

Urban farming and food security nexus for food sovereignty and food system planning: The case of a highly urbanized city in Metro Manila, Philippines

Sheila Uside Alumasa¹ and Dina Cartagena Magnaye²

¹Maasai Mara University- School of Natural Resource and Animal Science, Narok, Kenya

² University of the Philippines School of Urban and Regional Planning, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines

Introduction

Urban food security is a key challenge for most households in cities. Thus, there is a need to reconsider and use the existing space creatively as well as find an answer to the question, "how an empty space can be changed into a powerful space?" Creative urban farming strategies to achieve food sovereignty and a comprehensive food system plan are needed to address food insecurity and food injustice in the vulnerable urban communities.

Objectives

1. Determine how urban farming becomes an effective strategy to achieve food autonomy and food security.
2. Describe urban farming practices in a highly urbanized city.
3. Analyse contribution of a decade-old urban farming program in livelihood generation and food insecurity.
4. Identify strategies on enhancing urban farming practices.

Method

- Collection of primary and secondary data
- Survey of 60 program beneficiaries in selected *barangays*
- Adoption of case study method to evaluate a nearly decade-old urban farming program (Joy of Urban Farming Program) in Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines
- Analysis of relationship between urban farming and food security based on: 1) livelihood generation, 2) vulnerability context, and 3) asset or land ownership
- Crafting a food system blueprint to address food injustice and food sovereignty



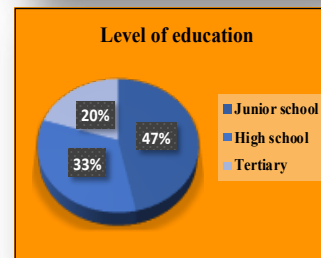
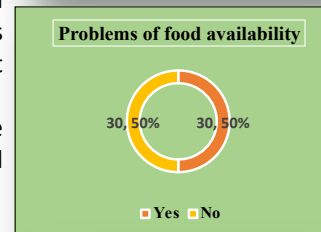
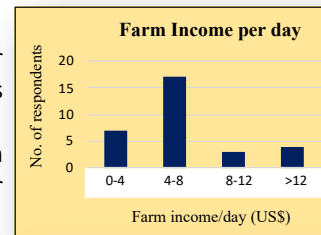
Results

Livelihood Generation

- Household income from food garden and other alternative jobs is an important asset for urban farmers because it represents their financial capital.
- Not having access to a constant income hinders urban farmers' ability to purchase food or to provide for their health needs.
- Food garden enabled the urban farmers to have food readily available and the income spent on food is reduced since they can produce the food that they eat and this mobilized them to save.
- Urban food garden provide urban farmers with the opportunity to develop their human capital and avoid certain vulnerabilities such as food insecurity.

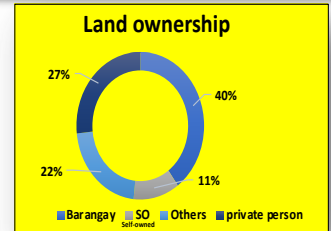
Vulnerability

- The opportunity of the urban farmers to complete junior and high school education may have been a factor contributing to previous struggles with finding appropriate employment.
- Food garden presented an opportunity to the urban farmers in developing human capital to avoid certain vulnerabilities such as food insecurity.



Asset (Land Ownership)

- Most urban farmers who cultivate in open spaces had acquired land by "first claim", with the first person who found a vacant piece of land and started using it became the de facto owner.
- Around 40% of land was owned by the city government. Only 11% was self-owned where urban farmers had a guarantee of security to land tenure.
- Around 22% of the urban farmers were using vacant land owned by a university.
- Urban farmers perceived that non-possession of land they cultivate will lead to losing it at any moment. This discourages them to engage in urban farming.



Conclusion

- **SUSTAINABILITY:** Urban farming can be sustained through the availability of government support, availability of agricultural land for the urban dwellers and the security to land tenure.
- **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION:** Urban farmers should actively participate in decision-making process on urban gardening/farming, zoning and land use planning.
- **URBAN FARMING STRATEGIES**
 - Provision of land (security of tenure) to urban farmers and assistance in marketing the farm produce
 - Integrate urban farming into the food system planning to address food injustice
 - Provide the direction and guidance in food production, distribution and consumption
 - Provide urban farmers with the right to own land as a farming asset to attain a just food system that supports food sovereignty.