Porto Novo, Benin. This MSF, established in 2008, still meets every three months. The CSA itself has not been updated lately, but the partners continue to meet and bring up issues according to their needs. A new microfinance actor (SFD: decentralised financing system) has become an active member of the platform and, together with the mayor, stimulates access to semi-formal loans provided to individual farmers. In Lima the UPA programme was even institutionalised at the municipality and metropolitan level, and in 2012 the city of Lima implemented a large-scale garden programme (Mi Huerta) with links to various other sectors. The municipality promoted capacity building, organisation of farmers, and environmental management. However, due to a change of mayor, the process flattened down and the MSF set-up that was working well has been interrupted. In Bulawayo, an Urban Agriculture Unit within the town planning section of the engineering department was established in 2011 and is still functioning; it enables effective coordination between the various municipal departments as well as between the municipality and other organisations (e.g., urban producer groups) involved in urban agriculture in the city. The city established an urban agriculture unit within the planning department and the unit reported to a committee of council as with any other municipal unit. This ensured sustainability as the responsibility was embedded in council functions. In Cape Town as well, an Urban Agriculture Unit was established within the municipal department, supporting various actors and poor communities (see UAM 24 and 25). However, in Cape Town the regular meetings of stakeholders stopped when there was a change of position in the municipality. The Lima and Cape Town examples raise the issue of political volatility of the processes and the need for strong organisation of farmers. Still in all these cities, policies, activities and support to farmers would not have occurred without the MPAP facilitation and experiences. Capacity has been built and networks developed, and urban farming continues

In Amman and Bulawayo, although different in set-up and participation, the Urban Agriculture Units are still functioning well. The process in Amman showed that the transition towards a more local food system can be developed in a more top-down process (Kim Otten, 2015). In the Amman MSF several ministries, key institutions and NGOs participated. UPA was institutionalised as the Bureau of Urban Agriculture of the City of Amman, first as part of the Department of Agriculture, but later directly under the Bureau of the Mayor. The MSF meets irregularly, but the Bureau provides support to business development and city greening. The promotion of urban agriculture in Beijing has been institutionalised as the Beijing New Countryside Development Office. Investment of the Beijing Government in UPA has substantially increased over the past years. A national network (the Chinese Urban Agriculture Association) was established and still acts as the national platform for exchange of experiences among Chinese cities, universities and national agencies.

Lessons

De Zeeuw and Dubbeling (2015) identify a number of related built-in tensions in multi-stakeholder approaches, summarised as choices in *top-down versus bottom-up, policy oriented versus direct action, and mainstream versus alternative.* In the execution of the RUAF CFF and FStT programmes it was learned that emphasis best be placed on strategic mid-term planning (2-5 years) and embedding of the agreed city agenda on UPA in the actual policies, budgets and programmes of the institutions involved (Dubbeling et al. 2011). However, in the planning process, activities that tackle key problems should be implemented in the short term and within the actual institutional and financial conditions. In China, policymaking is evidence-based; one needs to offer higher-level authorities good results or new technologies with proven potential, to allow strategic planning to be approved and implemented at that level. In addition, local government bodies often have less patience to work through the usually time-consuming multi-stakeholder processes and prefer fast(er) decision making based on "learning by doing". In the Amman "Clean Development" Master Plan, UPA is one of the five main components. It promotes urban forestation (applying wastewater), enhances access of urban poor (women's groups) to agricultural land and services, and promotes productive green roofs. This is highly relevant in the current situation with high influx of refugees from Syria, where UPA plays a crucial role in positively affecting the standard of living of farming families and individuals. In addition to this need for evidence and direct action, it is important to make the voice of the less-powerful stakeholders heard in the multi-stakeholder meetings and the planning process. As mentioned in the example of Tamale (see next article), drafting an agenda is a good result in itself, but the challenge then is to start acting, while dealing with different stakes. It is suggested to do this through formal and informal thematic working groups.

Experiences in various cities suggest that who, or which institute or department, takes the lead will depend on the *way food policy is framed*. The initiative for the urban (agriculture and food) planning process may be taken by civil society actors, commercial actors in the food chains or a local or regional governmental organisation. It is important that those who take the initiative, and go on to facilitate the training or further process, have a good capacity to establish linkages with a variety of stakeholders in the agr-food system and to cross existing gaps and barriers between those stakeholders, especially between government/civil society actors and private commercial actors, as well as the capacity to initiate and facilitate a multi-stakeholder strategic action planning process (Amerasinghe et al. 2013).

One should try to include in the planning process mainstream as well as informal and alternative actors in the food chain. This requires a transparent process, continuous capacity building among stakeholders for the development of participatory processes, and building of trust and cooperation among the main actors during the process. It is advisable to have the municipality in the lead, also for continuity and support, especially also since it takes a lot of energy and money to achieve and continue common activities. Good facilitation is essential. The facilitation by RUAF and IPES in Lima led to a wide consensus among urban producers, decision makers and other stakeholders that urban agriculture land use is legitimate and sustainable and should be actively supported and maintained. A municipal ordinance in VMT gave legitimacy to urban agriculture and facilitated integration within the cities' economic development and land use plans. The distinction between facilitators and participants may be a bit blurred, and in most cases the initiative is either taken or funded by outsiders. But the aim is for local stakeholders to take ownership of the process. Various stakeholders, including local government, NGOs, researchers and practitioners, engage in joint analysis and definition of issues to address, and in planning solutions. They identify points where the promotion and improvement of food system processes can be considered in their ongoing activities, and in institutionalising them (Dubbeling et al. 2011). This provides an opportunity to undertake further local participatory work, involving food system stakeholders as leaders in the planning process. Participation can thus be nested at different institutional and practical scales.

In China, the Beijing, the process was facilitated formally and informally by IGSNRR, through bilateral meetings, mini-conferences and interviews. At a later stage, several sub-groups or learning alliances operated: a policy-related alliance led by Beijing Rural Economy Research Centre; a more academic one led by Beijing Agriculture College; and a practice-focused alliance led by China Agriculture University. These platforms remained informal, and both meetings and bilateral discussions between institutions took place. The formal and informal facilitation by IGSNRR, through platforms, but also meetings and bilateral discussions between institutions, proved to be effective in reaching consensus in project generation and policy implementation. This informal character created the possibility of freely exchanging ideas and information, thereby influencing policy development within institutions and at various levels of government. Innovation and experimentation was made possible while staying aligned with official city planning and the city strategic vision.

Choices

Choices on aim, process and stakeholders involved, made in the initial phases of the planning process, will strongly influence the scope of the exercise and type of results that may be achieved (Zeeuw and Dubbeling 2016). This refers to the choice of: *specific geographical scope* (neighbourhood, city or city-region level); *sector or focus* (improving health/nutrition, enhancing food security, strengthening the local economy, or resilience of the agrofood system, etc); *aim or*

approach (awareness-raising, mobilising and supporting innovations, or systematic assessment and planning); and the *position and role of local authorities*. Each of these bring demands and limitations for information, policy orientation, stakeholder involvement, and so forth and influences policy uptake, access to financing and sustainability.

Question from the floor at a FUPAP meeting. Photo by Kenny Lynch / On Flickr

RUAF supported the development of the MSF and a strategic agenda on UPA for the District of Greater Monrovia, recognising the need for collaboration between the districts' various cities and townships and also anticipating the development of the Metropolitan Area of Greater Monrovia. The MSF provided a platform for urban farmers and their organisations to discuss and negotiate improved services with the Ministry of Agriculture and Monrovia City Corporation. The strong "political connection" and cooperation with local stakeholders contributes to "giving a voice" to vulnerable farmers and to influencing structural changes. In addition to putting UPA on the agendas of Greater Monrovia and several smaller cities, it has also been incorporated in the national framework for urban development.

In every city or city region those who lead the planning process have to develop their own approach that best fits local conditions, needs and political priorities. In some cases local government develops an interest in UPA because this fits well into its social policy, seeking inclusion of disadvantaged categories of the population and to enhance their food security. In other cities the interest in UPA is mainly for its potential contributions to urban greening, recycling of urban wastes, storm water management and adaptation to climate change, while in others one can only get the attention and cooperation of the local authorities when one reveals the potentials of UPA for local economic, micro-enterprise and value chain development.

A participatory situation analysis and subsequent discussion on a common vision and potential activities are important in getting to know each other, in understanding each other's positions and also the multiple functions of UPA, its constraints and opportunities. One should not lose sight, though, of the development of longer-term policies or strategies to transform the food system in the city region; these may require new policies, new laws and regulations, new institutional arrangements and acquisition of additional resources. And this takes time. In Tamale, after drafting the city agenda, a conflict of interest became apparent between actors that defend vested interests in the urban agro-food system and actors that want to transform that system and seek to reduce the power of certain dominant actors in the food system (see next article).

Drafting a strategic agenda on UPA and food is not the end. It recognises that a lot is already ongoing, and seeks to connect and enforce, and this way rather is the beginning of a longer process. Having such a strategic agenda does not automatically lead to change. The vision and strategies identified by the MSF need to be operationalised and implemented, requiring proper design and monitoring of projects and their inclusion in the institutional budgets. It also needs assessment and (re-)formulation of existing policies, laws, norms and regulations. The multi-stakeholder platform needs to be consolidated into a permanent governance structure (see article of Cabannes on page 10), and the partners need to actively work on its success.

