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"Municipal Policy Review":
Urban Agriculture (South Africa)
</div>

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1   INTRODUCTION

This project is regarded by the IDRC as a research support activity (RSA)

The author of this paper, as the co-ordinator of the project is, at present, not involved in research regarding policy review in South Africa. Although his current research is focused on an educational model for open space utilisation, he has, never the less, a great interest in promoting the concept of Urban Agriculture in a broader sense.

The role of the co-ordinator can be seen as that of a catalyst to further stimulate the concept of UA in South Africa and to bring together all role players by means of conferences and workshops which are focused on specific aims.

1.1   GENERAL BACKGROUND

South Africa's political legacy has left us today with the majority of our population living in urban and peri-urban communities which suffer from extremely poor environmental conditions. The concept of UA offers very real benefits to these communities.

Over the past three years many government departments and organisations have been coming to terms with the new South Africa and consequently are currently busy developing policies and strategies as a result of the vision of respective White Papers that can help redress past imbalances in service delivery.

Many government service providers are still feeling their way through the mine field of procedures and protocols, but, as service providers, they should first try to understand the issues involved and agree to role and responsibility division, before developing strategies with other stakeholders.

There is, at this stage, no common understanding, vision or clarity on roles and responsibilities of the different service providers. Many of them are only now developing strategy and plans in order to deliver on their respective mandates. For example - confusion has been so bad that community forestry has only this year started to utilise "fruit trees"! – as they were traditionally "agriculture's" preserve, and the policy was that we shouldn't get involved. (Gilliland 1998).

There is no clear strategy for UA in South Africa. There are currently policy documents in circulation which point out and suggest possible directions to follow, but any strategy and possible plans are isolated initiatives and generally not integrated with other service providers.
Focus on urban open space management should now be directed at disadvantaged communities in order to redress the former imbalances of service provision in South Africa. However, UA activities in both rural and urban disadvantaged communities are

still very limited.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR HOSTING OF CONFERENCES ON UA IN SOUTH AFRICA.

1.2.1 1994 Technikon Pretoria National Conference:

Indications were that the value and impact of the effective utilisation of urban open spaces had not been fully exploited in the apartheid era. The South African urban areas were a particular heritage of apartheid, with duel standards for white and non-white areas. The "white" areas had municipal parks and recreation services, with horticultural activities in streets, parks and other public places. In contrast, "black" urban areas had poorly equipped and financed municipal services, which provided no more than the absolute basics and extremely limited horticultural developments took place. Informal settlements had no services what so ever. The lack of capacity in the townships was exacerbated by rural poverty and rural land dispossession, which forced increasing numbers into the townships and informal settlements. As many townships were regarded as dormitory areas there was no sense of ownership and there was little incentive for residents to use their initiative in order to improve their environment.

In effect, government took limited responsibility for the environment of disadvantaged urban areas.

In order to adopt strategies to effectively readdress these important imbalances, the first of two conferences was scheduled at Technikon Pretoria. Delegates were invited from within South Africa to participate. The Department of Environmental Affairs and the Faculty of Environmental Science, Technikon Pretoria, hosted this conference.
The process followed during this workshop was one of consultation and consensus.

The need for a steering committee to further the progress made during this conference, and to ensure the integration and progress of further utilisation of the concept of urban agriculture, became clear during the conference.

In this regard, a decision was taken to elect an interim steering committee to ensure that momentum is maintained, and to develop the mechanism to ensure the wider participation sought after in order to further advertise the benefits of UA and the particular roles of authorities. The committee start to operate their activities under the name Productive Open Space Forum (POSF) which is still in use.

1.2.2   1998 Technikon Pretoria: IDRC International Conference

Since 1994 most townships and informal settlements have become part of larger municipalities, many of which have some form of parks and recreation service, but which are limited in their capacity. Despite the mandate to provide a service for townships, only limited impact on ground level can be seen after 4 years.

Because of the new political dispensation, there are a number of institutions that are becoming actively involved in community development and which might include UA for these development purposes.

Municipalities are the most important service providers with a mandate and

responsibility to implement UA developments on public open space. Although service provision in townships is now fully recognised, it has been a very slow process to insure that any UA issues are encompassed One of the major problems is that Local Authorities often do not have trained staff members or capacity to implement UA. Projects. There have been some initiatives, which have started in local municipalities notably Durban Bloemfontein, Kimberley, Port Elizabeth, and Pretoria but in general there has been little impact on township UA and little community involvement in any municipal schemes.

Local government play a very important role in safeguarding the environment of areas under their jurisdiction. They have the powers to formulate their own by- laws. These by- laws have to be in line with national and regional government policy and guidelines However local government is intended to be the driving force for decentralised development planning and implementation
Provincial departments concerned with environment have important roles to play as they can all provide direct or indirect support services.

South Africa adopted a new constitution in which the Bill of Rights guarantees environmental rights by declaring that everyone has the right to "secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development". The latter statement indicates the inclusion of UA practices.

