Urban Food Systems Governance

Engaging urban food governance in inclusive and transparent ways, enhancing and valorizing agency and developing methods for co-produced food sensitive planning

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THE CHALLENGE
Cities remain embedded in traditional hierarchical governmental structures. The challenge is how to create opportunities for other voices such as civil society, particularly if traditional management structures, policies and systems remain in place. Diverse voices form part of a wider conceptualisation of governance, and represent a form of bottom-up, contextually specific governance.

Urban governance is “The many ways individuals and institutions, public and private, plan and manage the common affairs of the city. It is a continuing process through which conflicting or diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action can be taken. It includes formal institutions as well as informal arrangements and the social capital of citizens.” (UN-Habitat, 2002, p.14)

WHY DO WE DO THIS?
• We have to be part of the discussion.
• Cities are unjust, unhealthy & uninclusive.
• Act through co-learning, co-governing & co-developing.
• We want to share OUII stories, not read these in academic papers.

FOOD SENSITIVE PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN (FSPUD)
Food-sensitive planning and urban design engages the current urban challenge as one where cities are facing unprecedented change, across multiple governance domains.

These include the converging and mutually compounding threats of climate change, vulnerability to peak oil, loss of land and resource scarcity, but sought to respond to these through the concept and principles embedded within the aligned practices of urban planning and governance.

A PROPOSED APPROACH
The history of both urban systems and food systems in Africa mean that current governance processes are ill-equipped to engage the dual challenge of rapid urbanisation and negative urban food system outcomes.

Collective action and time: “Each consortium contributed to the inclusive, integrated development plan: 1. Collecting and analyzing data 2. Consulting the community - seeking feedback on proposals 3. Developing solutions that integrated community knowledge and aspirations with due consideration for context.”

What is Agency? Agency as a temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past, but also oriented toward the future and toward the present. Contexts of action are also temporal as well as relational fields — multiple, overlapping ways of ordering in which social actors assume different simultaneous agentic orientations.

The entire process gave them insights that they would use to enhance the efficiency of future planning processes.” Muungano Alliance

FACT: "Where’s the government? Where are our ward councillors? What they forget was to invite us, we were not offered a seat at the table – a lot of conversations and dialogue was happening about and around us but without us."