



TRANSFORMING LAND TRANSFORMING LIVES

GREENING INNOVATION
AND URBAN AGRICULTURE
IN THE CONTEXT OF
FORCED DISPLACEMENT



“I dream that I will be able to go back to my country but while I am living here I want to improve my situation, especially by growing plants because plants are alive for everybody.”

About us

At the Lemon Tree Trust, we aim to mainstream urban agriculture and greening innovation in humanitarian programmes for people that have been forcibly displaced into camps and urban areas.

These practices create new and unrealised potentials, which brings dignity, empowerment and sovereignty for those living in under-resourced communities, such as refugee camps, and displaced people living in urban areas.

Contact us

If you would like to join us on our ‘greening’ journey, offer your expertise, form a partnership between your organisation and the LTT, so we jointly achieve our aims, or just access more information, then please visit our website at www.lemontreustrust.org

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At the **Lemon Tree Trust**, we believe that greening innovation and urban agriculture are essential to making refugee camps healthier, greener and more productive spaces. From years of working with refugees from across the world, we know that camp greening and supporting refugees to produce their own food works. Even in crisis, refugees often improve their homes and livelihoods through gardening or agriculture, from home gardens and composting to keeping rabbits and chickens.

From our experience, greening innovation and urban agriculture are often the work of individuals, unsupported by UN agencies or NGOs. We argue that greening innovation and urban agriculture should be mainstreamed at all stages when designing, implementing and sustaining the accidental city – the refugee camp or what may become future congested and overcrowded urban areas. Simple technology and waste recovery make greening innovation and urban agriculture cost effective and easily replicable, giving potential in a range of sustainable responses to the refugee crisis. And on a human level, the practices represent much of what’s important in all our lives: an attractive, clean environment; fresh, nutritious food; the chance to become self-reliant; and a place we can call home.



LEMON TREE TRUST



▲ Poorly managed surface waters can be converted into green lush spaces



▲ Some compost and seeds, with a little greywater is all it takes to start a home garden

Greening innovation and urban agriculture explained

Today, over 60 million people are living under harsh conditions due to forced displacement. In the face of this unprecedented challenge, we need bold visions, inclusive leadership, deep understanding, ambitious plans and decisive action to find sustainable solutions. Greening innovation and urban agriculture can be an instrumental part of this enlightening process.

Greening innovation makes landscapes and living spaces ecologically resilient and sustainable. It uses environmentally friendly, climate-smart technologies and practices to grow food, plant trees, produce energy, and convert wastes into resources using productive closed-loop systems that build rather than exploit their natural resources base.

Urban agriculture should be integrated into urban ecosystems, with food sovereignty, environmental justice and resilience as the end goals.

Together, greening innovation and urban agriculture can bring dignity and empowerment to refugee communities. Simple technologies and waste recovery make these techniques cost effective and replicable. For example, using innovative approaches like sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS), we can transform open areas plagued with stagnant surface waters into green lush spaces.

“My motivation for starting gardening here is that it’s living within me, moving in my blood. Wherever I go, I don’t feel comfortable until I plant something and take care of it.”

▼ Even small food gardens increase food security



Mainstreaming greening innovation and urban agriculture

Greening innovation and urban agriculture can bring enormous benefits to refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities, as well as to those with a duty of care.

Existing guidelines, frameworks and research papers on integrating innovative natural resource-based sustainable livelihoods into refugee camp planning and design are seldom applied.

Camps can no longer be planned around the grid system consisting of unsustainable linear models of inputted resources and discharged waste flows.

Significant changes are still required before greening innovation and urban agriculture are adopted more widely as part of the solution to the forced displacement crisis.

Even where the permanence of refugee camps has not been conceded, the closed-loop model can still be developed and greening innovation and small-scale food production can still be supported.