

Amman, Jordan

Urban agriculture: finding multi-purpose Urban NEXUS solutions through collaborative action

The Municipality of Amman created an Urban Agriculture Office and Multi-stakeholder Forum to foster food security, social inclusion and promote sustainable use of water through urban agriculture.

Urban NEXUS Case Story 2014 - 26

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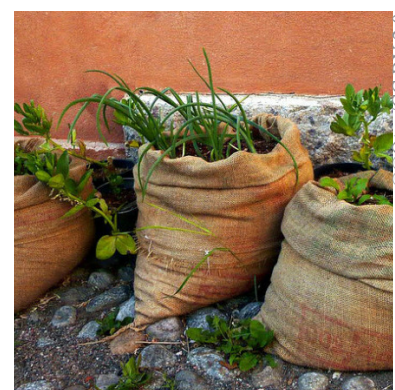
The project in brief

In 2005 the Amman Municipality established the Urban Agriculture Office, to encourage the farming of idle urban and peri-urban land, including rooftops and small plots between buildings. The Municipality has since launched several successful programs under the City Strategic Agenda (CSA) to promote urban agriculture (UA) and to support inhabitants' engagement by offering residents training, information, expertise, materials and access to credit. In the process, the Urban Agriculture Office has pursued a sustainable approach to farming by integrating recycling (e.g. collecting used tyres to convert them into flower pots) and other resource-efficient practices for water use, as part of the food security agenda.

Instituted in one of the driest countries in the world, the CSA includes various initiatives to provide access to water, including the reuse of grey water, the introduction of drought-tolerant plants, rainwater harvesting and the creation of water reservoirs. The CSA seeks to substantially improve the life of the urban poor, as home-grown food is cheaper, and the surplus may be sold, thereby generating additional sources of income for urban farmers. The country's average income per capita is roughly 130USD a month and UA provides on average 70USD of extra income per household. The City encouraged the trading of home-grown products by creating a label guaranteeing product quality. The project now encompasses more than 300 rooftops and 4,000 gardens in the city.

What makes it "Urban NEXUS"?

In order to address Amman's pressing issues of water and food security, land fragmentation, and poverty alleviation, the municipality instituted the Urban Agriculture Office to incite cross-sectoral and inter-departmental cooperation, notably between the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Environment. With support from the Resource Centres on Urban Agriculture & Food Security (RUAF) Foundation "From Seed to Table" program, Amman established a the Multi-Stakeholders Forum (MSF) for policy formulation and local action. The MSF holds 28 permanent members, including representatives of the Greater Amman Municipality, the Royal Directorate for the Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture, the University of Jordan and a number of urban farmers, credit institutions and civil society organisations. A key outcome of MSF collaboration included of an exploratory feasibility study, policy review and the formation three working groups for media, technical and legal action, ultimately resulting in the City Strategic Agenda.



Date	2005-ongoing
NEXUS Sectors	Water-Food-Social
NEXUS Innovations	Design+ Technology; Law + Policy; Institutions
Scale	City-wide (300 rooftops, 4,000 gardens)
Budget	n/a

Urban NEXUS Definition

The Urban NEXUS is an approach to the design of sustainable urban development solutions. The approach guides stakeholders to identify and pursue possible synergies between sectors, jurisdictions, and technical domains, so as to increase institutional performance, optimize resource management, and service quality.

It counters traditional sectoral thinking, trade-offs, and divided responsibilities that often result in poorly coordinated investments, increased costs, and underutilized infrastructures and facilities. The ultimate goal of the Urban NEXUS approach is to accelerate access to services, and to increase service quality and the quality of life within our planetary boundaries.

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Further Reading

Tawk, S.T.; Moussa, Z.; Shadi, H. and D. Abi Saiid (2011), "Developing value chains in Amman, Jordan." Urban Agriculture Magazine, no. 25, September: <http://www.ruaf.org/sites/default/files/UAM%2025-Developing%20Value%20Chains%2054-56.pdf> (20 Aug 2014)

Whitman, E. (2013), In Home Gardens, Income and Food for Urban Poor. IPS News Agency, 12 December: <http://www.ipsnews.net/2013/12/home-gardens-income-food-urban-poor/> (20 Aug 2014)

GIZ and ICLEI (2014) "Operationalizing the Urban NEXUS: towards resource efficient and integrated cities and metropolitan regions.", GIZ Study: www.iclei.org/urbanexus

The CSA addresses the City of Amman's pressing issues, particularly water availability and access, land fragmentation, food security, gender equity and poverty alleviation through a variety of projects, which include olive tree planting to combat desertification, workshops on water efficiency and material upcycling and/or reuse, home gardening, and human resources for gender sensitive projects such as the "From Seed to Table" project in Iraq el Amir.

Scope for improvement

Amman continues to urbanize at a rapid pace, and as land prices increase, it is more profitable for owners to sell empty plots than to use them for farming. The current land use guidelines that require 15% of each plot should be allocated for greening or agriculture marks a promising start for the urban agriculture, however the target could be further increased.

Replication

This type of project is replicable, provided there is strong administrative support. The creation of an integrated institution such as Amman's Urban Agriculture bureau can play an important role in the supervision and coordination of multiple actions and projects.

Acknowledgements

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On behalf of:



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