



URBAN AND PERI-URBAN FOOD SYSTEMS IN AFRICA

Unpacking interlinked issues concerning
food, nutrition, and agroecology

MEETING NOTES

NOORDHOEK, CAPE TOWN
27 to 28 February 2025





The African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) is committed to dismantling inequalities and resisting corporate industrial expansion in Africa's food and agriculture systems.

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Acknowledgements

The ACB gratefully acknowledges the financial support of several donors. The views expressed may not necessarily reflect the views of our donors.

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DAY 1

CONTEXT

Jane Battersby-Lenard, African Centre for Cities, UCT

Food insecurity is greater in urban areas

- What impact does this have on the way we work ?
- Urban areas shape wider food systems as well, and vice versa
- Not just hunger-based food insecurity, triple burden of malnourishment

Architecture of food system is to provide cheap calories to cities

- Diets dependent on staples
- Rise of ultra-processed foods (UPFs)
- In part driven by food systems change but in part to provide techno-fix to urban challenges
- infrastructure, access to electricity, water, cost of cooking

Food industry responding to issues but maladapted

- Fragile and unjust, not aligned to healthy diets

Thinking about agroecology (AE) in urban context

- Mostly applied to rural and production but can also apply in urban system

High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) Report 19 1

- Improving FNS must be informed by principle of right to food and also right to the city
- Access to housing and infrastructure are rights to the city issues that impact on right to food
- Space to trade

Thinking about broader application of AE principles

- Regenerative urban and peri-urban food systems
- Residual diversity of informal sector despite efforts by state to shut it down
 - Critical to retain this
- Also, other struggles
- Create enabling environments
- Resilience, poverty reduction
- “Illegality” by spatial planning
- Mills, markets

What does AE look like in whole food system

- Informal not automatically nutritious

¹ Strengthening urban and peri-urban food systems to achieve food security and nutrition, in the context of urbanization and rural transformation: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/items/e2eb153f-324d-4ac2-9922-b645d2445dcc>

How can we take the principles to shape wider food systems?

- Informal, small-scale, territorial
- Also resistance
- Food related alliances, but also right to the city

DISCUSSION

- Think beyond South Africa (SA) into region
- SA producing food for the region as well
- Cross-border trade stopped under Covid
- Mozambique with best soils and water
 - Why still dependent?
 - Must blame politicians
- AE is important but neglecting “indigenous” foods
 - (Dislike of the term because indigenous taken to mean people still living in bush, according to colonisers, so prefer traditional or local food)
- Strengthen farmers to produce local foods
- Many current diseases because of diets

Been talking about how urban bias is anti-nature

- How to introduce AE into such a system, e.g., capturing water in soil
- Important function but absence of speaking about food in municipalities
 - Planning all things there but not about food production or food systems
- Not economically valuable enough to protect
- Most conservationists come from urban areas but in an anti-nature context
- Principles of design
- Food as part of greening the city
- Bluening the city on flood water, de-concretising rivers and canals and bringing into natural system
- Anti-nature but doesn't have to be
- How do we understand urban planning?
- In the way it happens, for an ideal world, which is not even an African ideal
- Not planning for actual reality and complexity

Governance

- If deliberate can also help
- Planning influences everything
- Who does planning, who has authority to do it
 - In Ghana, municipalities don't own land, it is owned by traditional authorities
- How to: landowners to sit at same table as technical people
- How to connect urban and rural
- Lots of rural damage emerging from the cities, e.g., finance

Urban food system is not just what happens in urban areas but includes who supply's the system

Capitalism and distribution interferes with the relationship between producers and sellers

- Formal retail: if you look at SA at the moment we need to move to township economic development
- Good purpose, for people to get into the economy with lower entry barriers, but problem is that formal retail sector coming into townships
- Low-income versions
- Put informal traders out of business; 10,000 replaced by 500 in a mall
- Distribution system that also creates intermediaries – traders get food from wherever they can – such as food produce markets (FPMs), but sometimes problems – food coming from elsewhere. People end up eating that food instead of local markets – price of food because of number of intermediaries goes up – part of the picture – not doing it because interest in food, but economic opportunity – trade policy on kinds of food

Experience with pesticides issue

- Astonishing to see how government attacked spaza shops after poisonings
 - Collusion with CropLife and systematic victimisation and criminalisation of small traders
 - Been fighting agribusiness for decades – mainly regarding impacts on agriculture and the environment.
- Struggled to get issues of street poisoning and in agriculture into national conversation
- But urban poisonings turned whole debate around
 - A catastrophe for industry and people conditions of people living in urban areas, rats, etc., but not part of the conversation
- Attack on spaza shops and xenophobia
 - Tried to take different angle
 - Industry pushing for regulations to limit power of informal sector
 - If we are not ready, we will lose further ground
 - Positive side is that there is an informal system that exists although being eroded through vicious attacks, similar to Stilfontein mining issue where the state played a similar role as a front for mining companies.
- Extent to which our state has been dismantled, dysfunctional
 - Private sector with huge governance power, free for all
 - Main enforcement mechanism for pesticides is a label
 - Sector handed to industry: what are weaknesses we can see, also all the strength we have in the country. What can we reasonably get from the state, and what work is beyond the state? We have limited time, maybe need to reorganise.
- State is failing
- Scapegoats for their own failures. We need to stand against that
- Issues of being ready to respond to crises
- Uncertain world around food, climate, geopolitics. We must be ready: the moment of crisis can also be an opportunity

Are we not confident that we know enough to ask who, what, where, when in a way that can bring to the surface what we know and what obstacles there are to change?

- We may know enough, need to think about the practical responses
- Education Minister and McDonalds sponsorship

- If we know enough, we need to start pushing for correct solutions and undermine what is wrong
 - People are alert, but need to organise to talk to each other
 - Academia and those in advocacy space – part of normalising
 - We need to be confident to show what is not working and propose alternatives; break from the status quo in a tangible way

Issue of power, voice and narratives in this space

- Keep things current
- Globally seeing movement towards authoritarian nationalisms, alliance with corporate power towards fascism
- Way state redirected attention towards scapegoats, distracting from issues we are facing with government and state, such as xenophobia
- Keep in mind these broader political and ideological trends – importance of challenging discourses and narratives – world has changed – narratives shaped by AI and algorithms - need to engage with that
- **“Food systems” as a separate thing but actually integrated**, a result of other kinds of power structures – deeper infrastructural issues and how city is governed – need to think coherently about how to aggregate voices
 - Tend to want to formalise to create a platform, but also advantage in loose informal networks – advantages and disadvantages
 - Broad social movement in SA and beyond that can speak to these issues that require deep change
- Issue of food insecurity and environmental damage to bring people together and formulate challenge
- Expansion of supermarkets into townships
- Response to needs to strengthen power – is it absence of systems that is not allowing transformation, or lack of awareness, or manipulation by corporations – if all are serving need for food, what change – from us or system?

Colonial capitalism is a purposeful extraction of value from one place and movement to another

- Marx was an ecologist before an economist – metabolic rift
- Need to repair the source of extraction – urban systems designed in these greater complexities – de-democratising approach of capitalism – Nancy Fraser Cannibal Capitalism – 5 vectors of capitalism as a non-productive sector, only extractive
- Labour including women’s invisible and unacknowledged labour – all black lives, working classes – in middle of escalating class war
- Consumption of nature and refusal to replace – capitalism devours systems of governance – replacement of every yearning for life taken and converted to profit
- System is failing in ways it is designed to fail, and fails those it was designed to fail – response is to double down – global reorganisation – not only one hegemony, now multipolar – US “owning” western hemisphere – Russians and Chinese for East – Western Europe a non-entity – where does that leave Africa ?
- US\$2 trillion per year to the North – need to keep it in its current state to continue with this – need an African strategy – others creating a strategy for you – ban toxins in Europe and then allocate to Africa and call it development aid – need to look at this monster – a hydra

For low income South Africans, these conversations or thinking is an absolute **luxury**

- Part of collab on motherload – unpaid care work in low income context – participatory methods in form of workshops – **mothers** from all over Cape Town, some informal settlements, some townships
- What is impossible to co-exist with motherhood – poverty cannot co-exist with motherhood – specifically focused on food – if no food in house, all-consuming aspect to think about: how to resolve
- Luxury to think about type of food etc – first preference is, is it edible, can you fill you
 - UPFS do provide that – spaza issue – for low income caregivers, deeper reality is that mothers know the food is not healthy and not trusted – but no choice but to buy there
 - Spaza shops also give food on credit – child support grant to pay off credit – people have to go back to these places despite lack of food safety and quality standards
- Issues of growing food – space, water, but also soil quality
- In Langa, sewage running in the streets – how can children be raised in these spaces?
- Domestic workers in Masiphumelele – when arrived in 1992, thought this is not a place for children to grow up in – but now looks even worse – lived reality we must grapple with – no luxury to think about things beyond survival