During this time May/June 1996 Dr Luc Mougeot from IDRC visited South Africa to investigate the exploration of UA in the changing country.
This visit assessed:
a)   Follow-up to the Technikon Pretoria & Department of Environmental Affairs Conference on "Potential for Productive Utilisation of Urban Open Space" in South Africa, hosted during February 1994.
b)   National and local policy environment for UA initiative by IDRC
.
Mougeot, 1996, identified two important priorities that still need to be followed up:
1   Assess policy/legal discrepancies concerning future open space utilisation;
2   Institutionalise training courses.

The IDRC then decided to sponsor a "Municipal Policy Review" re Urban Agriculture (South Africa) project. This project was completed in the form of an international conference, followed directly by a workshop, at Technikon Pretoria during the period 3 to 5 March 1998
.
This second conference on UA, which was the first international UA conference in South Africa supported by the IDRC, was again jointly hosted by the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) and Technikon Pretoria (TP).

2.   AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES ON URBAN AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENTS

2.1   The aim of the first national conference held in *February 1994*, on the productive utilisation of urban open space, was

To introduce the concepts of UA in a changing South Africa.

- To stimulate an awareness and understanding of the values of UA.

- To consider the contributions UA can make towards community development.

2.2 **The aim of the second international conference held in *March 1998,* on productive open space management, with a shared focus on the potential on Urban Agriculture policy was**

- To share information regarding   * UA problems and solutions
                                               * existing networks
                                               * Urban agriculture and Agenda 21

- To identify the need for policy guidelines and who the role players are.

- To investigate key issues where action is needed   *institutional
                                                             *environmental
                                                             *socio-economic
                                                             *UA practice

3. SPESIFIC FOCUS FIELDS OF BOTH THESE CONFERENCES:

Due to the dynamic nature of the debate on the utilisation of open space, there was need for a participative approach in both conferences

The core focus point of both 1994 and 1998 conferences was to create an awareness of and an understanding of UA and to determine the participants' perceptions on a number of UA related issues, as experienced in South Africa.

During the International conference held in March 1998, the specific focus was on the need for policy review issues in SA. International speakers were requested to make their contributions towards policy considerations on UA that could serve as a guideline for the policy review process in SA.
It was decided that input was necessary from both national and international speakers, covering their viewpoints on general UA issues. Interactive workshops with inputs from all participants were also held during the conferences to ensure that the viewpoints were also captured from the institutions and role players involved with policy and practical implementation issues.

It might be of interest to note the composition of participants on both conferences.

Table 1

		(n = 440) 1994 %	(n = 230) 1998 %
?	Private	21.5	16.5
?	Municipalities and metropoles	26	35
?	Government departments	15	25
?	Educational Institutions	15	8,5
?	Students	10	7
?	Parastatal & NGO's	4,5	2

? Media	3	2
? Self Governing Territories	3	0
? Civic and community role players	2	4

An analysis of **Table 1** indicates:

the decrease in participation from the private sector can be attributed to the community and social benefits of the project as apposed to the financial rewards to participants;

the increase in municipal and government participation resulted from the shift in priorities from the apartheid structures (representing minorities) towards the post apartheid structures (representing majorities). Management of government structures viewed this conference as a source of guidance and information and as an opportunity for networking in order to direct their roles and responsibilities;

the decrease in participation from the parastatals (NGO's) can be attributed to the decrease in their role in the new South Africa, being replaced by the adoption of these functions by the local authorities as the most important role players for the stimulation of environmental services.

4 DISCUSSION CONCERNING AREAS OF IMPACT RELEVANT TO THE PROJECT

The areas of impact, or areas of relevant utilisation, can be discussed in the following way:

The areas of impact of which the co-ordinator is aware and which happened as a *direct result* of the project;

Areas of impact which will occur at a later stage through dissemination of information, when role players make use of the information that was gathered. This will be seen as an *indirect result* of the project.

4.1 INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY STRENGHTHENING

4.1.1 Direct impact

The impact in this area was particularly significant. The project allowed the temporary staff members to gain multiple skills covering the administration of an international conference.

A computer, printer, fax machine and telephone line with an e-mail address were purchased to make it possible for the temporary staff members to administrate the conference and compile a data base of all important role players related to UA in SA.

This equipment is currently being used by TP to support the actions of POSF and to update UA activities and networking via e-mail communication with stakeholders both locally and globally.

The hosting and co-organising of the conference resulted in TP being widely recognised as a tertiary institution, and as being a major role player in the further stimulation of UA in SA.

As a result of the international conference, there are stronger links between policy making bodies in SA and stronger linkages within local authorities that are interested in implementing UA practice in communities.

The availability of specialised literature, and the conference proceedings in book form, provided researchers and UA practitioners with a wealth of new reading material and knowledge.

The understanding of UA and how existing policies undermine it and the kind of information needed for policy formulation, can be regarded as a significant contribution to institutional capacity strengthening on specific regional and local authority levels.

The Management of TP, as a result of the success of the conference, expressed their appreciation and asked the Department of Horticulture and Leisure Management to task the co-ordinator of this project -
- To assist the POSF actions in the promotion and networking of UA;
- To investigate the development of a formal course in UA or, as an alternative,
- To develop modules on UA that can be included in existing courses offered at TP, such as "Open Space and Recreation Management, Health Extension Services, Agricultural Management and Environmental Management ".

What is also of importance is that TP and the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (D.E.A.T), are now widely used by various local authority officials in an advisory role regarding UA information networking and to link them with other community development programmes.

