

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

Eight hundred million people worldwide are involved in urban or peri-urban agriculture (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, 2000). Half of the world's population now lives in towns or cities. By 2020, nearly two billion people will be urban dwellers, increasing the threat to food security, the urban environment and quality of life.

Policy makers need appropriate information and to address the urbanization of poverty and to prevent the dire social, economic and, in particular, environmental degradation, that is possible unless adequately handled.

The rapid pace of urbanization is particularly evident in the developing countries. Eight of the nine cities expected to have more than 20 million people by 2020 are in Asia, Africa or Latin America. With food insecurity and unemployment expected to worsen, urban and peri-urban agriculture will be an increasingly important livelihood option for the urban poor (Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, 2000).

Urban farming is an ancient strategy for feeding city dwellers. The dramatic increase in the rate of urbanization and the size of cities during the 20th century highlights the importance of urban agriculture as a means of providing for household security and poverty alleviation.

In South Africa, results of the 1996 census show that 55.4% of the population lives in cities, while of the 55.4% live in metropolitan areas. On average 24.4% of the urban households are classified as poor, but 54.5% of these poor live in metropolitan areas (Rogerson, 1998). Most of the poor are concentrated in townships on the outskirts of towns.

The problems and constraints of urban agriculture are particularly evident in the Cape Flats area of the Western Cape province. A survey carried out by Meadows (2000) indicates that a large number of residents in that community are engaged in crop production. The majority of gardeners are usually unemployed; middle-aged females, with some degree of farming

experience. The gardeners get very little extension or financial support from government and local authorities. Most of the support comes from the local environment NGOs which, however, have been experiencing problems, especially lack of adequate funding and lack of capacity.

Meadow's (2000) research concentrated on describing agricultural activities in Cape Flats area. However, it did not address the issue of the role of urban agriculture in securing household food security and income. Very little research has been conducted to identify **livelihood strategies** of the residents and the role urban agriculture plays in these strategies. The focus of this report is to address these matters and provide baseline information for policy makers to develop appropriate support measures for urban agricultural activities in this area.

1.2 Objectives

The overall goal of this study is to focus on livelihood strategies adopted by the households involved in urban agriculture on a case study basis. The specific objectives were:

- To thoroughly describe a number of household experiences and case studies.
- To determine the main livelihood strategies adopted by urban households.
- To describe the role of urban agriculture in these strategies.
- To determine the opportunities, risks and constraints associated with urban agricultural activities with regard to available resources and markets.
- To assess how the livelihoods of urban poor would be affected by future expansion of urban agriculture.

1.3 Terminology and definitions

- **Urban agriculture.** Urban agriculture, the main concept of this study, is defined by the United Nations Development Programme (1996) as "an activity that produces, processes, and markets food and other products, on land and water in urban and peri-

urban areas, applying intensive production methods, and (re) using natural resources and urban wastes, to yield a diversity of crops and livestock" (see Table 1)

Table 1: Most common resource-based productive systems in urban areas

Farming system	Expected Outcome	Place location /technique within the urban locality
Aquaculture	Fish, seafood, vegetables, fodder	Ponds, streams, cages, lagoons, wetlands
Horticulture	Vegetables, fruits and compost	Homesteads, parks, containers, roof tops, wetlands, hydroponics, greenhouses
Livestock keeping	Milk, meat, eggs, hides, manure	Zero grazing, hillsides, peri -urban areas
Agroforestry	Wood fuel, fruits, building posts, fodder	Street trees, forest parks, homesteads, steep slopes, wetlands, orchards, green belts.
Other systems	House plants, medicinal herbs, beverages and flowers	Floriculture, roof top, container farming, gardening, container farming, roadsides, urban forest

Source: Sawio (1998)

- **Peri-urban areas** refer to areas not proclaimed as urban areas, which are adjacent to, proclaimed urban areas. Wolpe (1995) states that the peri-urban areas of the CMA, consist of Stellenbosch/ Bellville/Parow, containing highly fertile land.
- **Urban influenced areas** can be rural areas, but the city has a magnet role on people's livelihoods (temporary migrations, commuting and job opportunities).
- **Livelihood** a definition of a livelihood is that "it comprises the capabilities, assets, and activities required for a means of living" (Carney, 1998), i.e. seeking an answer to the question as to how people live and make ends meet?" The concept of livelihood seeks to convey the non-economic attributes of survival, not just the economic ones; it therefore includes, *inter alia*, the social relationships and institutions that mediate people's access to different assets and income streams (Ellis, 2000).

