

Workshop Minutes
Urban Agriculture and Urban Gardening
at the Planet Diversity Congress
Bonn, 15th June 2008

Many thanks to all the participants, to Christa Müller and Michael Abelman for the presentations and to Julia for translations.

The Workshop started with three input presentations held by Michael Abelman, Christa Müller and Severin Halder

Then we (explicitly or implicitly) discussed the following questions:

What are the main differences, commons and needs regarding UA/UG practices resulting from the presentations? What are our own experiences with existing networks on UA/UG?

What kind of networks already exist?

What is different and special about the new network we want to build? Which of our expectations and needs are not yet met by any existing network (we know)?

Which steps are necessary for the creation (or improvement) of a network?

What is going to be implemented, how, by whom, when, where,...?

As commons of the networks we know we found the following items:

- fight against hunger
- social factor
- growing awareness
- more value to food
- food safety and quality
- not organized gardens worldwide

- negative perception of the rural
- survival.

As differences of existing networks we discussed the following topics:

- level of organization
- more organization in the “global north”
- communication with authorities
- cities of the north are more urban
- post modern positive perception of the rural
- privileged or not.

During a quite open discussion about urban agriculture/ urban gardening experiences of the workshop participants the following topics of interest and questions were mentioned:

- soil quality
- food security, food quality, food sovereignty
- urban agriculture as a result of material/ social/ cultural needs

What does us drive to grow food in urban settings?

Small farmers might be the survivors of global climate change.

How can people answer (practical) questions on urban agriculture/ urban gardening themselves? (If they manage to find their own answers, they are more likely to fit to emic views and possibilities and to be implemented successfully.) One proposition was to use your local library for information! (If there isn't one, create one!)

A consideration on the use and praxis of urban agriculture: Look at your community and think about what would be needed if tomorrow there wouldn't be any food be brought from far away places. What would be the actual practical steps?

How do we secure the existence of a network that depends mainly on one charismatic person? (Like the one in Portugal Nuno reported about.)

How could people without (regular) internet connection be included into the network's communication structures?

Who would like to organize an international congress about UA/UG? (Stiftung Interkultur is planning a national congress about UA/UG in Germany.)

From the discussion the workshop participants came to the conclusion that an international network forum like a mailing list or a blog could be of good use in order to bundle information and link existing networks as a kind of meta network.

As “common denominators” and aims of such a blog/ network we put down:

- food sovereignty
- information exchange and practical support: e.g. information about actual practical steps for autonomy for your community
- lobby
- support, solidarity and resistance: e.g. blog/ mailing list for urgent action calls, as when a garden is threatened to be destroyed
- a collection of weblinks and events

We decided the following practical steps:

Julia will send the email list to all participants.

Nuno and Tania will create a blog and send an invitation to register to the blog to all participants.

Michael will send the link to the Dutch website that serves for exchange about UA projects all over the world.

Someone will add the link to the Ela von der Haidens list of existing networks.

If there is anything to add, please, feel free to open a thread on these minutes. Take them as inspiration to open discussions on any of the topics and questions mentioned or anything else related. Let the blog live! And feel free to invite other friends and practitioners of urban agriculture and urban gardening in order to make our network grow!