



ARUSHA TANZANIA

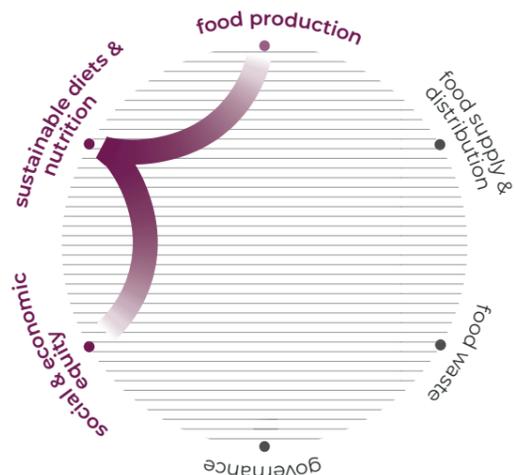
Title of Practice

ARUSHA: EDIBLE GARDENS FOR NUTRITION, EMPLOYMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Category

SUSTAINABLE DIETS AND NUTRITION

Main impacts on other MUFPP categories



Contact
NTEGHENJWA HOSSEAH
Public Relations Officer

Context

When talking about malnutrition in developing countries, especially in urban areas, obesity and lack of food are two sides of the same coin. But what are the causes of this paradox? On the one hand, in a city like Arusha, the diet is increasingly based on industrial food, especially refined cereals and junk food with high levels of sugar, which are main causes of diabetes, lack of micronutrients and obesity. On the other hand, increasing urbanization along with the contraction of the tourism market, an important component of the city's economy, have raised poverty levels, thus reducing the population's capacity to access food. The S.A.F.E. Gardens project aims to promote urban agriculture practices that can reduce malnutrition and food insecurity in Arusha. In addition, these practices can initiate a participatory experience based on the involvement of women's groups, which can both provide food security and safeguard agro-biodiversity.

Overview of the food practice

The "Arusha Edible Gardens" have been created in the heart of Arusha along the banks of the river Themí. The site is managed by a **women's cooperative** and it is composed of three macro-areas: an agro-eco systems area (5 edible gardens); an educational area; and a commercial area with a small restaurant, a weekly market of horticultural products and a tree nursery. All together, they form a virtuous model of the conversion of a degraded area into a catalyst for a new food culture as well as an **outdoor laboratory** where the community can access information and experience innovative food production methods. The **educational area** focuses in particular on raising the awareness of participants about available indigenous plants and their nutritional value, how to plant horticultural plants at home and how to cook nutritious and healthy meals. From this educational effort, 200 women have been involved in the creation of 200 domestic edible gardens in urban and peri-urban areas in Arusha. A **scientific partnership** between the University of Milano-Bicocca and the Nelson Mandela University allows the realization of a biological passport for ten endangered local horticultural species. The University of Insubria provides an analysis of the urban, agricultural and landscape connections between the urban center of Arusha and both rural and peri-urban areas, and provides cartographic tools to help support the municipality of Arusha in urban planning decision-making.

Results and lessons learned

Urban agriculture has become an acknowledged and effective strategy to fight malnutrition. It increases the consumption of food with high nutritional value, such as fruits and vegetables rich in micronutrients, while contributing to poverty reduction. Producing food

in the city increases families' access to fresh horticultural products while also offering **income opportunities**, thanks to the extra income coming from surplus production. Based on these benefits, the overall objective of the Arusha Edible Gardens is to promote models of sustainable and replicable food production and consumption in urban and peri-urban areas, through participatory and direct interventions, stressing the importance of traditional values.

Although the initiative involves the entire population of the city, its main focus is on vulnerable women, female entrepreneurs and students, who are provided with extensive training. The final objective is to create prospects for **employment** and self-employment in the production of quality food related to urban horticultural practices. Thirty women in the city have already formed a cooperative that serves nutritious foods at the small restaurant established at the center, further increasing their income and food security. The practice of urban agriculture in Arusha has provided evidence for city planners to consider establishing a zone to accommodate urban agriculture as part of the new Arusha City Plan. It also offers an example of communities living in balance with nature and preserving **local biodiversity**, while simultaneously addressing pressing social issues such as food security and health.



- <http://oikosea.org/projects/s-a-f-e-gardens/>