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"Solidarity in a competing world — fair use of resources"

Agrodiversity in Urban Farming Sites in Havanna (Cuba)

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Abstract

By 2030 most of the world population will be living in cities and the sustainable supply of this growing population with fresh fruits and vegetables will be of major concern. Urban agriculture can contribute to ensure regional food security, reducing transportation and ameliorate the micro-climate in urban areas. The conservation and management of agro(bio)diversity in urban farming sites are major elements for a sustainable and resource sparing farming system, food diversity and food security. The aim of this research was to describe three selected elements of the concept of agrodiversity (agrobiodiversity, management diversity and organisational diversity) developed by Brookfield (2001) and their characteristics in Havanna (Cuba). Fiveteen urban farms in the city were investigated in 2013 using a purposive judgement sample. The methods used were qualitative semi-structured interviews and an inventory of all agricultural crops and trees was carried out. Plant species diversity was measured using Shannon Index and Jaccard-coefficient. 130 different cultivars out of 65 plant families could be identified. The diversity of land management styles suggests a high awareness amongst farmers for the enhancement of soil fertility and a high diversity of agroecological land management styles were encountered. Regarding the organisational diversity a collectivistic approach towards leadership with profound exchange amongst farmers about agricultural topics was found. The Cuban government managed to build up a framework for the development of diverse urban farming systems. Potential for improvement can be found in-situ conservation of seeds representing one of the most important genetic resources and hence contribute to food sovereignty.

Keywords: Agrobiodiversity, agrodiversity, agroecology, organic farming, urban farming, urban gardening, urban agriculture

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