The distribution of a summary report document on the conference to all local authorities in SA, as well as other important stakeholders, whether they attended the conference or not, will also contribute to the availability of relevant information to stimulate positive action towards UA practices.

4.2   PARTNERSHIP WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

4.2.1   Direct impact

The selection of prominent role players regarding UA practice in SA to serve on the task committee, contributed to the success of the conference in the sense that all areas of impact regarding UA were discussed during the planning period from specific expert points of view.

The contribution from experts serving on the task team also opened up avenues of collaboration between the task team and relevant institutions eg. G.T.Z. Project Tanzania.

The project created collaboration and partnership with I.D.R.C. in Canada and with their local office in Johannesburg. The close links with I.D.R.C. during the

planning phase of the project resulted in the selection of the international experts that made a major contribution regarding the input on policy issues as well as the sharing of valuable knowledge on UA practices and problems in their specific countries.

The TP and DEAT work very closely together and since the first conference in 1994, co-organised by these institutions, the focused field towards the promotion of UA remains very strong. The international conference proved once again the importance of strong partnerships between a tertiary institution and a National Department with common ground.

Both conferences opened up avenues for collaboration between TP, relevant national institutions and specific local authorities by means of wide consultation before, during and after the conference. For example: the co-ordinator of the project was invited by several local authorities and communities to consult them on practical projects. e.g. Middelburg Town Council, Tirelo Sechaba Project – Atteridgeville and Lima u Vune Community Project.

Several of the government organisations (national, regional and local), are now in an excellent position to use the information that was shared during the conference for current implementation, both for policy development and UA programme interventions. In particular, local authorities are in an excellent position to use the information.

One of the greatest significance's of the conference was the spontaneous offering of services from volunteers of a wide variety of important role players to serve on the Productive Open Space Forum (P.O.S.F).
The main tasks of this voluntary forum are to establish a networking system and to share information regarding the enhancement of UA and to keep an updated record of activities, specifically on local and regional levels.
This forum will also play a major role in terms of liaison with other structures, for co-ordination purposes, and to ensure momentum is not lost.

The need for such a forum to further the progress made by means of these discussions, became very clear during the conference.

4.3 SCIENTIFIC ADVANCES

4.3.1 Direct impact

Due to the fact that this was the first international conference on UA in SA and that it resulted in the generation of very important information regarding policy issues and guidelines, as well as UA practice and the transfer of knowledge, this can be regarded as a scientific advantage.

The information contained in a book of the conference's proceedings, has already been widely used by various academic institutions, students, researchers, government officials and community leaders

The research findings that were shared between international and local experts

resulted in a more common focus and general viewpoint on UA practice and problems.

The conference attendance and the variety of role players was very impressive, and the effective use of the conference to draw attention to a range of issues has since been evident. This issue based focus can definitely contribute to the stimulation of further research projects. It has also proved that the utilisation of research findings on the ground is important

The proof provided by the conference, of the strong association between UA and food security for communities, contributed towards the understanding that much work, research and exploration needed to be done to present policy recommendations to local and senior governments.

The concept and importance of community gardens was explored at the conference, both formally and informally, when delegates shared their experiences regarding community development projects in SA and abroad. The community gardening projects in central city areas in Canadian cities and the work that is done by the Toronto Food Security Council, and ACGA stimulated much interest between the officials of local and metropolitan councils regarding the local potential of such projects.

4.3.2 Indirect impact

Delegates formed four parallel breakaway groups with the aim of workshopping suggestions/solutions around the following themes:
institutional, environmental, socio-economic, and UA practice.

The core aim was to determine the participants' perceptions on the above issues. In this regard, each breakaway group argued a specific issue.

A *Institutional group:

- Importance of understanding..UA covers many different disciplines and clear roles and responsibilities must be established if there is to be effective service deliver

- Awareness and understanding. If there is little value put on UA it will never receive attention or the allocation of resources:

- Where local authorities have been committed to UA projects, the output from these projects has been considerably enhanced.

- There is a need for policy to encourage community ownership.

- Restrictive legislation and bureaucratic red tape is still perceived as a limiting factor.

- UA must be stimulated through sponsored programmes of action.

- A need for drawing up a policy that will address development of support systems

and facilitate access to infrastructure, resources, financial support, extension services and training.

- Revision of existing policies that are linked to the new political process.

- Request that the importance of UA be investigated and emanated with guidelines from a relevant national department, (Department of Environmental Affairs was proposed) and that the relevant minister should take a leading role in this regard.

- Provision be made in all white papers for the promotion and support of UA policy (e.g. Departments of Agriculture, Water and Forestry, Health, Constitutional Development and Local Authorities, etc).

- If UA is to be promoted by local authorities as a lead project, substantial changes to current policy will need to be made, which will have important implications and guidelines are needed.

- The success of the implementation of UA policy will also depend on the commitment of local people.

- A policy of improving household food security is seen as a first priority, especially in areas of high population density.

- National Government needs to address a funding policy.

- Sensitivity concerning cultural aspects and the role of women in UA must be recognised in a policy framework.

B *Environmental group:

- Education: understanding of the environmental links to formal curricula, and simply by observation.   Activities such as Arbour Week and Environment Week where children can partake in agricultural activities and project development, needs to be expanded to include a UA week.