Successful policymaking and implementation requires that local producer and community groups, who tend to be the city's most excluded groups, be recognised as legitimate actors in urban management and decision making. This in order to increase their contribution to the local economy and policy making, through partnerships and alliances with other stakeholders.

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Experiences from Stakeholder Dialogues in Tamale, Northern Ghana

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Tamale Multistakeholder Forum. Photo by Imogen Belwood-Howard

Tamale is the capital city of Ghana's Northern Region. As the regional capital, Tamale is growing rapidly – the population has almost tripled to over 370,000 in the past 30 years, and the areal extent has increased up to sevenfold in the same period. Urban agriculture is an integral part of the food system, linked to resource management and spatial planning. In general one can say that backyard farming flourishes, but more formally organised production is threatened by urbanisation.

The first planning laws, developed in the 1950s, were based on the British 1945 Town and Country Planning Act, while the planning paradigm of the 1970s retained the colonial view that the functions of town and country should be separated spatially. Meanwhile, administrative powers have been devolved to the municipal level as part of the nationwide governmental decentralisation process. In theory, this should provide an opportunity for more involvement of local institutions and organisations in planning processes, yet there is still some way to go. It is necessary to consider not only whether but how participatory planning is enacted.

Despite occasional lack of implementation of urban plans, rapid and often unplanned growth has led, of necessity, to the evolution of a rather functional food system. The traditional Northern Ghanaian staples maize, yam and rice still play an important role in urban and periurban zones, but vegetable farming is increasing in importance. The Tamale food system links to local and regional food production, along with related nutrient and water cycling issues.

The multi-stakeholder planning process

Various local and international research and development organisations concerned with urban food systems have convened a series of interlinked stakeholder meetings, in order to understand and improve Tamale's food system and agree on producing a city agenda on urban agriculture.

This multi-stakeholder dialogue process started in 2011, by RUAF and Tamale's University for Development Studies (UDS) as partners under the Ghana Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) alliance. In 2013, UrbanFoodPlus, a research project on urban agriculture, in which UDS, RUAF and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) were also partners, became another umbrella under which these organisations and others, such as the Urban Agriculture Network, URBANET, could meet.

Accra versus Tamale

The stakeholder process was based on the Multi-stakeholder Policy formulation and Action Planning process (MPAP) designed by RUAF. RUAF and IWMI supported the development of a multi- stakeholder platform in Accra from 2005–2011, and a core working group: the Accra Working Group on Urban and Peri-Urban Agriculture (AWGUPA), the adoption of a City Agenda, and support to farmers regarding business orientation in vegetable production as well as for safe use of waste water. In Accra the project deliberately supported the involvement of key actors, later the AWGUPA, in a situation analysis (land use, farming systems, policies, stakeholders), which was discussed with wider platform actors and described in a policy narrative. In Tamale the analysis was mainly done by researchers.

A lesson learned by RUAF teams working on similar processes in Accra, Freetown and Ibadan was that identifying an appropriate local leader for an MPAP process requires that instigators understand the local institutional setup. Authority for certain decisions rests with different bodies

across locations, and gaining approval and legitimacy means engaging with different hierarchies in different cities. This observation is certainly relevant in Tamale, and is also especially important in the contemporary context of local government empowerment in Ghana. In Accra, AWGUPA played a key role in facilitation. Such leadership is still missing in Tamale.

The issues in the City Agenda are quite similar, and the discussion is also comparable. In Accra, project activities were initially limited to a pilot project, but later included extensive farmer support (see above). In Tamale, larger-scale project activities took place under WASH and UrbanFood^{Plus}. However, the involvement of multiple stakeholders, especially the policy makers and private sector, was limited in the discussion on urban and periurban agriculture (UPA). Active follow-up and facilitation is needed, including capacity building for the working group or core group, in leadership and project development.

Tamale

Key stakeholders in the MPAP included local NGOs; the two local government bodies that administrate the metropolis, Tamale Metropolitan Assembly and Sagnaragu District Assembly (the latter formed in 2012 as the city expanded); and other governmental institutions, such as the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, the Town and Country Planning Authority and the Ministry of Health (initially as independent government departments, later as part of the Tamale and Sagnaragu Assemblies). Participation is nested at different institutional and practical scales. At the end of 2015 the participants in Tamale agreed on a first Policy Narrative on UPA (Bellwood-Howard et al. 2015), and drafted a Strategic Agenda.

Participatory planning, however, is difficult to execute, especially when the impetus has come from external organisations and projects. When local institutions accept and commit to a City Strategic Agenda, they will be a step closer to owning the process, but there will still be a need for a coordinating body. The newly reinforced Tamale Metropolitan and Sagnaragu District Assemblies would seem to be appropriate lead institutions, yet they face accusations of inefficacy, particularly from the traditional authorities. Indeed, the contestations at the interface between the customary and legal land systems, the formal planning approach and informal realities, are the main points of contention structuring this particular discussion around spatial and infrastructural planning.

The stakeholder workshops showed that a major challenge in working towards participatory solutions is reconciling the interests of differentially powerful stakeholder groups at the institutional and local levels, even when an explicitly participatory process is used. This key element is of great relevance, and acknowledged to contemporary planning processes (also see the article above), but still often ignored. Within the current ongoing process of governmental decentralisation in Ghana, the actual enactment of participation should be carefully monitored, bearing in mind various actors' power-laden interaction.

An important step is to explicitly recognise the role of informal activity in urban African food systems, rather than attempt to enforce formal approaches with limited resources (Watson and Agbola 2013). Considering the lip service paid to formalist solutions by actors such as chiefs and farmers, it could help to leave space (literally) for informal activities. This is the case at all nodes of the food web. Even if formal solutions such as official zoning of agricultural land have been suggested in a participatory environment, the observations above on participation demonstrate that this may be disingenuous. Thus, there is a rationale for thinking about how informality, such as opportunistic use of available irrigation sources or unofficial roadside vending, may be integrated.

The experiences of the Tamale stakeholder workshops consolidate those of the Accra MPAP, that funds should be earmarked for professional time dedicated to such a process. A helpful tool would therefore be a working group on these issues, comprising local action researchers and professional experts in traditional land ownership and geography, specific to the area.

After agreement on a City Strategic Agenda, it will now be important to obtain commitment to the participatory planning process. Planning at the scale of the administrative district and the traditional chiefdom is critical. The discussions that took place during the Tamale multi-stakeholder forums confirmed that dialogue within a local, participatory version of the planning process reveals the diverse priorities of multiple stakeholders. These need to be considered if planning and implementation is to function in such a way that it meets the needs of the dwellers in a city-region. A multi-stakeholder dialogue, as mobilised by RUAF and partners in Tamale (similar to elsewhere in West Africa), should be owned by local stakeholders to facilitate such activity.

The full article will be published in the book presented on p10 in this magazine.

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Advances in Urban Agriculture Policy in East Africa: Learning through comparison

Christopher Gore

Nairobi and Environs Food Security, Agriculture and Livestock Forum display, national agricultural training centre, Nairobi, Kenya. Photo by Christopher Gore

The October 2015 Milan Food Policy Pact is an indicator of the global momentum behind the establishment of policies and practices to support and enhance urban food production and food security. There is reason to be optimistic about the Pact and its potential influence, but there is also reason to be cautious about assuming such commitments alone will produce policy change. Given that there have been international commitments to the right to food since the 1940s, we need to know more about the conditions that lead global and national commitments to become embedded or institutionalised at the national and city level. For the last four years, in collaboration with the Mazingira Institute, this has been the goal of a research project in East Africa.

Decades of research has shown how important urban and periurban agriculture (UPA) is for social welfare in East African cities (Maxwell 1995, 1999; Lee-Smith 2010; Prain, Karanja, Lee-Smith 2010). The countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, along with their largest cities, have featured prominently in this evidence. This research project was motivated by the need to understand the *political dynamics* that lead UPA to be embraced both nationally and in the largest cities of Nairobi, Kampala, and Dar es Salaam. Two research questions motivated this project:

- What are the conditions that have led to varying degrees of institutionalisation of UPA in each setting?
- Are the conditions similar or different across countries and cities?

Institutionalisation

To be "institutionalised" means that rules are established, accepted and repeated over time. Rules can be formal, like laws and regulations, or informal, like practices that are continually followed. Lee-Smith and Prain (2010) hypothesised that sustained civil society engagement and advocacy, regardless of international funding sources, may be critical for the sustained institutionalisation and support of UPA locally and nationally. This paper confirms that sustained civil society engagement is one of the key factors leading UPA to be institutionalised – but not the only factor. International knowledge, networking and funding are very important for initiating and fostering UPA policy development. Still, these impacts are not influential or durable unless they are locally rooted. Domestic civil society organisations whose advocacy and programming are directly connected to formal government actors at the urban and national scale have higher impact. Multilevel interactions between government and non-government actors – in short, the character of urban and national governance – seem to be

an important and often overlooked indicator of whether UPA will be supported and sustained over time. This critical indicator should be added to others such as access to land and credit, and extension services.

