



Handbook

# CREATING SPACE FOR SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS IN URBAN COMMUNITIES

Practical approaches and examples for cities



Based on experiences from  
URBACT II Thematic network  
Sustainable Food in Urban Communities (2012-2015)

Connecting cities  
Building successes





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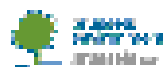
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# A WORD FROM THE LEAD PARTNER

by Stephanie Mantell, Brussels Environment  
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Brussels Environment initiated the URBACT Thematic Network “**Sustainable Food in Urban Communities**” (2012-2015) to develop low-carbon and resource-efficient urban food systems, joining efforts and thinking with other cities in Europe, namely Amersfoort (NL), Athens (GR), Bristol (UK), Messina (IT), Gothenburg (SE), Lyon (FR), Ourense (ES), Vaslui (RO), and Oslo (NO).

The environmental impact of food is one of the drivers of cities’ growing interest in the topic and a primary concern for us as environment administration. Indeed, according to the FAO, **the food sector alone accounts for over 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions** worldwide. Moreover, around 1/3 of the food produced for human consumption is wasted or lost. Making our urban food systems more sustainable can thus yield major benefits in terms of carbon intensity and resource efficiency. It involves notably the use of local and seasonal products (short supply chains), improving diets (reducing the share of animal protein and processed foods), using products that meet

environmental and sustainability criteria (certification), promoting self-production (fruit & vegetable gardens, use of derelict lands), and preventing waste (food and its packaging).

The **Brussels Capital Region** has substantial experience in sustainable food research and actions and the **political commitment is to go further and learn from others**, for instance, to work both on supply and on perceptions of the general public towards sustainable food choices among audiences not yet reached, finding new approaches and tools adapted to them. An upcoming strategic transversal plan on sustainable food will go further to facilitate the transition of existing local market actors towards shorter supply chains and greater sustainability and encourage the emergence of new actors - not only to reduce CO2 emissions and overall environmental impacts, but also to secure and create long term local jobs and strengthen urban communities.

Being part of this URBACT II network has been **one step on our sustainable**

**food journey**, as it enabled Brussels and its partner cities to learn from each other, to discover new initiatives and different ways of tackling sustainable food. Beyond the consolidation and dissemination of practical knowledge drawn from this transnational networking, stakeholders started to work together within each city to develop Local Action Plans and improve local policies.

Now and beyond the lifetime of our project we wish to reach out and communicate with other cities and stakeholders that are engaging in the process of making their food system more sustainable, to continue the journey we started.



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# INTRODUCTION

by Professor Kevin Morgan, Cardiff University

**“The 10 cities that participated in the URBACT project [Sustainable Food in urban Communities] have collectively generated a body of knowledge about sustainable food systems that will be of enormous value to their urban peers in the global north and the global south.” (Kevin Morgan, January 2015)**

Embracing a wide array of activities associated with the production and consumption of food, the project highlights one of the most important developments in the history of food policy and practice, namely the rise of the city as a transition space for the design and delivery of sustainable urban food strategies. The great merit of this handbook is that it seeks to capture the knowledge gained in 10 different cities and puts it at the disposal of cities that wish to begin their own journey towards sustainability by learning from what others have achieved. Mayors and civic society groups can learn much from their counterparts in other cities so long as they appreciate that every urban context is unique.

Until recently, the food system barely registered on the mainstream political agenda in the global north because of the widely held belief that it had delivered all that was asked of it. Slowly but surely, however, the hidden costs of the conventional food system began to resonate in the public domain. While there is no single reason why the food system has moved from the margins to the mainstream, the escalating costs of diet-related diseases and environmental degradation loom large in any explanation. If anything it is the multifunctional character of food that makes it such a unique political phenomenon because the food system is heavily implicated in so many public policy arenas.

The political significance of the food system stems from the combined effect of the following trends:

- Food security is now perceived as a national security issue following the urban riots that erupted in many countries after the food price hikes of 2007/08;
- The food chain accounts for some 31 %



of GHG emissions in the European Union, making the food system a crucial target of policies to counter climate change;

- The epidemic of obesity and other diet-related diseases makes the food system a prime target of campaigners;
- Food poverty is increasingly visible in the cities of the global north, as we can see from the explosive growth of food banks, making food a social justice issue as well as a human health issue;
- The food system is now perceived as a prism through which planners seek to promote more sustainable natural resource management and eco-system services;
- A quality food revolution is underway as people re-discover the pleasures of good food and its associations with place and provenance.

Over the past decade, municipalities in many countries have struggled with the question of how to incorporate food policy into their strategies and structures. In political terms this question generates two intensely practical issues – who should assume the leadership role for food policy and in which department should this role be located? The experience of municipal food politics in Europe, North America and Africa suggests that the answer to this question very much depends on the way food policy is framed; that is to say, it depends on the prism through which

the urban food question is viewed and valued by politicians and their civil society interlocutors.

Food policy has been dominated for so long by national and international levels of policy-making, it is sometimes suggested that cities have little or no capacity to shape the food system because they lack the powers to do so. However, within the urban food policy repertoire three powers merit special attention because, taken together, they can help to reform the urban foodscape.

Perhaps the most powerful food policy that cities have at their disposal is their very own procurement policy. The power of purchase has been shown to be very effective when it is part of a healthy public food provisioning programme. Another power that cities could deploy in more imaginative ways is planning policy, which is often used to frustrate development rather than foster it. Although planners have neglected the food system in the past, they are now beginning to address the urban foodscape so as to: protect and increase the diversity of food retail outlets so that they are accessible by foot or public transport; promote urban agriculture in and around the city by expanding access to allotments, community growing spaces and a range

of other under-utilised public and private space; discourage food waste and promote more socially and ecologically benign ways of recycling it; and create jobs and income for producers who need access to the “footfall” of urban consumers..

Finally, there is the power of partnering, where city governments enter into mutually beneficial collaborative partnerships with local businesses, social enterprises and civil society groups to achieve in concert what they could not hope to achieve alone.





## PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook draws on some of the 130 examples of promising local practices shared by the ten participating partner cities, as well as on the policy evidence reported and on the strategies and structure of the Local Action Plans they are developing as a result of this work.

We wish to share some of what we have learnt during the three years of exchanges and experiences in our network; to make it available to other cities and stimulate them to start a similar journey towards a sustainable local food system.

The handbook is written, not from an academic or advocacy perspective but from the pragmatic and practical outlook of people who work in cities and deal with the complex issues of urban life and the food system on a daily basis. It is therefore not complete, nor definitive, nor perfect, but is instead based on what is possible. We have selected examples of what we have found inspirational, many achieved through creativity, vision and commitment, despite limited resources.

Rather than a final report, we have therefore opted for an easy-to-follow and accessible handbook that outlines the key learning emerging from the ten partner cities.

We have selected content derived from hands-on robust experiences emerging from practitioners, practical information, and evidence-based implementation. As it is impossible to include everything in this handbook links are provided to more detailed material in three Thematic Reports, online articles and video presentations with examples of promising local practices from our own cities.<sup>2</sup>

It is our hope that we can inspire other cities to put food on their agenda and that cities across the world will make concrete changes that jointly generate positive impacts and drive a sustainable food system reform.

## WHO SHOULD READ THIS HANDBOOK?

- This Handbook provides a range different types of materials organised to provide different entry points and ways of reading and to be accessible to different interests. Its focus is on nine key topics that have emerged from the exchanges between the partner cities and on which the cities have sufficient joint experience to report.

- Three main categories of information are provided aimed at three main audiences :

- Insights for city policy makers on the importance for cities to build a sustainable and more localised food system

- A series of key learnings and practical tools for practitioners and actors who would like to start a similar process in their own cities

- A rich and varied set of case studies for a wider circle of interested readers that illustrate ways in which sustainable food initiatives can change daily life in the city.





# 1. BACKGROUND

## 1.1 The Project and its Partners

The URBACT II thematic network Sustainable Food in Urban Communities - Developing low-carbon and resource-efficient urban food systems (URBACT, 2012-2015) brings together ten European cities looking for joint, effective and sustainable solutions to develop low-carbon and resource-efficient urban food systems.

The URBACT process involved regular transnational exchanges between the ten cities over a period of three years and provided a framework for each city to establish a Local Support Group of key stakeholders in order to collaboratively build sustainable food governance and a related local action plan.

The cities of our network offer a fascinating variety in terms of i) demographics and scale of urbanisation; ii) land and territory; iii) food culture; and iv) levels of engagement in food system sustainability.

## 1.2 Finding angles to view the urban food system and sustainability

Three themes of 'Growing', 'Delivering' and 'Enjoying' were selected by project

partners to approach the complexity of the food system more simply, and to find a way to organize the many vibrant and heterogeneous experiences of the ten cities. The three themes were used to collect and review practical case studies of existing work in each city.

The theme of "Growing" explores all possible ways to grow food near or in the city. The theme of "Delivering" explores ways to distribute, share and procure food within the city. The theme of "Enjoying" explores how people in the city can embrace a sustainable, happy, healthy and vibrant food culture in canteens and households.

In addition, project partners addressed three cross-cutting issues:

'Governance, synergies & local system';

'Social Inclusion, jobs & economics';

'Carbon emissions and resource efficiency'.

## 1.3 Finding a pragmatic approach to low carbon and resource efficiency

Existing research suggests that the main ways in which urban communities can contribute to reducing CO2 emissions in the food system is by eating less meat



*The URBACT thematic network Sustainable Food in Urban Communities is a 3 years exchange and collaboration project between 10 European cities including Brussels Environment of the Brussels Capital Region (Lead Partner), the Bristol City Council, City of Messina, the Municipality of Amersfoort, the City of Lyon, the City of Gothenburg, Vaslui Municipality, Ourense City Council, City of Oslo and Athens development and destination management agency sa.*

*The Lead expert of the project is François Jégou, Strategic Design Scenarios, ENSAV, La Cambre Belgium. Thematic experts are Joy Carey, Independent Consultant on sustainable food systems planning & UK, Kevin Morgan, School of Planning and Geography, Cardiff University, UK and Frédérique Sonnet, independent consultant, France.*



and more plants; reducing food waste and by making fresh seasonal food from the surrounding regions available to everyone. To lessen the impact, food should be produced using less fossil-fuel derived inputs like fertilisers and pesticides. Food meeting organic certification standards is produced with an emphasis on animal welfare and harmony with nature. Project partners explored a range of practical approaches to low-carbon and resource efficiency in an urban context by reviewing innovative case studies and in specific workshop discussions with external organisations. Encouraging city residents to eat less meat and more fruit & vegetables requires a focus on fresh seasonal food and a range of fun activities that engage the public through interesting inspiring challenge with tangible results. With regard to business-led actions, there are many opportunities for new and innovative low-carbon and resource-efficient urban food businesses that create jobs. Labelling and recognition schemes can work but need to be simple, also aimed at the non-green audiences and help people to make a small shift. Cities can use recognition schemes to inspire and encourage collective action around fresh seasonal and local food; reducing food waste and encouraging the circular economy.