- An ever increasing environmental concern is also challenging UA, e.g. ecological and esthetical impact.
SA has limited agricultural potential and this can also be true in the sense of UA.

- No one is monitoring the impact on and interaction of various activities in urban environments

- There is a need for research into environmental health and food security for the poor. It might be better to work with a more focused term, "urban food production".

- The lack of focused environmental education and capacity building programmes in the environmental field, undermines the understanding people have of the variety of environmental opportunities offered, such as UA, and the responsibilities regarding interaction with the environment.

- Communities that use open space for UA purposes need to be actively involved in decision making processes.

- Quality and quantity of open space in urban environments need to be protected by good management principles.

- UA can teach people the meaning of sustainability.

- UA can cultivate a sense of responsibility towards the environment and specificly, the value of open space in urban areas.

C *Socio-economic group:

- Food security is a fundamental element of basic human rights -Food security programmes should receive more attention in South Africa Surely food security and food production must be a key element of any UA programme and targets should be set.

- For UA projects to be economically successful, the overall benefit to the participant gardeners and their community must be greater than the costs incurred

- UA creates many opportunities to earn an income and to access needed resources such as food.

- SA still has a relatively strong economy and unfortunately, UA is not yet regarded as an important community development tool.

- Spontaneous UA is occurring in smaller towns, which is an indication of the levels of poverty already being experienced in rural areas.

- Guided UA projects supported by local policies can address unemployment and poverty issues in urban areas.

- There is a need for democratic leadership structures to support UA.

- UA can ensure stable food supply and keeps food prices low - thus enabling the poor to have access to nutritious, fresh food

- UA projects would draw unused skilled labour back into production.

- Street food-vendors can depend on self-production for their enterprises.

- UA contributes to value adding activities.

- Inadequate access to resources, such as land, finance, water and technical support, should be addressed

- A safer environment for UA projects should be created as local petty crime is seen

as a stumbling block when promoting the project.

- There is a need to understand the enthusiasm and aspirations of people involved in UA, and community leaders and organisations need to be challenged regarding the potential of UA.

D *Urban agriculture practice group

- In order to develop and implement a programme for UA, the concept must be based on an improved understanding of community needs, institutional roles and capacities, and the correct practice for support service delivery e.g.

  - understanding of the issues and benefits of UA.
  - understanding of the factors that inhibit and promote UA.
  - an agreed strategy for development.
  - budgets which provide for project development.
  - the inclusion of UA into local development plans.

- Access, availability and quality of land are the most critical issues.

- UA projects fail due to the lack of policy and practice guidelines.

- Lack of commitment at local authority level, as well as at community level, can contribute to the non-existence of UA initiatives in towns and cities.

- Technical support and capacity building is, in many cases, inadequate, both at local authority and community level

- Participative management structures and processes to stimulate UA are lacking on local authority level.

- The lack of research data, networking processes and examples of case studies to serve as a support aid for local authorities, should be urgently addressed.

- Limited know-how and insufficient education and training of field workers are perceived as limiting factors.

4.4 RESULT UTILISATION

4.4.1 Direct impact

The conference contributed to an increased awareness and understanding of the importance of UA by city authorities.

Consensus arising out of the discussions was that the legal status of UA can only be changed by means of the implementation of a national policy strategy.

Senior officials of local authorities and government now see the positive aspects

of productive open space utilisation, i.e. that it provides food, income and informal employment. The only difficulty is that sound policy statements and developments are not yet in place and some officials tend not to commit themselves without a legal frame-work to support UA development. Middelburg Town Council proved that the commitment on the part of a local authority to support UA at community level, is more important than legislation only.

As a result of the information that was generated by the conference, one of the researchers at the national Department of Agriculture is currently adapting his research in order to focus more comprehensively on the new information concerning UA and subsequent developments.

4.4.2 Indirect impact

A *Issues identified needing attention

The delegates at the Conference proposed that the initiative should be taken further by using the following proposals

1   It is proposed that the National Department of Constitutional Development and Local Government together with the National Department of Agriculture and

        Department of Land Affairs, develop a broad policy statement, designating local government as implementing agent. Detailed policy matters and strategies should then be developed and applied by local governments.
2   All action steps should be as inclusive as possible. There should be appropriate consultations with people who are participating in UA
3   Comprehensive needs-assessment is required, which should be community driven and would cover both the human and the environmental aspects.
4   The development of end-user support systems eg. capacity-building, sustainable programs, provision of extension services technology, and training must be treated as high order priority.
5   Land identification and zoning including constraints, its potential availability and ownership using proper criteria. Land is a vital resource for UA practices.
6   A proper policy for the productive utilisation of open space is urgently needed. Such a policy should be sensitive with regard to associated fields, such as health, the environment and sustainability. Reviewing of current policies and legislation is seen as part of the process
7   Sources of funding for taking this initiative further need to be identified Budgets for the promotion UA at all levels of government can make a difference
        8   Selected local governments should set an example by implementing the principle of productive open space planning, in order to develop UA expertise in other local governments.
Existing knowledge and information should be identified, published and
        disseminated. Projects (past and present) should also be included in this process. It is suggested that a communication network be developed out of the existing initiatives from this conference.
10   Urban agriculture should be properly recognized and be made a priority, not taken as a 'left over'. Lobbying of different organisations to promote the priority of UA in urban planning and development should be implemented.