Systems designed to fail globally

- In our own African countries, things don't want things to work because someone is benefiting
 - In Kenya, because of that idea, when you try to make political change, fear that someone will benefit from this movement
 - Youth rising saying no leader, because otherwise someone will try to benefit from it
 - Complexity – at municipal level, someone benefiting from waste management for example
- Need genuine conversations of how we want to transform food systems on the continent

Must be realistic about what is possible for growing food in urban context

- Thinking is that urban agriculture, fund NGOs and this will solve everything – issue of **land** – fundamental to food system
- Urban, **peri-urban** and rural context – broken linkages between urban, peri-urban and rural
- Land plays a major role – access to water for a sustainable and ecological food supply

City won't be fed by urban only although it can play a role

- Scale, capacity limits – water, land, soil – must also give attention to links and how they can follow AE production
- Circumstances of land issue different in SA and other countries
- Recent research on maize prices in low income areas around Gauteng
- Sewage flowing in streets -implications on local agriculture, health, children
- Breakdown of infrastructure a serious issue – taps dry at the same time – malls but no toilets because no water – even that system breaking down

Street traders/alternative systems are there making available fresh produce

- So there is some hope – good quality – different channels including fresh produce markets (FPMs) – at least some connection with farmers, do compete with supermarkets –

wholesalers – some Somalian, but also Walmart – street traders selling at lower prices – quality fine – outcompeting and undercutting retailers – is some kind of alternative system – in Africa, local markets do represent something different; people creating own solutions – can bring AE principles in – may have weaknesses, but there is something there

FOOD PRODUCTION

In past, urban and peri-urban production was a choice – no longer a choice now
– Covid indicated vulnerability of food supply – if we promote production even in urban spaces, will contribute to response – climate and transport – context of AE – what do people eat – not just food, but nutritious food – grow food where it is needed most

Rirhandzu Marivate, SA Urban Food and Farming Trust (UFFT)

UFFT – township-based around Cape Town – work with farmers – urbanised space

Can AE meet urban food needs?

- Little evidence that urban agriculture contributes to food and nutrition security locally or globally
- Linkages and food flow important to understand – current urban production not enough – role of farmer beyond just production – social bonds – not necessarily commercial farmers but also **social functions** – [**multifunctionality of urban agriculture**]; usually a productivist and commercial lens and not necessarily what people want to be doing
- Opportunity for social farms to respond to other elements – environmental and **climate**
- Initially think that people grow enough food to meet their needs – learning that not only food issue but also wider social and environmental
- How to support farmers to assist this – community **resilience** – urban agroecology can contribute to building resilient urban communities
- Agri-hub initiative – understanding landscape of farmers – often individuals, inputs, access to land
- See what foundational basic needs to continue farming
- Support those already growing food, build resilience
 - Access to inputs, transport and ability to carry inputs back to farm
 - Aggregation infrastructure – looking for ideal location on private land – access to inputs and tools, processing, storage and sales
- Platform for networks and connecting – response to multi-scale crisis – build agency in farmers – climate change mitigation – floods – inputs at lower costs, training and knowledge, harvesting and market access, social engagement, local focus, prioritise farmer needs
- Financial indicators in agri-hubs – reduced input costs increased prices to farmers
- Resilience outcomes – physical and mental health, safety, social wellbeing, shocks, civic engagement, urban green spaces, biodiversity, environmental quality, climate resilience
- Network of urban farms – future potential – nutritional benefits, improve biodiversity through indigenous crops, strengthening agri-hub network – also strengthening across to other networks
 - Currently three agri-hubs and one emerging – 160+ growing sites, 800+ farmers

Rikolto –Mbale, Uganda – introduced the term, “a rural city” – decentralised urbanisation to reduce pressure on Kampala

- Mbale new city – fourth largest and fast-growing city in Uganda – 85% agriculture in the area still – 4% urban settlement – the remainder natural habitat – high youth population – cultural diversity – emerging cities a stage of initial design, not re-design yet – opportunity to do it right
- Modern markets created but still challenges – **waste management** – eight markets around the city but only one fully functioning – high poverty in the annexed peri-urban/rural and informal settlement areas
- School garden model and urban farming – can school gardens meet needs of school food?
- Generally food supply is good but access is critical – people living in poor conditions
- Reasons for rural-urban migration, urban farming not a priority – housing and settlement
- How to bring in issue of food production?
- Population pressure for living space – challenges beyond food, linked to wider planning

Governance challenges at city and national levels

- **Governance and effective organisation of food system** – highly centralised governance systems – delays and dysfunction – who is in position to make decisions about food – blockages in system

Is the problem food or to focus intervention on something else?

- **Infrastructure** inadequacy – roads, water, energy, markets – production challenges – rain-fed agriculture, climate change, post-harvest handling – food waste – food safety - power imbalances between traders and farmers – socio-cultural preferences of types of food

Responses – some production happening but question whether it can get to the right people at right time

- Policies etc are there but weak implementation especially at local government level – city initiatives on infrastructure, training, partnerships, stakeholder empowerment (unified thinking on food systems amongst officials) etc. – different contexts in different cities – food parliament and food council multistakeholder platforms to monitor and address challenges – media and cultural leaders to reach public

Rethink urban farming given different contexts

- Who are the urban farmers – are they landowners?
- Is there space for production – people don't go to the city to do farming but must eat – thus some role for production where feasible

DISCUSSION

Are we looking from supply side or demand side?

- Promote demand for AE food – traditional African leafy vegetables
- In past trying to train farmers on AE production – asking about whether consumers willing to pay premiums – lack of knowledge about AE – hygiene
- Are consumers willing to pay more for vegetables sold in improved stalls?

- Are people willing to pay more for produce sold in hygienic conditions (water, display surfaces, waste management etc) – how to create demand for AE food
- Some issues like aggregation facilities, agency, connectivity, biodiversity
- Some issues in Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)
- How to liberate some existing funds that government has been subsidising the pesticide industry with, industrial agriculture, mining, energy, industrial fisheries
- Reallocation towards AE food producers – farm input subsidy programmes (FISPs) prevalent in Africa on subsidising green revolution (GR) inputs – idea to build capacity for skill-scale rural farmers to channel subsidies towards work on seed, composting, bio-inputs – think about linkages – start from where people have already started – rural-urban connections between people – systems that people create together – precarious situation – multiple crises, need to address this – thinking must link urban and rural – different people can play different roles – some could produce seeds for distribution – also looking to work with mining people etc on subsidies – other issue is land and access – right to the city – what is our response now in these conditions

Agri-hubs

- Met Naude in Jhb – initiative taking off – one person earning more than lecturer – food for waste and liquid composting initiative – given urban spatial economy, production in cities to be intensive
- Current levels of productivity not high enough to make sense – food scraps, urine, etc., turned into liquid manure then sold – can take place in agri-hubs to bring resource together – redirect subsidies (requires lobbying and advocacy) to allow people to access bio-inputs more cheaply – also support idea of integrating production into green spaces and ecosystems

In Uganda, noticed smog on roads at night – people using coal to cook because electricity costs too high, also firing bricks for housing – air quality linked to pressure on urban housing and energy infrastructure – also *boda-bodas*: transport by bikes – need to take account of these innovations and way people coping with infrastructure challenges

What can we learn from each other?

- Progressive adaptations – how to anticipate and design – not just production in its own right but also **other systems like energy and transport and linkages with food system**

Need to be clear about what talking about on urban farming

- Backyard to larger-scales and commercial on edges of city – different typologies, modalities
- What do we need and what kind of protection and regulation
- In CT, urban agriculture, two profitable forms of urban agriculture are cannabis and livestock – not talking much about livestock integration

Land and water issue

- Often on marginal and poorly located land – farmers also losing land – not only developers but also informal settlements spreading onto production land – session is on food production – most food not from urban areas and won't be
- Need to challenge centrality of local and short distances – where possible should do that, but different distances for different products – but need to consider linkages – urban is an essential market for rural producers
- How do the links get considered on AE principles?