Urban agricultural policy in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania

In Kenya, advocacy and coalition building between civil society, international actors, farmers and central government agricultural staff has resulted in some of the most extensive, sustained dialogue and capacity building for UPA in the region. Results from a comprehensive Mazingira Institute study of UPA in Nairobi in the mid-1980s became a baseline for future research in the city. These results helped UPA become recognised as a critical national issue connecting land rights, housing, livelihoods, health and environment. Yet it was not until the early 2000s that the advocacy efforts of civil society began to foster deeper institutionalisation of UPA. One of the most important drivers of this change in Kenya was the establishment of the Nairobi and Environs Food Security, Agriculture and Livestock Forum (NEFSALF) in 2003 (see box), along with its sustained, collaborative approach.

Nairobi and Environs Food Security, Agriculture and Livestock Forum (NEFSALF)

NEFSALF is a network of Nairobi farmers that meets as a public forum hosted by Mazingira Institute, a non-government organisation. The Kenya government has engaged actively with NEFSALF, using it as an opportunity for its official extension services to reach urban farmers by providing them with training courses to improve their practices. Over a thousand urban farmers have been trained. The NEFSALF farmers established a representative, gender-sensitive management structure to further their interests, including both their right to farm and getting access to land, and have taken part in regional and international exchanges. This form of networking encourages the development of similar structures and ways of working in other towns and cities. NEFSALF has collaborated with RUAF to host farmers from other African cities as well. Since 2013 the network and forum have linked closely with the new devolved government of Nairobi City County.

The Forum built support for UPA by working with government, citizens and urban farmers to create a farmers' network (see Lee-Smith 2010). In 2008 Mazingira started to convene farmer training courses in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture. Farmers were offered skills to help with production and value addition and they also learned about the policy context. Almost all trainees became members of the farmers' network and were invited to participate in regular Forum meetings.

Backyard chicken coop, Kampala, Uganda. Photo by Christopher Gore

At the urban scale, in the early 2000s, the City of Nairobi was not supportive of UPA. However, following the passage of the new constitution in Kenya in 2010, which devolved agriculture as a responsibility to the new county governments, support for UPA in Nairobi changed. In August 2015 the Nairobi City County passed a bill to recognise UPA as a legitimate land use, and today Mazingira is working with the County to train and sensitise non-agricultural staff on the benefits of UPA. Although there is no national UPA policy in Kenya yet, one does exist in draft form. Nonetheless, the momentum and support for UPA is high with formal recognition of UPA in other national laws and policies. So while some of the conditions leading to support for UPA in Kenya are unique owing to agricultural devolution to counties, the conditions for support were established well before this as a result of purposeful, collaborative dialogue between farmers, civil society and national government agricultural staff. These characteristics stand out in contrast to Uganda and Tanzania.

Until 2015 Kampala, Uganda, was one of the few cities in sub-Saharan Africa that had implemented by-laws to permit urban agriculture within the city boundaries. These by-laws came about in 2006 after an inclusive, consultative policy development process (Lee-Smith 2010). Even though the by-laws were restrictive rather than supportive, their passage was celebrated and well documented. A national UPA policy was expected to follow soon after. This has not yet materialised however, and the political context in the city has also changed.

In 2010 an Act of Parliament established the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). The Act gave the national government direct oversight over the city (see Gore & Muwanga 2014). This event resulted in a dramatic change in city staff and overall managerial approach in the city. The role of the elected mayor and councillors was (and is) also regularly debated. With respect to UPA, what also changed was the relationship between the city and farmers, domestic civil society and national bureaucrats. The new city staff did not have connections with the domestic actors and processes that led to the establishment of the original by-laws, nor with the international actors that had supported the by-law process. The KCCA remains supportive of UPA and has not altered the by-laws, though they will be reviewed. But in contrast to Nairobi, UPA initiatives in Kampala have been largely executed independently of the civil society and farmer networks so engaged a decade ago. City agricultural staff are in high demand and are motivated to support UPA, but they are re-establishing and building an urban food governance system anew.

In Tanzania, urban agriculture has been a nationally recognised land use since the mid-1990s, with reference to it in several national policies. Yet no national UPA policy exists and there has been reluctance to include UPA in national land-use planning policy or legislation (Halloran and Magid, 2013). Like Kampala, Dar es Salaam – as well as other towns – has been a focal point for research on UPA in Tanzania. But owing to the absence of a national UPA policy, the large geographic size of Dar es Salaam, and the complexity of the city's administrative structure (until recently there were three independent municipalities, and now there are five), farmers and civil society groups are not sure whom they should turn to for support for UPA. In short, support for UPA exists in legislation nationally, but with farmers increasingly pushed from vacant lands, that recognition is not felt at the urban scale. Urban farmer networks like TaFoGaNet (Tanzania Food Garden Network) along with domestic researchers have been working for years to enhance and protect urban farming through legislation. National agricultural extension officers based in municipalities have also been sympathetic and supportive of farmer needs. Some municipalities, Kinondoni for example, have moved ahead with ambitious UPA programmes and support. But the complexity of Tanzanian and Dar es Salaam administrative structures – particularly for agriculture – combined with a lack of resources for prolonged and sustained advocacy has meant that institutionalisation of UPA has been very incremental and weakly felt on the ground.

Advancing and sustaining UPA in East Africa

The results from this research suggest that a critical condition leading to the institutionalisation of urban agriculture is sustained, long-term collaboration between domestic civil society organisations, domestic researchers, farmers and farmer organisations, agricultural extension officers, and agricultural policy leaders in national government. To date this limited evidence has not been well documented. The depth of support for UPA in Kenya is more extensive than in the other countries. This is a result of long-term processes where domestic civil society and farmers became deeply engaged in dialogue and collaboration with government staff. This process was slow, prolonged and deliberative. It was not rushed. International organisations have played important roles in each country, and remain critical to promoting and fostering knowledge sharing, networking and collaboration; they helped support domestic processes, programmes and policies at the state and city levels in all three countries and provided external evidence and expertise. Still, this support is more likely to have a sustained impact when connected to a collaborative process with strong domestic roots. Furthermore, policy processes are often one-time events, often driven by requirements for tokenistic public participation. These are not the same as forums where dialogue, deliberation and knowledge sharing occur gradually and over time. The cases in East Africa suggest that for UPA to be institutionalised, opportunities for dialogue, learning and debate between domestic civil society, farmers and public servants is critical and can help weather local and national political change.

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Linking Urban Farming and Urban Planning in Times of Crisis

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Photo by René van Veenhuizen

RUAF has been working on the role of urban agriculture in post-disaster and emergency settings for a number of years (see for example UA Magazine 21).

In 2015 RUAF began a collaboration with The Spontaneous City International (SPcitI) on this subject, in the context of the Syrian Refugee crisis, with a geographical focus on the region of Mafraq in Northern Jordan, where an inventory on the role of food and agriculture has been commissioned by the International Cooperation Agency of the Association of Dutch Municipalities (VNGI). Since then, RUAF and SPcitI have been building partnerships through linkages between urban agriculture and urban planning, with a focus on cities in the global south.

The Spontaneous City

SPcitI explores, guides and designs innovative urban planning processes and projects that bring together people, knowledge and disciplines in a multi-stakeholder approach. The core question for SPcitI is, "How do you create a city where 'mutual benefit' for many is created?" Stakeholders are guided to tackle complex urban situations together, resulting in a collective planning strategy that becomes part of a city's (or neighbourhood's) sustainable development. These – intensive – processes lead to concrete proposals of master plans/development strategies, promoting a better urban environment. SPcitI follows five basic principles in the design and planning of its projects: 1) Understand the existing situation within its context, 2) Give access to all stakeholders, 3) Define the benefits for each of them, 4) Create collective values and 5) Facilitate an open and transparent process of implementation.

Change in Refugee Aid

More than 60 million people (UNHCR, 2016) in the world live in camps or temporary settlements, and often refugee camps gradually convert into "shanty towns" or become permanent settlements. However, many displaced people instead seek new livelihood opportunities in and around nearby existing cities: more than 50 per cent of refugees live in urban areas. Many of these people are unregistered and the majority stay unemployed, live in poor and overcrowded areas, and depend on international and/or non-governmental organisations or may disappear into the urban fabric and depend on networks of relatives and acquaintances (Adam-Bradford and van Veenhuizen, 2015). Most countries and cities are ill-equipped to host this great amount of refugees. When the arrival of large numbers of refugees to urban areas exceeds the capacity of local urban authorities to effectively manage their integration, pressure on services and local resources soon mounts, creating tensions between the refugees and host communities. In the complexity of urban processes in primary and secondary cities and the local regions, the dynamics of

Avenida Tronco, Brazil

SSPcitI collaborated with the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul on the Avenida Tronco project in Porto Alegre, Brazil: a newly planned thoroughfare over 5km. The impact at the level of the whole city was relevant and needed to unclog traffic jams, yet the impact at the level of all the favelas that the avenida was going to cross was a sensitive issue. A workshop, held at a location at the heart of the favelas, connected the stakeholders and catalysed the outline of a development strategy that, later on, was also presented to the mayor of Porto Alegre. The outcome of this process included several forms of cooperation and co-production among stakeholders, induced by the new accessibility and visibility provided by the road, and included a learning, information and communication centre and an "Avenida Tronco Expo" to change the citizens' unpopular perceptions of the area.

local communities – of both the host population and refugees – call for innovative strategies and systems that deal with processes of change at various scales, involving different sectors and all stakeholders. This situation is increasingly being recognised (London Conference, Supporting Syria and the Region, held 4 February 2016), despite the fact that many refugee organisations are still not prepared to work in the highly complex urban context.

