

JULY 2023

Creating more resilient and equitable urban food systems in Southern Africa

A TOOLKIT FOR ZAMBIAN POLICYMAKERS AND URBAN PLANNERS



Many people living in Zambian cities and towns experience food insecurity. Food insecurity occurs when people do not have enough affordable and nutritious food to meet their daily needs for an active and healthy life.

To better understand the challenges of food insecurity in Zambia's small to medium-sized urban areas, a team of researchers from the Ministry of Agriculture - Zambia Agricultural Research Institute and the University of Arizona (USA) conducted household surveys in 14 Zambian cities in 2019, 2020, and 2021.



Key survey findings

A diverse urban food system that enables appropriately affordable and nutritious food options for different types of households can help reduce food insecurity.



Open air markets, street vendors, and local shops were important sources of food for all households, especially among lower income households.



Urban agriculture was also practiced by 40 percent of all households in 2019. In 2020, during the COVID pandemic, this figure increased to 50 percent of all households and remained at a similar level at 48 percent in 2022. However, many households still face challenges with urban agriculture, such as not having the right inputs, enough water, or sufficient access to land.



Some households obtain food from their own family farms or from relatives and friends in the rural areas.



Urban food systems also differ city to city, and have varying responses to shocks. During COVID lockdowns in 2020, household visits to open air markets decreased significantly from 2019 in some cities, while visits to street vendors increased in other cities. Some cities did not see significant changes in open air market visits. The unique strengths and vulnerabilities of each city, including how decision makers support cities in response to shocks, can affect how households respond to food insecurity challenges.

To address these challenges, it is important to consider how different policies and actions can help to ensure access to safe, nutritious, affordable, and culturally appropriate food for all urban residents, both now and in the future.

What actions can you take to promote resilient and equitable urban food systems in Zambia?

1 Learn more about the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). The CDF recently increased to K28.3 million per constituency in the 2023 National budget to account for inclusive development. The CDF can support government councils to implement policies and projects that improve urban food systems in Zambia.

2 Consider the important role of street vending and urban agriculture. With investment and policy planning, street vending and urban agriculture may become important pillars in a resilient and equitable urban food system.



3 Learn more about local policies.

- ▶ Markets and Bus Station Act (can help to establish new markets and improve the management of existing markets)
- ▶ Urban Development Policy (can ensure that new urban residential developments include zoning for markets and retail shops)
- ▶ Urban Energy Policy (can improve access to energy for cooking, lighting, and refrigeration in households and markets)

4 Learn more about national policies. These include: National Food and Nutrition Policy, National Agriculture Policy, National Lands Policy, Food Safety Act, National Social Protection Policy, National Transport Policy, National Climate Change Policy, and National Adaptation Plan for Climate Change.

This activity was supported by US National Science Foundation Award 1924309

