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“Filling gaps and removing traps  
for sustainable resource management”

## How Can Urban Agriculture Contribute More to the Well-Being of Farmers in a Disfavoured Environment?

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### Abstract

Urban agriculture (UA) can have multiple benefits, from feeding people to creating green oasis in sealed environments. The action-research presented here seeks to contribute to increasing the benefits of urban agriculture for food and nutrition security (FNS) and income for disfavoured populations in Cape Town and Maputo. In both cities UA plays a negligible role for FNS and to the food systems as a whole. History and structural differences have shaped very different urban landscapes:

Nearly 40'000 persons are depending on urban agriculture in Maputo. Over 15'000 farmers (most of them organised in associations) and backyard gardeners sell mainly cabbage and lettuce on local markets. The majority of sales happens via intermediaries. The lack of crop rotation increases the pressure of pests and diseases, which is countered by (often uncontrolled use of) pesticides. Most farmers have a fairly diverse diet. Like other low-income groups of Mozambique, they are nonetheless moderately food insecure.

The importance of urban agriculture in Cape Town rests mainly on its contribution to more diverse diets of the farmers as well as in the social networks the farmers are establishing. Despite an “urban agricultural policy”, farmers receive little support from government. NGOs are the main source for inputs and technical knowledge. There are few local markets in the townships, and township vegetable mainly furnish (predominantly white, inner-city) markets with the help of small sales enterprises usually founded by NGOs. In that way, farmers receive support and income, but are, simultaneously, highly dependent on “their” NGO. Self-organisation so far has been weak. Social processes in the townships - just as the entire food system of the city- are still dominated by dynamics originating in the apartheid and colonial heritage. Activities in and around urban agriculture can contribute to lowering social barriers and to food diversity of involved households. It cannot be a supplement for serious social and economic policies necessary in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

UFISAMO research covered value chains, organisational structures, consumption habits and knowledge transfer. An overview of results, good practices and recommendations to strengthen the respective roles of UA will be presented.

**Keywords:** Cape town, food and nutrition security, food systems, Maputo, urban agriculture