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Ghana's Urban Agriculture and Urban Food Security: A View from Policy

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Abstract

Urban agriculture in several countries contributes immensely to urban food security but its success partly depends on the policies, laws and institutional actions available. This study investigated how urban agriculture is being sustained in the rapidly urbanizing Ghana's capital city, Accra, by giving attention to the laws and policy frameworks, and institutional actions influencing it. The study's philosophical underpinning was pragmatism and therefore analyzed qualitative data from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources were interviews from farmers and key informants from governmental and non-governmental institutions, and the secondary sources were legal, policy and institutional documents that concern urban agriculture. In analyzing the qualitative data from the multiple sources, the study mainly employed content analysis. The study found out that there was lack of clarity when it comes to a comprehensive urban agricultural policy in Ghana even though the government recognizes the significance of urban agriculture to affect food security. Even though efforts have been made over the years to promote urban agriculture, there are significantly unsolvable challenges, especially, in the area of land and water use. There is also a weak institutional coordination and cooperation when it comes to promoting urban agriculture to affect food security. Even though farmers get support from 'non-mandated' government institutions such as spare lands for farming, they sometimes face challenges from them. The study therefore recommends a well-coordinated and a multi-institutional approach to the promotion of urban agriculture in Ghana by making urban agriculture a key component in its urban planning. A well-coordinated effort must also be instituted to train urban farmers in the area of enhanced technology, and grant easy access to farm inputs and other required resources for farming.

Keywords: Food security, Ghana, policy, urban agriculture