



## Lessons from Kampala: Will urban farming make a difference?



*Urban farming has been a livelihood strategy for city dwellers, especially in times of crisis such as during Idi Amin's rule in Uganda. For the last two decades an estimated 30 percent, or more, of urban dwellers in Eastern Africa are farming in towns, keeping both crops and livestock. This has contributed quite a bit to those households' food budgets as well as, presumably, to urban food consumption in general.*

There are signs that governments, local as well as central, in East Africa are starting to take urban food production seriously, particularly in light of the concerns about food security. Uganda's capital city, Kampala, is a case in point. Because of its history and circumstances, Kampala more than many other cities in Africa, has developed a particularly strong relationship to urban agriculture. It is one of the few urban local governments with a whole department dealing with agriculture, and it is almost certainly the only one anywhere in the world that has developed a typology of urban and peri-urban farming systems to apply to what goes on within its boundaries. Recently, Kampala City Council (KCC) carried out a review of legislation governing urban food production and distribution. New by-laws on urban agriculture, livestock, milk, meat and fish production, processing and marketing, were passed by the City Council in 2004 and gazetted in 2006.

While the economic analyses remain to be done, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), through its Urban Harvest Programme, has helped researchers in Kampala and other cities to characterize the scope and nature of their urban farming enterprises as a prelude to policy development. One of the major policy concerns in Kampala, and elsewhere, has been the health aspect of producing food in the city. In a book out shortly in November 2008, *Healthy City Harvests: Generating evidence to guide policy on urban agriculture*, a health impact analysis examines the benefits as well as the risks to human health of food produced in the city.

Although many of Kampala's circumstances – favourable agro-climatic conditions and a surviving culture of farming-based kingdoms – differ from those of other towns and cities, there are useful lessons that can be drawn from its experience. *Healthy City Harvests* suggests that with a high rate of urban growth, the proportion of the city's farming population appears to grow as well. This dynamic may have as much to do with the relationship between low levels of employment, and corresponding poverty levels, as it has to do with agro-climatic conditions. This suggests that cities that grow in dryland climates – Khartoum is an obvious example – may also have high proportions of their populations engaging in crop and livestock farming. Given the corresponding lack of urban infrastructure, gender inequalities and divisions of labour, and other similar conditions, many of the lessons learned in Kampala may be transferable to Khartoum.

The social learning and institution-building that continues to take place in Kampala does not have to be started from scratch in every other town and city government, but can usefully be copied with adaptations as is already happening in Nakuru, Kenya. With Urban Harvest support, Nakuru has adapted one particular aspect – legislative review – which it was already engaged in, simply examining and modifying some parts of the Kampala model. In Kenya, central government ministries dealing with agriculture and livestock picked urban and peri-urban agriculture in Nairobi province to showcase their National Agriculture and Livestock Extension Programme (NALEP). According to the Mazingira Institute, it is working well there because of the organized links with low-income farmer and civil society groups – through the Nairobi and Environs Food Security, Agriculture and Livestock Forum (NEFSALF).

In Kampala, the committee presiding over this research has become a policy advisory body, aimed at formulating policy guidelines and public health messages based on research. It has central and local government, research scientist and civil society membership – and continues to monitor implementation of the bylaws in collaboration with KCC. The development of this new type of institution and its potential contribution to the country's *Plan for the Modernization of Agriculture* was recently included in a study aimed at tracking and replicating pro-poor policy changes by Hooton and his co-authors (see below).

Given the rate at which central and local governments are taking advantage of the opportunities offered by helping urban and peri-urban agriculture to develop, it is important to include, in economic studies, urban food production and its potential marginal contribution to food security. While most urban – and indeed rural – households buy food (as opposed to producing it themselves), the marginal amounts contributed by home-produced and un-marketed food are not known. Detailed and rigorous research on exactly how this works is lacking and large scale policy responses even more so. We sorely need to learn from Kampala's example.

### Related materials:

Cole, D.C., Lee-Smith, D. and Nasinyama, G. (eds.) 2008, *Healthy City Harvests: generating evidence to guide policy on urban agriculture*, CIP, Lima and Makerere University Press, Kampala.

Contact Diana Lee-Smith, one of authors of *Healthy City Harvests*, at [diana.leesmith@gmail.com](mailto:diana.leesmith@gmail.com)

Hooton and co-authors report on policy changes related to urban farmers in Kampala:

[http://www.ilri.org/Infoserv/webpub/fulldocs/ChampionFarmerKampalaRR2/Championing\\_UrbaFarmerRR2.pdf](http://www.ilri.org/Infoserv/webpub/fulldocs/ChampionFarmerKampalaRR2/Championing_UrbaFarmerRR2.pdf)

Website: [www.pppppc.org](http://www.pppppc.org)

The Mazingira Institute's report is in NEFSALF Bulletin No. 8, Nairobi: [www.mazinst.org](http://www.mazinst.org)

**The collective action underpinning the research: Researchers from five CGIAR centres along with national partners in Uganda and Kenya are engaged in the Urban Harvest initiative that carried out the research described here. Other partners include: NEFSALF, the Kampala City Council, Universities of Nairobi, Toronto and Ryerson University.**

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## Newsbytes

### FARA-CGIAR meeting explores partnership for CAADP

From September 2-4 a CGIAR-Alliance team led by Kwesi Atta-Krah met with senior management of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), in Accra, to discuss how to improve collective action among Centres and FARA - in service of the African development agenda. Summing up the meeting Dr. Monty Jones, Executive Director of FARA, noted that "the CGIAR was a strategic and essential partner to FARA, and a great resource for the implementation of CAADP Pillar IV", which deals with research. The meeting paved the way for further consultations on creating a more effective partnership, as well as a number of cooperation agreements in the realm of ICT and knowledge management, and collective action in other areas such as the Africa Fish and ABIA Initiatives and the Sub-Saharan Challenge Program.

### IRRI-WARDA Field day: Free improved rice varieties for farmers

IRRI-WARDA distributed improved rice varieties to about 65 Nigerian farmers as part of Rice Farmers' Day activities on 15 October 2008. These better grain quality varieties boost yields due to their tolerance to iron toxicity, salinity and other soil related stresses and were the farmers' top choice during the previous farmers' day. Senior Scientist, Rice Breeder for Africa and IRRI Liaison Scientist for WARDA Dr. Glenn Gregorio led this second farmers' day along with WARDA scientists at the WARDA sub-station in Nigeria. Welcoming the farmers, Dr Olupomi Ajayi, Coordinator of WARDA-Nigeria, stressed that the organization's success is based on its strong partnership with stakeholders in the rice value chain, particularly rice farmers and their associations.

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