The issues that were identified during this conference can serve as guidelines for role-players for further actions and evaluation.

12   The policy guidelines contained in this document should form a basis for satisfying the need for such guidelines at relevant government levels.

13   The proposed web page is needed for enhancing and extending the international liaison that was established at this conference. Exchange of information should be stimulated. It is suggested that the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism(DEAT) is the most suitable agency to drive the process and operate the proposed web site.

B *Recommendations and suggestions made by delegates regarding policy issues:

The following represents the policy discussions with recommendations and suggestions made by delegates by means of written proposals to the organising committee.
The importance to have a legislative and policy environment conducive to UA became clear and in this regard the following suggestions were made:

- **Red tape and restrictive legislation must be deregulated, and is seen as an important step towards democratic principals.**
- A need for appropriate legislation and the necessary government policy measures to make the utilisation of sustainable resources a reality.

- Policy should follow a consultative process, creating flexibility and adaptability.

- Policy should address issues such as:
  *   food security
  *   land (access and tenure of)
  *   water and other resources
  *   funding (capital and cash flow)
  *   standards (environmental, UA practice)
  *   education and training
  *   extension services
  *   open space land use, development and planning
  *   socio-economic development
  *   access to resources
  *   transfer of technology and skills

- Policies should provide an improved environment which insures an improvement in the quality of life for all.

- Strategies adopted by line departments and local and provincial departments should result in the best possible outcomes. By-laws in the past fell short of actually meeting the basic food needs of the majority of people in this country at household level. The challenge for the transformed local authorities is to adapt their by-laws to make provision for UA practice on open space areas.

- There is a need for a comprehensive and significant policy framework for urban areas which should include a policy for UA practices in SA. Such a policy must include the promotion of:

"re-thinking" the uses and zoning of open space areas
fiscal and administrative procedures
mix land uses where individuals can contribute to community development.

- Such a policy must also address a strategy to
  * promote the potential use of vacant space for UA
  * promote a planning strategy to address food security and the well being of communities
  * stimulate jobs and reduce poverty
    * **set guidelines for the utilisation of urban open spaces to the benefit of all members of a community.**

- The traditional public open space concept and management philosophies on local level must be "re-thought". In this regard, the broad range of agriculturally related activities as indicated in *Table 2* on the next page**,** for which open spaces can be utilised*,* was recommended by the working group, as a framework for future open space planning

TABLE 2:

*Potential Urban Requirements which could be performed by an Open Space System (Agriculturally related functions are **shaded**)*

Food	**Production of staples, protein, fruit and vegetables, herbs and spices** **Stockfeed and forage** **Security of production of agricultural land** **Commercial and supplementary household production is required**
Other Agricultural Enterprises	**Other income generating produce, for farm and informal requirements, such as cut flowers, instant turf, timber, honey, colourants, flavourants, essential oils, confectionery end use, pharmaceutical end use** **Nursery production** **Crafts materials (e.g. palm seeds – Ilala**)
Water production for	Irrigation **Recreational activities** **Aqua culture** Water for other productive enterprises (e.g. feedlots, block-making)
Energy	Provision for major transmission lines **Woodlots and timber wastes for fuelwood**
Health	Prevention of hazards such as flooding, air and water pollution, effective disposal of sewage, solid washes and stormwater, slope stabilisation and the prevention of erosion Health extention (**e.g. nutrition and hygiene**) **Production of traditional medicines**
Education	**Formal and informal education, including provision of school playing fields, school gardening projects, school tree nurseries and care, environmental education and nature trails** **Extention services related to agricultural horticultural and forestry products (e.g. demonstration plots)**
Recreation and Community Activities	Active and passive recreation such as sport fields, water activities, **contact with nature**, manmade landscape areas Venues for outdoor community activities (**communal vegetable gardens**) Associated tourism possibilities

Building Materials	**Timber for poles and fencing**
	Concrete blocks
	Building sand and stone
Transport Routes	Secondary collector roads (**use of verges**)
Conservation and	Ecological balance and sustainability of natural systems
Aesthetic	Rehabilitation and expansion of natural features, such **as indigenous**
	forests for medical purposes
	Visual and physical contact with nature
	Conservation of fauna, flora and historic values

Source: Open Space Design for the Greater Mariannhill Structure Plan, NPA Unpublished Report, July 1989

It was emphasised that for successful implementation of open space design, commitment to the concept by the community is imperative. This will contribute to meaningful community development.

● It was mentioned that open space land used only for "parks and sport fields", should also include UA as a component of open space land use in future planning.

● Forms of UA practices that are found in SA and that can be enhanced by means of extension services and education, are:
  * Home gardens
  * Self initiated UA practices
  * Community projects   sponsorship driven
  local authorities support
  tertiary institutions initiatives
  NGO's

● Preparation of policy must take into account the various categories of UA practices.

● As water distribution is made more freely available, it is expected that home gardens will play a very important role in disadvantaged communities, thus helping to address the problem of poverty. Home gardens will also meet their substantial needs with limited investment and planning requirements from the public sector. However, home gardens will have limited implementation in the broader functioning of a policy.

