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“Resilience of agricultural systems against crises”

Can Urban Agriculture Land Use Planning Maintain the Resilience of Dar es Salaam’s Food System?

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Abstract

Rapid and unplanned urbanisation threatens future sustainable development in cities like Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, with a growing population of 4.39 per cent annually. Due to the pressure to rapidly modernise, existing activities and physical aspects of the urban space that contribute to the resiliency of the urban environment, like urban agriculture, are often ignored. Urban food production, or urban agriculture, in Dar es Salaam contributes substantially to the informal labour market and economy, as well as to human and environmental health. Despite all of these positive attributes, the increasing value of land within the city maintains the paradigm that agriculture is not an important urban land use. Nevertheless, not all stakeholders believe this to be true; the inherent value of urban food production has been recognised and the process of conserving agricultural land on the periphery of the city is underway. This study concerns the current legitimisation of urban agriculture within the Dar es Salaam Master Plan 2012–2032. It investigates the interactions of key stakeholders at the local and national government level, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of creating urban agriculture zones and its impact on urban farmers. Data collection was carried out during February to August 2010 and January to April 2012 and collected through an action research methodology. Information concerning the legitimisation process was obtained mainly through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, strategic planning and visioning sessions, workshops and site visits. It was found that although the conservation of land around the periphery of the city could buffer the impact of urbanisation on the Dar es Salaam food system, many of the existing open space urban farmers in the medium density areas of the city might not benefit from this process. This is due to the fact that the implementation and coordination of such ‘urban agriculture zones’ has taken into consideration those who currently occupy the zoned space. In conclusion, producing food within the city limits contributes to economic, social and environmental resiliency, but local and national governmental processes can often marginalise an already resilient activity, such as open space farming within the city.

Keywords: Food systems, global south, legitimisation, sustainability, sustainable development, urban agriculture, urban resiliency, urbanisation