



Tropentag, September 16-18, 2015, Berlin, Germany

“Management of land use systems for enhanced food security:
conflicts, controversies and resolutions”

Food Availability and Acquisition Along the Rural-Urban Continuum of Two Cities in Cameroon

MAXIMILIAN BUESSE¹, GERALDINE NJUMBE², KLAUS FLEISSNER²

¹*Technical University of Munich, Faculty of Forestry and Resource Management, Germany*

²*AVRDC-The World Vegetable Center, Cameroon Liaison Office, Cameroon*

Abstract

Although Cameroon stands out as a sub-Saharan country rich in natural resources, the reality of food insecurity still persists. According to UNOCHA, by early 2015, the number of food insecure people in Cameroon stood three times higher than two years before, also seeing an increase in malnutrition rates. This can primarily be attributed to insufficient agricultural production, low education and income levels, and inadequate infrastructure. The research carried out by the LUNA project (“Urbanisation and its impacts on the use of natural resources in Africa” also known as “Livelihoods, Urbanisation and Natural Resources in Africa”) in middle-sized cities in Africa aimed at investigating the impact of urbanisation on household food security and nutrition. The town of Bamenda in the Northwest Region of Cameroon and Limbe in the Southwest Region were chosen as study sites because of their rich agricultural background with still existing strong rural linkages and their rapidly increasing population, which create an undeniable rural-urban continuum.

Initial investigations of the first phase of LUNA included a quantitative survey of households throughout the rural-urban continuum of Bamenda, as well as several Focus Group discussions. The extension phase then aimed at a more intensified analysis of household food security and nutrition, especially in the peri-urban realm, through dietary surveys, focus group discussion and transect walks.

Dietary transect walks were used to have a commented, inside view on the effort and time that is needed for weekly food acquisition. Food acquisition turned to be mostly divided into purchase from local food markets as well as products from subsistence agriculture in gardens or farms.

For comparative investigations the project subdivided the rural-urban continuum into three spheres, an urban, peri-urban and rural zone. It could be detected that the time and distance and the connected efforts to acquire food for the household differed prominently between the spheres. But even within the same zone many differences were observed throughout the walks, especially concerning distance to the place of food acquisition (market or field).

Keywords: Food acquisition, food availability, rural urban continuum, stakeholder participation, urbanisation