Although practice is only changing slowly, various organisations are discussing and working on changing how in humanitarian aid is delivered, and are stimulating innovation, towards an integrated approach in dealing with refugee situations. Urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) in its various forms can play an important role in the disaster management cycle and assist in multifunctional policy development and practical applications; it is also applicable for the integrated design and management of refugee camps as well as in creating resilience in urban areas, and promoting integration (Adam-Bradford and van Veenhuizen, 2015). Linking UPA to water and waste management, and to urban and regional planning, are all components of this innovative change.

Involving communities in urban planning in Northern Jordan

Forced displacement driven by the protracted conflicts in Syria and Iraq is having a profound impact on urban infrastructure and the management of natural resources in and around towns. Forced displacement camps in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey affect both refugees and host communities. The Mafraq Governorate in Northern Jordan, which borders Syria, has been particularly affected by the Syrian crisis due to the high influx of refugees: currently 76,176 registered Syrian refugees are dispersed throughout the urban areas of the Mafraq Governorate, and in the Al Za'atari refugee camp reside an additional 80,112 Syrian refugees. The Mafraq Governorate is thus hosting over 156,000 registered refugees, though the total number of refugees is likely to be much higher; these official UNHCR figures do not include unregistered refugee families and refugees staying in informal tented settlements. The Syrian crisis also heavily impacts the already fragile social and agro-ecological systems in Northern Jordan, affecting vulnerable Jordanian as well as the displaced Syrian people. Continued food aid and other assistance and service provision to the refugees residing outside the camps, predominantly in urban areas, is not attainable in the current crisis response. Social stress and inter-communal conflict are increasing. The situation calls for to the urgent fostering of resilience at the local level.

VNG I coordinates LOGOReP (Resilience-based Local Government Resilience Programme for the Middle East and North Africa). This programme, implemented with Dutch cities, assists Jordan's institutions to provide a favourable (local) governance context to the refugees and host communities on the one hand and through putting international municipal expertise at the service of UNHCR and the national and local Jordanian authorities to address the challenges of managing service delivery to refugees in Al Zaa'tari camp and the host communities in the Al Mafraq region on the other. The project provides assistance in areas such as spatial planning, municipal service delivery,


Photo by: René van Veenhuizen

***Al Za'atari camp** is an accidental city (Jansen, 2009). Its horizon still reveals the official temporariness of the state of exception: across the area of about 2 by 3 km only tents and containers can be seen, arranged in a virtual grid, accommodating clans and family groupings. But given the number of people (fluctuating between 80,000 and 120,000) and their daily activities (more than 3,000 informal shops), the camp definitely reaches the critical mass of a city, nearly even merging with the adjacent village. UNHCR and several NGOs (as well as the city of Amsterdam) acknowledge the potential within the camp for growing food, or 'camp greening' through gardening linked to capacity building, and also education, although this is not yet ongoing. Other ideas include a public park, with a garden, sitting areas and space and materials for outdoor activities. Such a park would not only provide food and shade for the refugees, but could also build local capacities , livelihoods, and social cohesion at the community level.*

Eight interventions have been identified:
In the Camp:

1) *Household level: kitchen gardens*
2) *Converted wash blocks: walled community gardens*
3) *Community centres: demonstration gardens*
4) *Treated waste water used by farmers outside the camp: production and farmer field schools In selected municipalities*

And in selected municipalities:

5) *Household kitchen gardens*
6) *Community (compound) kitchen gardens and Community Centres*
7) *Small scale farmers and small holders: cooperative Development*
8) *Refugees outside municipalities in Informal Tented Settlements (ITS) linked to large scale farmers*

Urban agriculture in Domiz Camp in the Kurdish Region of Iraq

'Transforming Land, Transforming Lives' is the goal of the Lemon Tree Trust greening innovation and urban agriculture project in Domiz Camp. The bustling and hectic refugee camp is situated in the north of the Kurdish Region of Iraq, between the sprawling cities of Mosul and Dohuk. The camp was established in 2012 to accommodate approximately 29,800 Syrian refugees, but today is now home to over 40,000 refugees, the camp is becoming yet another accidental city (Jansen, 2009). On the 18th April 2016, the Lemon Tree Trust organised what is possibly the first garden competition in a refugee camp (please email ab3805@coventry.ac.uk if you know of any others). The competition was well attended with over 50 participants all competing for what became the prestigious 'First Place Certificate' and the 300 dollar prize money. With the event featured on the local Kurdish television it not only created awareness about the benefits of gardening in refugee camps but has stimulated a 'level of pride' and 'ownership of space' not seen before in a refugee camp. The greening of refugee camps though urban agriculture builds local resilience through environmental protection, environmental sanitation and food security: the three pillars of refugee camp resilience. The implementation of such programmes is best achieved in active partnership with the refugees themselves driving the process, not forgetting they always bring invaluable knowledge and experience covering agriculture, aquaculture, horticulture and livestock husbandry. The running of a gardening competition can quickly identify the level of expertise, potential demonstration sites, and trainers and future project leaders. As already mentioned it also helps create public awareness about the benefits of gardening and the role that refugees can have in improving their immediate environments through urban agriculture (Adam-Bradford et al.*, 2016). A platform to scale*

up camp greening and urban agriculture activities through the communal planting of community gardens, demonstration sites, school gardens, fruit orchards and even agroforestry. Gender-sensitive programmes can be designed using 'cash-for-work' programming to fund organic waste collection, composting plants, plant nurseries, demonstration gardens, and even community extension services. Improving environmental sanitation in camps, for example, through the utilisation of organic solid wastes for compost production and greywater recycling for irrigation, also provides entry points. Introducing a 'value-chain' approach brings additional benefits to urban agriculture through food processing, storage and improved market access. While maximising the synergies between refugees and host committees also builds social cohesion and reduces the infrastructural pressures of hosting thousands of refugees.

In essence, greening refugee camps through urban agriculture is all about bringing a new 'vision', a paradigm shift from 'dependency' to 'resilience', and maximising synergies through 'design' that introduces resource recovery and reuse, while building local capacities and drawing on the expertise, experiences and the human resourcefulness of refugees themselves.

local economic development and governance. Two missions by RUAF and SPcitI have so far been commissioned by VNGI. A first mission in 2015 suggested promoting local development by stimulating local food production, processing and marketing, and to provide assistance to the national and local authorities in improving participatory planning and service provision related to food. During the subsequent mission in July 2016, a number of interventions were identified to support the development of small-scale, integrated food and gardening activities for host and refugee communities residing in urban and rural areas, as well as in and around the refugee camp areas. These interventions in the local food system should be linked to the infrastructural framework and planning scenarios developed by VNGI and the municipality of Amsterdam, with different possible futures for the Al Za'atari camp and the region, trying to bridge the gap between short-term humanitarian aid and medium-to long-term sustainable development. The aim is to create connections between people, nutrients, water, products and services. This work will be further developed with VNGI. Similar work could benefit Lebanon (where VNGI is also implementing its LOGOReP programme), as well as other countries and organisations.

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In Pursuit of a Participatory Society: The role of the participatory agent

Beatriz Pineda Revilla
Arnold van der Valk

Buurttuinen Transvaal. Photo by Beatriz Pineda Revilla

In the last decade, Dutch cities have witnessed a rise in the number of citizen-led initiatives – initiatives which have increasingly attracted the interest of science, the public and policy makers. This article focuses on the role of the "participatory agent", a civil servant whose main task is to bridge citizen and local government interests in a community garden in Amsterdam East.

Partly due to the outbreak of the economic crisis in 2007 and the consequent budget cuts, the Dutch government has been exploring different ways to delegate more responsibilities to local governments, non-profits and citizens, switching its role from "director" to "facilitator".
This transition towards a participatory society presents many challenges for the various actors involved. In the case of the government, some of these challenges are about learning to let go, and to encourage "active citizenship" while at the same time continuing to exercise some kind of control. In the case of the citizens, the challenge lies in taking a more hands-on approach in order to leave behind comfortable paternalistic patterns. Building trusting relationships between the government and the citizens remains one of the main challenges.
One of the beliefs behind the participatory society is that societal problems such as social exclusion, antisocial behaviours, lack of social cohesion, etc. can be better approached by involving citizens in the decision-making process and in finding and working on solutions. The hypothesis that working together would lead to better results has been closely scrutinised with regard to the many different citizen projects implemented in the last years. Results are not conclusive. One thing is clear, however: in order to achieve a participatory society, "active citizens" are needed – citizens who can be described as responsible, honest, considerate and prudent (WRR, 2012). One important enabling factor for citizens to become more active is to be surrounded by "stimulating living environments". Of the strategies undertaken by the Dutch local government to foster such environments, one was to create the role of participatory agent.