C *Suggestions that were made by the international team for policy considerations on urban agriculture

The international delegates put forward the following suggestions and recommendations for the project:

1 Recognition of UA as an important activity in urban systems.
The policy for UA fits within the framework of other policy initiatives concerning environment, land, gender and food security.

2 Implementation
Policy must include local institutions and stakeholders.
It must be a participatory, societal process.
Community based organizations must be recognized, encouraged, supported and

linked to the system of urban governance.
The participative open space management model, as proposed by Spies.L.(1998), is recommended as an appropriate tool to stimulate implementation.

3 Land Tenure

Guaranteed land security to practitioners. That is, land for UA should be zoned and given community title. This ensures open space and public land remains in the public domain under community control.
Temporary tenure to be given to land earmarked for future development. Prior to development, there should be appropriate notification to practitioners

Farming on vacant land owned by private individuals / institutions could be done on contractual basis.

Peri-urban land should be bought to deny land to traditional owners.
Prime agricultural land should not be built on (Ref Habitat 11).

Guidelines are needed to conserve prime land for UA. High rise construction can be promoted where appropriate, to release such land for UA.

4 Food Security

Policy must focus on households, their entitlements to land and food, with equity (including gender equity) as a principle. Policy must address the food security needs of those urban poor who are also the rural landless.

5 Gender

A gendered UA policy should aim to:
Protect women's rights to farm and feed their families
Transform their role away from subsistence work to economic empowerment.
Women are a specific target group due to their lack of land rights relative to men. They need to be addressed in policy as household heads but also as farmers in other households.

6 New urban technologies

Policy needs to facilitate the emergence of new urban technologies that are ecologically sound and improve health and nutrition. These include:
- Urban livestock farming systems that promote nutrient cycling.
- Solid and human waste management systems that conserve water and utilize nutrient cycles.
- Solid waste composting and recycling of biodegradable household and other wastes
- Utilization of surface water run-off
- Human waste technologies based on low water use, local treatment and productive-use. This includes neighborhood and household systems incorporating acquaculture, UA etc.
Tree production for food, microclimate control, beautification and hazard control.

7 Regulation

Policy needs to generate appropriate regulatory systems for UA that assist local authorities to apply UA principals and minimize problems of competing land use and land conflicts.

8 Supports

Policy Guidelines are needed to develop appropriate support systems and infrastructure for UA. These include:
- extension services
- marketing facilities

water and other resource inputs
- financing

training and education

There should be monitoring and evaluation of effective support systems through action research with urban farmers, and a participatory process of policy development in this area.

5 OVERALL EVALUATION OF PRESENT SITUATION IN SA

It is important to note that policy change in SA is not as a result of research but due to the political change process.

The co-ordinator of the project consulted with a broad range of governmental institutions by means of personal visits and interviews. As a result, a variety of documentation was made available before and during the conferences. The following represents a synopsis of these findings:

5.1 Prevailing policy context

The vision of all white papers has to be translated into a series of tangible actions.

The following national policy statements could have a major impact on UA and Urban forestry:

Constitution of South Africa: Act 108 1996:-
    The Constitution guarantees every citizen a safe and healthy environment.

The White Paper on Sustainable Forestry Development:-
    The White Paper does not make any specific reference to UA or urban forestry other than a reference to peri-urban and urban environments. This is probably due to the historical focus of community forestry in rural situations. It does, however, state that there is an advocacy role for the government in encouraging the planting of trees and for trees to be part of development plans.

The White Paper in Transformation of the Public Service:-
    States that there must be a transformation of service provision to meet basic needs and to redress past imbalances in service delivery.

The Development Facilitation Act:-

Requires municipalities to formulate Land Development Objectives and under the Local government Transition Act, to formulate Integrated Development Plans.

The Rural development strategy within the RDP:-
Recognises forestry as an important natural resource that can play a major role in improving living environments and economic opportunities.

The White Paper on a National Water Policy for South Africa:-
Requires that water resources be allocated, after account is taken of the water reserve, on the basis of optimum use.

The White Paper on Rural Development:-
Refers to the present situation of poverty and inequality of services with reference to a future of dignity, growth and prosperity. Recognises and develops the role of local government in determining needs, setting priorities and co-ordinating services.

White Paper on Agriculture:-
Refers specifically to UA, its environmental effects, the need for coherent planning and the need for technical and financial support to the resource poor.
 "The Department of Agriculture is in the process of defining a policy and UA will be one of the areas which will require further elaboration and thought." (Mbuli 1998).

White Paper on Environmental Management for South Africa:-
Recognises the interrelationship between environmental degradation and poverty.

Energy White Paper:-
Indicates that fuel wood is and will remain a major source of energy for many rural households. It commits government to facilitate the sustainable production through a national community forestry programme.

Land Reform Programme:-
Aims to improve access to land and security of tenure. This reform programme also includes farm property belonging to local authorities.

White Paper on the Conservation and Sustainable use of Biological Diversity:-
Identifies, as a national priority, the necessity for sustainable use of biological resources.