#### 1.4 Finding an action-focused framework for sustainable food in cities

Initiatives that address the need for sustainable food in cities can contribute to supporting a lively and diverse local economy (jobs and skills), to creating a better environment (green spaces, urban design, reduced greenhouse gas emissions), and to supporting more health and wellbeing amongst the population (inspiring behaviour change, making it easier for people to make better choices). In order to achieve these kinds of benefits, food has to be put firmly on the city governance agenda. For that reason, over the course of the project the focus on 'Growing', 'Delivering' and 'Enjoying' has gradually shifted towards more an action-oriented and organisation-based focus of 'Sustainable entrepreneurship', 'Citizen's resilience' and 'Food governance' (see figure on the next page).

Creating space for sustainable food systems is a practical and physical challenge in terms of finding available land within the city and its outskirts, and is also about creating space for food in the broader economic, legal, cultural and lifestyle context:

- Creating space for emerging economic activities and food-related sustainable entrepreneurship in the city;
- Creating space for good and healthy food

in everyday life of more resilient citizens;  
- Creating space for food in the governance of the municipality with traditionally limited authority in this area.

These action themes are discussed in more detail in the following sections with illustrative examples from the ten partner cities.





HERLIGHETEN  
ALLOTMENT  
GARDENS,  
OSLO

Herligheten allotment gardens were born as an art initiative inspired by the Victory Gardens food growing initiative of American artist Amy Franceschini in front of San Francisco Capitol. The place chosen in Oslo, Loallmenningen in Bjørvika is probably the most contrasting location place both on the waterfront near the brand new opera house and one of the most disparate urban development areas squeezed between a high speed lane and railways. 100 micro-orchards in wooden boxes and 250 m2 of grain field just popped up, surprising even the promoters of the project. When asked if it is a one-off initiative, the answer is that the next project could be to “dig in the green” and grow food instead of useless grass in public spaces.

SLOWFOOD VALDEMONE,  
MESSINA

SlowFood promotes a good, fresh and flavoursome seasonal diet; clean food production and consumption that does not harm the environment; fair accessible prices for consumers and fair pay conditions for small-scale producers. For instance; SlowFood has developed original activities such as the Spoken Menu, telling the story of traditional dishes before serving them; Taste Ateliers are educational sensory journeys with a tasting session of different products; Presidi are rescue operations of traditional specialities or products that tend not to be produced or prepared anymore. All these activities are raising interest and capacities in healthy, fair and quality food among the population.

EDUCATIONAL VEGETABLE  
GARDENS, OURENSE

First pilot project of the city pooling unused land for gardening with a demonstration goal: demonstrating urban orchards are available for production. Located in a working class area called “Mariñamansa”, the initiative started over a land area of 2,262 m2. It includes 18 orchard/gardens for citizen’s use, 2 for people with reduced mobility and 2 integrated orchard/gardens strictly focused on educational activities, intended for school learning activities for small kids to improve their knowledge about how to cultivate a garden and grow organic food. This initiative based on public and urban lands, is managed by the Educational Department of the City Council. During the first 3 months, users first farmed vegetables, fruits and flowers. Two years and a half later, UNICEF has awarded it as “Best practice on local policies”.





**“COLLECTIVE  
KITCHEN”  
EMBRACED  
BY ATHENS  
MUNICIPALITY**

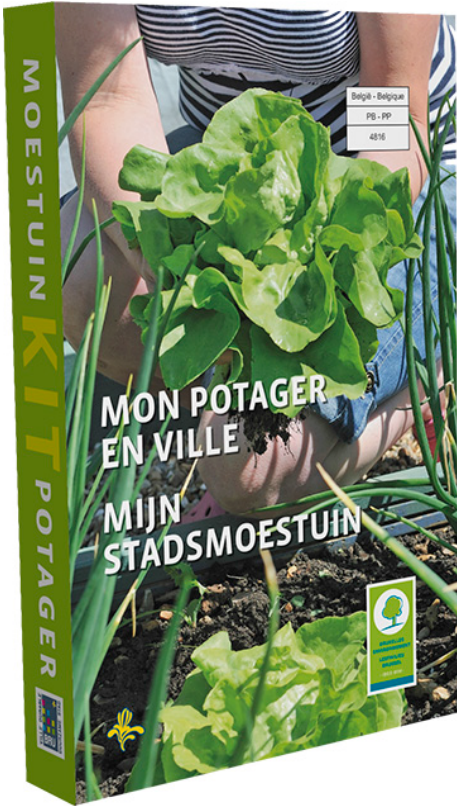
Collective kitchens have originated in Greece as a response to the economic and humanistic crisis that ensued in 2010. They reflect the informal actions by civil society, aiming at the satisfaction of fellow citizens’ need for food. Within a couple of years, collective kitchens transcended the “need for food” context and emerged as an opportunity to promote Greek gastronomy, producers and products, and create both economic and social value. The Municipality of Athens recognised the importance of collective kitchens for purposes such as social cohesion through the various food cultures present in Athens and raising awareness for sustainable food. “Athens, Metropolis of Taste” was the first event to take place under the auspices of Athens municipality on 27 June 2014 with the participation of the chef-team, the Afghan refugee community and the Nigerian women community.

**“MY URBAN  
KITCHEN  
GARDEN”  
GROW-YOUR-  
OWN-KIT,  
BRUSSELS**

Brussels Environment set up a program of different actions to encourage residents to grow their own vegetables in the city and raise awareness about eating more fresh, local and seasonal products. About 80% of citizens have a small space to grow herbs, fruits or vegetables at home (balcony, small garden, terrace...), but many lack knowledge or time to do so, according to a recent study conducted by Brussels Environment. Based on this finding, different tools were developed to help people to grow their own food:

- Free training sessions about kitchen gardening
- A network of gardening experts who give advice and organise some activities
- A free Helpdesk to answer specific questions of citizens

To help residents set up their own urban kitchen garden (in open soil, on a balcony, terrace, or in pots), Brussels Environment also developed the grow-your-own kit: a cardboard box with seeds and guidance supported by a monthly newsletter to help anyone interested set up an environmentally friendly kitchen garden in the heart of the city.





## MAJOB0, OSLO

MAJOB0 (meaning literally “food and soil where you live”) is a Norwegian grassroots network of local and organic food production and urban farming by citizens. It focuses on spreading ideas, inspiration and information. The activities, which are centred in Oslo, include communicating through social media, pilot projects, documentary screenings and network meetings to showcase local initiatives as well as hands-on beginners’ courses with hundreds of participants. Through the networking activities, MAJOB0 has triggered a range of other food-related projects by showcasing possibilities and providing platforms where like-minded people meet. MAJOB0 also acts as a voice for lobbying on behalf of urban agriculture to local and national political institutions.

## 2. WHAT CAN CITIES DO?

### Getting started

The question is how can a city positively influence its food system?

‘To reform the food system in this way has not been built into any local government policy and strategy, nor could a local government achieve such changes alone. It requires the commitment and pro-active buy-in from a wide range of city and city region stakeholders. The first step is to understand how the city and city region’s food supply system operates and how the different elements of the system are interconnected. The second is to understand strengths and vulnerabilities in relation to food system sustainability and longer-term resilience.’ (Who Feeds Bristol? Towards a resilient food plan; 2011)

A good first step is to develop better understanding and establish dialogue. This can then feed into a longer-term ‘sustainable food planning process’ which may take several years or indeed be adopted as part of an ongoing food strategy and policy agenda. There are many different ways of getting started. Bristol commissioned a baseline audit study called ‘Who Feeds Bristol?’ Stakeholder meetings, organised public events and discussions and participatory scenario exercises all help to stimulate debate and establish a new ‘sustainable food conversation’. The most important point is that it has to be both a process and a partnership approach.





*The URBACT partners used a simple case study approach to review what was already happening in each of the cities and established local support groups to help drive a process of developing an action plan. While working together and sharing our experiences we have developed some simple tools to help ourselves and now other cities to get started. Understanding what is already happening is an important place to begin.*

## TOOL / 'GETTING STARTED ON THE FOOD JOURNEY CHECK-LIST'

### AN EARLY QUALITATIVE DIAGNOSTIC TOOL

The tool is based on key lessons learned from the experience of partner cities. It consists of a series of questions aimed at helping cities to investigate their process of building local governance to implement a more sustainable food system.

#### Governance

- Does your city have a clear and agreed rationale for why it is important to address food system reform and improved sustainability?

Is the topic of a sustainable food system represented within the governance of your city (i.e. 'Food Policy Council' / elected representative in charge of the topic)?

- Has food been explicitly included in the official authority (competences) of the city (i.e. specific budget line; organisational and operational facilitation; etc.)?

- Is the subject of food present in the political debate in your city (i.e. on the

political agenda, in different positions debated, etc.)?

- Do your public food procurement contracts include environmental / sustainable criteria (i.e. organic; seasonal; fresh; sustainably fished, fairly traded, high animal welfare standards etc.)?

- Is your city taking action against food poverty (i.e. supporting social and solidarity initiatives; facilitating improved food accessibility in terms of distance and price; etc.)?

- Is your city involved at the national level to be a voice on the subject of sustainable food (i.e. taking part in a national sustainable food network; active in national food policy, etc.)?

#### Stakeholder involvement

- Does your city have a good inventory or mapping of food initiatives present within its territory/boundaries (i.e. mapping

resources; 'Who feeds your city?' report baseline audits)?

- Does your city have a view on the economic significance of the food sector and a clear analysis of who the businesses are?

- Does your city have an organised food stakeholder process (i.e. 'Match-making' / meet the buyer events; 'Stakeholder forum', a food network that meets regularly)?

