

Annex 3.5

**Revised discussion paper 1
“Gender issues in urban agriculture”**

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URBAN AGRICULTURE AND GENDER

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

By Joanna Wilbers
ETC-RUAF

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1. Introduction

This paper has been prepared with support of the RUAF advisory group on gender and urban agriculture as a first step in the preparation of this workshop. An earlier version was used as an input for the RUAF-IDRC Training workshop on Gender in Urban Agriculture, held in Johannesburg, South Africa in July 2003. The paper was prepared by reviewing a number of documents on "gender and urban agriculture" available in the RUAF bibliographic database (see www.ruaf.org), as well as by making use of case studies prepared for the Workshop entitled 'Women Feeding Cities', jointly organised by RUAF and Urban Harvest in Accra, September 2004.

2. Key issues "gender and urban agriculture"

2.1 Women in urban agriculture: an introduction

Over the past decade, the recognition of the fact that a large part of the urban farmers consists of women has increased. Before, the general focus would be on a gender-neutral (male) farmer, hereby hardly or not paying attention to women's experiences with urban agriculture. However, recent literature shows that the predominance of women can be found in many regions, including Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Poland and Thailand (Hovorka, 1998; Maxwell, 1995; Mougeot, 2000; UNDP, 1996). According to these sources the predominance of women in this group can be ascribed to 2 factors. Firstly, it is still the women that bear the first responsibility for household sustenance and well-being and secondly, women tend to have lower educational status than men and therefore more difficulties in finding formal wage employment (Hovorka 2003). However, one should keep in mind that situations can be highly variable and that numbers of men and women involved will differ from case to case. Box 1 and 2 illustrate this high variability well.

Even disregarding the fact whether it is men or women predominating in urban agriculture, it is important to shift the focus of research, policies and action planning to both men and women. To this effect, some issues, which can be considered to be of key importance within the field of women in urban agriculture, will be raised in the following paragraphs.

Box 1 - Men predominating urban agriculture in Accra, Ghana

Men dominate urban farming in Accra as a result of the arduous nature of the farming tasks especially land preparation which is mainly manual and the fact that vegetables require more activities such as regular watering, planting and transplanting, shading in some cases, regular turning of the soil and weeding. Land clearing, land preparation and watering are the most difficult tasks and are usually considered as male activities. Whereas men could supplement their effort by providing paid labour, half of independent women cultivators mainly depend on male labourers (paid labour) to carry out land clearing and preparation. Women with limited financial resources cultivate relatively small plots that can easily be managed. This is illustrated in the following comments made by a typical woman farmer who had been cultivating in Accra for 11 years.

"I started with five other women but they have all left because of the difficulty of the tasks involved. Talking about land clearing and preparation, forking of beds, spraying of chemicals etc., it takes much determination to continue cultivating. I mostly use men hired labour for land clearing and preparation. When I have not got enough money to hire labour, I do the land preparation myself but then I'm able to cultivate only part of my plot." (adapted from Cofie et al, 2004)

Box 2 - Female domination of urban agriculture in Harare, Zimbabwe

The Musikavanhu project, which originally concentrated in Budiro and Glen View and has now spread to the other low-income suburbs of Harare started with seven families meeting and agreeing to form a group that would work together and to engage in urban farming. Currently, 95% of the members of the project are women. Several reasons explain the dominance of women in the group. The first is that, generally, most of the urban farmers in Zimbabwe's cities are women. This is a/o explained by the fact that placing food on the family table remains a responsibility for women in Zimbabwe. Further, in Zimbabwe, up until the mid-1980s access to formal employment was a preserve of men. Women who lived with their husbands in the cities had a lot of time available to them and engaged in urban farming. In the specific case of Musikavanhu, another reason for female dominance is the fact that, as the group emerged as a mechanism to resolve conflicts over the use of the land resource, women farmers felt they needed

more protection, as compared to male farmers who felt they did not require the group to defend their use of open land for farming. Furthermore, until the late 1990s men felt that urban agriculture was not a high income earning activity that could enable them to provide for their families. They also did not support their spouses to join the sector. Most of the women indicated that they did not receive support from their husbands when they started practicing urban agriculture. Still, women are often not allowed by their husbands to attend training courses that will take them away from home for than a day, which severely impedes their capacity building opportunities and their participation in leadership positions. Men only joined in after demonstrated results in terms of the harvest and the money coming in from selling some of the produce. Also, the massive retrenchments that were exercised in the late 1990s left many of the men with very little option but to engage in informal sector employment, including urban agriculture. Currently, the engagement of men into urban agriculture is causing increasing conflicts due to the increased demand for agricultural land, sometimes resulting in some men invading land belonging to women. (adapted from Mushamba et al, 2004)

2.2 Access to/control over resources

An important key issue is the differentiation of access to and the control over resources within the household between male and female members of the household. This matter of access is highly influenced by structures or processes at the macro level, where cultural ideas determine which roles men and women play, and which responsibilities within the household both have. According to Moser (1993, p. 23), external factors like ideological, cultural and economic reasons underlie the symmetries and asymmetries in intra-household resource allocation. Often, traditions more than laws prevent women from inheriting and controlling land and animals on an equal basis with men. Traditions of patrilineal property inheritance limit women's access to a secure place to live, their ability to produce subsistence and to generate income. An example of the influence on culture and traditions on women's access to land is given in Box 3.

Box 3 – Land for urban agriculture in Hyderabad, India

The city of Hyderabad, India, is one of the fastest growing cities in the world. It is spread out over an area of 500 sq km with a population of 6 million. Various crops irrigated with wastewater are cultivated in the urban and peri-urban areas of the city along the Musi River, which flows right through the centre of the city. Here, land is considered to be a resource for men. Legally, the land inherited by a person should be equally distributed between the son and the daughter. But the land title is usually in the name of the man and after him, inherited by the male member of the family (sons). Indians still follow the dowry system where a bride's father has to pay the family of the bridegroom before/during the wedding. Parents of the bride pay in cash and jewellery to the bridegroom and retain land for their son, as he is the one who will support them in their old age. Women usually do not file a case against their father or brothers even if they do not get their share of the land. The main reason behind it is that a father pays a dowry to the bridegroom for the wedding of his daughter and that is supposed to compensate for the land that goes to the son. Culturally, women are taught that land is a man's property. Women get land titles only if the husband dies and the son is too young (less than 18 years old). Divorce is not a common phenomenon in the study area and even in the rare event of a divorce, the land remains with the husband. (adapted from Devi Mekala et al, 2004).