International Papers presented at the conferences:-
All the international papers concerning policy that were delivered at the conference referred to the need to establish integrated, participatory service provision in order to redress the previous lack of service delivery. They also stressed the importance of the environment in urban development and the benefit that UA can provide. They did not give any indication as to the respective roles and responsibilities that different government institutions should undertake, but emphasised the role of local authorities as the most important role players.

5.2 Government Departments:

Government departments currently involved or having the potential to become involved in community UA projects include:

Department Water Affairs and Forestry, Department Agriculture (ARC), Department of Land Affairs, Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Department of Health and Department of Education

The Department Water Affairs and Forestry, through the Chief Directorate of Forestry, is currently taking the lead in community forestry support services

Departments such as Housing, Agriculture, Health and Environmental Affairs, can play an important role in the creation of policy and strategy that is conducive for the development of UA

5.3 Other stakeholders:-

NGOs

Arising from increased environmental awareness, NGOs, CBOs school groups and community groups have been formed to improve local urban environments. NGOs, such as Trees for Africa, Abilimi Bezakhaya, Permaculture, Wildlife Society, Ecolink Peace Garden Foundation and Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens with the Outreach Greening Programme are active in producing training and support information, fund raising and project implementation. NGOs are an important catalyst for UA, particularly in initiating and supporting community initiatives.

Private sector:-

Corporate involvement has increased with major companies promoting a corporate urban awareness e.g. Total, Sasol, Nestle, Nedbank, May- Ford Seeds, Gencor etc, in sponsoring projects with the focus on environmental awareness. The corporate sector and local business have an important role as they own or control large areas of land in urban areas at factories and businesses.

International donors:-

Apart from some support for NGOs to stimulate UA, there is limited international support for any UA projects. There are, however, indications that international donors would like to become more involved, depending on the outcomes of policy content from Departments involved in UA. The IDRC Canada supported the Technikon of Pretoria by co-hosting the International Conference held during March 1998, with the focus on stimulating municipal policy review. Other donors such as GTZ Germany and ETC Netherlands also show a very keen interest to become involved in future UA actions

Individuals:-

There is a more positive attitude to environmental issues, and an increased awareness for community projects as a result of activities such as school UA projects and Arbour Day activities. Other factors, such as house ownership, higher income, stable employment and financial support from the local authorities, have also helped encourage change.

5.4 Enabling support

Supportive legislation
Appropriate legislation is necessary to support urban agricultural initiatives, which will enable urban agriculture to develop.

Awareness and understanding
Projects such as conferences, workshops, disseminating of information, networking and research results can contribute to the increase of awareness and the understanding of

the role of urban agriculture at the municipal level and at the level of the individual. This should lead to an increase in the demand for UA project support and in the demand for service provision by means of sound policy and regulations.

6. HOLISTIC JUDGEMENT ON THE PROJECT

In South Africa currently, there is, more than ever before, the need for leadership to develop actions that can lead towards an effective national and integrated programme for UA development. There is a need for an effective agreed strategy for UA development, including identified roles and responsibilities for potential service providers at national, provincial and local levels.

Strategic actions need to focus on the development and implementation of a programme for urban agriculture, based on an improved understanding of needs, institutional roles and capacities and best practice for support service delivery.

Without leadership, actions will result in a limited or total non-development of urban agriculture in an integrated manner involving national, regional and local government and communities.

6.1 What is required ?

On examining the current perceptions of role players and assessing the international speakers' papers and their experiences, there are three main components for the effective development of urban agriculture, which are:

a supportive policy framework
Such a framework must deal with the roles and responsibilities of the service providers and the strategies to realise and support these roles.

institutional capacity building
Capacity to undertake Urban Agriculture in disadvantaged areas is limited and will need to address seeding money, training and education, local participation, participative planing management and maintenance of pilot projects -this will primarily involve local municipalities.

establishment of enabling conditions
To provide a supportive legal basis for urban agriculture, particularly with regard to land zoning and community ownership. Information is required to enable individuals and local government to make informed decisions regarding urban agriculture.

However, in South Africa there is a major lack of access to and dissemination of

information regarding all aspects of urban agriculture, which may inhibits the development of the above components.

This indicates that there is need to organise information available and to disseminate it in a way that will reach stakeholders even on grass root level.

6.2 What are the risks involved with a national programme strategy ?

If the lessons learned from international experience are recognised and national policy is adhered to, then risks can be minimised. The principle risks are:

That there might be no demand for urban agriculture from certain urban population groups.

That it fails to attract the support it needs from regional government departments and municipalities.

That municipalities do not integrate urban agriculture into urban development planning.

That there is no community participation or consultation resulting in a top down delivery service.

That there is no support for community driven initiatives.

6.3 What is crucial for this project?

*If it were not for the conferences on UA, hosted and co-ordinated by TP and the DEAT, UA would not be on the agendas and documents for discussion and development at local level

*The present political environment has been under pressure and subsequently has resulted in a hostile attitude towards constructive policy review. The timing of the conference was consequently crucial in order to make a positive contribution towards policy development.

*The conference made a significant contribution to a national awareness of the positive possibilities of an UA policy which would be supportive of community development initiatives. It is a pity that the vision of some governmental white papers is not reflected in current draft policy documents. *e.g. Both the White papers on Sustainable Forest Development and on Agriculture recognised the roles that urban greening can play in urban economies and improving the urban environment, yet, the new Forestry Act which was recently published does not mention urban forestry, which is a glaring omission.- M. Edwards (Trees for Africa Newsletter Winter 1998.)*

*S A needs a more aggressive approach towards the dissemination of information that can contribute towards the stimulation of UA at all levels, as a national basis.

