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“Global food security and food safety:
The role of universities”

Urban Agriculture in South Africa and Mozambique. Results after two Years of Action Research

ERIK ENGEL¹, KARIN FIEGE², NICOLE PAGANINI³, ANJA SCHELCHEN², DOREEN SPARBORTH¹,
MAXIMILIAN BAUMANN⁴, DANIEL TEVERA⁵, SAMUEL QUIVE⁶, LUISA CHICAMISSE MUTISSE⁷,
ABDULRAZAK KARRIEM⁸

¹*Frankenfoerder Forschungsgesellschaft, Germany*

²*Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Centre for Rural Development, Germany*

³*Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Albrecht Daniel Thaer-Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences (ADTI), Germany*

⁴*Freie Universität Berlin, FAO Reference Centre for Veterinary Public Health, Department of Veterinary Medicine, Germany*

⁵*University of the Western Cape, Dept. of Geography, Environmental Studies & Tourism, South Africa*

⁶*Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Fac. of Arts and Social Sciences, Mozambique*

⁷*Eduardo Mondlane University, Sociology, Mozambique*

⁸*University of the Western Cape, Inst. for Social Development, South Africa*

Abstract

Sub-Saharan Africa cities grow faster than anywhere else in the world, especially in informal areas. Since accelerated urbanisation processes increases the need for sustainable urban food systems, urban agriculture has come into the focus of scientific research.

UFISAMo is implemented with BMEL funding from 2016 — 2019 by universities in Berlin, Maputo and Cape Town as well as by a private research institution, an NGO and a government organisation. It investigates whether and how urban agriculture can contribute to urban food systems and improve urban food and nutrition security as well as income for disadvantaged communities.

Two years of research in Cape Town and Maputo indicate the potential the activity has to contribute to household dietary diversity and to social bonding. Especially in Maputo, where the market for urban products is big, it also represents the main source of income for a considerable number of households. However, limitations are evident, and the contribution to food security remains limited. Main challenges encompass climate calamities, market disruptions, organisational shortcomings (inefficient self-organisation), inconsistent political support and the varying quality of production.

The research project UFISAMo has collected evidence on each of the topics above and developed recommendations to overcome some of the main challenges. My presentation will highlight results, recommendations and first steps in implementation after 2 years of action research. It will include guidelines for urbanGAP (good agricultural practices), examples of farmers' self-organisation and thoughts on influencing food habits by using urban agricultural networks

We approach urban agriculture by analysing

- value chains of urban agricultural production and consumption habits of urbanites;

- opportunities and challenges associated with plant and livestock production and good agricultural practices;
- organisational structures for production and marketing;
- most successful communication channels for information sharing from farmer to policy level.

Action-oriented research ensures that results are directly shared and discussed with farmers and implementing partners. Participation in research networks focusing on urban food systems and flanked by the development of modules for universities as well as by policy dialogues serve to sustain the results after project has ended.

Keywords: Dissemination and information, food and nutrition security, good agricultural practices (GAP), income generation, Mozambique, participatory guarantee system (PGS), South Africa, urban Agriculture, urban food systems, value chains