

As a result of this advocacy effort, significant improvements are now being recorded in the Institutional support for UPA in the city. Specifically, the Forum on UPA has been granted special audience with State Government and their support for future interventions promised.

In addition, state government resources such as local transportation were released for the use of the Forum. The Paramount Ruler of the largest city in West Africa, the Olubadan of Ibadan also warmly received the advocacy team and promised continued support for UPA activities in the 11 local government areas under his jurisdiction.

The results of these efforts are not limited to technical support. All the 6 key institutions responsible for different components of the pilot project also released 50% counterpart funds for the implementation of the project. In addition, they also allocated human resources in terms of personnel time and expertise from 11 Institutions and other UPA private practitioners to project activities.

However, these results have not been achieved without daunting challenges. Some of these include administrative bureaucracy especially for government establishments as well as individual vested interests on locations and target beneficiaries. However, innovative ideas and action by the UPA Desk Officers in respective Institutions as well as the Advocacy Team members were adopted to minimize these challenges.

The existing positive disposition to urban agriculture can be exploited to facilitate achieving increased counterpart contributions, adoption of the city strategic agenda as well as promoting up-scaling of the process in Nigeria.

and soil compaction, all of which contribute to low soil fertility and productivity.

In contrast to the factors listed above, the following practices could improve and sustain soil fertility and guarantee higher crop productivity:

- Use of organic fertilizer (composted animal and plant materials)
- Use of leguminous plants such as Mucuna as cover crops in periods of fallow
- Mixed cropping: for example, planting of Cowpea and Yam, Melon and Cassava on the same plot
- Mulching
- Bush fallowing over a long period (where pressure on land is low)
- Avoiding over-grazing on agricultural lands by animals
- Zero or minimum tillage.



Some officials from IAP inspecting the soil at an urban farming site (Photo by IUPAP)

Soil Protection: A duty for all

Soil is a natural gift of nature. It contains macro and micro nutrients, which are crucial for successful and profitable crop production. However, the efficient and effective use of these nutrients by field crops are determined by the various activities carried out by farmers. These activities either improve soil fertility or lead to a deterioration of the natural constituents of the soil.

Some farming activities with negative impacts on the soil are:

- Use of inorganic fertilizer
- Use of tractor for soil tillage on heavy soils
- Over-grazing of animals on a piece of land
- Cultivation of farmland over a long period without shifting to another area.

These factors either lead to destruction of soil organic matter, excessive exposure of soil to direct sunlight

The condition of the soil is therefore a major resource base and indispensable in agricultural development and food production. It is therefore, the duty of all to effectively protect the soil and its nutrients.

Implementation of Pilot Projects in dissemination cities

The implementation of the RUAFF-CFF II project focused on six cities namely Accra, Cape Coast, and Tamale in Ghana in the Anglophone West African region, Freetown in Sierra Leone as well as Ibadan and Akure in Nigeria. Multi-stakeholder platforms were established in three pilot cities - Accra (Ghana), Freetown (Sierra Leone) and Ibadan (Nigeria), while the remaining three cities, also known as dissemination cities, participated in capacity building activities. These cities were selected through a competitive grant scheme to implement UA pilot projects leading to exchange of results and experiences with other cities.