Who is the participatory agent?

The participatory agent is a public servant employed by local authorities to serve as a mediator between local government and citizens. The participatory agent should know the neighbourhood and the neighbours, and be accessible and trustworthy. *Proximity* and *continuity* are key factors for building the desirable relationships of trust between local actors.
As Polstra and Van Houten (2010) state, more and more local municipalities are making use of the participatory agent to coordinate the initial stages of citizen-led initiatives and to lend support after the implementation phase is over. The Amsterdam East district has nine participatory agents (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2015) for a population of 128,690 inhabitants (OIS, 2015). One of them is Wouter Stoeken, participatory agent in the Transvaal neighbourhood, who plays an important role in the Buurttuinen Transvaal community garden, one of the numerous local initiatives.

Buurttuinen Transvaal

The garden was initiated in 2010 in a green public space that was used mainly by dog owners and drug dealers in the vicinity. Five committed citizens, who lived around the square, took the initiative to transform their living environment and to create a meaningful meeting place for their neighbourhood. They approached the local government, *Stadsdeel Oost* (the Amsterdam East district), which had just received a subsidy from the Physical Planning Department to support citizen-led initiatives in "problem" neighbourhoods. Wouter Stoeken, who had already been working as a participatory agent in the Transvaal neighbourhood since 2007, supported the initiators with the creation of an official

Wouter Stoeken: Participatory agent at the Municipality of Amsterdam, Stadsdeel Oost

How would you describe the role of the participatory agent?
I am the bridge between citizens/entrepreneurs and institutions who want to contribute actively to the neighbourhood. We help with subsidy requests, questions about municipal policies, permit requests. We can also find connections with urban programmes such as "Healthy Weight". Within the municipality, we have inside information about the priorities in each area: what projects are in the neighbourhood and how we can start working together with all parties involved.

What has been your role in the Buurttuinen Transvaal?
My role has been to facilitate the initiative; to bring the right people together, to organise meetings with different departments within the local municipality such as green management, urban designers, ecologists. Together with the project manager, I actively looked for resources and I looked into how the network in the neighbourhood could be linked to this community garden and how local social projects could contribute to the initiative. For example, the adjacent nursery has organised some activities in the garden, and a group of local immigrant women have used garden vegetables in their cooking initiatives. At the moment my role is to maintain contact with the board of directors of the garden and, from time to time, help them with the occasional subsidy application.

What is the added value of the participatory agent?
We add extra knowledge about the area, are the access point for the initiators to the local municipality, involve all local parties in the decision-making process, and provide citizen initiatives with the knowledge and expertise gathered by the local municipality.

association registered at the Chamber of Commerce; this was one of the requirements for receiving the government subsidy. With the establishment of the association, the garden became a democratic organisation. All members, who must live in the neighbourhood, must be older than 18, and pay EUR 10 per year, have the right to elect the board of directors and to vote on issues related to the garden during the biannual general membership meetings.

Over the course of the initiative, the contact between the gardeners and the participatory agent has been gradually decreasing. The relationship of trust has allowed the local government to increasingly delegate responsibilities to the board of directors, allowing the garden to self-organise. Despite this apparent "emancipation" of the initiative, Wouter's role is still important. Citizen-led initiatives are continuously changing, mainly due to the fluctuating motivations and circumstances of its members. In the case of initiatives located in the public space, such as this community garden, it is especially important to guarantee inclusivity so that all residents in the neighbourhood feel welcome to participate.

The Buurttuinen Transvaal citizen-led initiative was one of the first to experiment with the "facilitating role" of the local government and with the participatory agent. The learning in these last years has increased exponentially, for both the local government and the gardeners. The local government has learned that, in order to be a facilitator, proximity to citizens is key. As well, rules need to be more flexible and rigid bureaucratic procedures should be transformed into enabling tools to allow citizen-led initiatives to flourish. Citizens have learned that, in order to play a more active role in the process of shaping their living environments, effective organisation and commitment are crucial. This might cost time and effort, but the reward, for example growing vegetables in your own neighbourhood, can be worth the extra effort.

Now the Buurttuinen Transvaal is a reference model for other community gardens in the city of Amsterdam. It welcomes many visitors, such as other local governments, researchers and students, who are interested in understanding the success factors behind this initiative. In the meantime, the garden is increasingly becoming an educational setting where gardening workshops and courses are facilitated.

Existing citizen-led initiatives have proven that the participatory agent can be a crucial element – though other aspects, such as the emerging role of non-profits or the potential of social entrepreneurship, deserve further exploration in this transition towards a participatory society.

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From Open Data to Open Space: Translating public information into collective action

Paula Z. Segal

Neighbors created 462 Halsey Community Garden on public land. Photo by Murray Cox

The 596 Acres project is the New York City (NYC) community land access programme, helping neighbours organise around and gain access to the city's vacant land. The programme combines sophisticated online tools and grassroots outreach to turn municipal data into information that the public can use, to help neighbours navigate city politics and connect neighbourhood organisers to each other. In the last three years, 596 Acres has helped groups of residents form community organisations and gain formal access to publicly owned land to create 37 new community spaces in previously vacant lots.

Where is the land?

Clearly, 596 Acres emerged out of a unique moment in a long history of community gardening and organising for local control of land in New York City. In the 1970s the city's budget was in bad shape and most vacant public land was unfenced. Neighbours transformed these lots into community spaces out of a combination of hope and necessity. These spaces were threatened in 1999 when Mayor Giuliani attempted to auction 112 city-owned garden sites as "surplus real estate". Gardeners and New York State objected. The State Attorney General sued the city; under a settlement, some gardens were preserved through a transfer to local community land trusts managed by gardeners. Others remained city-owned, but were permanently preserved as community open spaces through a transfer to NYC Parks.

In 2011 these local trusts were just gaining full title to the gardens they now steward. Though existing gardens were being preserved, the mechanisms for creating more had faded from view. The city's budget was in better shape; publicly owned vacant lots were now behind fences, and jumping fences was a clear first step to a night in jail for many New Yorkers (White, 2014). Yet the environmental justice movement and a growing interest in community-based responses to global warming had activists – from both long-established community groups like El Puente Green Light District and newly formed organisations like the Brooklyn Food Coalition – asking: *where is the land for the new community projects we know we need? Where can we grow food? Where can we transform food scraps into soil through composting?*

In this new New York City, flush with construction cranes and bicycle lanes, hundreds of acres of potential public space lurk all around us behind nondescript fences. Located primarily in low-income communities of colour that desperately lack green space, thousands of city-owned vacant lots languish,

Communities in action

596 Acres sees – and teaches others to see – empty spaces as sites of opportunity: for potential green spaces in neighbourhoods that lack them, and as focal points for community organising and civic engagement. By connecting people in neighbourhoods with information about central city policies impacting properties they care about, we have built a constituency ready to engage with the mechanisms that shape the city and decide the fate of our shared assets.

Protecting our gardens

In January 2015, NYC Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) published a list of 181 "hard to develop" properties they were willing to sell for USD 1 to housing developers willing to build housing deemed affordable according to federal definitions (rent can be more than USD 3200 per month for a family of four). Using our Living Lots NYC database, 596 Acres was able to quickly analyse the list and find that it included nearly 20 community gardens, six of which had formed through our support. We used and expanded our network to put community gardeners in the best position to respond long before any particular garden was threatened with demolition. We highlighted which lots on the HPD list were actually gardens, published a map, and called the impacted gardeners.

Within three weeks of the list's publication, over 150 New Yorkers, including four City Council members, rallied on the steps of City Hall (Tortellano, 2015). After a year-long campaign that included Community Boards, City Council and advocates in every level of the administration, on December 30, 2015 the NYC Department of Parks and HPD agreed to permanently preserve 15 gardens on the for-sale list in the NYC Parks inventory; community pressure was so great that the announcement extended to community spaces that were not even on offer: in total, 36 community spaces were permanently preserved as a result of information-driven advocacy – the fourth wave of major garden-preservation successes in NYC history (Crow, 2016)!

Creating promised open space

The lot that became Keap Fourth Community Garden in 2014 was designated "Open Space" in the NYC Urban Renewal Area Plan for the neighbourhood adopted in 1992. For 30 years the public lot languished behind a fence in the inventory of HPD, which has neither the mandate nor the budget to transform the many planned open spaces in its inventory into real places. In August 2012, 596 Acres posted a sign on this fence. Soon, neighbourhood parents, a Latino-youth-led "Green Light" district campaign, and the day-care centre next door came together to gather the support needed to force city agencies to do what was planned decades ago. Two years later, the ribbon was cut on Keap Fourth Community Garden. The two lots comprising it were finally transferred to NYC Parks for permanent preservation as an open space. It is now a thriving community garden and the site of many preschool singalongs.

full of garbage; they are abscesses in the very neighbourhoods that most need more healthy resources. Approximately 660 acres of vacant public land in New York City are distributed across 1,800 vacant lots (LivingLotsNYC.org, 2011-2016, last visited Feb. 4, 2016). These lots, that could be gardens, play spaces and sites of community gathering and cultural activity, instead sit vacant, locked and forgotten, compounding a history of urban renewal clearance and municipal neglect. Meanwhile, people crave vibrant spaces and yearn to create them. Most often what is missing is a structured invitation into the power structure that determines urban land use. In response, 596 Acres emerged to extend that invitation.