- Does your city recognise the diversity of the food system stakeholders and actively ensure that this diversity is included in discussions or events (i.e. public/private; food producers, processors or 'transformers', distributors, retailers, caterers; sustainable/conventional; etc.)?

- Is the health sector in your city involved in work on sustainable food (i.e. integrated policy; joint financing; etc.)?

#### Accessibility and public awareness

- Is quality sustainable food available at a walking distance in all neighbourhoods of your city (i.e. street farmer markets,

independent grocery shops, organic supermarkets, etc.)?

- What is the level of engagement of the population in food production and cooking (i.e. proportion of the population involved with food growing; proportion of food eaten in the home that is home cooked / cooked from scratch)?

- Is information/education on sustainable food provided in your city (i.e. educational programs at schools; local food centre for professionals and amateurs; etc.)?

- Does your city have any organised communication on sustainable food (i.e. accessible newsletter; website platform; awareness raising campaigns; etc.)?

- Does your city reach the general public to make them aware of sustainable food (i.e. cooking courses; information in purchase points; etc.)?

Does your city make land readily available to citizens who want to grow their own food?





# TOOL / 'THE RESILIENCE TEST'

## RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT FOOD SYSTEM VULNERABILITIES OF THE CITY

### Purpose

The aim of the Resilience Test tool is first to raise awareness among local stakeholders about strengths/weaknesses of their city's food system and, more importantly, to enable a collective acknowledgment of these strengths/weaknesses.

### Example

In Gothenburg, a series of pertinent challenges – crisis situations –for the city's food system are prepared in advance with local stakeholders.

- A huge strike blocks all outside supplies for 2 weeks. Food is missing in supermarkets and shops... How does the city react?
- Deepening of the food crisis on international markets: prices boom! First food riots... How does the city react?
- Oil peak and energy price booming: costs of fertilizers, mechanised agriculture, and food transport increase dramatically and

threaten food supply... How does the city react?

- Junk food kills! Proven by medical studies. Demonstrations in the street against health-damaging food... How does the city react?
- Repeated cuts in public budgets: no more subsidies for agriculture, school canteens and food banks... How does the city react?

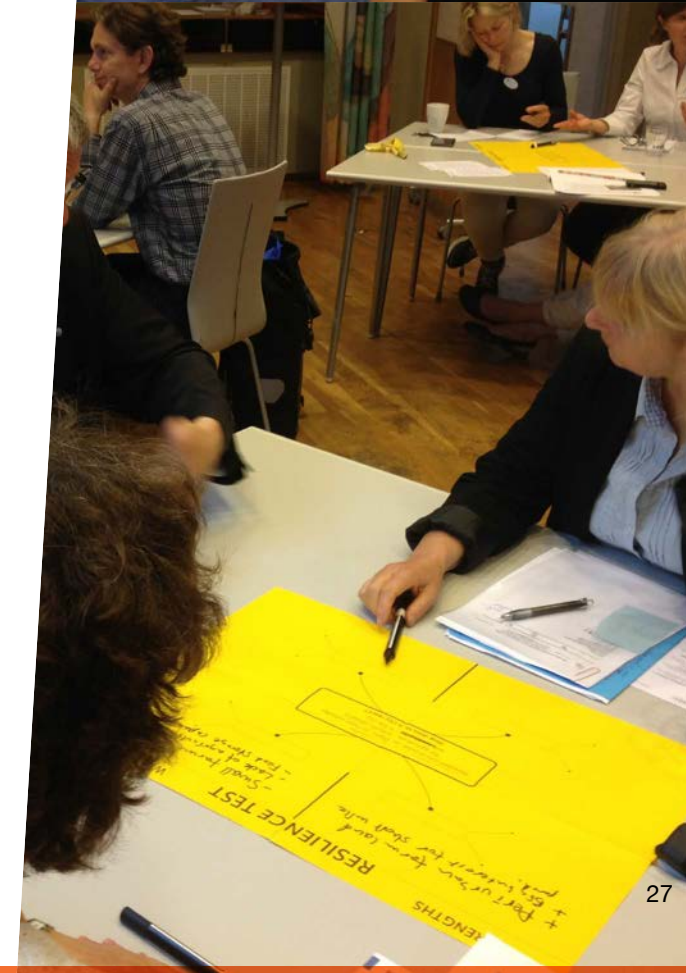
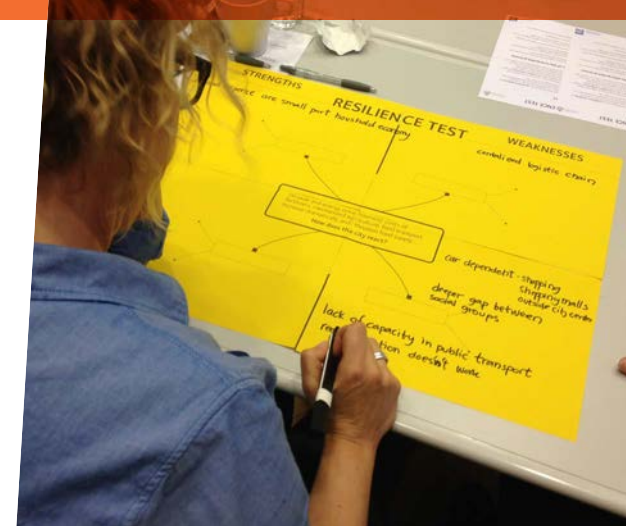
### Process

During a meeting of the local stakeholder group including non-for-profit organizations from social and business sectors, elected representatives and civil servants all focused on the issues of increasing food sustainability in the city. Subgroups of participants each receive one challenge and a 'strengths / weaknesses' mind-map to complete. They first discuss the current situation. In a second step they imagine what would happen if the same crisis situation were to occur 10 years in the

future following the progress in food policy that has been achieved as a result of the URBACT project.

### Outcomes

Each subgroup presents in plenary the result of their discussions. The presentations may be videotaped and contextualized to give more strength and impact to the awareness raising process. The challenges allow stakeholders to explore the limits of the current food system. The results of this test help to raise collective awareness of the potential lack of resilience at a city level. It also sets the basis for identifying a first set of actions to draft a Local Action Plan enlarging the point of view beyond the current situation.





**FEED BRISTOL  
PROJECT &  
SIMS HILL  
SHARED  
HARVEST,  
BRISTOL**

Situated in the outskirts of north Bristol on a 7-acre piece of land, the educational wildlife-friendly food growing project ‘Feed Bristol’ is twinned with ‘Sims Hill Shared Harvest’. Feed Bristol provides opportunities for volunteers to grow food and care for wildlife. Sims Hill is a community supported agriculture scheme with 65 members divided in 3 categories: growing members, vegetable sharing members and supporting members. The second category is particularly interesting: engaging people with nature and food is not always easy when they do not have time to take care of their own individual allotment. Vegetable sharing members help for 4 hours a week during 6 months and in exchange get access to vegetables year round.



**PRÉ SANTY INCLUSION  
GARDEN, LYON**

The “Pré Santy” is a vegetable garden aimed mainly at improving social inclusion in a difficult social housing area in the South-East of Lyon. The gardening activities are more a pretext than an aim, but it is an interesting example of promoting sustainable food amongst an underprivileged population. The garden occupies a small piece of land surrounding a parking lot but it is large enough to enable 20 families to experience eating the vegetables they produce from time to time and to organize more than 20 neighbourhood events around self-grown food per year.

**NEW MARKET GARDENING  
FARMER, VASLUI**

Marius Gorcea has been presented as one of the most outstanding representatives of the 4000 farmers registered in Vaslui City. Formerly a driver, he decided a couple years ago to set up a small market gardening business. Supported by EU subsidies for young farmers, he managed to pool 5000 m2 of land from 14 different owners. With hardly any prior skills in agriculture he set up a vegetable production with better efficiency compared to family gardening and traditional small farms (i.e. larger land plots, irrigation, limited variety of vegetables to match the demand...) but still keeping the fundamental assets of traditional quality food gardening.





**EEMSTAD**  
**BOERDERIJ,**  
**AMERSFOORT**

This project shows one example for growing food on temporarily unused land of the city. About 8 hectares (ha) are now used for farming, ½ ha for potatoes, ¼ ha for pumpkins, 1 ha for lupines, 2,5 ha for cereals and 4 ha for hay. Products find their way to the consumers in the city thanks to direct sales and sales to local farm stores and food purchasing groups. Moreover, groups of people are invited to help with harvesting their own produce, which they have to pay for. School classes are invited to help harvesting too.

**“GARDENS BANK”:**  
**RECOVERING**  
**FOOD**  
**PRODUCTION**  
**AREAS IN THE**  
**OUTSKIRTS OF**  
**OURENSE**

Since 2009, Ourense city council has been encouraging different projects pooling unused land for gardening. The organisation of such an innovative project, called “gardens bank”, relies on cooperation between landowners (in particular people who moved away from these areas or elderly people who cannot take care of their land and therefore generate risk of fire) with potential producers (in particular young people suffering from high levels of unemployment). The municipality proposed to relieve the landowners of the fire fines if they lend the land they do not use for market gardening to young entrepreneurs.

In order to ensure market access and boost this suburban food production the municipality focuses on the rehabilitation of two traditional markets as ‘food hubs’ for the population of the city, developing social life around the traditional markets, enhancing local food use among the small bars and restaurants around these markets, and offering free public transport access for sellers and entrepreneurs coming to offer their horticulture products at the local markets. Likewise, the municipality attempts to promote self-consumption in sectors of the population with low incomes, especially among producers themselves. Today, Ourense has twelve orchards on production and a waiting list of 24 citizens!







## FARO DOC FROM THE CUPPARI HIGH SCHOOL, MESSINA

Passionate staff from the Agricultural Institute “Cuppari” devised a strategy to address the school budget shortage: from teaching wine production they have now extended their activities to produce quality wine and have recently launched a new faro DOC (of controlled origin) “S. Placido” high quality wine with the first 12000 bottles sold in 2014. They have also opened a local wine tasting area and plan to offer direct access for tourists from cruise ships passing through the Messina strait.

