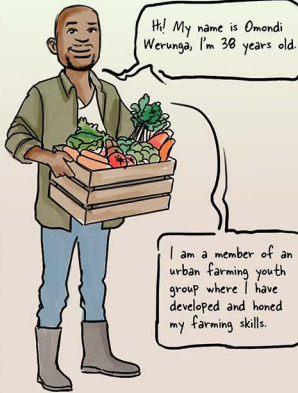


A day in the life of a young urban farmer in 2050

This is me and my lovely family. My wife and our three children.



Hi! My name is Omondi Werunga, I'm 38 years old.

I am a member of an urban farming youth group where I have developed and honed my farming skills.



I live in Mukuru kwa Ruben. It used to be a slum but it was upgraded a few years ago to what you see today. The houses have flat roofs with solar panels to encourage rooftop farming.
The first thing I do when I get out of bed is take a shower.



Every morning I prepare breakfast. We adhere to a strict balanced diet, often incorporating local starches, such as arrow roots or sweet potatoes, and traditional vegetables from the farm and the local market into our meals. Sometimes, we have porridge made out of millet flour or a mix of amaranth and maize flour. This is especially good when I have a heavy day at the farm.

My wife prepares the children for school, allowing us to save time during our morning routine.



There is a very high demand for organic food from the community. Everyone wants to be healthy and here in Nairobi we only do organic urban farming. This is unlike when I was growing up when the food we ate in our household came from rural areas, and the Newspaper dailies always carried stories about heavily contaminated food that had harmful agricultural chemicals. Many worried about the safety of our diets but did not know there was a possibility of growing safe foods in Nairobi given the limited land, and the level of environmental degradation.

My hope for the day is that I am able to accomplish my daily goals, a constant being to improve access to quality food for my clients and my community.

After seeing off my children to school, I normally walk to my office- the farm. I prefer to walk to work. The walk forms my daily exercise and meditation time.

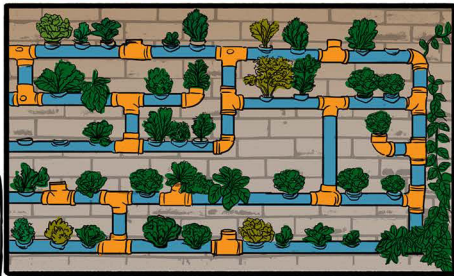


I use this time to plan my day, especially thinking through the duty rotations which differ depending on the cropping season.

When it rains I drop off my kids in my Solar Powered Tuk_Tuk. I also use it to make Vegetable deliveries later on in the day. The main challenge we face is keeping up with new technology that can provide us better yields. There are different apps and smart-tools available on the market all of which promise great yields at lowest cost.



Owing to limited space we have come up with some unique ideas (wall aquaponics). We use the farm structure walls to plant local green leafy vegetables that are very popular in our community.



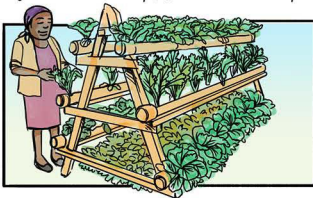
We also raise catfish. We recycle the outlet water from the fish pond to irrigate the gardens.



We have 200 chicken for eggs and meat



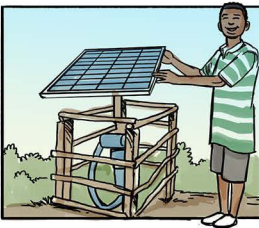
We have a solar-powered indoor farm where we plant onions, tomatoes, coriander, capsicum and traditional vegetables that are very popular in our community.



We maximize on the space through the use of innovative technology. We use the vertical farm design and planting techniques such as hydroponics, aquaponics and aeroponics, allowing us to produce different products at different levels of the farm. We use regenerative techniques to conserve and promote the wellbeing of the environment.



We have constant water supply in the farm thanks to a small solar-powered water pump

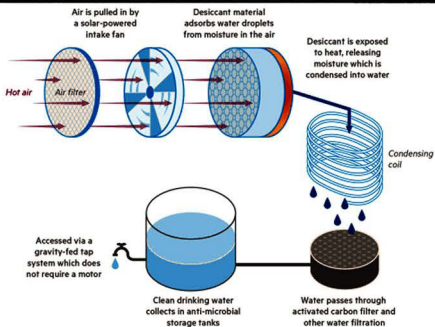


The chicken and rabbit droppings are used as organic manure for the farm.