The right to the city

The "right to the city", first articulated by Henri Lefebvre in 1968, recognises the urban environment as akin to a work of art constantly being created anew by its inhabitants: a space of encounter that allows differences to flourish and generates the contemporary conditions for creative human communities. Since the urban environment we shape in turn shapes us, the right to the city – the right to shape the city – is really the right to personal autonomy and community self-determination.

Individuals and groups lacking access to data about vacant public properties in their neighbourhoods, and access to information about how to influence them, are prevented from fully participating in this collective, creative act. The 596 Acres model, based on a belief in data-driven, inclusive and democratic local power, is a grassroots strategy that allows residents to exercise their right to the city. Regular New Yorkers with access to accurate information, in context, provided together with support from a small, nimble and experienced staff, can and do organise collectively to create tangible results and real change in their neighbourhoods. Together, they inspire grassroots change well beyond the boundaries of vacant lots. The model is replicable in other cities and scalable to citywide and statewide issues concerning environmental justice and public space.

Opening open data

In 2011, the 596 Acres team began to decentralise decision-making about vacant public land by hunting down available information. This is how we got our name: 596 acres is how much vacant public land the NYC Department of City Planning perceived there to be in 2011 in Brooklyn, where the

Keap Fourth Community Garden provides children attending the preschool next door with a healthy green space to grow, learn and play. Photo by Tanyth Berkeley

project was then based. We delved into this official number and found it both under- and over-inclusive (e.g., unbuilt municipal parking lots were not included; 20-year-old gardens were). We turned to other city agencies and not-for-profit organisations, using the New York State Freedom of Information Law when we had to, and began the work of translating data sets into information describing the world as New Yorkers actually experience it, beginning with the very definition of a vacant lot. After weeding out community gardens and lots that lack public entry (about 30%), we developed an interactive online map, Living Lots NYC, that identifies which fenced-off vacant lots are actually public and therefore already ours in common, with accurate data about each lot. People can sign up directly, saying "I want to organise here!" and then receive updates when someone else signs up or posts.

Open data becomes open space

We put information from our web tool where people most impacted by vacant lots will find it: on the fences that surround the lots. The signs announce clearly that the land is public and that neighbours, together, may be able to get permission to transform it into a community space. Also indicated are which city agency has control over that property, the official parcel identifier (BBL: Borough, Block and Lot number) and information about the individual property manager handling the parcel for the agency. This was key to our success in transforming open data into locally-managed open space: neighbours see the signs and see an opportunity. Armed with accurate information, they initiate local campaigns.

Both the signs and web tool connect to the 596 Acres staff, who can steer and support residents through legal advice and technical assistance. In each instance, residents must navigate a unique bureaucratic maze: gathering a group (usually ten or more neighbours) that wants to work together on the land access campaign and stewardship opportunity, applying for approval from the local Community Board, winning endorsement from local elected officials, and negotiating as a community organisation (whether existing or newly formed) with whichever agency holds title to the land. During each campaign, 596 Acres acts in a supporting and advocacy role, but each space is ultimately managed autonomously, transformed and maintained by volunteer neighbours and local community partners as spaces in which to gather, grow food and play.

We work with each unique situation to figure out what is possible and then help people achieve it. Where possible, practical, and aligned with community vision, the goal is permanent transfer to the NYC Parks Department. There the land becomes permanently preserved as community open space through a state law protecting parks and open spaces as resources held in "public trust", with the gardeners as official stewards. Sometimes the only achievable outcome is a temporary space for a few years, until other planned development moves forward. Even then, residents gain opportunities to shape the city, practice civic participation and self-government, and become co-creators with fellow New Yorkers.

Making connections

Not only does 596 Acres connect neighbours with one another; it also keeps track of their advocacy activity. Figuring out how to work across different communication platforms (the web tool or email, phone, face-to-face) allows us to connect New Yorkers who have different strengths, and who represent different groups, over a shared will to express their rights to the city. We also maintain a network through which local organisers from different neighbourhoods can share best practices from successful campaigns, strengthening their power.

While New York City policy makers take strides to prioritise urban agriculture and public space as beneficial land uses, 596 Acres fills the gap between policy and the people in our neighbourhoods. The 596 Acres budget is lean; we are supported through fundraising, with over 30% coming from individuals in our own community as small individual donations, and government support in the form of discretionary money from some New York City Council Members. Our small budget doesn't capture the tremendous pro bono work we have leveraged to support New York City land stewards, strategic partnerships with cultural and advocacy institutions, and the budgets of organisations that have implemented their own Living Lots platforms around the country. This is by design: our model will only become a robust, established approach as it is taken up by residents, community groups, advocates, and other city leaders.

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Pivotal Position for Large-Scale Urban Agriculture in Bottom-Up Development in Almere

Jan-Eelco Jansma
Arjan Dekking

Today's Oosterwold area features large scale world market oriented agriculture. Photo by Jan Eelco Jansma

The complexity of planning food-producing cities can be witnessed in the development of a new greenfield extension of 4,300 hectares on the eastern side of the Dutch city of Almere: Oosterwold. Authorities intend a pivotal role for urban agriculture as a placemaking instrument in the area; at least 50 per cent of the planned area needs to be farmed. Oosterwold embraced the initial ideas of a co-habitation between urban and rural life as suggested in the Agromere plans (more about Agromere: Jansma and Visser, 2011).

Oosterwold is a unique example of do-it-yourself urban planning with few regulations and much space to develop. In this article, we would like to offer two suggestions to support the development of urban agriculture in Oosterwold.

Almere

Almere is a new town designed with an unique polynuclear layout that is completely different from most Dutch cities. This layout was inspired by the English garden cities of Ebenezer Howard. In a period of 40 years, Almere developed into a city with approximately 200,000 inhabitants. Due to the growing need for new housing in the Amsterdam metropolitan area, Almere will have to double in size over the next decades. This intended expansion was conceived in the Almere 2.0 programme. Oosterwold, part of the Almere 2.0 programme, is expected to house approximately 15,000 households. The area should also be sustainable, carbon-neutral and as self-sufficient as possible (Almere, 2012).
The transformation of Oosterwold is expected to ensue as a so-called "organic" (in terms of step-by-step) urban development approach based in the "Do-It-Yourself Urbanism" paradigm (Ilieva, 2013). The authorities provide future residents with a set of 10 principles (see box). Each potential settler is provided with a "road map" which consists of 6 stages: how to navigate from initial idea to realisation. Although the authorities have a relatively small role to play in Oosterwold, still some legal procedures and permits are obligatory. To facilitate the settlers and supervise the area's development, a subsidiary has been founded. This subsidiary is a legal organisation approved by regional and national authorities; it consists of an area director and a small staff.

What happened since?

By autumn 2015, more than 180 initiatives applied for a site in Oosterwold. Most initiatives (private persons, groups, families and commercial developers) focus on the development of real estate. They opt for land with the urban agriculture qualification (more space than the standard for urban agriculture, see principle 4) because it is less expensive to purchase. So far,

10 Principles of Oosterwold (Almere, 2015)

1. *People make Oosterwold; not the government, but future residents create their own house, estate, neighbourhood, enterprise or urban farm.*
2. *Each settler has the freedom to choose the location, size and shape of his site, in consultation with the landowner. Some locations are allocated for infrastructure or nature development.*
3. *Oosterwold has a fixed standard division of space: at least 50% of the area is designated for urban agriculture, the remainder is allotted for housing and commercial activities (20%) and infrastructure, nature development, water infrastructure and public or other green space (30%).*
4. *It is possible to deviate from the standard (see principle 3). If you plan more space (than the standard 20%) for real estate on your plot, this has to be compensated with land for urban agriculture elsewhere in the area. Settlers who opt for more than standard urban agriculture or public green on their plot can purchase their plot for a lower price.*
5. *To maintain the green character of the landscape, every property must be surrounded by green space. The floor air ratio (FAR) is 0.5, i.e., with a one-storey property a maximum of 50% of the site can be developed.*
6. *The settlers develop their own supporting infrastructure: authorities will only provide the main infrastructure in the area.*
7. *At least two-thirds of Oosterwold will remain green: future Oosterwold will harbour different kinds of green (public and private): forest, agriculture, gardens and leisure areas.*
8. *The sites are as self-sufficient as possible: each settler – individually or with others – is responsible for their own (tap)water supply, wastewater and sewage treatment and energy supply.*
9. *Each site is financially self-sustaining: this requires that less profitable developments like nature and agriculture have to be sustained with more profitable initiatives like real estate development.*
10. *Public investment follows private investments: settlers invest in advance in future public facilities. With enough settlers in the area, the government will use these funds for the development of public facilities and the expansion of existing infrastructure.*

The Oosterwold subsidiary is responsible for the execution of these principles.

there are few initiatives with the intention of developing urban agriculture at professional (and larger) scale. A conference, organised in the autumn of 2015, highlighted the fact that prices for land (approx. EUR 90,000/ha for an urban agriculture site) combined with high investment costs and an uncertain development pathway discouraged professional urban farmers to settle in the area.