- Sustainable processing, recycling and circular economies – **not just about local but nature of the links** – links between people – consider scale and nature of operation – doesn't have to be corporate supply chains – there **are alternative ways of doing in practice**

Think about what is happening right now and how to intervene to support what is happening on the ground at the moment

- Issue of land – development, mining, tourism etc ., mostly best located for food production – Preservation and Development of Agricultural Land Act (PDALA) signed off now
- How to support that further and how will it benefit small farmers?
- Land also under pressure from urban expansion – should not say urbanisation is just there and a done deal, need to push back and create more links between urban, peri-urban and rural to stem ongoing urbanisation
- Land occupations for housing, but urban sprawl – beneficiary selection process in land reform has been a failure so far; not law so could be adjusted – need proper process – government has idea that land must go to commercial farmers with other businesses, entrepreneurs, large-scale farming – land prioritised for those and not small-scale
- How to intervene on how AE can be part of land reform process including beneficiary selection – municipalities with issue of organic waste – CT with neo-liberal approach – privatisation, business to exploit waste and doesn't become available for farmers to assist with production – not connecting waste management to issues of food production, ecology – focus on energy production – rural, peri-urban and urban links – need space for alternative markets, linking across spaces – beyond **commercial VC** and markets
- Philippi Horticultural Area (PHA): 60% of products to hawkers who sell to vulnerable producers – but no market to extend for smaller farmers to increase their profits and local communities to have access to nutritious food

Dealing with here and now – politics of land

- Minister of Land with Pan African Congress (PAC) background – with passing of PDALA, proposing Equitable Access to Land Bill
- Journalist Wandile Sihlobo writes article saying not required – need to advocate with Minister to promote Bill, must happen quickly

Aggregation, infrastructure, etc., points to economic structure – **design of an economic structure** – what does that mean and how to bring into conversation

- What does agroecological economic future look like – **how to connect with social mobility and social capital, networks** – can AE supply what people actually need – current economic structure based on what money you have
- What needs to be in place to solve food insecurity – responses are widespread, but not enough support – how can economic structure linked to agroecology to enable and support those people – still very small scale because of limited resources – instability – model at risk – social entrepreneurs themselves are income insecure and food insecure – social infrastructure – what exists – in SA, less clear than in other African countries

Economics – aggregation of infrastructure – agri-hubs solves a lot of issues

- What can be co-located with those – urbanisation can facilitate co-location around a hub
- Urban nutrition hub, energy – renewables at small scale – intersectionality – multiple damages and multi-sites responses – **co-location** using available resources – **schools** with

land that is not used [**schools as sites of intervention – food programmes, curricula, sites for production**] – relieving people in poor housing – community restaurants

- Can we think in more socialist way in food production that nurtures workers?
- Why talking about food systems – colonial idea – maybe talking about **labour systems** – different needs to different kinds of labour – unemployed and underemployed youth on continent
- Design public works programme to provide labour that city needs – a lot associated with food – can then start to cut into some of the precarity, unionising, extension of existing support systems on labour conditions, value of waste – streams of open sewage, urine for farming input
- How to design thoughtful process for utilising nutrients – look at food from lens of labour – waste pickers – alternative economy models – many ideas out there – designing into different notions of how money works

What is different between agri-hub and city – bringing together multiple resources and aggregating – Majority of urban Africa yet to be built – have this **window in which to hack the system [spatial planning and urban design]** – path dependency of shopping malls, etc., global climatic consequences

- Need to be clear of what we are speaking about – rural city like in Uganda with low urbanisation, this is the biggest issue – in SA or higher urbanisation areas, city is growing through endogenous growth – not an issue of migration now – **street traders selling prepared food already there – don't need to start from scratch, build on and support what is already there** – huge conurbations emerging – Need new thinking – ask different questions – urban diversity across Africa – how sufficiently nimble to consider that Mbale has different design opportunities compared with mature urbanised spaces – **differentiated approaches to design and planning**, and roles of production, and forms of distribution, prepared food, etc.

SOCIAL EQUITY

Vuyani Qamata and Mimi Nyaba, Food Agency Cape Town (FACT)

Farmer and also mobilising farmers in Gugulethu, Food Agency Cape Town (FACT)

- Community-based research network – research with farmers on urban production in CT and Maputo – three years – brought up lots of questions
- Biggest issue was frustration with researchers extracting info and studying people [**extractive research and co-created research**] – questions about farmers – history not only as farmers but also political and other identities – felt we don't belong – which spaces to have discussions where people feel comfortable
- Nothing about us without us – aim to co-create research with researchers – research paper – profile of farmers – mostly older women, Xhosa speaking – most people cannot speak in other languages except Xhosa – info was in our heads, now on paper so that was positive
- Co-research – names appeared in the paper too – research provided useful outcomes and recommendations – access to land and water, markets – why did people start growing food – lost mother to cancer, father hypertension, sister cancer – growing food not primarily about making money, but healthy food – politics emerge when you want to grow food

Artist by practice, writer – co-researcher – joined research on mapping – allowed for participation beyond what would have done alone – **language a big issue, how to communicate with people** – art methods to disseminate information

- Evolution from just dissemination to looking at potential of art methods to transcend language barriers – elders farm because always done in family – AE: re-creation of things we were already doing – know plants – how we grapple with idea of how farming not necessarily a full solution to food security, but not the only reason why people farm – cycle of life, value of time, seeing a plant grow, has psychological impact – hard to balance the more invisible elements vs the practical elements

Listening today, scratching heads – agri-hubs, nutrition hub – **action speaks louder than words** – if talking about AE, much work being done – local production for local consumption – not always happening – Covid example – team up of low income and wealthier communities – assisted – sales within wealthier communities – get cash but then go and buy at Shoprite – circular economy – could have meetings to township area to support local economy
Continuous research happening – lots of education – language of research – struggled to understand the word “agency”

Lots of learning happened in co-research – ended with results for community as well as power – black woman and multiple points of vulnerability – as **co-researchers, bring knowledge and lived experience** to build – often not understood when communities enter research and global power involved, are quite vulnerable – if looking at community participatory approaches, think about how to support work and protecting people from power relations at play – potential also for youth, but also different type of vulnerability – painful to be in spaces where you realise there is manipulation or subtleties to navigate.

Mervyn Abrahams, Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity Group (PMBEJD)

Some issues have come up already about power and power dynamics, economy, etc.

- Food system embedded in wider political economy – **often political economy aspect determines issues of access, equity, etc.** – important to focus on food system but also see as one system with interactions – capitalism – mechanism through which most people access food is determined by market – food affordability – true that even those in production are also net buyers of food

Wallet that determines what we eat and quality of what we eat

- AE also looks at nutritional quality but often portrayed as niche and more expensive and what does it mean for those earning minimum wage or less?
- Local production for local consumption becomes critically important – food price tracking – basket of 44 basic foods, not necessarily nutritious but what people actually purchase – food not bought first – other factors impact – transport, electricity – as these costs go up, which are parts of other parts of system, then impact on food access – emphasis on core food, what people buy first – then can prepare a meal – depending on costs of those kinds of food will determine dietary diversity
- National minimum wage R4,854 – transport and electricity, then basic food – comes in below food poverty line – most households face this **affordability crisis** in terms of impact on individual (education, poverty) but also on wider economy – about people – if not taking care of what sustains us as people, will have impact on wider system – not surprising that SA productivity is low – workers not eating enough – poor education outcomes
- How can AE help to move beyond this current system – must focus on sufficient nutrition – if we can get to that connection of local production for local consumption – if we can get that

right even at small scale to start and then expand, could that not be root of alternative system

DISCUSSION

Connecting people – egalitarian approach – make more human connections with each other

Recurring themes – farm workers, communities living next to coal power stations, triple burden of malnutrition – poor health situation – linked to health, farm workers saying can get to hospital but cost of transport

- What do people need **transport** for? Then at hospitals not enough medication or services so wasting scarce resources – calling for 24-hour clinics based on the specific local needs – need more education on socialist thinking on labour – people have own agency and skillsets and want to make own contribution to build the society – co-research was action research to build solutions – knowledge transfer but also skills transfer

One in nine people with diabetes in SA – current expenditure government pays is R16,000/person per year to treat diabetes – in comparison, food company CEOs earning US\$ 12 million a year – need to be more vocal about what food companies are doing

Capitalism as a non-productive system – break things to provide a technological solution – Woolworths CEO earning hugely larger salaries than lowest paid worker – role of pharmaceutical companies – focus on what is localisation impact of AE – food as medicine approach – planting to heal – ancestral connections – different system of shared wellbeing – this is where circular economy lives, not capitalist mode of reutilisation of remaining resources that can be extracted from waste – how to bring to level of bodies

Wallet determines what we eat – thinking of displaced people and refugees – what determines what they eat – circumstances they are facing

With local production for local consumption, must bring more money into local communities

- Often a reason why food leaves locality is because farmer wants to generate some **income**
- Reproduce corporate system in localised form – farm workers subsidise our food – should actually be paying more for food – talk about reducing prices rather than increasing incomes – farm workers carries costs – corporate wins – how to bring more money into communities so that local producers also have ability to sell locally and have some income – rather than premium niche markets

For people in wealthier areas, buying locally, but for the producing community, selling nutrition out of locality

Lived reality – change starts from appreciating what is true on the ground

- How AE intersects or connects with **everyday reality of people** – sometimes we talk at higher level and detached from everyday struggles
- What would make people see importance of AE, what would make it popular
- In Zambia some practitioners, but few – need the people to make it happen at higher scale

Let's not fool ourselves that urban production will feed the community, especially when small numbers – but if we go diversified production approach – agroforestry – schools with land that can

be used – get government to support that – National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) but when you look at what is actually provided is not the same – Eco Clubs at school – outdoor kitchen, demonstrate to children – support needed to build that and influence government – Integrated Development Plan (IDP), etc., come at last moment just for rubber stamping

- need training on local advocacy, policies, processes etc

iLembe NSNP pre-Covid – district entity of state able to facilitate tender to do the programme, worked with farmers in communal areas – bakkie traders and own vehicles to aggregation point and distribution to 90 schools – not all easy but a lot worked – when tender ended, was won by someone else who was more efficient to go to FPM to buy from commercial farmers and to distribute to schools – better model and more efficiency – but undermined local producers – some farmers interested in shifting from agrochemicals – said to state, are we learning from these opportunities? – Brazil model attempt to connect – new government unravelled that, then Lula returned – build legal defence of new connections in likelihood of right wing government coming in

Building on interpretation of slow violence – also issue of disproportionate power and what it might mean and what does AE bring to urban spaces – thinking of the now – what are we trying to undo?

