

Towards a Safe, Nourishing, Economic and Inclusive Food System for Arusha, based on Partnering

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This article reflects on a process to develop a food policy with Arusha City Council, which was supported as part of a city-to-city exchange project led by ICLEI Africa, with partners FAO, C4o and RUAF.

The Arusha food system

Like many cities, Arusha in Tanzania is primarily dependent on food that is produced outside its administrative borders. The quality of road infrastructure, markets, transportation and other supply chain systems present major challenges to the city's food security, especially for ensuring the safety and nutritional quality of food that is brought into the city. Agriculture is the mainstay of the regional economy, contributing more than 40 % of regional GDP, and accounting for over 75 % of export earnings. Food production in the city also forms an integral part of the food system, whilst also facing numerous challenges, including urban encroachment, protection of farmer's tenure and effective waste management. Given the nature of administrative boundaries, promoting a cross-border city-region food system requires effective and often difficult coordination of numerous stakeholders.

To demonstrate political commitment to improved food security for Arusha, Mayor Lazaro signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) in 2014. Activities such as road construction and maintenance, improvement of storage locations, upgrading of abattoirs, and urban market construction and rehabilitation were and remain high on the list of priorities, though they have been slow to implement due to high capital costs and planning processes. Nevertheless, as part of its commitments, Arusha City Council has focused on social interventions, improving revenue collection to support market function and to lend support to vulnerable groups so that they can participate in food system activities. The council has built strong relationships with multiple actors working towards shaping a sustainable food system, and has requested support in developing an urban food policy.

City-to-City Food Systems Forum

In April 2018, Arusha joined nine cities from six Eastern and Southern African cities for a City-to-City Food Systems Forum (CtCi). Focused on building capacity, learning and exchanging on city-region food systems, participating cities connected with each other on their shared similarities and

differences. Arusha joined the event having self-identified its most pressing food system issues as being road networks, food system infrastructure, youth and women empowerment, and the need for a dedicated city food policy. As a collective the forum identified seven key food system focus areas for action and intervention:

1. Stakeholder engagement and partnerships
2. Capacity-building, education and skills development
3. Coordination (vertical-horizontal integration)
4. Infrastructure (roads, markets/land, equipment)
5. Governance (management, enforcement)
6. Information (up-to-date data)
7. Funding (internal budget and external sources)

Arusha has been active in many of the above, however, the ultimate objective has always been to tie all of these together by developing and implementing a city-region food system policy – in conjunction with the city's overall master plan.

City-to-city food system exchange

Phase two of the city exchange aimed to provide in-depth learning. Arusha City Council was partnered with Commune Urbaine d'Antananarivo, Madagascar to reflect on the integrated food policy development process that was taking place in Antananarivo (see page 29). The two week-long exchanges, held in late 2018 (12-16 November 2018 to Antananarivo, and 9-14 December 2019 to Arusha) in each city, provided an opportunity for local delegates to visit food system stakeholders working in food production, processing and distribution, as well as sessions for engaged reflection and dialogue.

Despite initial understanding that Antananarivo already had a food policy, this turned out to be not a written document but rather a perspective and a practice by the Commune Urbaine d'Antananarivo, in which it acts as a demonstrator of urban agriculture and a facilitator of relationships between food system actors who are contributing to improved food security and environmental sustainability. What is unique about Antananarivo's approach to developing a food policy council is the central role of the Commune in facilitating the council, as opposed to the council being an external advocate for improved food systems. This articulation of 'policy as practice' became a foundational concept throughout the exchanges and when developing a policy process with Arusha.



The exchange delegation, including ICLEI, Arusha City Council and Rikolto East Africa officers visit an agroecological produce market (right). Photo by Paul Currie

The key outcomes of these exchanges were:

- Improved conceptual understanding of Antananarivo's and Arusha's food systems and of the initiatives which each contribute in some manner to food safety, improved nutrition, effective food distribution and economic support of food actors.
- Shared articulation and observation of specific challenges faced in each city, as well as potential ways to address these challenges
- Inspiration from the similarities witnessed between Arusha and Antananarivo, as well as the different approaches taken by each city. While the focus had been on learnings to shape a policy for Arusha, learning went both ways, with Antananarivo finding insight in Arusha's approaches, such as those for revenue collection and waste management.
- A first step towards a stronger relationship between Arusha City Council and Commune Urbaine d'Antananarivo.

Food system values

In framing a policy process with Arusha, the concept of a food policy council remained central. In discussion about how to draw food system actors together in a shared purpose, the Arusha and Antananarivo delegations drafted a set of values for the Arusha food system, to which local food system actors could contribute and commit. The draft value statement for Arusha's food system was jointly conceptualised as a food system that is:

- **Safe** – citizens in Arusha, no matter where they source their food, should be confident that they are receiving food that is safe from pesticide and chemical contamination
- **Nourishing** – no citizen in Arusha should experience malnutrition in any form, least of all our children, who should receive appropriate first 1000-day nutrition and quality food thereafter. Diverse, balanced diets should become familiar and expected features of our food system.
- **Economic** – food production and processing are opportunities for improved employment, particularly for our youth. Our regional food and cuisine should contribute to improved cultural tourism that celebrates the offerings of our city and country.
- **Inclusive** – our food system should ensure that all

The ICLEI-RUAF CITYFOOD network aims to accelerate local and regional government action on sustainable and resilient city-region food systems by combining networking with providing its participants with training, policy guidance and technical expertise. Through the CITYFOOD network, local governments are supported in shaping more sustainable and resilient city-region food systems, with the specific aims of (1) meeting current and future food needs of their populations, (2) integrating vulnerable populations in economic development through food production, processing and retail, (3) aligning environmental management strategies on food, water and energy, and (4) building diverse food systems that are more resilient to climate change and disaster risk.

vulnerable populations, including the elderly, youth, sick, differently-abled or unemployed, are supported so that they have access to good quality food.

- **Improved** through partnering – given the nature of our food system, which crosses multiple functional and political boundaries, we can only build a sustainable food system by partnering with multiple actors across boundaries through a shared vision towards shared success.

Based on the visits in Arusha, and the food system issues prioritised by the delegation, policy priorities were identified. The priorities were then elaborated as policy pathways. The framing of policy pathways fits into the orientation of policy as practice, and may be used as a basis for directing implementation and priority action by Arusha City Council and partner stakeholders, as a step towards building the food policy platform. They were designed with a nexus approach in mind to be fluid and adaptive as new priorities emerge.

Moving forward, Arusha City Council aims to convene food system actors in shaping a food policy council around shared values. These stakeholders would also commit to, and operationalise, the policy pathways.

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