## LANDWINKELS, SHOPS AT THE FARM GATE, AMERSFOORT

Landwinkel is a national organization that supports farmers in opening shops at the farm gate. Landwinkel works as a co-operative, pooling products from local farms so that each outlet offers not only its own products produced onsite but all the products produced locally by the network of local farms. Landwinkel also provides commercial and merchandising support (i.e. branding, packaging, shop design, information and advertisement material) greatly facilitating farmers’ ability to have their own shop and attract customers to the outskirts of the city (where they are mainly located.)

## SUPER HALLE, LYON

The Super Halle is an innovative concept of a grocery shop based on sustainable food. It combines in one place: an organic shop, a producer shop (fresh produce direct their farms), a restaurant and a food supply/distribution hub. Those businesses, run by 4 independent companies or cooperatives, are supporting each other. The restaurant and organic shop are supplied by the producers, who also do shifts at the shared cash desk. The organic shop doesn’t sell what is available at the producer shop, instead offering complementary foodstuffs. This multifunctional system, based on innovative cooperation and coordination schemes, provides an interesting new business model and a unique shopping experience for their customers.





# 3. SUSTAINABLE FOOD-RELATED ENTREPRENEURSHIP

For the participating cities, creating space for food relates firstly to enabling emerging economic activities and food-related sustainable entrepreneurship. This includes:

- securing urban land/space to enable growing food in the city;
- fostering the emergence of new urban food businesses with innovative income generation models;
- facilitating the development of a new shopping scene with innovative models of intermediation between local food producers and city dwellers.

## 3.1 Growing food in the city

The trend of reclaiming urban space to grow food, observed in participating cities, often involves initiatives born from very different motivations.

Urban gardening might start as a production enterprise or a recreational activity to engage people with food. Several cities, encourage the development

of peri-urban farming to reinforce local supply (see case studies p 21, 29, 30). The 'Feed Bristol' project combines both growing food and caring for wildlife (see case study p 28). It may also start as an arts project (see Herligheten Allotment Gardens, Oslo), an educational initiative, a pretext for new social connections or an activity facilitating social inclusion of marginalised groups as for instance the Prés Senty project in Lyon (see case study p 29). These different motivations tend to blur and most growing initiatives are multipurpose.

This multipurpose characteristic is fundamental to understanding the value of food gardening in cities, which is clearly limited in terms of scale and volumes of food produced. Challenges include re-engaging disadvantaged population groups in cooking fresh food from scratch instead of living on more expensive industrialised ready-made food, or shifting from overconsumption of junk food to more healthy choices. Reconnecting urban

citizens with food growing in a natural environment seems to provide solutions. In particular, the experience of growing food for oneself can be life-changing. Therefore, participating cities acknowledge the indirect social and economic benefits of recreational, educational or even symbolic urban food gardening as much, if

not more than the actual quantities of food produced by urban agriculture initiatives. Within a city the benefits of growing food should be assessed taking in consideration the whole urban system and accounting for indirect and collateral positive effects as well as direct contributions in terms of effective agriculture production.

## INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

- Promote all food growing initiatives ranging from food production, social inclusion, food education, sustainable regeneration or artistic projects;
- Encourage enrichment of each initiative towards multi-purpose solutions and economy of scope, when possible;
- Foster connections between them, exchanges and cross-fertilisation;
- Provide greater visibility for such local food production initiatives, through events, signs, land made available in public areas, mapping.

## 3.2 Urban food businesses

New entrepreneurship related to sustainable food in partner cities and in nearby suburban areas gives rise to new and innovative income generation or value creation models based on hybrid partnerships. It often involves a creative mix of social innovation, public-private partnerships, shared and collaborative economy beyond the classical social contract between public authorities, civil society, businesses and citizens. The city of Ourense for instance in the

Spanish region of Galicia promotes an interesting project built around short food circuits (see case study p 31) fostering both supply and demand at the same time: the municipality facilitates the emergence of youth entrepreneurship in market gardening in nine villages around the city generating jobs and suburban local food supply. In parallel, the municipality encourages customer demand through the refurbishment of the old traditional markets of the city as an attractive fresh food hub with cafés and small restaurants. The Cuppari agriculture high school in Messina (see case study p 32) is a good



example of an even more complex and interwoven multifunctional model. The school's integrated economic strategy promotes high quality regional food and increased job opportunities. It connects the use of winery teaching equipment of the school to produce premium wine, the development of a side business of selling wine to compensate public school budget shortages, the promotion of regional products creating a wine tasting area in the school to increase local tourism and the enrichment of students' experiences and skills.

Promoting these new multi-stakeholder

income generation and value creation models requires cities to find space - not only physical space to establish the new production businesses but also a widened understanding of the public authorities' role and administrative culture. The municipality operates as a broker in the city to facilitate partnerships, to experiment with them and to secure public equity, fair exchanges and forms of co-responsibility between involved players (Jégou & Bonneau, 2014).

### 3.3 New shopping scenes

#### INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

- Generate opportunities for stakeholders likely to take part in work on sustainable urban food to meet and liaise. Give preference to open events where unusual suspects are likely to come rather than closed meetings where only official representatives are invited;
- Adopt an active brokering role and seek out any promising partnerships. Dare to support experimentations of new value creation models between public, private players and citizen participation;
- Let public actors take on an active role in fostering new sustainable food businesses through ambitious calls for projects (i.e. open to citizens or new players in the food field), mixes of funding opportunities (i.e. Public-Private Partnerships, crowd funding, etc.) and original partnerships (i.e. co-operative enterprise such as French SCIC société coopérative d'intérêt collectif, etc.);
- Provide coaching and training according to the needs of entrepreneurs who wish to set up a new sustainable food business (e.g. GreenTech Brussels) and existing food businesses who wish to integrate sustainability aspects in their activities or acquire an environmental label to increase financial viability and environmental benefits.

The hybrid and multifunctional nature of new sustainable food urban entrepreneurship induces a renewal of the shopping scene in the partner cities. This concretely leads to a disintermediation (cutting out the middle man) between producers and users and to a growing level of customer involvement in the quality control and delivery of the services. This new shopping scene ranges from well-known and developing forms of bulk food purchasing groups (GASAP in Brussels, AMAP in Lyon, GAS in Messina, etc.) to a change in the traditional model of supermarkets, adapted by new entrepreneurs to welcome small local producers and ensure affordable quality food (i.e. Plus Supermarket in Amersfoort). Half way between these extremes, suburban producers also create their own distribution models to nearby urban areas. The Landwinkels' network of shops at the farm gate in the Netherlands (see case study p 32) have developed a local co-operative brand supporting farmers in setting up professional shops to sell their products directly on site.

An example of a new hybrid form of retail is La Superhalle in Lyon combining several related businesses in a former storage building of on 800 m2 within an industrial neighbourhood in the outskirts of the city: an organic grocery area furnished with shelves and bulk dispensers, a farmers'

market with different producers serving on a weekly rota arrangement, an organic restaurant and take away and a vegetable box scheme delivery point (see case study p 33).

In some partner cities an increasing number of vegetable basket or online order schemes compete in flexibility and attractiveness for consumer attention, providing information about the local producers to create a human connection. This emerging shopping scene is changing food distribution opportunities in the partner cities. Short circuits, direct purchase by the producers, sales of organic or traditional farming products tend to increase the average food quality and reduce packaging waste. However, this kind of localised delivery in the city tends to be less optimised. The customer logistics (the duration and routes followed by individuals to visit different shops, collect their purchase and bring them home) can be more complex and thus potentially reduce the environmental benefits.



### INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

- Stimulate match-making and collaboration between emerging food delivery models in order to promote synergies and optimization of the local logistics;
- Promote development and access to low impact local distribution solutions based on open logistic platforms; connect wholesale markets with soft delivery systems such as boats when rivers are available, cargo trams, cargo bikes, etc;
- Give sustainable food businesses visibility to enable them to build a sufficient customer base to be economically viable and inform citizens of the benefits of such consumption choices.

### 3.4 Reflections on sustainable food-related entrepreneurship:

Of particular interest is the innovation and multi-functionality of these examples. They bring additional economic, environmental and social benefits and services that contribute to the lives of citizens and to the city's distinctiveness. They bring increased diversity of retail models; increased connection between food producers and customers and new local markets for food producers. The importance of the entrepreneur cannot be over-emphasised. Policy and voluntary activism alone are insufficient to create food system reform.





*Some entrepreneurship enhancing tools:*

## TOOL / 'MICRO-CONSULTING'

### STIMULATING EXCHANGES AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN STAKEHOLDERS

#### Purpose

The principle of Micro-consulting starts with a local initiative/project in a city hosting a visit of practitioners and experts from other cities and, in exchange, asking the visitors for a micro-consultation on a problem they face. This practice stimulates the field visits during transnational meetings. Visitors are first presented the initiative/project and then take on an active role as “consultants” by contributing their know-how directly to the local host. They also share their different cultural perspectives in relation to what they experience during the visit and thus collectively reach a better mutual understanding of what is being undertaken and achieved. The Micro-consulting session has to be prepared in advance. A clear and concise question needs to be defined by the host initiative to then ask the visitors.

#### Example

In Oslo, MAJOBØ, a food network movement started to simply label all food growing initiatives within the City

with a MAJOBØ flag. Their original goal was to offer the label to 1000 initiatives. In so-doing MAJOBØ got involved in multiple projects, event organising and match-making between sustainable food initiatives in Oslo.

#### Process

Presentation of some examples of collaboration between not-for-profit organisations and municipalities were discussed in advance with the visiting partners in order to kick-start the conversation. About 30 international participants and 3 representatives from the MAJOBØ pioneers took part in the Micro-consulting session for about 90 minutes. The micro-consulting questions were: What is MAJOBØ doing (or intending to do) as an organization linking/promoting local sustainable food? Can such a civil society movement help local public authorities by bringing together multiple local social innovations/bottom-up initiatives and organising synergies between them?

#### Outcome

The discussions with visiting “consultants” led MAJOBØ representatives to realize that the success of their movement opened new opportunities for development. Their initial goal of giving visibility to grassroots initiatives resulted in building a strong network of local stakeholders. The practitioners from the different municipalities of the visiting cities highlighted the value of an initiative like

MAJOBØ to support multiple and diverse initiatives, link them, increase synergies and facilitate the emergence of a more coherent movement in the city. This process of aligning social innovation is difficult to achieve for municipalities. The Micro-consulting session helped city public authorities and activist movements to better understand new paths of mutual help and collaboration.