150 years of slow violence through food system to enable extraction and exploitation – take over land to push people into mines, cheap food to keep urban populations from rising up - education systems to assert power and make other knowledge less worthy – how to undo that slow violence – African cities themselves embedded in same colonial history of extraction – food a central part of that economic strategy – how to unpick that movement where so many practices have been normalised e.g. maize as a staple, names of foods – how to stop that erosion of what was society before an economic society – cities have been centres of power – must undo that process

Politics very linked to mining – rural production to support urban workers – governments have come and gone because of that

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Issues of triple burden of malnutrition – how characterised in urban context – then place lens of AE on that – care, health, food, economics all overlapped – intergenerational
Industrial system not only pushes back, but vicious in response

Wanga Zembe, Medical Research Council

Often issues end up being less about nutrition but about context in which malnutrition happens

- How structures and systems create these indicators – started with focus on child health and wellbeing – when got into research began to see that problem starts with mother and fact that state interventions and how people think about child health and nutrition happens in a vacuum, separate from mother or caregiver who has to raise the child
- Once I saw that, changed lens through which view the work – lived reality – Black motherhood and caregiving and what it means for child health and wellbeing outcomes, and for caregiver outcomes
- What does it do to soul and life of black women who have to raise children in context that black people must make a life in
- Bottom line is that 15 million people, half of which are children, are going hungry in this country

- Producing enough food but stunting levels you wouldn't expect of our income levels – who is earning this income in SA though?
- Based on gross domestic production (GDP) you wouldn't expect so many children going hungry
- Same levels as height of Apartheid – people eating food that is killing them – people know they are eating this food but don't feel like they have a choice – child support grant is main source of income
- People think grants spent on food but first other hidden costs such as transport, have been waiting for two weeks to get grant – in Eastern Cape now R50 each way to get to town – then pay for each item loaded – limited amounts remaining – people know they are meant to feed children, but limited choice – nutrition education not top priority – people have to buy what they can – shops stock based on what people want or what they need – spaza serve a need by stocking cheapest food available – nutrition falls away – trade-offs – people talk of details of situation from meal to meal every day – don't know how people have any energy left to do anything else but sort out food
- People buying sugar by teaspoon now, or a cup of rice – chronic stress – struggle as researcher because **Western way of generating knowledge is extremely extractive** – get knowledge, share it, need to publish or perish, then international conferences – nothing changes – people onto that – open data but how do people consent to use of their data to build their careers, not to change things – **chronic stress** – no luxury to think about whether nutritious or not – frozen veg small handful onto meal, not actually enough for needs – stress contributes to disfunction – household dynamics – expectation attached to term 'mama' is a trigger if people cannot provide adequately – child also hungry – starts inside household being in constant conflict with caregiver, who blames themselves for not being able to provide – fights over food within household – mediation on access to food – long before effects outside – stigma, shame – ashamed that poverty and lack is visible to neighbour who is also similarly poor – no longer borrow from each other, everyone will know your situation
- Isolation in context where everyone similarly poor – shielding by caregivers – maternal nutritional status which no one talks about – only intervention around mothers is if pregnant, by which time too late – after baby is born, no one cares about mother anymore – reliance on reciprocity networks are weakening because of deepening vulnerability – less willingness to share – what would it feel like to knowingly feed child something that you know is not good for them – guilt – processed food is tasty, pacifies hunger – spaza shops – integral part of township economy – regulation should mean support not registration – responding to a need – not intentionally evil like corporates – cheap food, but also inferior and dangerous – regulation to leverage that they are main sources of food and provide support mechanisms – things are not changing, or even are getting worse – social grants not working – Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) not working – so many hidden costs – food gardens not considered viable – social quality, lack of access to land and water – limited yields even with a lot of persistence – need to watch that agri-hubs must change picture of people having actual food

Nzama Mbalati, HEALA

Reality is to build power for change – trying to compare apples and bananas

– **Need a radical change – don't know exactly what the rallying point is**, whether AE or something additional – food supplied to NSNP – supermarkets seem clean, can advertise and tell people when there are specials – in today's reality, talking about AE and school food programme – how to draw on all of this, that we know enough and want to tackle this problem – we have power – people are

protesting children used by big food on billboards, e.g., McDonalds and Minister of Education – poor schools without desks – provide desks but promote their brand

- Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) experience – people rallied especially black women – mobilised in society and changed space of stigma to build power and improved funding in health care, grants to treat HIV – an infectious disease became a rallying point – reality of death and sickness was in everyone's face
- What is it about food, where so many people going hungry and not a rallying point yet – when do we say: **who is responsible?**
- **What can we tackle and change** – how to make sure people access food – what mechanism – basket or what? How to reduce prices and have action around that – TAC a movement by poor people – this and trade unions of changing people's salaries probably the most effective struggles since 1994 – for TAC, people being outside mainstream is a good example
- Who, where, when on food? Who is the problem? Big Food, do know this – is AE the rallying point of getting desperation to change status quo – **people don't know what AE is** – need clarity. Is AE about producing and consuming locally – if no consensus, then how to move agenda – not academic but clarity for non-academic purposes – people not working in this space won't understand it
- HIV dramatically declined due to people's action and state and pharmaceutical companies showing responsibility – models that have worked in some places but diminished – how to defend things that may be imperfect but do contribute – plan to address issue
- Will food systems get us to where we are going on not?
- State capacity is an issue – TAC build treatment plan for SA – that actually saved lives – more straightforward intervention, to get treatment to people to save lives – in various interventions, is it mobilising or demobilising on food?
- Funding landscape and food regulations – things we are doing for people to have access to quality food – are you producing because getting support, or because it is needed – what informs what we are doing? Need to break siloes, solidarity campaigns where we take issues and have multiple organisations signing up letter to Minister – is it a base of building power for radical change?
- Can we fix food system, overhaul, or alternative?
- Coming together brings opportunity to build power – have network but busy and running around in our daily work and lives – recognise that we need quick interventions – **hunger dehumanises but also demobilises** – what is it when we leave here that we will do? – how to organise – specific five-point plan to take forward – also day to day interventions to eliminate hunger

DISCUSSION

Sitting as NGO and seeing where we can best try to intervene – how, where, when to intervene – what is our current reality – this is where we get stuck

- Bigger challenges and problems but also immediate things facing us that we must deal with
- Agri-hubs can not necessarily do anything unless addresses hunger – hunger also in farmer households
- What can people grow that they can go back to for their own nutrition as well?

- Funding environment – change towards child-centred approach but caregivers themselves are hungry – how to address that too – Early Childhood Development (ECD) and schools – challenging, given that a lot to be done about getting production into schools – question of how and where we should intervene – as organisations can only do limited things but **must find spaces to be impactful**

Women know about nutrition – important because solution not about education primarily – mental health and stress – worry about generalisation of spaza shops and inferior quality – variation between smaller and larger, what they sell varies – UPFs as unhealthy food and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – spazas are responding to a need while also meeting their needs – giving us challenges on how to organise movement for food justice – been a big challenge – Union Against Hunger – should we align and support? – how to foreground the mothers?

Food gardens – university has a big campus but not being used – some people started doing crops there – cooperation – any time university needs to build new infrastructure, try not to do in areas where people producing

FACT emerged from Covid soup kitchens – unanimous hatred of idea – how to turn into community kitchens – implicit that always will be need for food relief – where does that fit into the conversation?

