



Conclusions

UrbanFood^{Plus} team.

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The diversity of studies under the UrbanFood^{Plus} project showed a dynamic picture of urban food systems in rapidly growing West African cities. Of the four cities studied (Bamako, Barmenda, Ouagadougou and Tamale) this publication draws in most parts on the results of the last two, where the research started the earliest and the data are already available. In Tamale and Ouagadougou, urban food systems are shaped by the co-existence of contemporary developments and historical patterns. For instance, the livestock sector in Ouagadougou has been modernized through private investments to meet the growing urban demand for dairy products. On the other hand, traditional structures prevail, such as the traditional periodic market system in Tamale's hinterland, a system that is integrated into a diverse food distribution system influenced by local and global food sources. In other cases, traditional systems collide with new developments, creating new conflicts and

challenges. For instance, the traditional customary land tenure system has been increasingly undermined by valuable land markets and related financial incentives when selling the land to private developers.

The urban agricultural system as part of the urban landscape is also influenced by urban planning, land tenure and past urban development, demonstrated, for instance, by visible backyard farms and consequent marketing opportunities for women in Tamale, which are less developed in Ouagadougou. Growing urban demand, also for 'modern' urban food, can boost the production of particular commodities, like exotic vegetables, rice and milk products, provide employment and increase incomes. Intensifying crop production, by improved management practices and the use of new technologies with locally available materials, is therefore key to urban farmers making best use of small plots. Health risks caused by polluted water or the

excessive use of pesticides can be minimized by on- and off-farm water treatment and safe post-harvest food handling. An increasing challenge for urban food systems are climate change-related events, such as flooding or droughts which can affect common urban food supply chains. Adaptation measures by traders (alternative (short) supply channels) as well as authorities (storage) are needed.

As city development interacts with urban food systems, the path for more sustainable and resilient future food systems can be laid at the city level today, for instance by improving access to markets, supporting inner-urban production and creating enabling environments for food safety measures.

Twelve key messages from the UrbanFood^{plus} project which summarize major conclusions of the research studies are presented on page 2 and 3 of this publication.

Food market in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