Lee-Smith (1997, p. 71) uses the theoretical framework of gender contracts as introduced by Hirdman to address the reasons why women's access to the resources land and housing is different from that of men, in a Kenyan context. Gender contracts can be defined as distinct sets of social rules that make up invisible agreements governing what men and women can and cannot do, which can be found in every society. According to Lee-Smith (1997, p. 169), gender behaviours in Kenyan society are mediated by the social mechanism of these gender contracts, which is shown by the rules making up these contracts being widely known and adhered to.

In the field of access to and control over resources, two related issues can be distinguished: Access to and control over **productive resources**, like land, water, inputs, credit, technical and market information, technology as well as contacts, interpersonal networks and organisations. Also highly gendered are the rights to control one's own labour and the degree in which one can regulate the actions of others in the household.

The control over **the benefits of production**, like cash income, food and other products (for home consumption, sales or exchange). The access to (productive) resources also determines certain rights/obligations over the benefits of these resources.

Box 4 provides an example of the way urban farmers in Accra, Ghana make an effective attempt to enhance their access to (informal) credit, while Box 5 describes the access to education for female urban farmers in Kampala, Uganda.

Box 4 - Pre-financing of urban agriculture activities in Accra, Ghana

In general urban farmers do not have access to formal credit schemes in Ghana. This is mainly due to the fact that farmers cannot meet the collateral demands of the financial institutions. In addition, most of the urban farmers have limited space for cultivation and do not own the land. In spite of these problems, some urban farmers have managed to have a win-win situation with the vegetable sellers in terms of access to informal credit. Sellers pre-finance farming activities by providing seeds, fertilizer, pesticides or cash in order to produce for them. Sometimes sellers order the products before cultivation usually through verbal agreement based on trust and confidence. The final amount of money received may differ from the initial amount agreed on as demand and supply might have changed during the growing period. Similar situations have been observed in Lome, Togo and Cotonou, Benin in West Africa. (adapted from Cofe et al, 2004).

Box 5 - Education of female urban farmers in Kampala, Uganda

In Kampala, most of the women involved in urban farming have primary education or none at all. Only a few have secondary education. This determines work done and explains why poverty was a great problem among females, since few of them are in the formal sector and many stay at home as housewives, farmers in the backyards or carry out petty trade in foodstuffs in evening candlelight markets by the roadsides. Thus, this makes them susceptible to poverty resulting into poor standards of living and exploitation of land resources, which leads to land degradation. (adapted from Kiguli, 2004)

The legal standing of resource tenure as well as the kind of tenure tends to reflect gendered relations of power. For example, resource rights are de jure often associated with men and de facto resource rights with women, which has major implications for the relative strength and security of tenure by gender. Women often have rights of renewable use (for example: harvesting leaves from trees), while men have rights of consumptive use (harvesting the tree itself). Resources can be divided into different categories, and women and men may have different control over each of the categories. These differences may embody a division between resources for use value and resources as commodities (Hetterschijt 2001, p. 36-37).

Besides gender differences in access to productive resources within households, one can also find gendered differences between women heads-of-households and men heads-of-households. Often, the first tend to own resources of a poorer quality that consequently result in lower production. In a literature review on gender and agricultural practices in rural and peri-urban areas of Ethiopia, done by Tegegne et al. (2002), the differences between female- and male-headed households were extensively dealt with. According to this review, female-headed households are constrained in a number of ways, as opposed to male-headed households. An important disadvantage for female-headed household is the fact that female farmers tend to limit their labour time in farm activities due to heavy commitment to domestic chores (Tegegne et al., 2002, p. 3). Other disadvantages, related to access to resources which are mentioned in this literature review, are limited education and therefore fewer opportunities for employment in the off-farm labour market, while culturally determined rules can also prohibit women to use certain productive resources, which decreases their productivity as opposed to men's. In a study done by Maxwell on the impact of urban agriculture on livelihoods, food and nutrition security in Greater Accra (1998), female-headed households were also recognised as being among the most vulnerable groups of the city.

A debate exists between scientists that hold the vision that informal economic activities (like urban agriculture) for women are another opportunity for male control, versus scientists that hold the vision that these informal activities are an opportunity for women to regain control over productive resources.

It is important to study whether the experiences gained by women in formal and informal sector activities differ substantially from those of men and how differential access to and control over resources can facilitate or hamper participation in each sector.

Besides the control over and access to productive resources, it is important to review the access to and control over the benefits of the production. According to Hovorka (1998, p. 29), women producers who are not landowners demand

their share of revenue derived from production because they are the ones who are primarily responsible for the care of children. However, when they are not successful in convincing their husbands to share the earnings, women may retain part of the money from their vegetable produce sales without the knowledge or consent of their husbands (Maxwell 1994, p. 9-10). An illustration of the access to and control of the benefits of urban agricultural production can be found in Box 6 below.

Box 6 - Accessing and controlling the benefits of urban agriculture in Kampala, Uganda

It is the men who control the major source of household income and determine how to use it. The men purchase the farm inputs and equipment like hoes and pangas. It is they who have a strong hold on the household budget and allocate a certain amount of money to women, who in turn decide on household expenditure priorities. One woman explained: 'you grow the crops but when it comes to selling, it is your husband or male relative who sells and decides on how to spend the money. If you complain, he asks you if you are the one who owns the land. He then goes to spend the money on local brew. (Focus group discussion, Kigobe zone, Rubaga Division, Kampala, 2003). (adapted from Kiguli, 2004)

2.3 Role in decision-making

Control of resources and decision-making power are closely related but distinguishable issues. The role and bargaining power of women in decision-making can be viewed at on two different levels:

- a. Within the **farm household**, where decisions have to be taken on for example the sale of products, land or animals, on the production process itself (what to produce, when, where, why, how), regarding the development of the infrastructure, do we save or invest? Should some members work on the farm or in another job outside of the household, etc.?
- b. Within the **community or a local organisation**. Contacts and influence at community level and in local organisations define to an important extent access to and control over productive resources. The decision making power of women within communities can be highly influenced by the extent to which women's group activities exist. These activities can be viewed as co-operative mechanisms through which women successfully pool resources, skills, information, time and energy. The strength of women's social networks and co-operative efforts are noted as potential areas for successful development strategies in the urban agriculture sector (Hovorka 2003). Women farmers may participate in governance, local politics, and community groups, linking social activism and urban food issues. Women's groups and their urban agriculture related collective practices need to be promoted and involved in the community processes so that they will be recognised as a social and political actor, converting urban agriculture in a citizen's concern. Box 7 provides an example of the reasons why there is often a specific need for women's organisations. However, in some societies women's groups depend on a male chairman to represent their interests to the rest of the community, which may not be the best possible arrangement for addressing women's strategic needs (Peters 1998, p. 20-21).