# TOOL / 'BUSINESS LAUNCH PAD'

## EXPLORING ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN SUSTAINABLE FOOD

### Purpose

The aim of the Business Launch Pad tool is to involve local stakeholders in imagining how simple bottom-up initiatives could transform into tentative self-standing businesses that are able to scale up the local sustainable food system and generate jobs.

### Example

URBACT Local Support Groups can constitute effective 'business' incubators: all key stakeholders are represented, connected and able to both stimulate and support local entrepreneurship. The tentative new business solutions emerging are then used to stimulate the generation of related policy recommendations that in turn help to enrich and orient the Local Action Plan. In Messina, for instance members of the local support group and partner city guests tested the Business Launch Pad tool looking for opportunities to transform grassroots urban farming initiatives into potential enterprises generating new job opportunities.

### Process

The workshop process is organised as a role playing game. Roles are assigned to the participants according to their skills and interests: business entrepreneurs, local authorities, key stakeholders, etc. A selection of scenarios that offer the potential to generate business and employment are presented to kick-off the session. Participants gather in groups of 3-4 and invent or develop promising opportunities for the local context. They imagine each new business opportunity and fill in a template inspired from a Business Model Canvas but in a more lively format. The market offer is pictured imagining a short advertisement for the new business in a magazine; requested competences are defined through writing a short job ad with requested profile, motivations, etc.; business opportunity are framed with estimates of the market potential, sources of profit, break even points, etc.; success factors and barriers are described; and finally a proper name, title or brand are formulated to help picture the new business.

### Outcome

Presentations of the pitches by each team are shared and videotaped. Groups then generate policy recommendations, public initiatives and conditions likely to favour

the emergence of such new businesses. In doing this they therefore help to shaping a Local Action Plan based on the emerging business environment.





**THE SQUARE**  
**FOOD**  
**FOUNDATION**  
**COOKERY**  
**SCHOOL AND**  
**KITCHEN,**  
**BRISTOL**

The Park is home to the Square Food Foundation and its training kitchen. Knowle West is one of the more vulnerable neighbourhoods in Bristol where poor eating habits are quite entrenched. An attempt to establish a good quality wholesome food café next to the training kitchen failed through lack of interest from customers. The offering is now ‘transition food’ a mixture of wholesome and ‘junk food’ so it stays to some extent familiar and therefore accessible to local people. This, together with open cooking classes for customers, provides a progressive pathway to sustainable and healthy food.

**FOOD**  
**CHALLENGE**  
**FOR FAMILIES,**  
**BRUSSELS**

To support grass-root projects about sustainable food, almost every year Brussels Environment launches a call for proposals about sustainable food. Several calls for proposals have been focused on low-income households in order to increase sustainable food availability. One of the supported projects was, “Food challenge” of Etterbeek (one of the 19 municipalities of the region). The idea was to coach a small number of households to create a positive momentum around sustainable food by empowering families to become ambassadors on the subject. Low-income households not yet aware about sustainable food issues were given priority. Over a period of 6 months, 12 households were involved every fortnight in activities such as cooking classes, tasting workshops, etc. Behaviours and views on food quickly evolved. A photo exhibition, a website and a brochure with recipes and advice given by the participating families helped reach out to the wider public. This interesting project was much appreciated by participants, and has been repeated a second time. The high cost of the intense coaching activities, however limits the number of families that can be accompanied.





**LUNDBY LOCAL  
ADMINISTRATION  
IS SERVING  
ALMOST  
50%ORGANIC  
MEALS IN PUBLIC  
CANTEENS,  
GOTHENBURG**

The local administration in Lundby (part of the city of Gothenburg) is leading the way in serving organic food. They are now serving almost 50%organic meals (49,4 %) in canteens for schools and for homes for elderly. A couple of months ahead of schedule the city of Gothenburg got qualified in the league of organic food in Sweden. (Ekomatsligan) because they are on average serving 33% of organic food in the local administrations in Gothenburg (canteens in the whole city). This shows that the local administration of Lundby is at the leading edge. Organic food is a priority and we work with seasonal food, it takes more hours to cook food from “scratch”. We want to aim even higher, says Johan Fogler, divison manager and chef in the Elias kitchen.

**GEITMYRA  
CULINARY  
CENTRE FOR  
CHILDREN,  
OSLO**

Geitmyra culinary centre for children is a non-profit foundation established by the food writer and TV-cook Andreas Viestad. Based in the buildings of a former farm near Geitmyra allotment garden in Oslo, the place has been refurbished to host school children every day of the week in addition to kindergartens visits and classes for grown-ups who work with children and food. It also offers evening courses and Open Farm-arrangements. It hosts 30-35 classes per year for an entire week each. Kids have an immersive experience on a farm where they can experience the origins of food by feeding and slaughtering chickens, growing and taking care of the organic vegetable garden, baking bread, smoking and conserving fish, making yogurt etc. and eating the product of their labour.





**ELEONAS' URBAN FARM PROJECT, ATHENS**

The Municipality of Athens is supporting a large action towards reclaiming available urban space for growing food. It is implementing real urban farms on the larger pieces of land and urban gardening on smaller plots. Eleonas is a neighbourhood of Athens with mixed industrial and commercial areas. A large brownfield is planned to be turned into an urban farm (municipal property of approximately 20.000 m²). The project is about to start and foresees benefits both in terms of creation of jobs for unemployed people and of urban production of food for poor households. At the same time, small scale urban farming is being advanced through the identification of plots of land that can be used for cultivation aiming at educational and symbolic functions (e.g. local edible wild vegetation, vegetable, herb and tree gardens).

**SOCIAL AND SOLIDARITY GROCERY SHOP, LYON**

The original grocery “La passerelle d’Eau de Rebec” is a social business enhancing social inclusion with a dual pricing system. The grocery works with two types of clients: ‘beneficiaries’ with low incomes accessing mainly food charity stock but also fresh organic food sold to them below the market price, and ‘solidarity clients’ attracted by organic food sold at fair but full market price to them. Both evolve in the same space: the solidarity clients are providing better margins to the shop. These margins are reinvested in order to give beneficiary clients a discount on organic, local and fresh food.





## 4. FOOD LITERACY AND RESILIENCE

‘Food literacy’ is about ability and understanding in relation to food. Organisations promoting this concept define it in terms of personal behaviour: the ability to organise one’s everyday nutrition in a self-determined, responsible and enjoyable way<sup>4</sup> ; and as understanding the impact of your food choices on your health, the environment, and our community<sup>5</sup>.

‘Resilience’ is not such a well-defined term. In this context we have used it to describe the capabilities of citizens to maintain a balanced and quality food diet in challenging situations such as economic crisis and low income or perturbations in the usual food delivery system.

Creating space for food in the city therefore also relates to cultural and daily behaviour and practices:

Convenience food has become a social standard or new social norm.

-Mainstreaming healthy and quality food calls for **re-engaging the population with food**, in particular by dedicating some time and securing enough skills to prepare and cook their own food.

-It calls also for **ensuring a food education and canteen experience**

at school and elsewhere since, in an increasing number of situations, it is less likely to take place at home;

-Finally it requires solutions within an urban food system to **reduce food poverty among low-income population groups**.

### 4.1 Re-engaging the population with food

As explained in the introduction of this book, the participating cities represent different dimensions of the European food culture landscape. They range from weaker food cultures invaded by junk food and agro-industrial products to richer food cultures, but which are often blind to the progressive loss of skills and interest in food by the younger generations. In all these situations, a more or less growing part of the population is showing a strong disengagement with food. Sophisticated processes are required in order to help people to re-engage in cooking and in appreciating healthy and quality food. The Brussels Capital Region distributed thousands of free grow-your-own kits to anyone interested in setting up an environmentally friendly kitchen garden in

open soil, on a balcony, terrace, or in pots (see case study p 21).

The Square Food School in Bristol (see box Square Food School in Bristol) is a particularly illuminating example. A skilled and motivated Chef opened a food café next to the Square Food School’s training kitchen offering a premium quality menu compatible with the training courses operating at affordable prices. All the required conditions seemed to be met to re-engage the local population with good food and with the pleasure of preparing it. But it did not work. Customers were decreasing. The food café reintroduced a share of junk food and soft drinks in its menu. It is now offering an improbable mix of highly healthy and highly unhealthy items: a form of ‘transition food’ to retain interest of local customers while slowly influencing and improving their food habits. The Food Challenge project (see case study p 45) has been piloted by the commune of Etterbeek in Brussels with

low income households who were willing to find out more about food sustainability but were unsure how this could fit into their daily lives and into their budget. The Food Challenge is a transformative process involving a sample of families in a 6 month series of participative food training sessions. The project was assessed as very effective but the costs incurred are judged to be very high given that it only prompted changes in the way of eating of 12 families - who are now willing to take on the role of sustainable food ambassadors at events in the municipality. A photo exhibition, a website and a brochure with concrete recipes and advice given by the participating families helped reach out to a wider public. Still, the Food Challenge is also a challenge in terms of scaling-up such initiatives in a cost-effective way to engage more families.

In both cases and in many other serious and in-depth initiatives aiming at re-engaging people with food or bringing

### INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

- Promote the practice of growing food within the population supporting access to land (through development of community gardens, promotion of private garden sharing, etc.) and gardening capacity building (through the organisation of collective teaching sessions, training of coaches, gardening help-desk and online information support, etc.);
- Encourage opportunities to increase food literacy among the population from informal/popular education supported by non-for-profit organizations to various events (i.e. seasonal markets; cooking demonstrations) promoting the pleasure and the interest in food.



in environmental considerations in food choices, lifestyles changes are effective and rather long lasting. However, these initiatives also require a high level of involvement from their promoters. The complex transformative processes required to change habits and catch-up with a lost – or disappearing – food culture, are expensive. The costs incurred for municipalities to replicate these processes at city scale are inevitably perceived as barely viable.

