Effecting Policy Change and Implementation in Urban Agriculture, Kampala, Uganda

This paper presents the process, experiences and lessons learnt pertaining to urban agriculture policy change in Kampala. Specifically, it chronicles the legal and policy framework related to urban agriculture before 2001, and the participatory process culminating in the formulation of the current Bills for Ordinances that will serve to promote and regulate urban agriculture in Kampala City.

K

Kampala, the capital city of Uganda, covers approximately 195 km² of hilly terrain with low-lying wetlands that are covered with lush green vegetation. The city has a population of 1.2 million with a population density of 4,581 people per square kilometre (UBOS, 2002). Its population is steadily increasing at a rate of 3.9 percent per annum due to high rural-urban migration and natural population growth (KCC, 2006a).

Despite it being illegal until very recently, urban agriculture has existed in Kampala since the 1890s (Urban Planning & Land Management Department, KCC, 2005). To date more than 30 percent of Kampala’s population practices urban agriculture (Muwanga, 2001). Although it is recognised as an important coping strategy to ensure household food security and income, it also continues to be perceived as a nuisance and a threat to public health and the environment.

It was not until the late 1980s that research documenting the importance of urban agriculture in Kampala began to emerge. This research contributed to a gradual shift in the perceptions of local policy makers. In 2000, the Kampala City Council (KCC) acknowledged the importance of urban agriculture and the need to legalise and regulate the practice. The Council also recognised that existing bye-laws were not supportive of urban agriculture and were obsolete given current economic and social realities.

In 2001, the KCC hired a consultant to review all urban bye-laws developed during the post-independence period of the 1960s. The only bye-laws that existed relating to urban agriculture were The Kampala City Registration and Control of Dogs Ordinance, 1964, which emphasised the control of rabies; The Kampala City Maintenance of Law and Order Ordinance, 1964, which emphasised the control of roaming livestock and proper disposal of carcasses; and the Public Health Act, 1964, which emphasised the growing of trees and ornamental plants in the city. There were no laws pertaining to crop and livestock production, fish farming, or related agricultural activities even though they were all widely practiced at the time by Kampala citizens.

In 2001, KCC established a committee of people from various disciplines who worked in collaboration with the consultant to review, develop, and amend the respective bye-laws. The six draft Bills for Ordinances that resulted from the process included:

- The Kampala City Registration and Control of Dogs Ordinance, 2001
- The Kampala City Maintenance of Law and Order Ordinance, 2001
- The Kampala City Fish Processing and Sale Ordinance, 2001
- The Kampala City Urban Agriculture Ordinance, 2001
- The Kampala City Sale of Milk and Milk Products Ordinance, 2001
- The Kampala City Meat Ordinance, 2001
- The Kampala City Sale of Meat and Meat Products Ordinance
- The Kampala City Sale of Milk and Milk Products Ordinance
- The Kampala City Livestock and Companion Animals Ordinance
- The Kampala City Fish Ordinance
- The Kampala City Urban Agriculture Ordinance
- The Kampala City Sale of Milk and Milk Products Ordinance
- The Kampala City Sale of Meat and Meat Products Ordinance

In 2003, the KCC – in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries, & Fisheries, the National Agricultural Research Organization, and Makerere University – was supported by CGIARs’ Urban Harvest and the Department for International Development of the British Government (DFID) to spearhead a second consultative process to re-examine the six Draft Bills for Ordinances. The two-year review resulted in five Draft Bills for Ordinances, including:

- The Kampala City Maintenance of Law and Order Ordinance
- The Kampala City Fish Ordinance
- The Kampala City Urban Agriculture Ordinance
- The Kampala City Sale of Milk and Milk Products Ordinance
- The Kampala City Sale of Meat and Meat Products Ordinance

In 2005, KCC assented to the newly developed Ordinances to “provide for licensing, guidance, control, and regulation of urban agriculture and to provide for other connected matters” (KCC, 2006b).

ADVOCATING FOR POLICY CHANGE

One of the aspects that contributed to policy change in Kampala was knowledge sharing and exposure to the existence of urban agriculture and its contribution to food security, financial stability, health and nutrition, and the creation of green
environments. This exchange was facilitated by the interaction of agricultural extension officers with other KCC officials through the sharing of research findings and exposure to local community-based projects. This created a demand for a change in policy.