Box 7 – The Kachi Women's Association in Hyderabad, India

Kachiguda is an urban location almost in the centre of Hyderabad (see also Box 1). Most of the urban farmers who farm along the Musi river, which flows through Hyderabad, live in the Kachiguda neighbourhood. Here, there are four community associations – the Hyderabad Farmers' Association, Kachi Association, Kachi Women's Association and Yadava Sangham. The Kachi Association and Yadava Sangham are caste-based associations and only people belonging to Kachi and Yadava caste respectively can become members. The members are all male. The Kachi Women's Association is exclusively a women's association, which was formed about six months ago (in the year 2004) to help the women belonging to the Kachi caste to solve their domestic problems. In reply to the question of why the Kachi women had to form a separate association, when the kachis already had an association, the Secretary of this association, Ms. Madhumathi bai said: 'The Kachi Association is entirely a men's association and women cannot talk freely about their problems in front of the men. So the chairman of the Kachi association, himself encouraged us women to form a separate women's association where we can freely discuss our problems such as domestic violence, problems of water, blocked sewage drains, lack of electricity, problems with neighbours, etc. If it could not be solved then we take the problem to the men. We still do not have a savings group, but soon plan to start

one. As for agriculture, it is the only source of livelihood for some of the Kachi women, as they do not have any other skills or courage to go out and search for other jobs'. (adapted from Devi Mekala et al, 2004).

Productive activities can help strengthen the position of women in the decision making process within the household. For example, in Kampala, farming activities represent a means to economic self-reliance, as was found in the research of Maxwell (1994, p. 11). Especially married women have other reasons for being engaged in urban agriculture than only food supply: they can practise urban agriculture because it is within the margins of what they culturally are expected to do and make their positions in intra-household conflicts stronger when they have access to their own generated source of income. Culturally, urban agriculture is seen as a marginal economic activity and the women may have reasons to keep this appearance up (Hetterschijt 2001, p. 30; Maxwell 1994, p. 11). In Box 8 it can be read how men's views on urban agriculture can change once it has proven to be a profitable activity. According to Denny (1994), women's decision-making power as was witnessed in Nairobi, may be undermined by factors such as size of plot, need for cash and personal health.

Box 8 - Men's views on urban agriculture in Lima (Villa Maria del Triunfo)

Of the total of productive family units (PFU) in Villa Maria del Triunfo, a municipality in the southern part of Lima, Peru, 76% are under the responsibility of women and 24% of men. Of the total number of PFUs, 82% practice urban agriculture recreationally and consume what they produce, 3% (all women) practice urban agriculture with the goal of supplementing their family income. 15% (all women) see urban agriculture as a potential strategy for the generation of supplementary family income. The lesser participation of men in urban agriculture is a result of the fact that they do not see this activity as a viable strategy for the generation of direct income, dedicating little time to it and giving priority to other income-generating activities, prioritising their productive role. However, they are interested in taking the next step and using urban agriculture to generate income, particularly through processing activities. The current purpose (recreation and self-consumption) of urban agriculture in Villa Maria del Triunfo avoids conflicts within families relating to the access and control over resources and benefits of home gardens. Women make decisions without intervention from men, since this activity does not at present generate "visible" economic income and is therefore not of relevance to men. However, when the possibility of generating visible income through commercialisation arises, men want to take part in decision-making. When striving to make urban agriculture an income-generating activity, it is necessary to identify strategies to avoid conflicts and inequalities in the control over the benefits arising from home gardens. (adapted from Merzthal, 2004)

2.4 Division of tasks/labour in urban agriculture

Within the household, the various tasks and responsibilities are divided between the male and female members of the household. This division is subject to context specific circumstances, which can make certain situations rather complicated to comprehend and describe. Circumstances are influenced by both deeply rooted socio-cultural backgrounds as well as practical ones. For instance, when we look at the case studies of 6 different cities in the scoping study done by Rangnekar (2002, p. 20), we find that within every case (city), the division of tasks between men and women in urban livestock is different, according to the cultural group they belong to, the socio-economic status of the household, the species and size of the livestock and the location of the household in the city (the same factors are found to influence the decision-making power of women and men as well).

Regarding this key issue, a distinction can be made between:

- a. the division of household chores (**reproductive tasks**)
- b. the division of tasks related to urban agriculture (**productive tasks**)

Generally, urban households are engaged in urban agriculture because of two main reasons. Some households that engage in urban farming do so because they moved from rural to urban areas and brought along their agricultural practices. Other households have an urban background and got involved in agriculture by choice or by need. With regard to the first situation it is important to ask what happens to the gender behaviours within a household when it moves from a rural to an urban area. In families with rural backgrounds it is often the woman's task to provide for the family food through farming and gathering. Such a task might be more difficult in the urban conditions. According to a case study in Lusaka by Rakodi (1988, p. 510), urban immigrants carry through the traditional (rural) gender division

of labour in the urban areas, but in the city areas family labour is hardly supplemented by casual labour, which increases the burden on the women in the households.

