

Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE) - Peer-learning week in Kenya Urban food systems in action - Perspectives from 10 cities in Bangladesh, Kenya, Rwanda, and Senegal

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Peer learning concept

The Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE) Project works on urban food systems with six “front-runner” secondary cities – two each in the involved countries of Bangladesh, Kenya and Rwanda. Secondary cities are typically of a size where food system transformation is considered more feasible, as argued in this NICE supported publication: [FSS Brief Secondary Cities.pdf \(sc-fss2021.org\)](https://www.fss2021.org).

In each of these cities, it is the local government, municipality or city corporation that is the main project partner and have identified focal points from the city architecture that engage in the peer learning process. The process is facilitated by the World Food System Centre (WFSC) and the AgroEcosystem group at ETH-Zürich, which has a pre-existing collaboration with the FAO Headquarters.

From virtual to face to face

After several online peer learning events between all 6 NICE cities from all countries, a face to face peer learning event was organised in Kenya 11-17 February 2023.

The programme was agreed between the city leadership, WFSC & AE-group at ETH, and FAO HQ, and made the link to the [FAO Green Cities Initiative](#) that works in Kenya in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. The opportunity was taken to involve the city of Bambilor from Senegal which is also part of the Green Cities Initiative. Jointly with officials from all these cities, national partners from the Ministries of Education, Health and Agriculture, FAO Kenyan representative, and participation of the Swiss Embassy in Nairobi, the peer learning event involved visits to Busia and Nairobi.

The topics of focus included food system governance and facilitating multisectoral engagement from nutrition, health and agriculture, as well as from civil society and local businesses involved in food production, processing and sales. Here the NICE cities learnt in particular from Kisumu, Mombasa, Nairobi and Bambilor about their food city charters, and anchoring of food system platforms through local legislation and by-laws.

Attention was given to the channelling of nutritious food to the public procurement system which Busia city has been successfully doing with its school feeding programme, to the whole question of introducing agroecological transition, and to the interlinkages between demand and supply, and how this can be best achieved.

When working with secondary cities, the farming systems involves the food shed, while many consumers are based in the urban/peri-urban centres, and it was reflected how demand work needs to include consumers more broadly, through social activations, while also involving farmers, and more traditional multipliers like schools, health facilities (clinics) and community nutrition officers. The cities are also cognisant that many urban and peri urban inhabitants are constrained in their consumer choices by lack resources, triggering the attention given to the public procurement system, and also examining other support modalities like small grants.

Poster gallery

The cities involved all presented the different ways they are working on urban food systems through a poster.



Ms Zeitunna Tullu from Swiss Embassy in Nairobi



Elizabeth Imbo – NICE project Manager Kenya



Coumbaly Diaw and Thierno Diop – Senegal



Participants group photo



Gilles Martin from FAO- Presenting on the Green Cities Initiative virtually



Rwanda team making their poster presentation



Bangladesh teams making a presentation of NICE food

Outlook and next steps

Going forward, the NICE project will continue its peer learning concept, through a mix of virtual and face to face meetings. It is also planned to continue the fruitful exchange with FAO at country level and with the Green City Initiative. As the NICE city focal points gain confidence, they will start to contribute to city networks at national and multilateral levels (like Milan Pact). The two cities involved in Rwanda (Rusizi and Rubavu) are part of a national urban agriculture city network where experience sharing has already begun.

Ultimately, the peer learning is closely linked with the question of scale up and the NICE project is starting to document its learnings in a synthetic manner for sharing with other cities that will be coming on board within the initial 3 countries, and ultimately beyond.

For more information on the NICE project see our website: <https://nice-nutrition.ch> and recently published protocol paper: <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1081535>