As researchers, we can withdraw from day to day reality – **issue of language we use** (e.g. AE) as being exclusionary – big challenge for us – concept itself so complex that it becomes difficult to rally around it

- Cultural edifice of colonial experience and logic – facing challenge of decolonising way we think and speak about things to rally around common cause – we do emphasise complexity in food systems – useful as academics and researchers, but as activists maybe dial back for popular appeal – **violence of food system is distributed** – cascades down into household to extent that people fighting with each other in households
- Epistemic violence and collective problem of food insecurity and environmental destruction is individualised, whereas it is a collective issue that cannot be solved at individual level – build solidarity and rally around specific cases of injustice
- Maybe small wins to start with but build solidarity

Common themes – nothing changing – challenge for all of us to reflect on our work and shifts we will be required to make – link to this is question about whether it is the food companies – not a lot of time – urgency – don't have three decades to build things – need to change how we are doing things in a radical way built on people's power – can't manufacture from ether how to do things – not about campaigns and plans but **how to build people's power**

- How to organise ourselves politically in different ways – delink from NGOs, which are vulnerable
- Approach solutions with love – NGOs assisted to build waste pickers associations, but baggage, e.g., corporate sponsorship of events, exploiting our vulnerability – waste pickers to be organised in unions, not in NGOs – unionisation issue may be important – we have unions but weak and under attack – disconnection, can't think of solutions with long view

Trade union concept in terms of SA problematic; at the moment because most workers not organised – though there is experience and knowledge – current context – budget that was not presented – realisation on part of the state that issue around food is a critical issue in the country

– Inspired idea on increase of child support grant (CSG) – where the state finds itself at the moment can provide us with an opportunity – extra expenditure on social grants motivated by high food prices and people to get food – not sufficient, but could be entry point to push or bring alternatives

Is AE relevant? Needs explanation – relevant but unclear – let's be clear what are the interests of agroecology – what are the concerns and what needs is it addressing

- How can we as NGOs disappear – vulnerable, part of pacification – what is next move?
- Don't talk about cooperative structure behind spaza shops – very diverse ownership and management structures – rural Eastern Cape – same thing happening there – on health and spaza shops, saw micro butcheries outside shops – safe but with informality behind it

NGOs can also make contribution – nutrition assembly – voluntary food hampers – people preparing food for NSNP work full time and earn below minimum wage – are considered volunteers – want to be recognised as full time workers – if two year turnover of people, difficult to organise – access to lawyers, research, etc.

Assume that if info presented to right people would be immediate change, but not the case

- **System has desensitised us and individualised us** – need for info on social media, on events and things happening – also beyond organising, how to bring actors together – how to tell stories in ways that appeals to people – spirit of *ubuntu* no longer there because also neighbours affected – not normal when you look at it, gender-based violence (GBV), hunger but been normalised

Pessimist reconciling idea that system is failing those, it is meant to fail

- System is designed and functioning the way it was planned to – so what is the point of all this
- Looking at global capitalist system, any intervention will hollow out – should we be looking at solutions in context of capitalism or alternative because system burning down – **speed of crisis versus speed of solution is not aligned** – not sure if interventions will ever catch up with crisis
- Where do I go when I don't have food – not a lot of interventions, especially for mothers

As NGOs, often donors determine what we do – how does that impact our work – if we go back to our desks now, doing related work but isolated – how to pull together, seeing everyone who has to be included – farmers, vendors, supermarkets, middlemen as gatekeepers who determine what comes into the city – cluster around addressing these issues, building on need to organise

Union Against Hunger – Mark Heywood, HEALA, Grow Great – thinking about bringing umbrella to tackle this – wouldn't have gone in there if didn't think principle not correct – goal to end hunger

- vehicle, will need to think about how to build – open for others to contribute in shaping – good principle but a bit vague in terms of how to achieve the vision – needs all of us to guard if we think this is the mechanism – need a political campaign – HEALA co-convening and believe the principle is correct

Battle with pessimism but in spaces like these with real talk, gives some hope

- Convening like this should end up with an action plan – we get disillusioned when we meet and talk but nothing comes from it – **want to humanise data, put faces, imagine the actual people** – but need to have power in room in the first place or how to get info to tap into power
- How do we get powerful, those who can make a difference to be part of the discussions so we are not preaching to the converted, or same people

DAY 2

ECONOMIC

Gilbert Siame, Consultant

Context – significant overlapping trends influencing everyday life – rapid urbanisation – some of the poorest people found in informal settlements around urban areas – inequality and poverty – shapes where investment goes, city politics, access to food ,etc.

- Climate also impacting on food – vulnerability, nutrition and other factors – how can AE be used to make a difference? What problems can we fix or begin to resolve given this context?
- Everyday concerns for people in Lusaka – transport, employment, security, health, water, living costs – food not appearing as an explicit topic, but cuts across all – few people in city producing food – Mainly informal sector income to buy food – determines what types of food are made available – pay attention to what matters to people every day first
- Whose narrative is AE? Meaning and practice of AE to make sense of economic life of ordinary people – urban-rural food relationships – urban planning/urban systems lack attention to food
- Informality and its management, infrastructure gaps – peri-urban areas – limited institutional responsibility but growth the highest here – needs attention
- Multiple actors claiming some level of rights to the land – smallholder producers, livestock, conservation but also rapid urbanisation – traditional and state land use systems collide – could be a zone for AE – regional planning but participation and equity
- City the heart of where people will supply – production in peri-urban areas but changing to settlement – unplanned urbanisation, especially along transport corridors
- Public markets play a major role in food supply in most African cities, but neglected and under-resourced – why should one market be a determinant of food and nutrition security in a big city?
- Decentralised markets offering a diverse variety of food – who finances, what is political economy, how to ensure access for farmers and other actors?
- Multiplicity of actors – traders, agents, producers, processors, transporters ,etc. – informal is part of this – some elements of AE difficult to incorporate in city context – participation seen as critical but also sometimes tick-box exercise
- How to make it transformative – waste management – planning to incorporate production – often conventional production – **reexamine urban planning practice and infrastructure to integrate food systems** – centre poverty reduction – prospects for AE but governance to be considered – facilitation needed for participation and inclusion

Gareth Haysom, African Centre for Cities, UCT

African urbanisation very rapid – global North took 200 years to reach 50% urban, Africa in 80 years, much larger total – need different economic models especially in context of climate change

- Data up to 2100: Africa will have 3.7 billion people, 72% urban – differentiated across the continent – how to deal with this diversity, and context to become a key informant

- Already half a billion people in urban areas in Africa – **rise of UPF as response – high food and nutrition insecurity** – dietary diversity: 6, a proxy indicator for undernutrition – many people below that, average around 4 – type of food will not enable Africa to thrive – sugary beverages – urban food distribution
- Alliance for a Green Revolution (AGRA) stats
- 1.3 billion tons of food per year moves through value chains (VCs) private sector (but not differentiated by formality)
- 85% from domestic supply – urban market 9x bigger than agricultural exports – massive rise
- Many business operators functioning without state support – roads, markets, energy, water, information and communications technology (ICT)
- Policy and governance as key issues – territorial markets – relates to local production to local consumption – caution on this – different territorial food systems for different products
- What is urban food system position – do you say it has to be local ?
- Income from longer distance travel, but what happens to poorer people locally?
- How does an official make a decision on this?
- Does AE give some tools to manage these trade-offs ? Poultry: chickens local but eggs from outside – What is territorial market and how do we understand it ?
- Corporate concentration – informal employment very strong in Africa
- Who is providing food to African cities? Mainly “informal” – market traders and street vendors higher in urban areas (aside from SA) – food sources in CT – everyone goes to supermarket – low income regularly buy from spaza shops – street traders as the fridge – instead of shutting them down, how to strengthen role?
- Biggest costs for informal traders aside from food cost – transport, spoilage, energy, licences, etc., – UPFs in spaza shops, sold because of other costs – there is food in African cities – but this is not what determines food systems outcomes – key issues infrastructure – what does it mean for AE principles?
- Are links across all that can be adopted in urban – infrastructures of care – unfairness, exclusion, injustice
- Context -> social stratification -> experiences of inequity
- How does AE lay over this and what can it do to unbundle these

DISCUSSION

UPFs – tins not necessarily UPFs, although they can be – e.g. pilchards used to be in tomato sauce (4 ingredients) but now many flavours, sugar added ,etc. Basic raw ingredients (e.g. fresh fruit), then cooking ingredients (salt, oil) added when prepare food, then processed food (e.g. tinned veg) for sake of longer shelf life, then UPFs with a lot of extra ingredients (milled, extrusion so that matrix of food has been broken down and turned into something else, then made to represent something seen as food, other ingredients and additives)

- Differences in processes e.g. pasta is flour and water then stretched but two minute noodles broken down, chemicals added, then shaped to look like noodles

How do we hold each of these interventions?

- How do we organise and influence around these issues?
- Who does it, is it us, working with who?

- Need to house AE somewhere – how to do this in a way that can bring change?