Lee-Smith (1994, p. 8) points out the contrary: an urban situation where there is no recognition of the traditional gender division of labour, which may be due to loss of influence of the social norms brought from the country side. In a scoping study on gender relations and livestock keeping in Kisumu done by Ishani et al. (2002, p. 16), the matter of changing cultural traditions – and therefore changing gender roles within households - with the market economy and urbanisation is raised as well. Households in Kisumu are seen to apply the cultural traditions of the Luo community that prevail in the rural areas differently. Here, cases of women owning property are found, where this would be impossible if the Luo tradition would be completely adhered to. Another example of changing gender roles due to urbanisation is that women in Kisumu are inheriting livestock; while tradition prescribes that wives and daughters do not inherit (see also Box 9).

Box 9 – Female headed households and changing traditions in Kisumu, Kenya

The city of Kisumu is situated on the shores of Lake Victoria. It has an area of 395.1 square kilometres of which 35.5% is covered by water. Generally, almost all of the households kept local livestock and the most common livestock were goats. In Kisumu, control over property was largely determined by who was the household head. Female-heads held absolute control over the household property. This was especially true for widows who controlled land, houses and other property, including livestock. In female-headed households the women were free of the restraints imposed on their counterparts in male-headed households. They exercised their will regarding financial, consumption and production property (even when there were adult sons and their families living in the same compound). Sometimes the sons were consulted but not the daughters. Inheritance and purchase of livestock played an equal role in female-headed households. This was surprising as according to Luo tradition, wives or daughters do not inherit and yet the females had inherited the livestock, mostly from their husbands. There was also one case of a single woman who had inherited the livestock from her parents. This shows that the norms are changing and that widows do inherit. (adapted from Ishani, 2004)

When it comes to the division of tasks concerning urban agriculture, we first have to recognise the fact that, in many cases, women are more involved in urban agriculture than men (see paragraph 2.1 on the predominance of women in urban agriculture). Often, within urban agriculture, more tasks go to the woman in the household, whereas men can be found to be active on the sideline of urban agriculture, as the example of Kampala shows. Here, men are more involved in helping to provide cash for the purchase of inputs, and in obtaining land for farming than in the actual urban farming itself (Maxwell 1994, p. 7). However, in another study in Accra, also done by Maxwell (1998), it was found that farming was mainly a male occupation. This evidence underlines the heterogeneity of the subject.

Aside from the difference in the amount of urban agriculture work performed, a number of other differences in the roles of men and women in urban agriculture can be observed. Firstly, there is the difference in division of responsibility for certain crops. In most urban agriculture household systems, men are responsible for a few cash crops and larger livestock and for generating cash income for the family, whereas women are responsible for a variety of food crops and small animals and for securing household food security and nutrition (Hovorka 1998, p. 19). In research done by Ofei-Aboagye in Ghana (1997, p. 5), it has been found that women are mainly responsible for crops with lower maintenance requirements, which leaves them with more time to spend on their household tasks.

Secondly, Ofei-Aboagye (1997, p. 5) witnesses the difference between men and women in dry and wet season farming in Ghana. Usually, men are more actively engaged in irrigated dry season agriculture, while women are more involved in wet season farming. Women often lack the physical strength to clear the dry season farmland and their access to hired labour, oxen or a tractor is limited. Fewer farmers engage in dry season farming and so more money is made due to relatively lower supply of foodstuffs and unchanged level of demand.

Box 10 describes the differences in task divisions and primary reasons for being involved in urban agriculture of men and women in Kampala, Uganda.

Box 10 – Urban agriculture in Kampala, Uganda

Urban agriculture in Kampala takes place predominantly on private land, in backyards and on undeveloped public land. However, due to rapid urbanization and population growth, people are utilising hazardous places unsuitable for development to grow crops. Such places include road verges, banks of drainage channels, wetlands and on contaminated sites such as scrap yards and dumpsites for solid and liquid waste. Most of the farmers in these hazardous places dig and sell their food with a higher proportion of women compared to men selling food directly to consumers. This could be attributed to nature of crops grown and the fact that men grow crops on a larger scale and can sell on wholesale basis to retailers while women sell directly to consumers in the neighbourhood. Furthermore, a higher proportion of the men than women sell some of the food produced from farming activities. A higher proportion of the farmers use the food crops mainly to feed their families although a small proportion of them grew food purposely for sale. The percentage of farmers who sell all of the food grown on contaminated sites to consumers was higher among women, who consequently use the funds to buy other foodstuffs from the market. Clearly, the data shows that men and women are involved in agricultural activities for different reasons. (adapted from Nabulo et al, 2004).

Apart from the division of labour at household level, one also has to look at the gender division of tasks at organisational and community level. It is important to understand that gender issues also play a role at this level with important consequences. For instance, where women participate in farmer organisations it is quite common that they do so only as a member or in supporting functions and not in key leaderships functions with decision-making authority.

2.5 Differences in knowledge and preferences

Another key issue within the field of urban agriculture and gender are the differences that exist between men and women with regard to their **knowledge** of e.g.:

- the cultivation of certain crops and animals
- the application of certain cultural practices (e.g. women in the Andes know more about seeds selection and storage, herding, processing of wool and natural medicines)
- the use of certain technologies (e.g. irrigation techniques, chemical inputs and castration of bulls are often dominated by men)
- certain social domains (e.g. men may know much more about formal marketing channels, whereas women may know more about informal barter relations)

Men and women normally also differ strongly in their **preferences and priorities**, in relation to their main roles and responsibilities, e.g. regarding production goals (e.g. food versus market oriented), preferred location of plots (women with young children often prefer to work close to the home), preferred mode of production (e.g. single versus multiple cropping), use of the benefits (household consumption rather than sales), etc. An example of differences between men's and women's preferences, priorities and perceptions is given in Box 11.

