

# Urban agriculture in Johannesburg – livelihoods and informal markets

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26 March 2013

Paper presented at the Conference on 'Land Divided: Land and South African Society in 2013, in Comparative Perspective', University of Cape Town, 24 – 27 March 2013.





## Presentation outline:

- Background to the research
- Informal markets
- Multiple livelihoods
- Policy recommendations

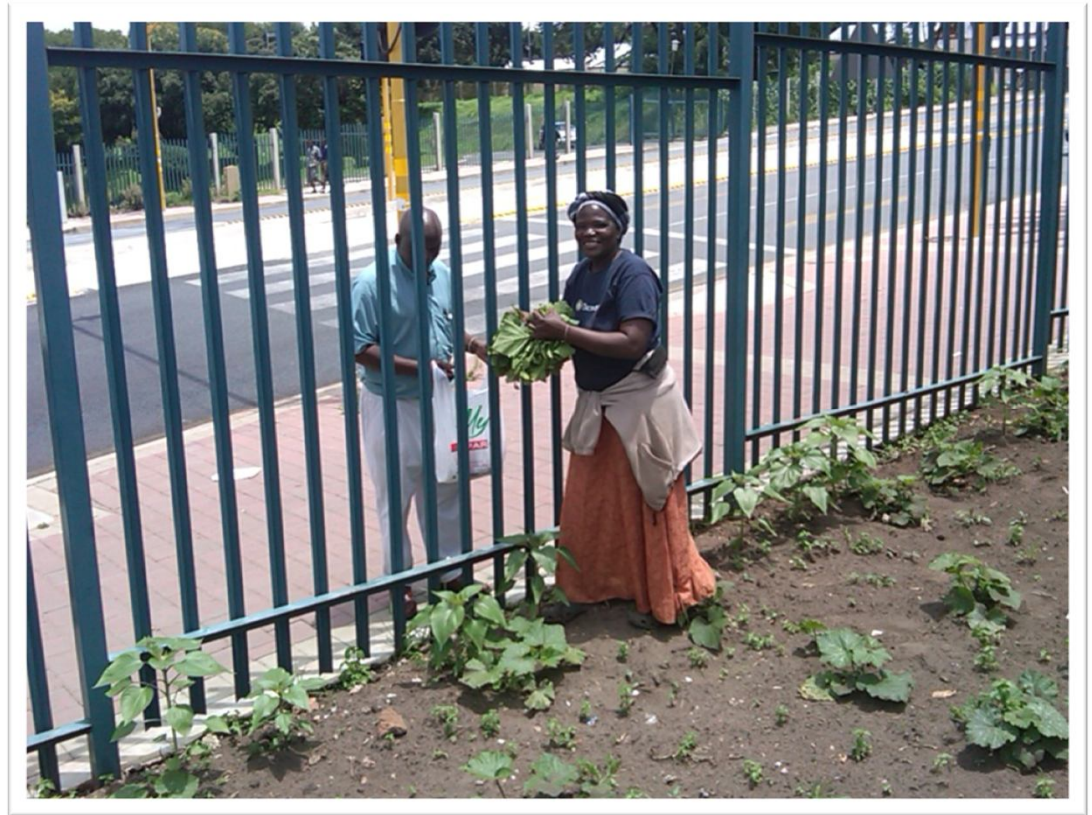


Image 1: Garden-gate sales in inner-city Johannesburg



## Background:

- **Current debates and perspectives:**
  - **City of Cape Town – Urban Agriculture Policy**
    1. To enable people to create commercially sustainable economic opportunities through urban agriculture (jobs and income)
    2. “To enable the poorest of the poor to utilize urban agriculture as an element of their survival strategy (household food security)
  - question the close links that are assumed to exist between food-gardens and higher nutritional levels, especially in Southern Africa” (Webb, 2000:62).
  - Nigel Webb critiques the common conception of urban agriculture noting it to be a “construction of the development discourse designed to meet the needs of the development institutions” ([Webb, 2011:203](#)).



## Background:

In order to contribute to these debates I wish to explore the two themes that emerged from my ethnographic work conducted with two urban ‘community’ projects in the city of Johannesburg.