#### 4.2 Ensuring a food education and a positive canteen experience

Kids and youngsters have fewer and fewer opportunities to learn about food and cooking at home due to a combined lack of knowledge, time and interest from their parents. The food culture and related skills of growing, preparing and tasting food are disappearing from household environments. Partner cities of the network all report numerous initiatives at school level to address this gap and re-integrate food education through two main entry points:

First, the improvement of the quality and sustainability of the food served in the canteens: this strategy is leveraging on public procurement to encourage the sustainable transition in all parts of the food chain. It is also ensuring at least one

quality balanced meal offered to each child per day. Second, the inclusion of food as a proper topic in teaching curriculums: this strategy includes the implementation of educational gardens and cooking activities in the schools and in some cases visits to farms. If these two entry points are combined (as for instance in the UK Food for Life Partnership approach for schools) it maximises the benefits gained by the children. Furthermore, while the startup is demanding, once the schools are fully engaged, the process is self-perpetuating as this is a whole school integrated approach, involving all staff.

The case of Lundby school in Gothenburg (see case study p 46) shows the importance of the involvement of canteen staff and Chefs: they catalyse change, motivate pupils and challenge in a creative way the rules and legislation around canteens which can appear restrictive. Specific food education processes are also designed for kids as for instance the Geitmyra Culinary Centre in Oslo (see case study p 47). It offers weeks of immersion for kids to perform the complete cycle of growing, transforming, cooking and eating their food.

Beyond growing interest in food issues and in cooking practices, the challenge of food education at school is to raise the importance of food in daily life, as

#### INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

- Promote food literacy as a topic at school and develop canteens as an instrument to develop interest and awareness of taste in quality food;
- Support occasions of informal education and familiarisation in relation to quality and healthy food in institutions that depend on the municipality (i.e. schools, elderly homes, hospitals, public institutions, etc.);
- Explore ways to increase cooking skills to address the frequent intergenerational disadvantage that perpetuates dependency on convenience and junk food;
- Encourage public (and private) procurers to include sustainability criteria in their food procurement contracts;
- Encourage canteen staff to learn about and implement more sustainable practices and to communicate about them to those who eat there, including through a dedicated label or information about the meals served.

a pleasure and as an element of quality of life. In order to ensure quality food becomes an important issue (and stays important) for citizens it is key to raise the tasting capabilities of kids. Their ability to recognize good quality food by taste (rather than only from the label) will ensure that they will appreciate quality food and continue to request it, throughout their lives as adult consumers.

#### 4.3 Reducing food poverty among the low-income population

The first concern of partner cities, when facing food poverty issues, is to try to redistribute food that would otherwise be wasted. This is happening in the retail sector and also in the kitchen.

Organizations like FareShare in the UK and many local non-profit organizations recover and redistribute unsold food, helping to rebalance a malfunctioning food system in situations of low or no income. Beyond reducing food waste, partner cities stressed citizens' food resilience in urban contexts can be improved by securing access to land. The municipality of Athens is involved in reclaiming unused land available within the city and turning it into urban farms. (see case study p 48). This structured solidarity project aims to both create jobs for unemployed people with low qualifications in the city and generate an urban production of food for poor households hit by the crisis. In Lyon, the Social and Solidarity grocery shop La Passerelle d'Eau de Rebec



(see case study p 49) shows another mechanism to increase citizens' resilience in relation to food access. The grocery is a non-profit business. It collects benefits from 'solidarity' customers purchasing quality food and it uses these benefits to enable 'beneficiary' customers of the same neighbourhood to also buy quality food, but at a lower price. In both cases, the municipalities involved are trying to increase citizens' food

resilience. They are adapting traditional models of resilience (i.e. based on complementary self-production and mutual help within a community) to current urban environments.

#### INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

- Facilitate access to land for low-income populations and encourage self-production of food both as a means to tackle difficult economic situations and to recover self-esteem and develop entrepreneurship;
- Support the dissemination of food solidarity and mutual help schemes (i.e. unsold food redistribution, food waste reduction, solidarity purchase groups, social canteens, etc.)

#### 4.4 Reflections on food literacy and citizens' resilience

Two aspects are highly pertinent and represent a serious challenge to cities: i) how to successfully enable citizens to have new learning experiences that influence their understanding, confidence and ultimately their behaviour about food choices; and ii) how to provide the practical infrastructure to improve physical access to good healthy food in affordable ways. Rarely is one sufficient without the other. New habits need to be developed through educational activities. However, in situations of low income, education alone is simply not enough.

**FOOD  
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**ALL WELCOME**





Some community building tools:

## TOOL / 'SPEED PRESENTATION EVENINGS'

### BUILDING THE COMMUNITY

#### Purpose

Speed presentation evenings based on a '3 slides / 3 minutes format' provide rapid insights into local and foreign experiences and an opportunity for informal direct exchanges. In the network it is an occasion for the transnational partners to present one case from their city that they think will be particularly inspiring and new for the host city. For the host city, it is also a moment to show a speedy and wide-ranging panorama of the best and most promising practices of the city, in particular initiatives that could not be shown during the site visits.

#### Example

During the 9 transnational meetings that took place within the Sustainable Food in Urban Communities thematic network, about 150 initiatives from the 10 partner cities have been presented often by original initiator of the initiative, discussed

by participants and recorded in video format building a rich library of short 3 min. clips illustrated by slides and commented in English.

#### Process

About 15 to 20 such short presentations are scheduled in the evening with some breaks to enable participants to meet each other, ask questions and discuss more in-depth the cases they are interested in directly with the stakeholders involved.

#### Outcome

This activity is initiated locally during a transnational meeting and should be repeated regularly even without international guests: the aim of such networking evenings at a local level is to ensure that all stakeholders involved in sustainable food in the city meet all the other stakeholders involved in sustainable food in the city at least once.





# TOOL / 'VISIONING'

## COLLECTIVELY BUILDING A VISION OF SUSTAINABLE FOOD IN THE CITY

### Purpose

The aim of envisioning tools is to enable the 'Local Support Group' or a local stakeholder group to collectively build a representation of a future local urban sustainable food system. Such medium term vision helps to create convergence between heterogeneous stakeholders and facilitates the shaping of a coherent and shared 'Local Action Plan' or strategy.

### Example

During the kick-off meeting of the Sustainable Food in Urban Communities thematic network, each partner city recorded a tentative visioning film clip answering the prompt: '5 years after the URBACT thematic network, what is the sustainable food scene looking like in your city? What has been achieved thanks to 3 years of transnational exchanges, local support group activities and local action plan development that otherwise would not have been achieved?' This 'jump into the future' helped the partner cities to step back from daily contingencies and at the same time to better grasp opportunities of the starting URBACT network.

### Process

Building a synchronised medium-term vision of what is desirable requires knowing where we would like to go collectively: this may seem obvious but concrete future visions (beyond wishful thinking) acknowledged by all stakeholders are very often lacking!

A vision in this exercise should be understood as:

Desirable: no negative scenario, only positive;

Medium-term: not right now and not in a lost future;

Synchronistic - no bits and pieces but a coherent food system likely to work;

Acknowledged: one step beyond m.a.y.a. (most advanced yet accepted);

This is not an official vision but rather a 'vision for thought' and should help to trigger questions such as: is it really the future we want? Is it a desirable way of living? Is it realistic medium-term? Is it coherent? Do we all agree?

### Outcome

Take inspiration from existing cases. Assemble pictures in a slide show presenting how your city food system may

look in 10 years. Wrap-up the vision by telling a 5 min. story as you present the slide show. Display it offline and online

as 'a possible vision' and trigger social conversations.







TRANSITION VERS L'ALIMENTATION DURABLE

**bristolfoodpolycouncil.org**

The online home of the Bristol Food Policy Council

Search



## **JOB CREATION POLICIES IN URBAN AGRICULTURE & SUSTAINABLE FOOD BUSINESSES, BRUSSELS**

A study of the economic potential of businesses related to sustainable food estimated that about 2000 jobs could be created by 2020, particularly in the field of food production. Regional ministers for environment & economy and their administrations are working together to develop this sector in collaboration with stakeholders through various mechanisms: the 'Jobs-environment alliance' ([www.aee-rbc.be](http://www.aee-rbc.be)), regional ERDF funding giving priority to sustainable food projects; an upcoming transversal action plan on sustainable food.

## **BRISTOL FOOD POLICY COUNCIL**

The Bristol Food Policy Council was launched in March 2011, as the first Food Policy Council in UK. It brings together a dozen stakeholders from diverse food-related sectors to examine how the food system is operating locally and to develop recommendations on how to improve it. Bristol Food Policy Council has been established as an independent body including representative from the local government and a board of local key players. Internationally Food Policy Councils aims are educating officials and the public, shaping public policy, improving coordination between existing programs, and starting new programs, mapping and publicising local food resources; creating new transit routes to connect underserved areas with full-service grocery stores; persuading government agencies to purchase from local farmers; organizing community gardens and farmers' markets, etc.

## **SUSTAINABLE MEALS IN CANTEENS, GOTHENBURG**

Workshops and educational information has been provided by the municipality of Gothenburg to support canteens organisations in working towards the ambition to make the citizens aware of the issue of sustainable food. In this way, large numbers of the population are reached. They receive healthy good quality food while decreasing the impact of the environment. Steps taken include for instance a policy to serve at least one vegetarian meal in the canteens every week.

## **SUSTAINABLE FOOD IN SCHOOLS, BRUSSELS**

The Sustainable Canteen programme focuses on collective catering kitchens in Brussels because they represent some 270 000 meals eaten every day and a significant environmental impact. Institutional kitchens can be used to raise awareness of a large group of users about sustainable food. The various pilot projects already run by Brussels Environment have targeted kitchens that cook for schools, institutions, companies, nursing homes and other establishments, whether run in-house or by external catering companies.



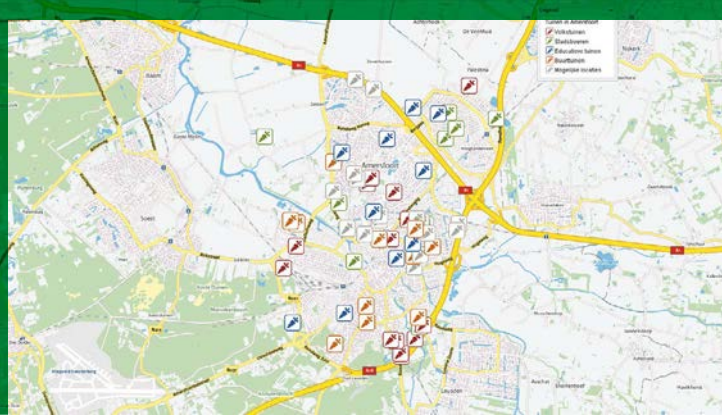
A large and extensive report has been commissioned both by Bristol City Council and Bristol National Health Service (NHS). The report has been carried out by an independent expert, in collaboration with the food community in Bristol. It draws an in-depth and exhaustive overview of food issues in Bristol as a basis for a food systems approach. The report identified a range of challenges and actions that have provided direction in Bristol now articulated by the Good Food message, the framework for food planning in Bristol.