Box 11 - Gendered differences in preferences, priorities and perceptions in Carapongo, Lima, Peru

In Carapongo, a neighbourhood in the eastern shantytowns of Lima, Peru, mainly vegetable production can be found, with very limited areas of large-scale livestock raising or forestry. The neighbourhood covers an area of 400 hectares and has more than three times as much cultivated land as residential area. Here, it is found that men and women differ in their activities and responsibilities, and in their preferences and priorities. They differ in relation to production goals (food versus market oriented), preferred location of plots (women with young children often prefer to work close to the home), preferred mode of production (single versus multiple cropping), use of the products (household consumption rather than sales). They also have different perceptions regarding gender roles. Although there is coincidence between male and female perceptions around the male-linked tasks of land preparation and pest control, there is quite strong diversion of perceptions about many of the other tasks. Most notable is the absence of recognition among men that women may be mainly responsible for some of the tasks of agricultural production, yet many women perceive themselves as the person handling these tasks. A particularly strong discrepancy in perceptions concerns the purchasing of inputs. Whilst 61% of men consider that this is a male responsibility, almost the same percentages of women think it is a female task. One possible explanation for this is the discrepancy between the decision to purchase inputs and the knowledge and contacts with vendors that facilitate such purchases and the actual act of purchasing. Women may be more frequently involved in the latter activity than men acknowledge. There is also a large difference in perceptions of the role of men and women in marketing. Men

recognize the importance of women's responsibility, but this is not seen as noticeably greater than men's and is less than joint responsibility, which again may indicate men's role in decision-making. Women on the other hand very clearly see themselves as having the major responsibility. (adapted from Arce et al, 2004)

2.6 Role of external factors on gender in urban agriculture

There are a number of external factors that can have a strong effect on gender relations in urban agriculture.

An important clear external factor concerns the socio-economic conditions, which are often at the root of the involvement of women in urban agriculture. According to Maxwell (1998, p. 25), female-headed households and those occupational groups that are predominantly female (petty trading and street food vending) have the highest levels of vulnerability to food price rises or income shocks. As a result many poor urban women seek to create sources of food that are independent of the formal urban market.

Another factor is the effect of existing inheritance and land laws and regulations, which often disadvantage women. Widows and single women are usually unable to inherit land and may be forced into both urbanisation and poverty (Lee-Smith 1994, p. 9). According to Maxwell, female urban farmers are often more affected than male farmers by tenure change or loss of farmland (Maxwell 1998, p. 23).

Other external factors, which are important to analyse for their effects on gender and urban agriculture:

- local policies (see Box 12 for an illustration of the impact of local policies on the circumstances for men and women active in urban agriculture)
- educational system
- grassroots activism (NGOs/CBOs)
- social and cultural norms regarding gender relations
- environmental factors

Here, it is equally important to look at the different scales at which these external factors affect gender in urban agriculture.

Box 12 - Access to land for urban agriculture in Accra, Ghana

Even though some communities disallow women from owning land, this pertains mainly to communal lands in peri-urban and rural areas and has little or no effect on access to land for farming in the open spaces within the cities in Ghana. Seventy percent of the lands being cultivated in the urban areas belong to the government and access to these lands is not based on gender differences. This is very interesting, as this would mean that the urban situation would "rule out" culture and traditions, or would at least make them less important. In Accra, 87 percent of the farmers indicated that men and women have equal access to government lands in urban open-spaces. In essence, access to government land is based on availability and the lobbying strategies of individuals. In most cases, access is achieved via direct contact with the owner or caretaker or through a third party working with the government institutions in the area. In some peri urban areas of Accra, where sharecropping is used as payments for cultivating land owned by individuals, landowners or traditional leaders (e.g. chiefs) prefer that men rather than women cultivate larger plots, hence providing them with greater benefit. The landowners perceived that men are likely to produce higher yields than women. (adapted from Coffie et al, 2004).

2.7 Gender and the positive and negative impacts of urban agriculture

It is important to monitor what the positive (advantages, potentials) and the negative (disadvantages, risks) impacts of certain urban agriculture activities are for men and women respectively, in a given location and under given conditions, and how these relate to the existing gender dynamics. When looking at the actual merits of urban agriculture for men and women, it is important to first differentiate between practical versus strategic interests/needs. Palacios (2003, p. 2) describes **practical needs** (following Moser) as "immediate needs related to the inadequacy of their living conditions, such as the supply of food, water, health care and employment". They do not imply changes in gender relations. **Strategic needs** "are related to the division of labour, power and control by the genders, and can include issues such as legal rights, eradication of household violence, equal wages". Satisfying the strategic needs by

gender helps women achieve a greater equality and originates shifts in the existing roles. Although they can be identified and conceptualised individually, practical and strategic needs normally appear and must be treated together. Involvement in urban agriculture can add to both needs, although the idea of promoting urban agriculture as a means to reach the economic autonomy and self-esteem of women can be presented will mostly attribute to their strategic needs.

As positive effects of urban agriculture for women can be mentioned:

- It allows women to realise their role in securing family food security and nutrition while being less subject to market fluctuations.
- In addition, it helps them to create more independence by generating some additional income from sales of surpluses and by saving cash on food expenditures, which can be used for other purposes.
- It allows women to work close to the homestead and to combine it with other tasks.
- It can be undertaken with relatively low capital, technology and inputs attainable and affordable for women with limited education and resources.
- It stimulates the use of indigenous practices.
- It may motivate women to go beyond subsistence farming of food for domestic use and engage in related activities like small scale food processing and marketing, production and sales of compost or animal feed, production and sales of herbs, pot plants, mushrooms and other more profitable urban agriculture-micro enterprises.

One should however be vary careful not to take this list for granted and analyse (and monitor) in each specific situation what positive and negative effects urban agriculture may have (or has) on men and women.

The case of Carapongo, Lima, describes both opportunities of urban agriculture for men and women as well as specific opportunities for women (Box 13).

Box 13 - Opportunities of urban agriculture in Carapongo, Lima, Peru

Urban agriculture in Carapongo, Lima (see also Box 11) has several opportunities for men and women. Firstly, it offers employment opportunities in the context of a serious underemployment and unemployment in Lima. Forty two percent of the men and 34% of the women indicate that farming is one of the few sources of regular employment available to them in the city. Almost forty percent identify a major benefit of farming as the ability to pay for education of their children, while 31% regard it as their main source of food security. Furthermore, with the growing city population due to migration from rural areas and natural growth, the demand for fresh products is also on the rise, especially for fresh vegetables and animal products. A specific advantage of being engaged in farming in the urban location of Carapongo for female urban farmers is their ability to combine their domestic tasks with their marketing role is possible because of the easy access to wholesale markets and the short time needed for selling. Another positive effect of urban agriculture for women is that they recognize their important role in helping with family food security and nutrition. Lastly, it helps them to create more independence by generating some additional income from sales of surpluses (e.g. guinea pig, which is a novel opportunity market in Carapongo) and by saving cash on food expenditures, which can be used for other purposes. (adapted from Arce et al, 2004)

On the negative side, we see women's problems concerning land tenure. While both women and men face constraints regarding access to land, women are further disadvantaged because they traditionally have less access and control over land than their male companions. Men tend to have the first choice of any available vacant land, which leaves women with low quality or less secure plots of land or plots that are located at a considerable distance from the homestead. Increasing access to land for the family may not solve the problem of the women due to inequitable access to urban land between women and men (Hovorka 1998, p. 31).