- **Strategies** A strategy may be defined as the combination of processes (plans, decisions and acts) that an individual or a group of individuals (a firm, a family, etc.) develop purposively, and which aim at changing/transforming their social, economic and/or physical environment. Such processes combine resources and/or techniques and/or knowledge and know-how (Oliver de Sardan, 1995). Yung (1998) states that “individuals develop strategies as responses to a changing and uncertain environment, in order for them to duplicate, transform a given lifestyle that corresponds to an objective, as a group or as individuals. The crops, crop management sequences, activities, and so on, that the individuals combine and mobilise, reflect such strategies”.
- **Subsistence production** is the condition of just having enough food to stay alive (Essential Dictionary). It consists of the production of goods and services by and for household’s members which have the possibility of being replaced by the market goods or paid services when there is an opportunity (Engberg, 1991). This includes the production of food, fuel, fibre, livestock, handicrafts and housing, clothing and other material goods produced for home consumption. It also includes activities and services such as unpaid agricultural work and domestic work (the farming, cooking, gathering, cleaning, food preservation and storage, child-minding, etc).
- **Household** is a group of related individuals who share a home, share meals and pool their resources for the benefit of the group (Botha, 1999). It is the smallest of social organisations - the micro systems within a larger hierarchy of social system within each nation, and they are the part of the total ecosystem.

1.4 Advocacy on urban and peri-urban agriculture

Mougeot (1994), cited by Karaan & Mohammed (1996), points out that urban authorities, policy makers and municipalities can no longer neglect the significance of urban and peri-urban agriculture as statistics reveal clearly that globally about 20 million urban dwellers are now farmers and backyard gardeners, providing food security and income to approximately eight hundred million people.

In South Africa the Reconstruction Development Programme and African National Congress agricultural policy promote urban agriculture by improvement in household food security and to provide support for the resource- poor agriculture. Other policy documents for example the (GNU's) *White Paper on Agriculture* argues for the eradication of poverty through urban agriculture and stress the need for future research to develop it, (Ramphela & Boonzaier 1988) describes it as uprooting poverty. Rogerson (1996) states that among the several stated objectives of the RDP is to eradicate poverty, employment inequalities and low wages to meet basic needs and thus to ensure that every South African citizen has a decent living. The majority of poor people are located in rural areas in former Bantustans; increasingly the geography of poverty is shifting to urban areas, urging the need for production of food in cities and towns.

May & Rogerson (1995) state that in Cape Town poor urban households spend an estimated 40 to 50% of their income on food purchases and in the peri-urban areas of Kwazulu, close to metropolitan Durban, up to 52% of all households spend their income on food. This reveals that expenditure on food represents the highest single household expenditure item. Rogerson (2001: p.18) cited a Soweto case study that concluded that, "*Urban agriculture is a successful strategy for immediate relief of hunger, malnutrition and is way for women to gain a food hold in the urban economy*". Urban agriculture is a component of resource poor agriculture with new strategies and innovations looking for improved livelihood. The significance of urban agriculture has also been recognised by the Pretoria Technikon, which is intending to offer a two years diploma course on the subject (Fisser, 1996: p.95).

(Rakodi, 1993) states that "*urban agriculture is a productive activity that has a potential both as diet and as an income supplement for poor household.*" For an example 25% of urban families in the six major African cities claim they cannot survive without self-produced food. (Tinker, 1994).

Urban and peri-urban agriculture has been accepted by the international community because of its significance in relation to poverty alleviation (Rogerson, 2001: p.17). The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) with its enviable perspicacity, became the first major international agency to recognise the importance of urban food production (Tinker, 1994). The FAO followed by establishing a specialised support division for urban and peri-urban

agriculture. The Strategic Initiative for Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture (SIUPA) and electronic conferences on urban agriculture co-ordinated by FAO- RUAF/ETC with the objectives to bring together, exchange lively ideas, and discuss experiences gained with a variety of methodologies applied in urban agriculture research, policy development, spatial urban planning, project planning, implementation and evaluation.

1.5 Structure of the report

The report is composed of six chapters. Chapter 1 gives a general perspective, definition of terms, and problem statement of the study. Chapter 2 reviews a body of literature review on urban and peri-urban agriculture and sustainable livelihood framework. This chapter focuses on the experience throughout the world, Africa and South Africa. Chapter 3 explains the methodology and survey approach. This includes data collection and the framework of analysis. Chapter 4 describes case studies of urban agriculture in Khayelitsha and assets-base. Chapter 5 discusses the livelihood strategies of the households surveyed, demographic characteristics of the surveyed respondents, results, benefits, constraints, and risks associated with urban agriculture and typology of urban agriculture in Khayelitsha. Chapter 6 discusses policy issues pertaining to urban and peri-urban agriculture with regard to the rejection and acceptance of urban agriculture in South Africa and concludes by calling for attention to urban and peri-urban agriculture by policy makers, government officials, researchers and those who realise the need for its reform.

Karim & Mohamed (1996) state that South African urban planners, policy makers, researchers and practitioners do not have a strong tradition of urban agriculture and it is essential to draw experience from international contexts so as to gain a better understanding of the activity. International literature reviews outline vegetable production in highly dense urban areas in other parts of the world, and it is from their successes and experiences that South African officials and planners should deduce the potential of urban agriculture in our densely populated urban areas.

In the United States of America, Manhattan city (Schneidersopf, 1996) and North Denver (Fradford 1993; Klinkenberg, 1995) offer some valuable suggestions to policy makers with regard to the potential of urban agriculture. Ebedford (1989b, p 54) states that "the trend of city farms are a new and growing phenomenon, these city farms are community projects working with farm animals and gardening, situated on areas of derelict land in the centre