



ARUSHA, TANZANIA

NOURISHING FOOD PATHWAYS FOR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

At the local level, the Nourishing Food Pathways programme strives to facilitate inclusive food systems governance and mobilise local agency to transform urban food environments, advancing access to food security and safe, healthy diets for all.

This Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition's (GAIN) pathways initiative is active in the intermediary cities of Arusha (Tanzania), Pemba (Mozambique), and Bogor (Indonesia).



THE CHALLENGE

Arusha city-region, located near the Tanzanian and Kenyan border, is experiencing rapid population growth as more and more people move into the city and families grow. The city is youthful with 41% of the population aged 15 years and younger and faces economic challenges for the more than half (55%) of the population who are of working age.¹ While Arusha is closely connected with local food production from within the city and surrounding rural region, urban residents access to sufficient food and safe, healthy diets is a challenge.²

This challenge is linked to, amongst many factors, the lack of affordable foods, and the poor quality of urban food markets in terms of infrastructure, uninterrupted provision of basic WASH services, food hygiene and safety practices, organic food waste management and inclusive food systems governance.³ Urban planning for market access for transporters, vendors and consumers is a further challenge which is amplified in the rainy seasons.

THE INTERVENTION

Food markets, in Arusha are microcosms of the city's food environment, connecting long, cross-border and local food value chains and registered and unregistered vendors with urban consumers, on a daily basis. They are hubs of nourishment, livelihoods and local economic development, and community relations.

GAIN works together with Arusha's city and regional government leaders and market leaders, including women vendor group representatives, from Kilombero Market. This market is the second-largest public market in Arusha, where a variety of produce from the food categories: fruits and vegetables, meat, grains, and dairy, are sold, largely by women vendors, aged 25 years and older.⁴ GAIN, together with these leaders, **identify** stakeholders, key partners like the development organisation, Rikolto and the ICLEI.Africa coordinated AfriFoodLinks initiative, urban food policies and governance mechanisms, effectively **include** vulnerable voices, and have established and begun fully implementing a multistakeholder pathways platform that facilitates local agency, decision making and inclusive food systems governance.

¹ The United Republic of Tanzania (URT), Ministry of Finance, Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics, & President's Office - Finance and Planning, Office of the Chief Government Statistician, Zanzibar. (2024). The 2022 Population and Housing Census: Arusha Region Basic Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile Report. Tanzania.

² Msuya, J. (2024). State of City Food System report, Arusha, Peoples Republic of Tanzania, AfriFOODlinks Project, Cape Town South Africa.

³ Abwe, F. G. (2020). Local Public Markets: the empirical evidence on their quantity and quality in Arusha, Tanzania.

⁴ GAIN (2024). ONENutrition workshop report: Arusha (Tanzania) [Unpublished report]

THE IMPACT

In Arusha, the city government and market multistakeholder pathways platform has initially prioritized localizing Tanzania's national food systems pathway, to "ensure nutritious, healthy and safe food diets for all". Key to mobilising local agency and inclusive food systems governance with respect to this priority pathway, has been to: gather and share different forms of knowledge about the food system; review market governance structures and functions; appraise the city government's interpretation, as a signatory city, of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact framework; capacitate leadership with knowledge about ONENutrition and operationalisation of gender and social inclusion in food systems governance; and track platform agendas.⁵

3 Key Takeaways:



Arusha's pathways platform established and operationalized, involving leaders from city and regional government, Kilombero market committee and market women vendors representatives. 75% of platform participants strongly agreed, and 25% agreed that their agenda items were heard in the September 2025 meeting.⁶



Training, city-to-city and expert engagement through the GAIN and ICLEI Global Secretariat cities and markets community, and other efforts are informing how to mainstream gender and social intersectionality in Arusha's food systems governance. In July 2025, Arusha's presentation on their efforts to the city-markets ICLEI-GAIN community was well received.



Deliberations in progress to link the pathways platform to other activities in Arusha as led by Rikolto and within the AfriFOODLinks project.



WAY FORWARD

Increasing effective agency and inclusive governance, supported by GAIN's on-going technical contributions, e.g., ONENutrition and gender trainings, and co-facilitation of the Arusha pathways platform. This includes on-going feedback between platform meetings, agenda action tracking in the routines of daily government and market life and connecting activities in Arusha that are supported by partners, like Rikolto, and the AfriFOODLinks project.



RECOMMENDED CITATION

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⁵ Trevenen-Jones, A., Greenwood, M., Muketha, M., & Kebenei, M. (2025). Empowered local agency, infrastructure investment, and governance: a model and case for traditional food markets. Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). Working Paper #49. Geneva, Switzerland. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36072/wp.49>

⁶ GAIN. (2025). Second pathway platform meeting report: Arusha, Tanzania [Unpublished report]