Another problem often faced by female farmers is distance and transportation, as is shown by an example of women involved in urban agriculture in Lusaka (Rakodi 1988, p. 513). Although the cost of land in Lusaka is insignificant, physical availability is becoming a more important constraint here, and the distance, which has to be travelled to reach gardens, is, for a high proportion of cultivators, quite considerable. The physical time and effort involved in such

journeys is high and therefore proves to be a significant constraint for women, especially the elderly or those with young children, to become involved in food production.

In addition to travel time is the time involved in the production itself. Although a strategy to increase the household production of fruit and vegetables, not just for own consumption but also for sale, would appear to be desirable, one must take into account the labour time available to women. Their response to opportunities to grow more food or better earning crops will depend on the extent to which they can influence the decisions in the household about cultivation, the use or sale of produce, and the distribution of benefits within the household. Also, if women are stimulated to start working with the more profitable crops, which take more time, the nutritional situation of the household might be jeopardised since they then may not have enough time left to produce nutritious food for the household members.

Other problems women often face are lack of inputs and working capital as well as lack of access to knowledge and information on the use of modern inputs and technologies. The latter is a/o due to a limited exposure to commercial urban agriculture or to limited access to training courses offered by institutions or non-governmental organisations. Women are less likely to benefit from research or extension services that fail to consider gender specific differences when selecting technologies and working methodologies.

Although above the positive and negative effects are depicted with reference to women mainly, one has to remember that gender dynamics have an effect on both women and men (see Box 14 for a Senegalese example).

Box 14 - Gender differences in constraints in urban agriculture in Dakar, Senegal

In the maritime fringe commonly known as the Niayes valley, which runs from Saint-Louis to Dakar, Senegal, a strip of about 350 km wide is often referred to as the 'green lung of the region'. In this valley, several urban agriculture activities are carried out on a 60 ha area, such as vegetable gardening, floriculture, fishing, fruit and vegetable processing. A gender study executed in the area determined the constraints encountered in the practice of urban agriculture by both men and women. Although some constraints were commonly identified by both men and women, most differed and those commonly identified were prioritised differently by men and women. According to the male urban farmers, land insecurity was the most important constraints for their activities. They believed that these are threatened because of the rapid and uncontrolled growth of urbanisation, resulting in the construction of collective housing and infrastructure. Another important constraint is access to water. Watering in this zone is the farming operation that mobilises the most time and physical effort, because most farmers use watering cans to water their farm. A third problem particularly relates to access to (other) inputs. For women, the availability of operational premises to process agricultural products is the most important constraint, due to the importance of processing in women's activities. Generally, they rent a room in which they gather to carry out their activities. Some women are trained in processing techniques but they rarely receive assistance for effectively conducting activities in the form of equipment, functional premises, working capital, etc. Another constraint relates to the problems women have to carry out certain tough and physically enduring tasks (particularly watering). Other important constraints are: the lack of follow-up of the training pursued by women and the mobilisation of labour force within the family, especially among the children during the academic year. This last difficulty illustrates the insignificant influence women have on their husbands' decision to allow the children to pursue their schooling. This means that women will have additional chores to carry out in the household. (adapted from Sy, 2004)

2.8 Differential impacts of urban agriculture-projects with or without attention for gender

Urban agriculture projects can have quite different impacts on men and women, depending on the degree with which gender issues have been taken into account during the design and implementation of the project. If gender aspects are not taken into account, urban agriculture projects may result in positive effects on family income and reduction of poverty but may also increase the workload of women, negatively affect nutrition and health of the women and children or have a negative influence on women's strategic interests.

Moreover, literature suggests that urban agriculture projects, which integrate gender issues to a high degree, tend to have more positive effects not only on the position of women, but also on poverty alleviation, household food security and health. For example, according to Talukder et al. (200?, p. 1), home gardening activities in Bangladesh increase

the income earning capacity of the women and thus contribute to the empowerment of these women, and provide important socio-economic returns through lower health and welfare costs, lower fertility and lower maternal and infant mortality rates. Maxwell shows that female-headed households in Accra have lower mean incomes than male-headed households but their food budget shares and calorie availability are significantly higher than those of the male-headed households. Female-headed households spend 60% of their budget on food, compared to 50% in male-headed households (Maxwell 1998, p. 24).

2.9 Specifics of gender in urban agriculture

Many of the above mentioned key issues can be encountered in many frameworks on gender and agriculture. But what are the specifics of gender in urban agriculture as compared to gender in rural agriculture or to gender in other urban informal sectors? Or, put differently: are gender issues in agriculture different in an urban setting than in a rural setting, and if so, in what ways? And, is gender in urban agriculture different from other informal urban sectors?

Regarding the differences between the rural and the urban setting, we can say that, in many cases, in the urban setting:

- There is more diversification in sources of income of a family; various family members may have some sort of urban job (eventually next to a role in urban agriculture)
- There are more opportunities for schooling and wage labour for women
- There is more insecurity regarding land tenure/land ownership, even more so for women (Hovorka 1998, p. 31), and there is more theft (Hovorka 2001)
- There are more opportunities for women to obtain (short term) credit
- The food provisioning task of the women is much more difficult for a number of reasons

See Box 15 for a description of the situation as found in Lagos, Nigeria.