A new retail market was built from scratch on a former derelict market site, with local budget funds (aprox. 3.5 million Euros) in the centre of the city as an energy efficient building. Work started in 2012, finished in September 2014, and the market is administered by the local authority. It is endowed with high European technical means needed to facilitate the direct sales of local products coming from the small-sized land holdings of Vaslui.

The market is divided into 5 well designed areas: quality control laboratories for food safety and security (which plays an important role in increasing the trust of people), fruits and vegetables, fish products, meat, and dairy products. Local producers are the main target of the market and they have special designated areas with special rent conditions in order to encourage local production of best quality products, shorten the food chain, and reduce CO2 emissions.







## DIGITAL URBAN FARMING MAP, AMERSFOORT

During the URBACT project one of the local actions in Amersfoort was to map current urban farming initiatives in combination with possible plots in the city where urban farming is possible. This is a joint initiative between municipality and the local Food Network of Amersfoort to inform citizens and promote urban farming initiatives.



## LYON FAIR AND SUSTAINABLE CITY LABEL

Lyon Fair and Sustainable City label was set up in 2010 in order to create a community of sustainable practices among the trade people in town. The label is characterised by transparency of selection criteria and progressive improvement processes for those who are not yet eligible. Due to the city's culinary cultural background (40% of the businesses belong to hotels, restaurants and cafés sector), the food topic is of course very well represented among awarded entities. The label stimulates cooperation between them and between food-related and non-food related fair and sustainable activities in the city. The aim is to reach 200 active members and strengthen the activities of the network.



## AMERSFOORT “CAPITAL OF TASTE 2012”

Throughout the year, the designation of the region Amersfoort as “Capital of Taste” was the occasion to organise a large variety of recreational, educational and popular activities around food. Together with several regional municipalities and citizens involved in local food actions “Capital of Taste” was a good way to promote regional food and address the connection between health, seasonal, fair and pure taste. Every year the elected “Capital of Taste” focuses on a signature product. In the case of Amersfoort and the surrounding municipalities, the typical Dutch potato in all its refined and gastronomic aspects was the focus product. “Capital of Taste 2012” culminated with the national Week of the Taste in early October with almost 700 activities in the Netherlands.





**FAIRTRADE**  
**CITY,**  
**GOTHENBURG**

Since spring 2011, Gothenburg has been certified a Fairtrade City. This means that the municipality must or should live up to criteria for fair trade procurement, conduct active information work on the subject and have a certain amount of Fairtrade products on supply in shops, cafés and workplaces. To meet the certification requirements companies, NGO's, organisations, unions, churches and the local authority work together, jointly contributing to a fairer and equal world. Fairtrade City Gothenburg is working on a local, regional and international level. url: [fairtradecity.goteborg.se](http://fairtradecity.goteborg.se)

**SABORES**  
**DE OURENSE**  
**& "COME**  
**OURENSE"**  
**AWARD**

The event 'Sabores de Ourense' takes place twice a year, for two weeks in autumn and two weeks in spring, and has been organised for the past 4 years. Restaurants, pubs and taverns are invited to create small dishes ("tapas") on a topic proposed, usually the use of local and seasonal raw products, to enter a sort of popularity and quality contest. Several prize categories are awarded by public vote, professional jury, press jury, etc. With around 6000 votes cast and around 40 businesses involved, this event is quite popular among neighbours and is also a tourist attraction. In autumn 2014, for the first time, this campaign had a special award, called 'Come Ourense' reserved for recipes based on local, seasonal and fresh ingredients. Seventeen different restaurants participated in this specific award. The prize was the development of a workshop about the recipe at the next Xantar event, the international fair about gastronomy of the city. Next events of 'Sabores de Ourense' Campaign are guaranteed by Tourism Department of City Council.







## 5. FOOD GOVERNANCE AND THE CITY AGENDA

Creating space for food in the city relates ultimately to the governance itself. Municipalities have traditionally had limited authority in the area of food. Cities involved in the URBACT network begin to develop a specific governance striving towards sustainable and quality food. They seek to raise awareness amongst decision makers on the strategic dimensions of food in an urban context. and to foster proper **food-oriented city leadership**.

Partner cities also consider food an asset. They explore possible synergies between food and other sectors of the city, overcoming administrative silos. A **food-oriented urban development** is emerging. Finally, the partner cities focus on food culture at the territorial level. They endeavour to pool together local food assets in a coherent way and create or recreate a **city food identity and label**.

### **5.1 Emerging food-oriented city leadership**

Cities usually do not have any (or limited)

official authority in terms of food. Food issues are generally dealt with at higher regional and especially national and international levels. But food brings together a number of local insidious problems that present challenges to municipalities: food poverty, food-related diseases, unhealthy diets, unequal access to quality food, city food supply vulnerability, etc. These many problems with their complex interdependencies and rebound effects should urge motivate cities to engage in food policies.

The City of Bristol, inspired by Canadian and American examples, created a Food Policy Council (see case study p 60). This Council is an informal advisory group of a dozen key stakeholders. It investigates food issues at city level and it is available to advise local policy makers on food-related issues. It summarises its function and role as 'validating, influencing, connecting, communicating and creating visibility' of all aspects of the sustainable food agenda.

Partner cities also aim to tackle food as an issue in all branches of the municipality.



The Brussels-Capital Region for instance explored a joint policy making process driven by the Ministers of Economy and Environment in collaboration with local stakeholders: the Job-Employment Alliance (see case study p 60). The overarching aim is to generate food-related entrepreneurship and employment through the development and greening of the sector by jointly identifying barriers and targeted actions needed to enable such development. Partner cities of the network show a growing involvement in addressing sustainability in the food system.

Municipalities integrate the sustainable food topic in various levels of their administration. They make use of their purchasing power at a strategic level to stimulate sustainable transition of their food providers (see case studies p 61).

Their very involvement in the Sustainable Food in Urban Communities URBACT thematic network shows their strong interest in exchanging policy practices, in building a Local Action Plan and in creating a city leadership on the topic.

## INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

- Investigate each part of the municipal administration dealing directly or indirectly with food. Create occasions for them to meet, exchange on mutual concerns and possible synergies; cross-link policies and policy objectives;
- Activate a local stakeholder group focused on sustainable food in an urban context topic. Blend formal representatives and usual suspects with legitimate newcomers. Keep it small and manageable and position it as an advisory group to the Municipal Council;
- Make use of the academic community who can bring objectivity, relevant research findings and helpful insights from other places to bear locally;
- Create larger gatherings around interesting food-related topics and do not be afraid to allow very open discussions;
- Relate to other relevant public authorities (European level, national level, regional level, nearby municipalities etc.) to address the transversal dimension of food and consider the food system beyond the city boundaries (e.g. peri-urban, regional production).

## 5.2 Food-oriented urban development

Urban planning in modern cities hardly ever takes food issues into consideration. Partner cities of the network reveal their lack of background and preparation on the topic. In particular, they generally lack information and studies on food in the urban perimeter. For example, who are the stakeholders? What are the flows of food supply from the urban perimeter entering the city? How is this food distributed to reach the consumers' plates? How are leftovers disposed of? What are the problems and where can unmet opportunities be found?

The Who feeds Bristol? report (see case study p 28) covers all these issues. It suggests a range of strategic orientations and priority actions to operate a transition towards a more healthy and sustainable food system. This report was acknowledged as an inspiring model by the partner cities. Most of them have undertaken similar Who feeds the city? studies covering their own territory. In parallel, partner cities involved in the URBACT process set up a 'Local Support Group' of stakeholders from the beginning of this programme, building either on groups or networks that already existed or starting from scratch. The Local Support Group aims to develop a proper sustainable food strategy. It articulates a set of priority actions already in progress in the city with actions inspired

and adapted from other partner cities of the network. These actions should be organised and presented into a Local Action Plan, which is approved by the municipality by the end of the URBACT process in mid-2015. The Local Action Plan should embody the emerging sustainable food policy of the city.

Among the rich set of actions generated in the network the program of rebuilding food markets by the city of Vaslui (see case study p 63) is a characteristic example. A large foreign international supermarket brand is currently settling in the city. At the same time the municipality is building brand new food markets offering similar facilities (i.e. large parking underground or on the roof top; similar size hosting many market stalls and shops; etc.) and combine them with traditional market assets (hosting quality fresh food with specific clearly identified areas reserved for local farmers and controlled by an laboratory established within the market). The partner cities illustrate how the URBACT process can be used to start or enrich food-oriented urban development. The process helps to bring together and strengthen existing opportunities of a sustainable food transition, and to explore and activate potential synergies working towards a more robust local sustainable food system.



## INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

- Make an inventory of all local initiatives, projects, activities, businesses, etc. involved or potentially interested, directly or indirectly in sustainable food, map them on the territory and provide them with opportunities to interact and exchange;
- Investigate where the food that feeds the city comes from: providers, stakeholders, flows, trends, opportunities and threats;
- Investigate the extent to which the planning system is engaged with and takes into consideration the whole food system rather than separate individual sections that have no inter-connection.

### 5.3 City food identity and labels

Ways to make food issues more visible and influence behavioural change at city level include local trainings and events (see case studies p 19, 79) the use of awards (see case study p 67), recognition schemes or labels, or the collective identification of positive examples. These can for instance inspire and encourage purchasing of fresh seasonal and local food; reducing food waste and circular economy thinking. Labelling and recognition schemes need to be simple, aimed also at 'non-green' audiences and help people to make a small shift. Cities can use such schemes to good effect.

For instance, the city of Lyon well-known for its high level cuisine and vibrant cooking culture intends to raise awareness on food sustainability. Its strategy is to capitalize on its already successful label

Lyon fair and sustainable city (see case study p 64) to stimulate the sustainable food sector.

