



URBAN-RURAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR FOOD SECURITY AND VIBRANT MARKETS

The Partnership The Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) Initiative - people shaping their sustainable futures.

The Goal To initiate and promote a "Regions Feeding Cities" approach between communities and their country sides, highlighting the role of cities as prominent actors in achieving food security and vibrant markets.

The Result In many parts of the world, most rural people are relatively disadvantaged and lack adequate opportunities to exchange information. The SARD initiative is encouraging the exchange of information between people to improve their lives, and achieve sustainable agriculture and rural development.

The Urban-Rural Partnership is a new thematic area of the SARD initiative that evolved from the recent food crisis. Cities have emerged as important actors for agricultural markets, food security, green jobs and ecosystems services. New opportunities and revitalized markets have emerged that encourage public procurement of food.

How they did it The SARD initiative is a civil society-led umbrella framework that engages civil society, governments and intergovernmental organizations to achieve sustainable development goals. The initiative supports pilot efforts to build the capacity of rural communities, disadvantaged groups and other stakeholders to improve access to resources such as genetic, technological, land, water, markets, and information. The SARD initiative helps to promote wider access to, use of, and benefits from existing resources.

The SARD initiative collaborated with major groups, governments, and UN agencies to showcase the benefits of urban-rural partnerships. Their aim is to strengthen urban-rural partnerships that will benefit underserved stakeholders, women, smallholder farmers, agricultural workers, and indigenous people.

Outlook Today we face a number of inter-related crises that need to be addressed simultaneously - climate change, the financial crisis and the food crisis. These crises, together with the challenges of population growth, highlight the need for new strategies to sustain food security, and conserve natural resources. Cities are emerging as important actors in devising more resilient and predictable public food strategies.

In Canada, for example, the Toronto Food Policy Council established an urban-rural policy in 1992 that aimed to bridge the gap between producers and consumers of food. The city established the "Field to Table" program which today provides affordable, locally grown food to 15,000 people each month.

Background The presence of sustainable agriculture in and around cities has great benefits for ecosystems, wildlife habitat, higher quality water, and decreased run-off and water conservation. Most importantly, growing food locally impacts on the environmental costs of transporting food long distances.

The SARD Initiative was launched in Johannesburg at a series of side events during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002. Representatives from 65 Governments, 5 UN agencies, 80 civil society organizations, and media and consumer interest groups, participated and expressed interest in being involved in the initiative.

For more information on the SARD Partnership see:

<http://webapps01.un.org/dsd/partnerships/public/partnerships/28.html>

For more information on the CSD 17 Partnerships Fair see:

http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/dsd_aofw_par/par_csdfair17.shtml