Box 15 - Engendered effects of urbanization on urban farmers in Lagos, Nigeria

The Lagos metropolis covers an area of about 3,577 km² and can be characterized by challenges associated with urbanization process, such as waste management problems, housing problems, high population density, food insecurity, extreme poverty, soaring cost of living, potent unemployment as a result of mass retrenchment in both private and public municipal establishments, high cost of land and competition for land use, congestion and violent crime. Agro-ecological circumstances allows for diverse vegetable production in the study area. Cultivable crops include spinach, okra, spring onions, lectus, ewedu, dally, green pepper in addition to cassava, maize, yam, coco yam cultivation. There are about 1530 vegetable farmers scattered all over the metropolis, but the number is always fluctuating due to high seasonal mobility of farmers in certain period of the year. While the number of women cultivators if compared to men is very low, it is important to pay attention to the complexity within the urban system, which makes women roles and responsibilities in both household and the farm more demanding. The urban challenges as summarized above tend to increase women's role, through tasks transfer from her spouse at the household level and result in higher vulnerability for women. With these numerous urban challenges in the face of production constraints such as inadequate credit facilities, lack of access to scarce urban land, credit facilities and unequal access to extension services and agricultural training, there is greater negative implication on the social, economic, environmental and health well-being of the urban household. (adapted from Anosike, 2004)

On the difference between gender in urban agriculture and gender in other urban informal sectors, we can say that, in many cases,

- Urban agriculture is especially convenient for married women with children (close to the home, little cash needed, combines well with prime responsibilities of women)
- In urban agriculture production women tend to focus on saving on family cash expenditures by growing their family food (and eventually sell some surplus production), whereas women active in another informal urban sector are focused more on generating a cash income. Animals also fulfil an important role as "security" and in certain socio-cultural practices (e.g. marriage).

However, it is important to note here that certain specifics are only true for certain places and times, and that they are subject to a high degree of variability, following from their specific context.

2.10 Gender, urban agriculture, human rights and development

Attention should be paid to trying to establish the impact of urban agriculture on the well-being, dignity and feelings of self-respect of both women and men. The human development approach (HDA) was one of the first schools of thought on the question what role development should play in people's sense of self-worthiness and personal self-respect. Although this paragraph mostly deals with the HDA and its link with UA, it is important to note that creating an increased self-respect for women should be seen in the wider context of gender equality being a universal human right. The 1993 Vienna Conference on Human Rights provided a big step forward, as its final Declaration underlines the international consensus reached at the conference and states the following: *'The human rights of women and of the girl-child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life, at the national, regional and international levels, and the eradication of all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community... The human rights of women should form an integral part of the United Nations human rights activities, including the promotion of all human rights instruments relating to women.'* (source: www.undp.org/rbap/rights/Thematic2.htm).

Placing the issue of gender within a rights and development framework, allows the dialogue to move from non-discrimination, towards a commitment to gender equality of all. Within a human rights perspective, the development aspirations of women and their relationship to men regardless of region or country can be founded on the principles of participation and equality. Thus development programmes would ensure those women fully and freely participate in decision making that impact their lives.

The core of the human development approach is the vision of development as the expansion of people's capabilities and choice options, with the ultimate goal to enlarge the range of things a person can be and do. In 1990 the Human Development Index reflected capabilities to be educated, to live a long and healthy life and to have access to resources needed to enjoy a decent standard of living. Additional choices were defined, these being political freedom, human rights and personal self-respect. A more detailed account of the approach is given in the box below.

Box 16 – The human development approach (HDA)

The HDA finds its own origin in the creation of the UNDP Human Development Report, which had the purpose of shifting the focus of development economics from national income accounting to people centered policies (Fukuda-Parr, 2002). In shaping the concept of human development, an important role has been played by Amartya Sen, who's work on capabilities and functionings provided the strong conceptual foundations for the new paradigm of human development. The core concept of Sen's theory of development as capabilities expansion is the idea that the purpose of development is to improve human lives, and that meant expanding the range of things that a person could be and do. Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices. From this perspective, development is about removing the obstacles to the things that a person can do in life, such as illiteracy, lack of access to resources, etc.

An important feature of the HDA is that it has an explicit basis in philosophical reasoning. As opposed to the neoliberalism and the basic needs approach, it emphasizes human rights, freedoms and agency as policy issues and assesses development by the expansion of capabilities of all people. In the HDA a distinction is made between its two central themes: the evaluative aspect and the agency aspect. While the first is concerned with improving human lives as an explicit development objective and with understanding in what ways improvements are to be made, the second is about what human beings can do to achieve such improvements, particularly through policy and political changes. One of the most difficult questions to be faced in applying the capabilities approach to development policy is on selecting which capabilities are important. As mentioned by Fukuda-Parr, 'the range of human capabilities is infinite and the value that individuals assign to each one varies from one person to another' (Fukuda-Parr, 2002). Two criteria are used to decide which capabilities are important: first, that they are universally valued by people across the world and second, that they are basic so that without them, many other capabilities would be foreclosed. In 1990 the HDI reflected capabilities to be educated, to live a long and healthy life and to have access to resources needed to enjoy a decent standard of living. However, the HDA was never intended to be defined narrowly by these particular capabilities only, and later on, developed more towards issues such as political freedom, human rights and personal self-respect.

In reviewing the literature on urban agriculture, one notices that a lot of mention is made of the fact that urban agriculture does have an impact on the self-respect of the urban farmer (male or female). However, quantification is (almost) never made, and the mention which is made, is mostly indirect, as is for example shown by a statement by Madaleno: "Poor Brazilian communities see urban agriculture as an alternative survival strategy, because it produces food and improves household's nutrition, but also generates income and jobs, while additionally providing self-respect and hope for a better future" (Madaleno, 2002). In a FAO electronic conference on urban agriculture, one of the participants mentioned the following: "..., instead of giving away food through UN organizations and NGOs, [it] might be more suitable to give away land (first), then seeds, technical advice, subsidies to farmer cooperatives, groups of women, unemployed people, in order to stimulate self-respect, give the poor people some aim in life and hence give them dignity" (www.fao.org/urbanag/300900-1.htm). Reference is also made to the influence of practicing urban agriculture on one's mental stability. While it is mostly in the Western countries where one finds people who give this as the last reason when asked about their motivation for being involved in urban agriculture, the notion is also on the rise in many cities in the South.

Better documented are the effects of urban agriculture on the development of community bonds, as producing food in a city environment encourages cooperation and a sense of sharing. Connectedness with one's environment and the feeling of belonging to a bigger whole also adds to personal well-being as well. But how does urban agriculture influence the self-respect and dignity of the urban farmers in general, and does it have a different effect on women's self-worth than on men's? How do we assess and monitor these effects? Why is the relationship between the two an almost neglected one in the literature? Is it because the whole concept of human development is a relatively new one? Or is it the difficulty of measurement, which limits the amount and strength of references made¹?