KEY ISSUES

During the stakeholder consultative process, several issues relating to the practicality of the ordinances were raised and the ordinances were amended accordingly. The new ordinances are intended to be “user-friendly”, and they outline regulations for city farmers and traders to promote sound management practices for each form of urban agriculture and marketing. Provisions were included for permits to legitimise farmers’ activities and licenses to regulate quality standards of commercial production. Subsequent sections of the ordinances place restrictions on where agriculture can be practiced and ban the use of unsafe inputs such as pesticides and chemical fertilisers. Also the disposal of wastes from agricultural practices is clearly addressed. Any breach of the ordinances could result in legal action. However, it is also recognised that the successful practice of sustainable agriculture in Kampala City will require ongoing development of technologies that are economically viable, ecologically friendly, and culturally appropriate.

PILOT TESTING OF THE

ORDINANCES

The KCC, in collaboration with KUFSALCC (Kampala Urban Food Security, Agriculture and Livestock Coordination Committee), prepared guidelines to operationalise the ordinances. These are currently being pilot-tested in two parishes of Kampala to assess the practicality of the developed ordinances in terms of adherence at the individual and community level, enforcement, and challenges of implementing the bye-laws.

One of the aspects that contributed to policy change was knowledge sharing and exposure

Some of the issues that have come up during the pilot testing phase thus far include:

• Resistance on the part of farmers to adopt the permit and licensing system. This can be attributed to a deep-seated reluctance to pay taxes stemming from the KCC’s failure in the past to provide services in exchange for taxes collected from Kampala residents and businesses.
• The need for a clear definition of urban agriculture (e.g., what level of agricultural production will require – or be exempted from – a permit?)
• The need for flexibility within the permit and licensing system in order to accommodate the dynamic nature of urban agriculture (e.g., over time farmers may shift from one type of agriculture to another due to changing market forces).

LESSONS LEARNT

Lessons drawn from the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) case study on Kampala “Process and Partnership for Pro-Poor Policy Changing” (Hooten, 2005) revealed that wide consultation and stakeholder involvement are key aspects when drafting policies. This process contributes to sensitisation and is imperative to creating a sense of ownership among all stakeholders.

Partnerships involving committed individuals from key organisations in the policy process are important. Strong and committed individuals in key positions can be crucial in arguing for change, especially in the case of issues such as urban agriculture that had been ignored and marginalised for many years.

Champions within organisations can help change the behaviour within those organisations through their leadership. Strong political champions play a key role in this respect. The policy making process is iterative, slow, and expensive. This requires resource mobilisation as well as a long-term vision about the outcome that can transcend changes in political administrations.

LINKING REALITY WITH VISION

The existence of urban agriculture in Kampala prompted the development of related policies. Its wide acceptance and acknowledgement is evidenced in the manifestos (working documents) of the President of Uganda, and the Mayor of Kampala as key strategies for poverty reduction. KCC’s Urban Planning and Land Management Department have also recognised the ambiguity of a paragraph in the City’s Master Plan document relating to multiple land uses, which does not specify urban agriculture, but can be adapted to integrate urban agriculture into future city development. The existence of urban agriculture in other towns in Uganda has prompted a study to establish the magnitude of its practice as a basis for creating a dialogue on the inclusion of it in national policy frameworks.

CONCLUSION

The policy change in Kampala is a remarkable achievement considering that urban and periurban agriculture is still restricted or only tacitly accepted across the Sub-Saharan region. The breakthrough comes on the heels of increasing recognition of the contribution of urban agriculture to urban food and nutrition security, income-generation and employment and its potential impact on poverty reduction, health improvement and women’s empowerment.

References

Kampala City Council. 2006a. Three Year District Development Plan 2006/7 to 2008/9
Kampala City Council. 2006b. The Kampala City (Urban Agriculture) Ordinance, 2006
Kampala City Council. 1964. The Kampala City (Maintenance of Law and Order) Ordinance
Kampala City Council. 1964. Public Health Act Kampala City Council. 1963. The Kampala City (Registration and Control of Dogs) Ordinance