*The content of the conference was relevant for all end users.

*There is a need for more active research programmes and specialised research that is focussed on basic technology development.

*Long-term sustainability of the project could become a problem should the current co-ordinator move away from his present position. If the DEAT did not have the manpower or budget to subsequently replace the co-ordinator, the ongoing momentum of the project would be lost. In today's political and business climate, this is a matter that requires urgent attention.
The co-ordinator has already secured the commitment of the TP management for the institution of a Centre for service delivery within the Department of Horticulture and Leisure Management.

7 STRATEGIC ISSUES NEEDING ATTENTION

The following issues need to be addressed by the POSF

The institution of regional POSF's with regional co-ordinators that will serve on the executive of POSF.

TP should co-ordinate and facilitate this process and make the office available for the daily functioning of the service.

Initiate a lobbying process on regional level to stimulate UA activities by means of a participative process. The accent must be on local authorities.

Share the model for policy development (*see **Table 3** page 25*) and assess which policies, rules and regulations etc are not in line for future utilisation of urban open space management. Research in this regard needs to be stimulated by the POSF.

Maintain and further develop the database by means of the introduction of a web site for POSF.

Stimulate the development of a demonstration project in SA with local partnerships and international donor organisations, which can be used for training demonstrations and active research. TP needs to take the leading role in close collaboration with POSF in order to initiate this action.

Organise practical and educational UA workshops on a regional basis.

Organise a follow up International Workshop in the year 2001.

8. IN CONCLUSION

Policy is not static – it must respond to changing circumstances and needs, and must be constantly updated. It is believed that the important issues debated, and the

guidelines proposed, which are set out in this report as a result of the 1998 international conference, can influence the formulation of UA policy in SA.

"Past policies stressed food self-sufficiency, and whilst this was appropriate for a country picture, in as far as the past government was concerned, it fell far short of actually meeting the basic food needs of people in the country at the house-hold level." (Mbuli 1998).

Service providers, (institutions), that can deliver community UA services do exist. However they lack co-ordination at national, provincial and local level, as well as information concerning the planning and implementation of UA programme development. Roles and responsibilities have still to be decided on.

This conference created an opportunity for a comprehensive overview of issues that affect the practice of UA and makes way for addressing the challenge.

The project represents a milestone in the development of guidelines for a municipal policy review process in South Africa. It does not only contribute towards the discussions on the importance of policies to support UA projects, but also further increases the awareness and understanding of the importance of UA as a source of food production for the urban poor. The success of the implementation of such a programme lies in the institutionalisation of the project.

The co-ordinator of this project proposes the following model (*see Table 3 next page*), as one that can be used for further policy development purposes. This model has been adapted from a table presented by the Department of Environmental Affairs during preparations for the first conference in 1994.

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Table 3:
Proposed policy roles of Government authorities:
-Holistic approach to policy development

RESPONSIBILITY

PREPARATION OF POLICY (National level)	Assess the merits of promoting UA considering the benefits and investments required Consult with major actors interested in the development of policy related to urban areas / nutrition / agriculture / horticulture Prepare national policy guidelines (vision of White papers for adoption by responsible departments to facilitate the implementation of urban agriculture. The most important spheres in which the guidelines are needed, will relate to: Planning Access to resources (especially land) Access to support services Promotion/public participation
Central Government Department: Education Agriculture Health Environmental affairs and tourism Constitutional Development. Regional Government: Agriculture Housing & Local Government Education Health Local Authorities: Councils & Metropoles	Provide guidelines for the preparation of policy/strategies at the following scales: Structure plans Viability studies Detailed design Implementation Identify areas where further research is necessary Consult with role players to streamline and co-ordinate efforts Assess the potential role of UA as a policy to be promoted within urban environments (or components thereof) Develop food security and entrepreneurial development programmes Develop UA strategy - align internal structures, budgets and staff training Identify and review - existing projects and disseminate information on UA to communities
STRUCTURE PLANS (For urban open areas) Regional Government: Provincial Departments Regional offices of Central Government Departments Local scale: Local authorities Local community groups	 Assess level of community interest Assess economic viability Assess broader developmental impact Assess availability of resources e.g. land, extension funding, etc. Through a consultation process, decide on the viability of project
VIABILITY STUDIES/and DETAILED DESIGN **(Project specific)** Regional government (as above) where necessary as a facilitator to stimulate Local Government. Local scale: Local Committees Local authorities Consultants (Planners, Agriculture, horticulture expert's) NGO's	 Facilitating training, education and support Facilitating access to land Facilitating access to inputs e.g. seed, fertiliser, etc. Provision of ongoing support services e.g. extensions, guidance, workshops re marketing, etc. Promotion of UA and ongoing organisational development.
IMPLEMENTATION (Project specific) Regional Government, as above (where necessary as a facilitator. Local scale: Local communities Local authorities Development agent(s) Authorities e.g. Dept of Health, Agriculture etc. Technikons University's etc NGO's Private sector	