In an article by Mehrotra, it is stated that one of the guiding principles for public policy to promote gender equality is the importance of a sense of one's own worth for women (Mehrotra 2002). Following Nussbaum and Sen, it is argued that if the woman in the family thinks others have more worthwhile goals than her own, she will bargain weakly. According to Nussbaum, these women have to undergo a two-stage process of awareness: coming to see themselves in a bad situation, and then coming to see themselves as citizens who have a right to a better situation. The IDRC website holds a section on the relation between women living in poverty, their self-respect and health issues. One of the statements it cites, is the following by a health professional commenting on the living situation of women in Montevideo, Uruguay: *'Pigsties are better than many of the shacks of these people here. It is difficult to have self-esteem that way, everything points to your undervaluation as a person. They do not take care of themselves as people, they belittle themselves as women, they have no self-respect.'* The website goes on to describe a/o harsh living conditions leading to feelings of negativity and low self-esteem, the positive effect of education on the self-confidence of women, the positive relation between the acknowledgement of a woman's economic contribution to the household and the community and the effect of an increased self-esteem on the way in which women express their opinions and viewpoints. It also describes the formation of women groups as a good starting point in accomplishing increased self-confidence of women (http://web.idrc.ca/es/ev-27479-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html).

With regard to urban agriculture in specific, examples can be given of cases where the link between participation in urban farming leads to an increased self-respect, increased social respect by the surrounding community, such as for example the case of Sanikanchi Adhikari in Nepal (see box 17 below). However, there remains a large need for more research into the role urban agriculture can play, or already plays, in increasing self-confidence of female but also male urban farmers, awareness raising among stakeholders on the importance of these norms and values for development as well as an operationalisation of the concept into (better) measurable variables.

Box 17 – From Poverty to Dignity in Nepal

Sanikanchi Adhikari resides in ward no.3 of Kapan. She used to have great problems in providing even the daily subsistence needs of her family. Her husband managed to lose all of their property by taking out a number of loans using the property as collateral, and then misusing the money. In due course, Sanikanchi joined a cooperative in

¹ The publication by Klasen (entitled 'Gender-related Indicators of Well-being', March 2004, United Nations University, World Institute for Development Economics Research - WIDER) describes the problematic character of constructing gender-related well-being indicators.

May/June 1999. It was difficult to pay the total amount of Rs.700 (US\$9), for five shares (at Rs.500 at the rate of Rs.100 (US\$ 1.3) per share), plus the Rs.100 entry fee and the Rs.100 in monthly savings for May/June, necessary for membership in the cooperative. However, by joining a group first, she was able to acquire membership. Sanikanchi intended to get a loan from the cooperative to do some agro-based enterprise activities, but other group members did not want to serve as guarantor for her, as she did not have any property. Fortunately, the chairperson of MPSACCO, Mrs Jamuna Shrestha, agreed to be her guarantor. In this way, Sanikanchi received a loan amounting to Rs.30,000 (US\$390) from the cooperative. She subsequently invested that loan into poultry farming by purchasing 200 chickens. Through her laborious work and concentration on poultry farming, she gradually became successful, and her income also increased. Sanikanchi earned Rs.300,000 (US\$3,896) from this enterprise, and has now upgraded to 1,800 chickens. From her earnings, she acquired wheat and millet crops, and cultivated potatoes and various green vegetables. She used the chicken dung to fertilise these activities. She then started selling the crops at the nearest market in Kathmandu and made a good profit from it. Gradually, Sanikanchi has been able to pay back her husband's loan, totaling Rs.800,000 (US\$10,390). This amount has by now decreased to Rs.300,000 (US\$3,896). In addition, she successfully recovered 0.15 hectares of land kept as collateral by her husband. All the while, she has provided good care and education to her children. With all of these things, Sanikanchi has also succeeded in gaining social respect. (from: Urban Agriculture Magazine, no. 9, 2003).

3. Guidelines, methodologies and recommendations

Although gender concepts are valuable, they are not sufficient to promote the mainstreaming of gender in urban agriculture. We also need tools and instruments for:

- engendering the diagnosis of the situation and the identification of problems, potentials, actors
- engendering research (a/o technology development and testing) with regard to urban agriculture
- engendering policy development on urban agriculture
- engendering action planning, implementation and monitoring/evaluation
- engendering the integration of urban agriculture in urban planning (territorial)

Many gender guidelines and manuals exist, but none of these are adapted to the specific situation of urban agriculture (with exception of Hovorka 1998, IDRC Cities Feeding People #26.).

While attempts have been made to develop appropriate methods for urban agriculture (e.g. the methodology workshop RUAF-IDRC, Nairobi 2002), so far gender aspects have insufficiently been integrated. Hence, the development of such engendered guidelines and instruments specific for urban agriculture is still a challenge.

The importance of gender analysis and planning is described by Palacios (2003, p. 1-2), where it is said that urban agriculture could and should be based on a practice that generates more equitable social relations. If the data in a diagnosis is not broken down by gender, the project, plan or policy will be based on an overall vision that denies the differences between genders and suggests common answers to problems that, in practice, are different, thus likely to deepen those differences and inequalities.

In the gender analysis and planning process, it is important that one:

- recognises that women and men have different needs
- identifies the mechanisms that keep women in a disadvantageous position
- establishes the implications of urban agriculture in the reproductive, productive, community, political and cultural roles and areas of social interaction performed by women and men
- identifies the practical and strategic needs of men and women and work on both, but especially on the strategic needs, because they tend to balance gender relations
- defines equality policies and affirmative actions that render gender equality operational in the urban agriculture process.

When providing policy recommendations with regard to urban agriculture it is important to conceptualise gender as a social, political, economic and cultural issue, and as a human right's issue, to which different actors (local governments, institutions and organisations) have to respond. In this regard, urban agriculture policies should be

based on acknowledgement of the real value of women's contribution to production, should contribute to the recognition of women as subject of economic rights and their consideration as beneficiaries of the policies.

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