In addition to the stream, we use water harvested from air through the Majik System innovation to irrigate the crops on the farm. Majik was introduced to the community a few years ago to provide the community with constant access to clean water.

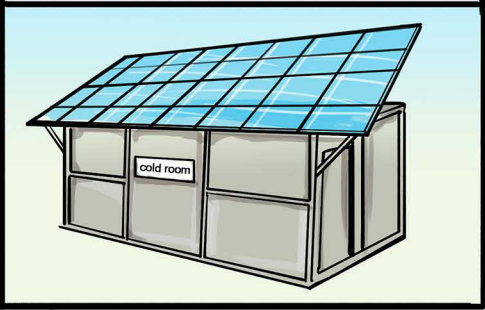
Large tanks are used to store rainwater for use during the dry season.



Once a month we have children from the local school farming clubs come to the farm to learn how we work. We helped the neighboring schools to establish farms where they grow different fruit trees to help augment their diets.



Two large solar-powered cold containers are used to store and preserve our farm produce, separating animal from plant produce.



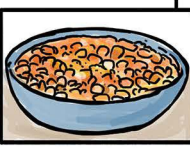
Managing the farm is not an easy task. We are a group of ten with three members being formally employed by the project. They are allied to the community center.



The work also serves as a training opportunity for the youth.



My team and I usually carry our lunch to work but sometimes we like to order food from the local kibanda (kiosk). Because of the work we do, our food is normally hearty and heavy on starch. We usually have usali (a cake-like mixture made with maize or millet flour) or cooked arrowroots, bananas or githeri. We always add vegetables and some source of protein from our farm to the meal.



On my way home, I deliver produce to roadside vegetable vendors using my Tuk-Tuk. People can also buy the produce on their way home.

1. Orders are made using a mobile app which allows them to indicate type, quantity and preferred date of delivery for various food items.



2. The orders are carefully packed in boxes that are made out of recycled materials

3. The orders can be delivered at a small fee or the customer can pick them up from our farm.

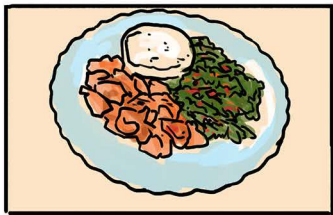
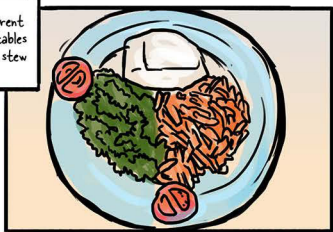


4. Happy Customer

We also sell vegetables to schools, especially those that serve as feeding centers for vulnerable children in our community. They like our produce as it is farm fresh.



For dinner, my family eats food from the farm. Thanks to technology, we are able to have different food crops available all-year round. So if we have sukuma wiki (collard greens) or indigenous vegetables in the farm, we will eat them with ugali and stewed catfish. About twice a week, we eat chicken stew with our evening meal.



Before I go to bed, I think about the progress I have made on the farm and where to sell my produce. I also think about the future I want to build for my young family. I would like my children to enjoy a good education, live in a good home and have a balanced diet every day, from the proceeds of the work of my hands.

My thoughts make me proud that I am a bread winner for my family but they also scare me. I worry about some of the shocks that could reverse the progress we have made as a family. In Kenya, they often say that the middle-class is one chronic illness away from poverty. My family can be plunged into poverty by a pest invasion, a bad debt, post-harvest losses, water shortages, this keeps me awake at times.



When I was growing up, there was a very serious pandemic called COVID-19. It paralysed everything! My father, who used to work in a factory near the slum where our house was, could no longer work for months as the factory was closed.

My mother used to work as a domestic worker in a nearby upmarket area but due to the crisis and the containment measures like social distancing she lost her job.

We were not doing any urban farming then and we depended on purchased food transported from the countryside. Due to a lockdown imposed on the city, there was limited flow of food, and the prices shot up all while we had no money.

Many days we slept hungry.

Today I am less worried though because I feel we are more prepared for such a crisis than when I was growing up. Even if I had no job my family would not go hungry, and my community would access food more easily as we are more prepared to tackle challenges.