AE framework encourages us to build new alliances – in terms of home for AE

- Look at things like climate change, biodiversity – in Zambia, AE intended for climate change and mitigation, driven by commercial sector (CS) on seed – also way of eroding FISP
- Alliance between those kinds of activist and planners – strong markets, fair flows of food – but not drivers to do it

Rapid urbanisation – need to think beyond AE, food scarcity

- Need to establish link between ae and rapid urbanisation – consequence of rural destabilisation

Yesterday considering realities of 15 million suffering from hunger, situation of mothers

- Where does AE fit in – how will it fit in?
- Why centre AE as solution, and where does transformation of industrial agriculture come in?

Factors driving urbanisation linked with conflicts on the continent

- Stranded assets, people dispossessed, land grabs, mining – people ended up living on street in precarious circumstances – multiple shocks and what happens to people – agrarian distress
- Opposing false solutions but **distinguish between techno-fixes and technological development** e.g. decentralised solar energy – UPFs a result of capitalising on lack of systems and diminished capacities – done work on FISPs, mismanagement of fiscus, highly indebted
- Food system in Zambia collapsing – subsidies also like social welfare – role of state – AGRA aiming to perfect uptake of industrial agriculture model – on peri-urban very important, needs more work and attention
- ACB could possibly play a role here in terms of research – ACB has done work on conservation, biodiversity that could come into here, know what is going on about offsetting – do engage internationally, what is happening in government
- How will governments do environmental cleanup from mining etc.?
- Extractive, colonial mindset – issue of disconnect between what is on the ground and the narrative being manufactured by AE movement – but maybe thinking too far ahead – makes sense but starting point – vision vs practical steps
- Conservation, land use management, seeds ,etc. – not good way forward to say this is reality and how can AE fit

Issue of AE and way it is framed

- Name itself is agriculture and rural focus – maybe need to unbundle it and take out of rural framing ?

Principles of AE can be applied to broader questions of urban governance and planning

- Not necessarily directly related to food – some are political positions, e.g., participation, fairness etc. If we apply these to governance of city, may lead to different outcomes of food – way of thinking about food systems tends to silo-ise – need to think about integrative frameworks

- May be obstacle to wider alliances – issue of scale and speed of transitions in Africa – much development through informality – need to think about the term itself – absence of compliance with state power and surveillance – much of development in African cities is informal
- Limited capacity of state to see what's happening and influence it – attempt to push on African society on how things ought to be governed and developed – different ways of thinking about how to make visible, forms of governance inherent in those systems and maybe not at all aligned with Eurocentric views of state control

Also think about **being and bodies**

- Who are we talking about – black lives, women, children? Are the ways we have interacted with AE in different ways e.g. spiritual practice – informality integrated with Big Food

Public markets and street traders still a dominant form in most cities in Africa

- Supermarkets have not dominated in way predicted – people creating something different – not supermarkets but another structure which provides food – does lend itself to AE – biodiversity also relates to diversity – not necessarily that supermarkets disappear but diverse forms and channels
- Diverse AE food system – multiple options – urban food system, also ways in which food is delivered and distributed from outside urban zone – thousands of kilometres to get food to traders as well as supermarkets – food is moving over long distances
- Need to consider the nature of the links and networks that bring food – AE principles can be applied – recycling, economic diversification, connectivity, etc. – can reinforce those, re-embedding food system in local, but also connections embedded locally – traders, retailers can be more or less embedded – multiplier effects – social connectivity also there – support those more in line with AE principles in every part of the system – inclusion not just shelf packer or farm worker but owners and control – won't shift overnight, but **move in certain directions – must meet food needs of majority**

What is cost of all we are speaking about and bringing into action?

- Who pays? Protection, participation and transition

Move from strategy and policy to some level of resistance and action, popularisation

- Must reimagine what we call **local** and have nuanced view

AE very useful over past two decades – sustainable agriculture and understanding of what happens in African cities – ways in which they can be integrated – one tension is who wakes up and worries about something in order to get it done?

Everyone's problem but no-one's problem – target those people – work in food is everybody's issue

- Once you give it someone, becomes a narrower institutional issue
- How to deal with diversity of what needs to be done and multiple poles – targeted intervention
- How do we avoid default to equality, how to look at equity to apply **disproportionate benefit to most marginalised** – government actors can't do that in general politics

May also be an argument for allocating responsibility and specific focused leadership – separation of food and agriculture – shouldn't be mandate only of Ministry of Agriculture

Should look at places where there is actual food sovereignty and how they organised it

Ministry of Food – consider upsides and downsides

Brazil public procurement – system of farmers producing for market

- Seed: government purchased seed and distributed for food production for food programme
- Law changed to include smallholder farmers in all agriculture policies – targeted school food programme with preferential procurement – indicated types of food, no UPFs, no advertising of UPFs to school children – issue of harmful subsidies

GOVERNANCE

How to get transition? Multi-actors – role of communities – how to bring people together

Florian Kroll, University of Western Cape / African Food Systems

Metro governance – term governance considers power and how it works in society

- Power exists throughout society – decisions in different locations including consumers, private, government, civil society – focusing on the state now, especially state at metro scale for resilience, equity and health – transitions to AE
- Framework based on Foucault and biopolitics – looks at development in how states operated, particularly in Europe and thinking behind how government was built over time
- Ways states influence ways populations act – administrative state leading up to industrial revolution and following – application of that framework tricky in post-colonial context
- Europe and colonial context quite different
- Origins of cities and trajectory of food systems in African context related to colonial experience, extractive processes – what possibilities for metro state to promote transition to AE ?–
- What exists on paper in policies and what happens on the ground two different things – gap
- Must think of other aspects of the state as well as policy – institutional architecture but also logic of the state, how it should function, purpose and organise – not only policy but how organised, built over time and reasoning that informs it
- Engagement by researchers has contributed to changes in governance – possibilities in shaping governance of food – findings of research – City of Cape Town (CCT) and City of Johannesburg (CoJ) no formal management on food mixed competencies – many bits of policy relating to food
- Profusion of many different institutions of the state – logic of government
- Colonial import of thinking on how state should run
- Sectoral logic – health, agriculture. Etc. – changes based on political contestation – silo-ised thinking
- Cascading hierarchies of control, different aspect of mandate implemented by different institutions – pyramidal structure – thinking still tiers
- National to set stage for provinces, who have intermediary and regulatory function for implementation at local government level – structurally can say that food governance

mandates scattered across levels of government and multiple sectors – already poses a challenge

- Food systems thinking to consider linkages and feedbacks and complex dynamics
- Integration and overall functioning of a complex system – sectoral logic in a different way
- Fragmentary responses – hardwired into ways of operating – difficult to engage systemically
- Efforts to remedy – integrated strategies but generally not worked well – resources lacking, coordination structures
- Still sitting with same challenges today – reasoning and thinking of how state rationalises own operations and influences state capacity to promote something like AE thinking
- Policies and structures where state has instruments to reorient urban economies, but wielded by different people with different interests, priorities, mandates
- Multiple different ways of thinking about the state itself, what it should be doing – often conflicting – political culture in Africa and in other countries, e.g., shift in US and way state is running
- Patrimonialism – European idea of impartial bureaucracy based on class of well-trained and educated officials to implement policies – but always informal cultures – placement of loyal people in key positions in order to make use of state to advance interests of particular groups and elites – e.g., tenderpreneurism – tenders written for certain people, influence in selection process, budget for kickbacks – not only SA, happening across the world – also others who see state as instrument to advance revolutionary interests to transform society
- In CT, major shift in development of food systems programme built on prior process on resilience strategy – major shift in development of actual programme on food systems, food environments, equity and fairness, role for state: possible because of discursive shift in city as result of creation of unicity and how to make it work – new public management – logframes, check lists, etc.
- Governmental technologies to toe the line and implement to plan and budget – not as efficient as made out – making things difficult – limited flexibility and adaptive capacity because entrenches hierarchical and stylised logic – shift to integrated approaches, resilience – discursive opening –

Day Zero challenge galvanised the state to think about how to adapt to crisis and challenge

- Strategic opening which was taken advantage of, also to bring in food systems thinking
- Embedding of notion of food systems programme – foot in the door made possible for better collaboration
- Then Covid crisis put food insecurity at top of agenda for many
- Opportune moment for local government officials to put programme before decision makers and get ratified – powerful role for academics and CSOs to build relationships with key officials, informal knowledge sharing, **take advantage of societal crises – opening to engage with city to drive AE agenda** within city and reorient some of the policy, regulatory instruments towards AE
- Consistent engagement, careful manoeuvring, opportunities presented by “policy windows” to strategically advance things as they arise

Are some people inside who care but may be constrained in acting?