Although local policy has high ambitions for changing the planning process in Oosterwold, the reality is unruly. Oosterwold sharply contradicts with the strict spatial organisation, blueprint development plans, and institutionalised approach to planning in The Netherlands. The Oosterwold conference emphasises that authorities as well as settlers struggle with their new role and position in the development process. Settlers have to take care of procedures like archaeological and ecological pre-research at their potential site as well as the construction of roads and utilities like tap water and electricity. Normally these are executed by professionals, not by private persons. Settlers also have to put a lot of effort into involving the authorities in their ideas and intentions. Civil servants of crucial departments at the municipality and involved utility institutions are not always prepared to engage in this way of participatory planning practice. Inherent to this kind of innovative manner of area development is that rules and procedures evolve, affecting both authorities and potential settlers. One of the first settlers keeps a blog on the progress of their property since the very first ideas (Almere, 2016). One of the important lessons for new settlers is that this means of development is time-consuming; a "part-time job", as one of the settlers called it at the 2015 conference. There is also a need to share experience and lessons, not only among the settlers but also between settlers and authorities, and between the involved departments and institutions. Settlers and authorities both feel the need for some room to experiment outside the standard. Nevertheless, the expectation is that the procedures will take less time in the future, when authorities and settlers are more accustomed to this new situation.

Prospects of urban agriculture

Today, Oosterwold harbours mostly large-scale arable and dairy farms; they produce for the world market. A survey in 2011 among these farmers showed that only 25% of them were potentially interested in converting to urban agriculture; they do not feel the urge to change their profitable practices. Hence, the area will need urban agriculture pioneers from outside who are willing to invest in the area. But, as mentioned, the costs of investment are high and the development pathway uncertain. Without incentives, the development of urban agriculture to the required 50% of Oosterwold's area will be difficult. We propose two incentives that could stimulate urban agriculture initiatives: a land conservation trust and an incubator.

A *public farmland conserving organisation or trust* could mediate between land supply and demand but could also actively purchase land from incumbent farmers who want to leave the area. This could provide new entrepreneurs, or other initiatives, from outside the area with land to establish

Cooperation between a real estate agency and an urban farmer

Over the last decade, real estate developer AM has acquired several sites throughout the Oosterwold area. Eva Hekkenberg, development manager at AM, sees opportunities for new real estate development in the area in collaboration with urban farmers. The first collaboration takes place at a location of approximately 40 ha. "Some people want to develop their property by themselves, but others are less interested in taking care of the whole development procedure themselves. Here we see a role for AM. The real estate developer facilitates the development of roads, utilities, the legal hurdles and developing urban agriculture. Residents then purchase a site, sometimes even with a house. For the agricultural part, AM has teamed up with an urban farmer. Of course the urban farmer takes care of the agriculture at the location, but his role is more than that: the farm has a key role in the placemaking of the location. If they wish, future residents can even cooperate in the farming." It is expected that in 2016 this collaboration between AM and the urban farmer will start in Oosterwold.

their urban farm. This trust could evolve into a modern kind of publicly owned land, a kind of agricultural commons. Funds to establish the trust could be derived from property owners in the area who have no interest in establishing urban agriculture on their acquired plot (and would be happy if someone else cultivates it). The trust could also derive funds from stakeholders of the Almere area, which might help to tighten the bond between the city and Oosterwold. Moreover, placing the land, as public property, beyond the economic pressure, could preserve the land from future urban development. Establishing such a trust would be novel in the Netherlands.

The second suggestion we have that might stimulate the development of urban agriculture is to create *protective places* which encourage and facilitate start-ups with product or business development. Incubators could be locations where start-ups can experiment, adjust and mature new products or services before scaling up. Incubation occurs in learning networks of pioneers with experts, online or on-site. An example is the Vermont Food Venture Center in Hardwick (VT Food Venture Center, 2016). This centre was established by local farmers, food businesses and the local community of Hardwick with support of regional funds. In Almere, the Almere 2.0 programme offers possibilities for the funding of these kinds of initiatives.

In this initial phase of change we believe that the Oosterwold subsidiary plays a crucial role as an intermediary – to reflect on the lessons, establish an organisation, facilitate the initiatives and networks, acquire resources and broker knowledge. The initiatives could also profit from the relative proximity of the Oosterwold subsidiary to authorities in voicing their needs and wishes. We expect that the involvement of this intermediary will decrease over time, when a growing group of initiatives take the lead in Oosterwold.

Eva Hekkenberg, development manager at AM.
Photo by Xander Remkens, Oosterwold Conference 2015

Final remarks

In this article, we leave a lot of issues connected with the further development of urban agriculture in Oosterwold untouched. Questions like how to organise and integrate local food production and related services in the region, how to integrate agriculture in the local circular systems and how to balance between urbanisation and agriculture will emerge sooner or later. Although today's settlers and authorities encounter hurdles that are part of an innovation of this dimension, the intended development of urban agriculture in Oosterwold is unprecedented and puts this area in the front line of innovative urban planning.

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Social Currencies and Community-Based Food Initiatives in Asturias, Spain

Ana Maria Rivero Santos

Photo by Ana María Rivero Santos

This article shares an example of how community-based initiatives have used new monetary mechanisms, in the context of economic crisis, to contribute to the food system's resilience. Among several cases of social currencies existing in Spain (with 230 initiatives more than ¼ of all social currencies globally), RASTRU is one of the few social currency cases with access to food at the core of the exchanges. Research in the region of Asturias shows that social currencies contribute to economic sustainability of producers and to enhanced participation in community-based food planning.

Social currencies are a non-traditional means of payment consisting of a monetary unit, agreed upon by a community, to be used to exchange goods and services produced and consumed in a territory. Social currencies spread worldwide within the Transition Towns movement to relocalise production, reduce dependence on international markets and achieve self-sufficiency for essential inputs like food.

RASTRU uses the social currency called 'copin' (plural: copinos) and stands for *Red Asturiana de Comunidades de Trueque* (Asturian Network of Barter Communities). According to the official website, it is "an alternative economic system based on indirect barter of goods and services between individuals, companies or associations without money. It allows anyone to contribute by offering their talent, resources and skills to the community and meet their subsistence needs without the restrictions that unemployment and shortage of money currently impose". RASTRU is structured through local barter communities, also called "nodes", which have the autonomy to control and manage exchanges and markets. With indirect barter, the currency is created at the moment of exchanging a service or a good. The buyers get a negative balance in their account (debit) and the sellers get a positive balance (credit), which can be used for other purchases with other members from the RASTRU network.

Solidarity income

RASTRU, unlike other mutual exchange systems, has a taxation system that allows social investments and a basic income for the most vulnerable people. It consists of a tax that takes 8% of each transaction (4% from the "seller" and 4% from the "buyer"), which goes directly to accounts of the various Open Councils in the network. An Open Council is a place of dialogue and debate where anyone from the community (not only RASTRU) can participate in periodic meetings to decide how the tax is used for the common good. The taxes are used to encourage projects and proposals for vulnerable people, families or groups to become self-sufficient and meet their basic needs in copinos. Different kinds of activities can be covered, such as English

Main features of RASTRU (early 2016)

Location *Asturias (Oviedo, Pruvia + 6 nodes), Spain*

Type of currency *LETS currency. Ratio exchange of 1:1 between copin and euro. Copinos cannot be exchanged back into euros. The individual credit limit in the system is -50 copinos.*

Users *1032 people, mostly 35–54 years old; equal participation of women and men; both employed (44%) and unemployed (20%)*

Main features *Mutual credit exchange; self-governance and taxation systems; solidarity income.*

Main bodies and actors *Monthly RASTRU meetings; weekly meeting at the node; working thematic groups; communication committees. Food producers are members of the network and charge 100% in copinos, which they then use to obtain products and compensate workforce.*

Short food supply chain mechanisms *Ecologic Consumption Groups and Community-Supported Agriculture: financed with taxes charged in all transactions (4% from buyer, 4% from seller).*

lessons for unemployed people, workshops to stop smoking, or entrepreneurship initiatives. So far seven families have benefitted from this subsidy, or "solidarity income", using copinos to purchase food produced by local agro-ecological food producers in RASTRU through the consumption groups or to access other services or goods offered in the network.

There are a number of ways to obtain copinos in order to access the weekly food "basket". One way is to borrow copinos and get a maximum negative balance of -50 copinos; another option is to earn copinos by selling goods or services through using the "solidarity income"; one can also exchange euros at a rate of 1:1. One last option is to work at one of the farms (see below). The farmer pays 10 copinos per hour, normally not exceeding 4 hours per day.