For national cultures where food is less of a focus, an event, a campaign or a process that raises the profile of food issues and stimulates activity can provide a basis on which to build. The city of Amersfoort deploys large efforts to stimulate food culture through various events and manifestations likely to raise more interest in food among the emerging food activist communities and beyond. In 2012 the city was awarded 'Capital of Taste' of the Netherlands (see case study p 65). The municipality built on this opportunity and subsequently on the participation to the URBACT network to keep the momentum and continue the process of raising more interest in food locally.

Collective identities, labels or awards can be helpful positive tools, at least as a capitalisation process in order to give

coherence and visibility to the issue of sustainable food. Exposure to these kinds of initiatives or schemes can help to create aspiration and stimulate the emergence of more initiatives that relate to sustainable food within the network.

## INSIGHTS FOR CITIES

- Take stock of local established food reputation and culture, of related strengths and weaknesses;
- Use identified strengths and weaknesses as themes for public action campaigns; build action focussed partnerships, e.g. to reduce food waste, or to support local farms and local markets;
- Develop strengths or positive action and outcomes as part of a public and collective city identity;
- Look for local flagship food and drink products that embody sustainability and that can be labelled or promoted – existing or potential.

### 5.4 Reflections on food governance and the city agenda

The challenge that every city faces is first how to get the subject of sustainable food onto the city agenda and second how to keep it there. Solutions encompass a range of interventions research, infrastructure and skills investment, cultural activities etc. that together begin to make up what we are calling 'food governance'. These interventions help to embed new values and principles within city culture and within the policies and strategies of the municipality, other stakeholder organisations and businesses. At the core is a new partnership approach to food system reform, between the municipality and other stakeholders. This process of working in partnership is not easy but is possibly the only way to make the informed and impactful step-change of a scale and specificity that is required for a sustainable and low-carbon food system future.



Some governance-questioning tools:

## TOOL / 'EVIL PROJECTION'

### CHALLENGING THE EMERGING SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICY OF THE CITY

#### Purpose

Participating partners work hard following the URBACT participative local action planning process, engaging a strong local support group, building an effective local action plan and certainly all struggling to avoid the many obstacles that may stop the process... But do they really know what these obstacles are? How can these fuzzy threats that they have in the back of their minds become more tangible and clear? Would it be useful to share them in order to make all local stakeholders aware what to avoid?

The aim of the 'Evil Projection' tool is to give visibility to the potential threats to the URBACT process. These threats are shared either at the transnational level (in order to discover counterintuitive barriers) or at the local level (in order to strengthen each player's capability to avoid them).

#### Example

A short projective exercise in small groups is set-up to creatively generate the largest

panorama of threats to the URBACT process. The brief is formulated as such: "2016: the URBACT process failed in your city, the URBACT Local Support Group dissolved rapidly, the Local Action Plan was not implemented, local authorities and elected representatives now avoid the topic, stakeholders are upset, citizens disengaged, etc. Why did the network fail to meet its expectations/potential?"

#### Process

Each subgroup fills in forms with 3 to 5 key-mistakes to avoid. At the end of the exercise, the results are shared and clustered. Top threats are prioritised by all the participating stakeholders and the effect on the group is definitely stimulating. Some threats are explicitly formulated and pointed out as clear obstacles; other less expected threats are identified; stakeholders are mobilised to avoid them...

#### Outcomes

Threats to the participative local action planning process were clustered in three groups.

- Too much! A first group of threats relates to oversized and over-promising or over-expecting objectives.
- Not enough! A second group of threats relates to processes lacking in quality and perspectives.
- So what? A third and last group of threats

relates to the very fact that the project ends with no provisions and perspectives. The exercise may seem to put a damper on the enthusiasm of the participants but the contrary happens: for half an hour participants are allowed to be negative, to be creatively negative, imagining all the problems that might arise in order to reinforce their awareness and capability to avoid them!





# TOOL / 'LOCAL ACTION PLAN CRASH TEST'

## TESTING THE EMERGING SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICY OF THE CITY

### Purpose

The Crash test tool provides a collective challenge to a Local Action Plan in development by a city partner. The aim is to enable criticism and possibly strong critical inputs within a collaborative process that otherwise tends to emphasize only the positive contributions.

### Process

The city partners gather for a series of 20 min sessions where each city will in turn make a pitch for their Local Action Plan. These are presented in only 3 slides for a total of 10 min, on the state of the art of the action plan where the presenter does his or her best to convince the listeners. Then the other partner cities are encouraged to react and to be as critical as possible. For that purpose they are

equipped with signs expressing their points of view as if they were voting pro or contra. The signs express reasons why the local action plan may fail (i.e. 'It's too much!'; 'It's not enough!' and 'So what?') that partners have developed together in a previous session using the Evil projection tool (see 8.4.1 Evil projection)

### Outcome

The participants set aside for a moment positive thinking and collaborative attitude. They are allowed to be nasty and somewhat destructive at each other putting forward a strong critical sense. After the round of crash tests, city partners reconvene in their own teams for a time of intensive work to address the criticism they received.





**HOUSEHOLD  
RESILIENCE,  
VASLUI**

Mr and Mrs Tinaru, a retired couple of the higher middle-class may not be entirely representative of the 3-4000 single family houses with kitchen gardens. Indeed, their brand new house on a large 8000 m2 piece of land is above average. But their engagement with food seems to be very representative of the habits and aspirations of Vaslui households: they are organised as real self-producers, growing food on more than half of their plot, experimenting with many varieties of grapes and tomatoes, making their own wine and homemade preserves in the summer, storing food in their ‘natural fridge’ (a cellar built below the garden for that purpose) and welcoming any visitor who would like to taste their products.

**ALBATROS  
FOUNDATION,  
FOOD SCHOOLS  
PROMOTING  
REGIONAL  
FOOD, MESSINA**

The “Albatros Foundation” is the only highly specialised Technical Institute in Sicily that operates in the field of food and “New technologies for Made in Italy”. It aims to promote and disseminate the culture of innovation support and technology transfer to food business operators. The Albatros Foundation is a post-secondary school institution jointly founded by: the Antonello vocational school for catering and hoteliers; the University of Messina, Agricultural Economics Department; the Province of Messina; the Chamber of Commerce; the Non Solo Cibus Association, and other agribusiness sector enterprises. The foundation has become an important reference point for the dissemination of sustainable and traditional foods in the Sicilian region and the Messina area in particular. For instance, this year foundation members were selected to cook for the Festival di San Remo, the main Italian music festival.





## ORGANIC FARMERS' MARKETS, ATHENS

The main motivation in establishing organic farmers' markets is to provide access to healthy, local and organic food at affordable prices as there is such a limited supply of sustainable food in Athens. Presently, 28 organic farmers' markets operate in the Attica region, but none in Athens. This year the municipal council has approved the decision for a market in Patissia, a vulnerable area characterised by a low-income population and a mosaic of different cultures, as well as 3 other markets in separate neighbourhoods of the city. The goal of these new organic farmers' markets is to operate on a weekly basis.

## CONCLUSIONS

Food emerges as a new burning concern for which the cities in the network – though committed – were not entirely prepared. The experience of the network shows that striving towards a local sustainable food system goes beyond the question of land use and availability within the city and its outskirts.

A wider perspective is required addressing economic, legal, cultural and lifestyle questions.

Finding and making space for food is therefore a very pertinent issue for cities – not just in terms of physical space for food entrepreneurship and self-production, but in terms of a widened understanding of the public authorities' role and its administrative culture.

Cities are thus having to fight for space in terms of governance in order to:

- Facilitate economic activities including food production, but also new models of

value creation or income generation that combine multiple functions in a hybrid mix of production, delivery and transformation (processing);

- Change cultural representations of food, invest in infrastructure that helps to make good food more affordable and encourage a shift in daily practices towards more healthy and quality food choices;

- Adapt legal and administrative procedures and practices to enable partnerships and new forms of city food leadership at the scale of the urban territory, but also connected to food and agriculture policy at regional and national levels.

Partner cities are in the process of changing their governance to match the crosscutting and multi-dimensional nature of the food system.

It is both a challenge and an opportunity for them to develop a more participatory and multi-level form of food governance.





# REFERENCES & USEFUL LINKS

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2 - Excerpts from Kevin Morgan's book section - *The New Urban Foodscape: Planning, Politics and Power* – in A. Viljoen and K. Bohn (eds) *Second Nature Urban Agriculture: Designing*

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Related URBACT projects:  
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<http://urbact.eu/diet-for-a-green-planet>

URBACT Gastronomic cities project (2012-2015), Five cities working together to promote gastronomy as a key urban development,  
<http://urbact.eu/gastronomic-cities>

URBACT Markets project (2012-2015), Driving urban regeneration, sustainable living, employment and entrepreneurship,  
<http://urbact.eu/urbact-markets>



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*“The 10 cities that participated in the URBACT project [Sustainable Food in urban Communities] have collectively generated a body of knowledge about sustainable food systems that will be of enormous value to their urban peers in the global north and the global south.”*

Professor Kevin Morgan, Cardiff University, January 2015

**The aim of this handbook is to share the key lessons learnt during the three years of exchanges and experiences of the network; to make it available to other cities and stimulate them to start a similar journey towards a more sustainable and localised food system. It is our hope that we can inspire other cities to put food on their agenda and that cities across the world will make concrete changes that jointly generate positive impacts and drive sustainable food system reform.**

This handbook draws on some of the 130 examples of promising local practices as well as on the policy evidence shared by the ten cities participating in the URBACT Thematic Network “Sustainable Food in Urban Communities” (5/2012-4/2015). The ten cities joined forces to develop low-carbon and resource-efficient urban food systems and to implement Local Action Plans.

Rather than a final report, we have opted for an easy-to-follow and accessible handbook written from the pragmatic and practical perspective of people who work in cities and deal with the complex issues of urban life and the food system on a daily basis. It is based on what is possible with selected examples of hands-on robust experiences that we have found inspirational - many achieved through creativity, vision and commitment, despite limited resources.

A range of materials and different entry points are provided that cater for different interests. The focus is on nine key topics that have emerged from the exchanges between the partner cities and their joint experience. Three main categories of information are provided for three main audiences:

- Insights for city policy makers on the importance for cities to build a sustainable and more localised food system
- A series of key learning and practical tools for practitioners and actors who would like to start a similar process in their own cities
- A rich and varied set of short case studies for a wider circle of interested readers included throughout the handbook that illustrate ways in which sustainable food initiatives can change daily life in the city.