- Use opportunities to push – need to be ready at all times because don’t know when crises/opportunities may arise

Possibilities of localising food systems governance in Ghana

- Traditional authorities must be on board in any governance framework
- Policy and legislative environment on food governance – many not implementable, including lack of capacity
- Are there national level policies, plans, etc., that can be drawn on?
- Urbanisation and climate change priority issues – Ghana about 57% urbanised – rapid rate of urbanisation – increasing challenge of food – may be element of reclassification – growth faster than ability to govern
- Climate: flooding, droughts – unpredictable, unsustainable resource exploitation

Internal migration from climate disasters

- If crops fail, people may move to urban areas
- National level efforts to initiate conversations on food systems governance at different levels
- How and what needs to be done?
- Other dialogues to address some of the action areas
- Derived from United Nations Food Systems Summit (UN FSS) and other
- Five action areas – access to nutritious food, sustainable consumption, nature-positive production at scale, equitable livelihoods, resilience, integrating nutrition into primary healthcare delivery systems – but not a lot materialised yet – weak governance – massive problem of illegal and legalised mining – damage to forests and water – may end up importing water – corruption
- Policies but then contradictory actions
- Local leaders with better connection to the ground – may be opportunity for action at this level – at higher level, less knowledge about lived reality – visibility at of food system actors at local level, empowered local government, context matters
- localisation of governance through
 - pluralist and multi-level governance – coalitions, peer learning and sharing, targeted investment in food system infrastructure, active participation of grassroots
 - Tamale Livestock Market – mobilised livestock farmers, butchers, pastoralists with government and traditional authorities (TAs) – external funding from World Bank – generates income for municipality cities identify priority areas to invest to create jobs for youth – platform for multi-actor engagement
 - politicise food issues – food insecurity normalised, individualised issue – politicisation to amplify voices – action around election times especially – **failure of governance allows private corporations to come in and take space** – need for basic equipment and tools
 - citizen-centred urban planning and governance – notion of food sensitive planning
 - responsive regulatory oversight – production systems, distribution and retail

DISCUSSION

Kenya – public participation is a legal requirement – may be tick-box but people do litigation

- Judiciary still considered to be functional – requirement now for legislation on standards for participation to ensure not just tick-box – multistakeholder platforms are possible

Issues of capture of trading spaces by local mafia – local officials not willing to take responsibility

- Localised governance – councillors on the ground are enablers – haven't had experience of good councillors – are some who are interested and can facilitate relationships – support to those councillors we can work with – different forms of governance
- In SA very Western approach – do also have Tas, etc. – any lessons from traditional forms of governance – attributes that might be more useful, and translate to urban?

Has to happen at local government level, as they have the mandate, whether effective or not

- Requires social dialogue – constituencies need to be organised themselves, independently, and not by government officials – social dialogue from planning onwards
- Planning concept that was popularised is concept of natural markets – not permits but logical space for trading – people who know where those markets are, are those who are there
- In SA at taxi ranks because no urban food markets – workers in informal economy to build negotiating skills, then engage with others – taxi driver organisations and street traders organisations with things in common – e.g. spatial regulations – can resolve tensions only if strong, respected organisation – even if expertise from outside, shouldn't be deciding what should happen
- Local populations involved there should decide – no statutory forum for engagement at local government level for informal
 - Brazil had one but abandoned because badly drafted, manipulation of law
 - India national street trading policy then fought for national law to apply across states and got it – also targeted around elections – protection of street vending act – devolved to states town vending forums – statutory negotiating space – 40% of members from street vendors associations – gender quota – 10% to include of CSOs in alliance with traders – traders represent themselves
 - other 50% combination of local authorities and private sector (e.g. shops) – in other places, establish negotiating forums based on strong local organisation – planning with direct actors – nothing about us without us – Indian law only on street vendors but other informal sector workers not yet included
- Aim for cross-sectoral bodies – trade union system of negotiating done in those forums – collective bargaining – counterpart not employer but municipality – multi-lateral bargaining forum with all interests – as more sectors in informal economy get organised, build negotiating skills, and deal with planners and implementers at appropriate time – not consultation where municipality formulates everything and then consults – **key to inclusive system of all actors is collective negotiation**
- Negotiate until reach an agreement versus dialogue, which may not lead to anything – some councillors are open to it, though others hostile

Negotiating forums for some kind of actual impact at the end

- Regarding CT, are limitations in that decisions still made internally and little direct participation and decision-making – information on livestock market interesting because example of specific case where interest groups come together with pragmatic solutions – specific examples of how to bring it to concrete situation

Indian example allows us to think of ways we are approaching issues in our contexts

Important power of taxi associations in SA, and should not be underestimated – linked to police – must recognise that there are **informal states operating parallel to formal state**

ENVIRONMENT

Vanessa Farr

Intersections and margins – where are urban food systems?

- What do we do with the fact that groups of farmers but on the fringes?
- Where do we begin to look at some of the questions environmentalism is asking of us?
- Climate change is pollution ultimately – pollution is colonialism – highly polluting system
- Just transition doc written by Senegalese eco-economist and Tunisian political economist – framing for how to think about environmental issues – decarbonisation is decolonisation

Three structural deficits:

- Lack of food sovereignty
- Lack of energy sovereignty [cooking as primary measure – patriarchal violence as control mechanism – women mainly responsible for food – health consequences of smoke inhalation because energy deficiency – doesn't allow us to move things around correctly]
- Africa is the low value exports continent in the global imaginary
- Structural deficit driven by fact that African agricultural policies set in Europe
- Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) decides what crops grown for export – syphoning up US\$ 2 trillion from the continent – politics of trauma – telling us we don't have what it takes to stand on our own feet – AU now on reparations bandwagon – won't get it because of ways climate funds structured – loan and debt based – constant structural deficits – dumping ground for outdated tech – carbon sinking – rainforests taken for offsets and people excluded from it
- Africa has been put into this position – can think agroecologically about this – rethink climate – cumulative effect of pollution and discards – show up as waste, mostly not biodegradable, and the rest not treated appropriately as reusable nutrients – technologies for better environment not transferred to Africa
- Water privatisation – water floated on stock exchange as a commodity in 2020 – processed water now – building stranded assets – infrastructure that generates money for the builders and thereafter they don't care
- Edges and verges – spaces of violence, dangerous, uncontrolled – one way of looking at them
- another way of looking at them is that they are liminal, non-conformist, queer, crisis responsive
- Absorption on verges, e.g., swales, water catchment – opportunistic, resilient – place where weeds grow – pioneering plants – gifts, wild food, spiritual and relationship building
- AE approach to food systems – where the wild things are

Urban food production for eco-socialism

Podcasts with speakers

Idea of fugitive spaces

Islands of coherence

Nazeer Soday, Phillipi Horticultural Area (PHA)

Colin Duncan – defends idea that agriculture is central – basis of fight to save PHA

- Industrial processes with radical indifference of place, not based on natural processes
- Restoring nutrient cycle from waste to compost – organic waste going to landfills – restore environment while building sustainable livelihoods – compost to be freely available to farmers, address impact of agrochemicals on soil and environment
- Carbon emissions from landfills – toxins leach into soil and water -city plans to ban organic waste to landfills by 2027 – smallholder farmers with poor soils – opportunity to connect these issues – start with home composting, local compost projects
- Workshops, plenary – compost collective and WG – 130 farmer participants – smallholder farmers, community food gardeners, home food growers – engagements with other actors – land degradation – effects on resource-based livelihoods – loss of high potential lands over past 30 years – Threats from development – urban sprawl, mining, tourism, infrastructure
- Engagement with officials and desktop study on waste management plan – no recognition of challenges facing farmers, or potential of organic waste as response – siloed work – city trying to solve – pilot projects but poor results so far – fear to talk about the plan, closed to proper community engagement – assume they know all the answers – waste to energy is top priority for city
- Farmers: lack of sufficient inputs for onsite compost production – finances for community diversion plans – carbon materials tied up in municipal contracts, unavailable for farmers – high cost of composting equipment – 20 m³/acre/month required in CT – lack of support from government – some successful projects but fail to demonstrate scalability
- Build technical expertise to advocate for new plan based on proper research of existing plan
- Sao Paulo: amazing waste diversion plan – decentralised production sites - free access to compost
- Administratively feasible, economically viable – need political support – if get it right in the city, can expand plan countrywide – have research partners who were working on waste – realigned projects to tie in with PHA – have Masters researcher to examine plans and look at Sao Paulo model and propose new plan – further research opportunities – quantify condition and numbers of who the farmers are – city wants to invest in tech to burn waste for energy
- Cost/benefit analysis of waste to energy vs compost – multi-dimensional

DISCUSSION

Consider rural-urban link – rural farmers thinking about inputs and soil health – conversation about bio-input production using input subsidy programme – seedlings, compost – doing something similar – connect with existing resources – **exchange that can happen across rural and urban, share ideas** – shortage of compost, but rural farmers also thinking about links – one concrete way to bring these urban and rural together

Worked with smallholder farmers in Mthatha – land seriously degraded – trees chopped down – needs compost but also different types of compost – use waste, also living compost (e.g., cover crops) – should facilitate exchange and discussion across urban and rural – waste could theoretically

cover all urban and peri-urban farmers and maybe even beyond – in Sao Paulo, waste circulated in local area, decentralised system – can move into periphery and into rural areas – agriculture one place of turning waste into nutrients rather than waste