Agro-Ecological consumption groups

Each node is in charge of developing activities to improve the economic situation of the members, their social links within the community and with other territories. At RASTRU, they have opted for agro-ecological consumption groups that are supplied by community-supported agriculture or local agro-ecological producers accepting social currency. Consumption groups are composed of individuals and families that are organised to collectively buy food from local and agro-ecological producers. Within RASTRU there are approximately 30 families who, every week, consume products equivalent to 30 to 40 copinos and another 10 to 15 families who occasionally participate. There are eight suppliers, including professional farmers and artisan producers, of which five are members of RASTRU who sell their products – consisting mainly of fruits and vegetables – 100% in exchange for copinos. The other three suppliers are derivative producers (olive oil, cheese, yogurt and cider) who instead charge in euros. All transactions within the consumption groups are conducted in social currency. Weekly, about 60% of the participating consumers who are not members of RASTRU buy copinos with euros. These euros are used to remunerate the suppliers of derivative products. In turn, 40% of the consumers pay in copinos which are then used to pay the suppliers providing their products for copinos. The participation of consumers paying in euros is relevant to maintain diversity of products (like non-perishable food items). Suppliers accepting copinos use them to purchase other local food supplies or pay for farm-work time. One person is in charge of coordinating supply and demand within the consumption groups, centralising the orders and organising the deliveries at a meeting point. This person earns a salary of 150 copinos funded by a monthly contribution from the consumption group's users.

Supporting new farm businesses

In some cases, the transaction tax is also used to support community-supported agriculture initiatives by individuals or collectives that aim to cultivate unused lands using agro-ecological techniques. The local nodes, organised as an association for legal purposes, search for land and agree on cession contracts for a period of at least two years. A credit of about 500 copinos is provided to the new farmer to access goods from the network and to pay salaries to people willing to earn copinos by doing farm work. The network collectively decides what will be produced at the farm in order not to compete with other producers, assuring the profitability and complementarity of the farm and its products. Products from the new farms are sold in the consumption groups in order to cover the debt in the system. Producers can also sell to regular markets in euros, provided that they sell directly to the consumer. Consequently, the new farms complement the existing supply chains within the copin economy. They also enrich the local agro-ecologic food supply that, at fair prices, reaches those who can normally not afford agro-ecological products and those who are not yet involved in social currency. Besides the direct economic benefits for farmers and consumers, other environmental effects concerning agro-ecologic soil restoration and social inclusion are favourable.

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Shopping for Daily Vegetables in Urban Vietnam

Sigrid Wertheim-Heck

In the highly dynamic context of urban Hanoi, food-buying practices are constantly reinvented and reconfigured by consumers who use their skills, routines and social networks to refrain from purchasing at top-down stimulated supermarkets.

Retail modernisation

Food safety is a major concern in Vietnam. In the past decade fears have grown surrounding the agro-chemical contamination of vegetables. The response from the government to these and other food safety risks includes the modernisation and the regulation of the food retail system; this amounts to stimulating the expansion of supermarkets and reducing the number of traditional food markets. The argument here is that supermarkets can better build trust among consumers by implementing private food-safety standards. The assumption is that consumers will shift from traditional fresh markets to supermarkets as a response to their food safety concerns. Supermarkets, however, account for less than 5% of total vegetable sales. The traditional wet markets or fresh markets remain the dominant locations for purchasing fresh food, despite being considered unsafe and "uncivilised" by the government.

A study was undertaken by the author to assess how policy-enforced stimulation of supermarkets has influenced daily vegetable purchasing while improving food safety.

Vegetable "purchasing" practices

In the box is an overview of six identified practices of "purchasing" – obtaining – fresh vegetables in contemporary Vietnam. The overview includes the main food-safety mitigation strategy. Hanoi consumers draw from a broad range of food acquisition and shopping practices, quite similar to other cities and countries. Although more abstract guidance systems such as labelling, branding, and certification are increasingly entering the playing field, individuals' wish to trust certain sources seems to prevail over officially sanctioned food safety certification.

Although consumers do not fully trust the safety of vegetables offered in supermarkets, they do regard supermarkets as being relatively safe compared to other channels.

Dynamics in practices and food safety

The study also assessed how these practices have changed over time.

Vegetable purchasing practices

Self-provisioning *is the practice of growing one's own produce and includes the use of small areas, vacant lots, gardens, balconies, rooftops, parks, and side roads to plant vegetables for personal consumption and neighbourhood bartering. The motivation is the need to re-establish a direct link with production in terms of food safety, although the consumers are not professional farmers, and production regularly occurs in unfavourable environmental conditions in terms of soil and water quality. The trust mechanism is having the cultivation under personal control.*

Kinship shopping refers *to obtaining vegetables from relatives living in the rural hometown. This is motivated by concerns about the safety of vegetable provision in the city and is based on trust in family members' good intentions in terms of naturalness. The underlying conviction is that people in the countryside know how to produce safe vegetables. Arguments such as "I know the people and I see their growing methods" point to questionable food safety verification.*

Local farmer shopping *is the practice of buying directly from producers (in rural areas close to Hanoi). Reconnection with farmers is sought as an alternative to anonymous food shopping. Here informal food safety sanctioning is based on the trust mechanism "locally produced", but often consumers have not actually visited the production site, nor do they know how the vegetables were produced and handled from harvest to the moment of sale.*

Wet-market shopping *includes formal wet markets and more informal street markets. Food safety control builds on the social culture of Vietnam, as illustrated in the Confucian saying, "It is more shameful to distrust our friends than to be deceived by them."*

Safe vegetable outlet shopping *is based on the explicit claim of providing "safe" vegetables. These outlets include designated stalls at markets, greengrocers and online ordering services. The explicit food safety claim at the outlet level is trusted to ensure "more safe" or "less risky" vegetables.*

Supermarket shopping *involves purchasing larger quantities of both fresh and processed foods to be stored at home for days to come. Food safety is "guaranteed" through "company reputation" in combination with explicit food safety assurances through certification, labels and brands at the product level.*

The observed trends include the following shifts:

- Social relationships: from face-to-face contacts to online communities;
- Frequency: from purchasing fresh vegetables daily to weekly in stock;
- Revaluation of food shopping: from being a belittled household chore to a lifestyle practice to be aspired to and enjoyed.

The research shows that several key factors have influenced this change over the past 40 years. In urban Hanoi, access to production space has drastically diminished and the distance between production and consumption has increased. Traditionally, urban consumers produced some of their own vegetables. However, urbanisation and socio-economic development necessitated new ways of obtaining food, and resulted in dispersed family ties and a decrease in kinship interdependence, which was replaced by more individualistic household decision-making. The introduction of motorised transportation, equipment such as refrigerators and freezers, information technology, and banking systems enabled new shopping practices (for more information, see the full paper). However, modernisation and globalisation allowed "traditional" practices to be reinvented and new practices to take shape.

Demanding hybridisation

Our research shows that support for supermarkets by policy makers proved to be an engine of change in daily vegetable purchasing, though analysis demonstrates that existing practices cannot simply be replaced by other practices, due to wider contextual developments beyond the practice of shopping and beyond the domain of food consumption. Shopping at supermarkets is no alternative to market shopping, since it implies buying larger quantities, which need to be stored at home in the refrigerator or freezer for several days, and involves larger money transactions. In addition, the reluctance to go to supermarkets is historically rooted in self-accommodation and social interdependence. Gardening, at home or elsewhere, and shopping at street markets date back to times (the late 1980s) when people were stimulated in the directions of self-accommodation in food provision and they still provide essential social safety-nets at the local community level. A shift is occurring: specifically, the increasing financial independence and employment of women outside the home is driving the trend of hiring domestic servants for child and elderly care. For higher income groups, this diminishes the need for kinship and local community support activities and allows for changes in food-purchasing practices. The reluctance to fully accept retail modernisation is also related to cultural identity in terms of cultural heritage. Especially in rapidly changing contextual conditions, people not only tend to stick to the familiar; they also tend to re-value or even romanticise the past, advocating the preservation of markets and farmer vendors. The study also showed that the reinvention of traditional practices is often enabled by societal modernisation. A good example is the inherited practice of directly purchasing from farmers, which, despite increased distances between production and consumption, has been reinvented through the development of financial systems and internet, and is motivated by increasing concerns about the safety of vegetables sold on informal markets in the city.

A new factor in this situation is enjoyment. Driven by growing affluence, people go to supermarkets as a popular weekend destination, or rooftop gardening is prioritised as a leisure activity. Even in the practice of shopping at street (and other) markets, a shift has been observed from vital interdependent relationships to more voluntary, enjoyable interactions. Thus practices do not merely co-exist, but reinforce each other and are combined, such as buying supplies at the supermarket for home-growing, or ordering organic vegetables from local farmers online. Shopping at supermarkets is expected to become more "normal" in daily life, yet it is likely to remain just one among a wider range of shopping practices. Therefore, rather than pursuing organisational fixes, Vietnamese policy makers should think in terms of transition processes, and could strive to achieve grassroots-informed versatility. Acknowledging existing practices in the population and understanding how these practices took shape over time should form the basis for future-oriented policies.

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31
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UA Magazine welcomes contributions on new initiatives at individual, neighbourhood, city and national levels. Attention is given to technical, socioeconomic, institutional and policy aspects of sustainable urban food production, marketing, processing and distribution systems. Although articles on any related issue are welcome and considered for publication, each UA Magazine focuses on a selected theme (for previous issues, visit: www.ruaf.org).

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