

Coordination of greening efforts in Hong Kong

In Hong Kong six government bureaux (out of 16 policy-formulation bureaux) and 15 departments (out of 38 departments) are involved in greening issues. The division of tree administrative duties is based on a range of criteria, including land ownership, land administration, land use planning, land use, development agent, land user, planting agent, vegetation management agent and so forth (Works Branch, 1994a; 1994b). Each relevant department has to follow nebulous policies and guidelines that include many uncertainties and overlaps. Both government and private land users have to deal with a bewildering array of often ambiguous and sometimes conflicting duties, rules and requirements. The departments often operate in isolation, oblivious of one another's information base and decision rationales.
Source: (Jim, 2002)

Cecil Konijnendijk



In tropical cities such as Kuala Lumpur, street and park trees play a crucial role in providing shade and moderating the city climate.

Linear Urban Agriculture

Accessing 'the commons' for food security, a healthier environment and community development

Imagine thousands of kilometres of linear space throughout urban areas: roads and their verges, electric and other utility right-of-ways, railroad tracks, fences and walls, airport runways, rivers and streams and their banks, and more. Recognise that most of the urban infrastructure is linear. Consider that most of this space, horizontal and vertical, is 'the commons'. It is public space that belongs to all of us.

Linear urban/periurban space is a very large underutilised development resource. This potential at its simplest may be the fence around a playground. Imagine this fence, typically two metres high, exploited to produce beans, cucumbers, peas, tomatoes, squash, grapes and other foods. Consider that this garden can be the core of an education programme for the children using the playground and a source of fresh healthy food for the families using and maintaining the playground.

This potential exists on fences surrounding, protecting, and defining many public institutions including: schools, libraries, hospitals, prisons, golf courses, airports, museums, reservoirs and much more. To use this public facility for the further public good a small number of prerequisites will have to be put into place including: a.) an enabling policy, b.) legally binding agreements between owner and user, c.) health supervision, d.) security services, and e.) extension/education services.

Roadside and railroad-side verges are being farmed in many cities worldwide from Oslo, Norway, to Windhoek, Namibia; but they are not being farmed in a great many more cities. As with farming on fences, all the prerequisites a. through e. noted above are needed. It is also necessary to regulate the time of day/week during which certain activities can take place. Many roadside verges now have fences, thus offering a double opportunity. However, the types of crops

and the timing of some farming tasks are clearly limited, and security operations may be time consuming at and near harvest time.

Utility right-of ways (ROWs) are being put to agricultural use more often than fences or roadside verges, but they are often not farmed as intensely as would be optimal. Rio de Janeiro and Los Angeles both have very well-conceived and implemented programmes. However, in too many cities utility ROWs are used mostly for livestock grazing and for providing a green infrastructure rather than for intense food production.

The most well-known linear green infrastructure is street trees. In the majority of the world's cities street trees are primarily utilised for their beauty and the cooling shade they provide. However in many cities street trees also provide food, medicinal products and inputs for handicraft industries.

Thies, Senegal, and Port au Prince, Haiti, are two among many cities that use Neem trees at street side for medicine and handicraft production as well as for beautification and greening. Argentina and Chile have programmes to produce fruit on their street-side verges for social service agencies.

Linear urban farming has several benefits: a.) the farmer does the maintenance, which saves municipal costs, b.) the crop reduces erosion on transport verges and stream banks, c.) carbon dioxide and ozone are cleansed from the air, d.) groundwater aquifers are enriched and cleansed, e.) the quality of food is improved, f.) street traffic is reduced [fewer 'food miles'], g.) the population's economic base is enlarged and stabilised, h.) jobs are generated [especially for women, young people and the elderly], and i) the urban youth is connected to the food system.

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FAO has played a major role through its publications and the annotated bibliography of urban forestry in the developing countries (FAO 1995). Information about UPF is also disseminated via organisations such as the Resource Centre for Urban Agriculture and Forestry (RUAF) and the European Urban Forestry Research and Information Centre (EUFORIC). The importance of extension services that demonstrate UPF benefits and methods to local communities is described in several of the articles in this issue of UAM.

PERSPECTIVE

The experiences described in this *UA Magazine* show the importance of urban greening. The concept of UPF offers important lessons and emphasises the need to join forces with other initiatives aimed at sustainable urban development. Further development of the concept of UPF and its contribution to sustainable urban development requires a strategic approach. Mock identifies the need to develop a healthy tree resource, comprehensive management and community-wide support (page 29). Furthermore, UPF needs to be linked to a broad range of issues and agendas, like urban agriculture, but also to the many related urban issues mentioned above.

The problems faced by cities in the 21st century cannot be effectively resolved without a coherent alliance of all forces at local and international levels. Initiatives for cooperation and city-twinning open

the door to various kinds of partnerships. In addition, the forthcoming year 2005 will be crucial for the revision of the Millennium Development Goals up to 2015. Events such as the IUFRO World Congress 2005 in Brisbane, Australia, in August 2005 and the Third World Urban Forum in Vancouver, Canada, in 2006, offer unique opportunities to put urban forestry and agriculture on the map, build strategic partnerships (at all levels) and develop adequate support.

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Legislation

In Turkey, urban forests are covered by forest law, with 270 wooded recreational areas being governed by forest legislation (FAO, 1993b). In Sudan, forestry policy, dating from 1986, considers recreation as a function of the forest. In Kenya, tree-planting in periurban zones is encouraged, and management plans are required in order to fell such trees (Profous and Loeb, 1990, cited in Carter, 1995). In Vienna, Austria, an environmental protection law covers trees on both public and private land (Carter, 1995). In Brazil, the Curitiba municipal code specifies that tree-cutting in urban areas requires prior authorisation from the Secretariat for the Environment. Such authorisation is subject to the condition that two trees must be planted or donated to the city. In green areas *Auracaria* trees cannot be felled without a special permit (Spathelf, 2000). Source: FAO, 2002b.

Johannesburg City Parks Agency

As the city tries to implement more efficient, business-like policies, various services have been reorganised into self-contained "utilities" and "agencies". Utilities have been formed for services that can be charged directly to individual consumers, such as electricity and water, while agencies have been created to look after the city's roads and parks. These agencies then charge the city council for services rendered. Johannesburg City Parks is run by a managing director and a board of directors who report to the city manager. How does this benefit the taxpayer? Previously parks services were fragmented across the city. The idea is that, with a more business-like approach, responsibilities are more clear, and the agency will be able to build and maintain more parks within the existing budget.

Source: <http://www.johannesburg.gov.za>