NSNP maybe not ideal, can see how to improve, but very important programme that must be defended – same with public markets, though is a place that could be a catalyst for some transformation

Ways in which organic waste currently goes to outsourcing – perfect example of how neo-liberal paradigm of cost recovery leads to ways of dealing with this resources that reinforces concentration

- Issue of how an idea that is technically feasible not considered because of political obstacles
- Can city make money from it ? Challenge underlying rationality

Somewhere along the line, city admitted that if municipality does diversion and processing, will be cheaper than outsourcing – they admitted it themselves – but for other reasons, outsource

Working on project on cooked waste management – working with food traders – what is being done with it currently – city project looking at organic waste diversion for compost – but selling to farmers or using for parks – Green Cape working on organic waste, black soldier fly

Limited nutrients from compost – plastic inside there too – doing behind the scenes, not public – have been doing for many years – only some recipients

Problems with separating at source even in pilot – plastic and bottle tops

Rob Nixon on slow violence – looking at environmentalism of the poor – quote on how decision made to deliver waste to Africa – Summers on economic logic to relocate dirty industries to Africa

- Law as white fantasies – minor key is interlaced with major key – neither fixed in advance – minor considered as secondary - more difficult to track – thus focus on major – minor without full force of major – power in consistency and invisibility – *“The Minor Gesture”*, Aaron Manning

Frustration that we must have concrete outcome – if challenges with providing volumes to NSNP but why not test it and provide support? Must be some kind of plan or at least attempt something

Linking waste and farming – initiative in Soweto – needs a community initiative – farming at school

- Established method of converting waste to biofertiliser – also cook at school – community brings waste to them now because see value of that instead of waiting for municipality to remove the waste – now getting support from municipality to educate youth on farming – circular economy working in that space – interlinkages on who can play what role

CLOSING DISCUSSION

Not about pushing for something concrete right now – opportunity to bring together people with different pieces of the puzzle – let it sit for a while, consider what we may want to do

Good challenging questions arising –

- Do we need to work differently for greater impact?
- How to build wider alliances
- Interconnections between transport, energy, health, water, housing, food, incomes – look for acupuncture points

- Embedding approaches to agricultural production and distribution in real context and lived experiences of most marginalised people in our society
- Relationship between immediate response to critical situation, dynamic and rapidly changing context, broader visioning of where we want to be going (and who shapes that vision?)
- Identifying what is there already and build on and strengthen that

WHAT STOOD OUT – INSIGHTS AND IDEAS ON HOW TO TAKE THE WORK FORWARD

Agroecology as a metaphor – would like to get 13 principles and 10 elements of AE – go back to first principles – poster of those – **principles of AE a good homing point**

Request retreat to discuss Just Transition paper – could get one of the authors to share – extremely refined thinking [Vanessa]

A lot of knowledge and expertise – how do we translate what we know into impactful interventions? Loved a lot of the reframing and bringing in African thought

Separate organic production idea from AE and see those principles applied to different ways of food systems

Generative – thinking about what the next move is – engage with food handlers in NSNP – how to research and apply, but also how do implementers position in relation to research

Multiple lines of evidence brought together – motherload project and many other examples – nature of topic is broad – pull out five pages on key topics and possible agenda that we can also connect with others – forward-looking, evidence backed

Impressed by research work and extent in terms of which already engaged with informal trade in relation to food – often in spaces where people don't know what they are talking about – so great that all research included this part – look forward to something coming out that we can share in informal sector even beyond food – some were already involved in dialogues on Just Transition

Value of space in bringing in diverse people – beginning of conversation – people are feeling urgency to shift – who else to engage with? Some part of transformation – doing a lot, great but changes are slow to come – moment we are in – like during pandemic, it was suspended time, now it is compressed time – repositioning geopolitically – could potentially facilitate more conversations

- Also other intersecting issues, e.g., on grants, where others have been working – been pushing against private sector and industry – government has handed regulation to industry – in some places, food programmes being captured for food imports, asset class – concerned about default role private sector playing in our country – development funds withdrawn, private sector taking over
- What will it mean for us, in relation to food because that is our intersecting issue?

As academics, accustomed to robust debate, so no offence – rich sessions, will take time to digest and have clear sense of discussion – can lend energy in terms of what already busy with in relation to this process – Food Imbizo to support better food governance, mainly at metro work in WC, GP, hopefully also KZN – African Food Systems Transformation Collective (AFSTC) and possible ways that

work can link to this – value in sharing knowledge in broad networks of motivated and expert researchers

Learned a lot especially tools, e.g., India: social dialogue process – community radio advocacy work

- Active in Ghana – not common to have spaces like this where people come together, but radio offers one hour a day opportunity to vent and host makes effort to call relevant people into conversation – different voices – those affected by lack of service delivery and those responsible for delivering – linked to finding solutions
- In terms of output from the meeting, **some kind of living space to connect on some issues as they arise** – e.g. grow indigenous foods, provide to neighbours – have been other people who are doing micro level charity – would like to have space to share what we are doing, discuss

Spaces where we learn, new information, think about research – are all doing important work

- How to move quicker to change this picture of children dying of things that can be easily resolved
- 15 million people, not just a number – during the HIV, it was important to humanise people – cross-learning between knowledge holders and broader civil society and spaces that already exist
- Challenge and discuss including term of AE – take it into existing spaces to build capacity to understand – HEALA work with other organisations – convened NSNP but don't own it, working with others – those spaces will have life when they do and understand these concepts as part of daily work – most challenging is in digestion of all the info and what to resolve – good to connect to everything, but what specific thing can we do, ask for ?

In broader collective discussion, what specifically to ask and expect from responsible people/institutions? Not easy but how to get there – What is AE and what is the ask?

- What is wrong with the world that this responds to? Pull other elements into that
- What is the basic pitch? Simplify, concretise for all to comprehend – ok not to be fully clear right now

Great mix of concrete on the ground reality and wider criticism and ideas and literature, which we need for imagination – need spaces like this, **need common vision for diversity, equality, what could be better but combine with pragmatic engagement with real world** – done that to a large extent in this space – no concrete plan of action, but everyone involved – not wasted info – up to all of us to take forward – could bring in more artists and musicians

Lovely to hear all the work and experience – also intolerance of poverty and the situation – often just figures – trying to wrestle with idea of transformation – erosion of ability to repair – in urban space, how people taught to build collective action – notion of repair and maintenance – takes time

- Food in the city and AE – showing how people trying to repair – social infrastructure which also needs maintenance and repair, also soils, nutrition in the body

Before 1994, growing up in shebeens in Gugulethu, drinking with doctors and lawyers, but today they are all gone – would like these conversations to happen in those spaces – agri-hubs starting, so these could also take place there

Taking deep dive into AE – too afraid to talk last night – visual learner – when I saw the figures, I was absent in my own body. Putting a face to the numbers – making sure this is put forward to right people in way that sparks action – project on sustainable futures in Africa – examples of what is

working in urban areas – could be a way to connect on this . ***Please share case studies with Tinashe Kanosvamhira**

Excited to enact what we learned in this room – must be accountable on the agri-hub – know that farmers are here – would be great to have traders as well – do have some names – very challenged

- Explored many different points of view – we do get stuck in our bubbles, just engaging on what we are comfortable with – AE as framework to think of wider world – opportunity to bounce ideas, etc., to make sense of what we are grappling with – how to enable social dialogue, food councils, multistakeholder processes in our space

Gaps in thinking – happening in real time – ability to keep up – changes happening very quickly

- Need to keep abreast of developments – not sure about plan, e.g. ,for African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) – links to pesticides etc, commercial farms, citrus, etc., – DA – what will US ask and what response? EU will cut development funds, UK, Netherlands already doing it – linked with hegemonic fights between superpowers
- SA member of BRICS – will have profound changes which we need to keep abreast of – what is our role, what is the opportunity ? Need to be concrete – EU tells us what to grow for export – **relationships with EU and US has been toxic** – western imperialism, white supremacy – country is degrading – no ability to give those who are already privileged with water and sanitation – opportunity for other connections with unions
- Big intersecting issue is “informal” economy as alternative – sacrificed people – do have a role to play, we have a stake in the future – dynamism of people in this space doing things – but also to push against industrial agriculture – must clean our vocabulary, e.g., “informal”

Not coming directly from AE but saw where we connect and can bring perspective here – will take a while to process the discussion and where role is – have own sense of what is happening in context of precarity and low income motherhood and Blackhood – even getting perspective that ubuntu thrives in some form in different places – but in low income communities, segregation still a reality

- Bonds of kinship and ubuntu are degrading – taking away that we can frame work around who is waking up worried – can apply that in any context – who is taking burden of worrying from others who should be worrying, who is not worrying at all.