1. the importance of these projects to the localised informal food economy in their vicinities, and
2. the role the spaces played in the livelihood strategies of the people that worked them

### Data collected through:

- Survey analysis – assets and income
- Participant observation through 12 weeks of labour
- Informal/formal interviews (COJ, key stakeholders)



## Background:

- **My research focus and applicability:**
  - ‘Community projects’ as are conceived by the COJ Human Development Directive
  - They are ‘community spaces’ where cooperative initiatives are encouraged (sewing, baking, farming)
  - They are highly subsidized spaces – land, water, electricity, tools, and seed
- **However:**
  - Support is not consistent – entrepreneurs take control
  - Cooperative model (farming) evolved into an allotment type model
  - Not necessarily the poorest of the poor

Background:

City of Johannesburg



Credit:: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City\\_of\\_Johannesburg\\_Metropolitan\\_Municipality](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_of_Johannesburg_Metropolitan_Municipality)

# Background:

## City of Johannesburg





## Background:

- The research sites:

### Bambanani Food and Herb Agricultural Cooperative

- 0.65htrs Social services facility in inner-city Johannesburg (Region F),
- 6 members and 2 employees,
- Provides a base for a diverse set of livelihoods for 15 people,
- Wide range of produce sold to the informal sector through farm-gate sales,
- Produce also sold through more formal channels, to SPAR and at urban farmers markets,



## Background:

- The research sites:

### Mtla Agricultural Project;

- 0.71 htrs open plots at a Sport and Rec facility in residential area (Region B)
- 4 members
- Garden is one of many livelihoods
- Primarily chou-moellier/kale is grown and sold to hawkers - some subsistence crops
- Grass cuttings used to make compost



## Informal markets:

- Harvesting Red Herb for an “Indian Line”
- Sale of ‘weeds’/Tepe
- Congolese wives insisting on pumpkin leaves/*Chibagwa*
  - “my husband comes home at six and it will be ready then”
  - “I cannot buy this anywhere else”
- Additional market access
  - Participatory Guarantee System (PGSSA) approved



## Informal markets:

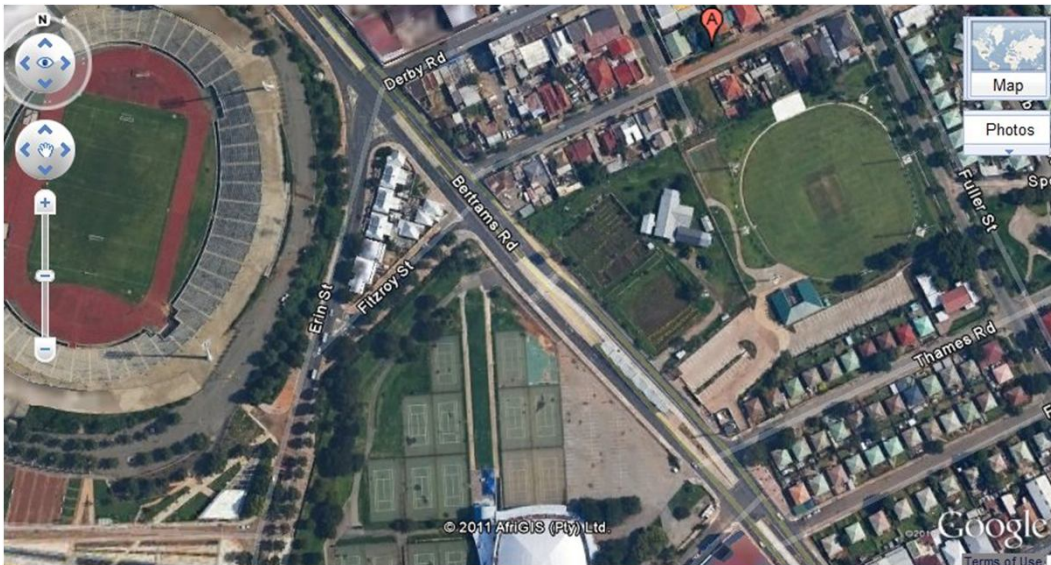
- Sells primarily chou-moellier/kale to hawkers





## Multiple livelihoods:

- Space used for value adding (but not to agricultural products)
  - Cooking, hawking, car guard for sporting events
  - “If it was not for my cooking, I’d leave the garden”
- “This is what we do when we don’t have a piece-job”







## Policy recommendations:

**For local government, specifically for the COJ Human Development Directorate:**

1. 'Community gardens' should be informal market oriented and not formal market
2. Project members should be permitted to use the space as a component of their multi-faceted livelihoods
3. Government's support personnel should provide a facilitation service for these projects where they are tasked to create links with local agencies and business for resource acquisition and distribution.

## Conclusions:

- enhanced urban livelihood support,
- access to locally produced and ‘culturally’ varied food, and
- improved management of urban resources – urban ‘waste’ products (storm water, garden refuse).





Thank you