Sustainable transformation through city-region food systems

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Food: Locally Embedded  Globally Engaged

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Food Hub Case Studies and Survey

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What is a food hub?

- Big picture definition
- “Networks and intersections of grassroots, community-based organisations and individuals that work together to build increasingly socially just, economically robust and ecologically sound food systems that connect farmers with consumers as directly as possible” (Blay-Palmer et al., 2013)
What is a food hub?

- Survey (practical) definition (2015):

  "Food hubs are actual or virtual places through which food is collected and resold to processors, retailers or restaurants. Food hubs can also provide space for other food-related activities including food preparation, handling and/or processing. This survey is interested in local and/or sustainable food."

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Purpose of Our Study

• To better understand existing and potential capacity/resiliency of food hubs
• To provide an opportunity for stakeholders to share first hand experiences/observations.
• To identify tangible barriers/challenges both operative and entry level.
• To identify potential policy recommendations, areas for additional funding and or logistical support.
Desired Outcome

- A more vibrant and robust local food distribution system.
- Shorten the gap that exists between eaters and growers.
- Elevating the visibility of the importance local food plays in our society.
- Adding resiliency to the value added food chain.
Food Hub Case Studies
Impacts & Benefits

• Economies of scale
  Efficiencies and cost savings
• Local economic development
  Support for local businesses
• Facilitating local/regional food distribution
• Building partnerships & relationships
• Increasing access to fresh, local food
• Increasing food system knowledge
Challenges & Limitations

• Access to capital
• Insufficient supply
  Local food, organic food, processed goods
• Transportation and distribution problems
• Dependence on volunteer labour
• Competition from conventional retailers and distributors
Keys to Success

• Build/expand gradually
• Integrate work across food chain
• Engage with the local community
  Build relationships across different sectors
• Creativity
• Persistence
Creative Public Procurement for Sustainable Food Systems

University of Toronto

Nottingham Trent University

University of the Arts, London
Creative Public Procurement

- **Integration** – How can university procurement help integrate sustainable “infrastructure of the middle” into the food system?
- **Scale** – How can university procurement help scale up sustainable local food systems?
- **Governance Models** – What governance models can embed sustainable local procurement practices into university policy to reduce reliance on individual champions?

*What is the role of the non-profit sector in supporting creative public food procurement?*
Project SOIL
Shared Opportunities on Institutional Lands
## Project SOIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Scaling Up and Out</th>
<th>Innovative Governance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food / Health nexus opens doors to conversations, partnerships b/w 1) Civil society, gov’t, private sectors 2) Natural, social, health sciences</td>
<td>Demonstration value of food-growing projects Replication of lessons: what factors allowed for increased scale? Inter-scalar influence of regulations e.g. food safety</td>
<td>New forum for conversations, negotiations b/w Public, private, third sector — and ‘no sector’ — e.g. over appropriate use, control of land and resources</td>
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Food Share
Increasing Access, Knowledge and Consumption of Vegetables and Fruits through Community-led Projects

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## FoodShare

### Integration
Non-profit hub and community food centre
* demonstrates, *animates, *
* trains and *
* advocates through produce
distribution, growing,
cooking and school
programs

### Scaling Up and Out
From 40 Good Food boxes/month in 1994 to $2.1 million sales in 2014,
Mobile and Good Food Markets, Good Food Box and Bulk Produce to
School & Communities now replicated across Canada

### Innovative Governance
New third sector supply chain, with civil society lead partnering with
public and private sector including strong farm coop sector relationships
and innovation

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Guelph Centre for Urban Organic Farming
Lessons

- Diversity
- Flexibility
- Innovation
- Sharing, communications
- Realism
Understanding City Region Food Systems
Planning for a more food secure and resilient city

FAO Food for the Cities Programme:
Building food secure and resilient city regions

RUAF Foundation
CityFoodTools project
Bridging the rural-urban divide through city region food systems

Upland forest provides water harvesting, flood control, wildlife conservation, carbon sequestration, scenery & recreation, and timber & non-timber products.

Peri-urban & rural green wedges are biodiversity-friendly foodway corridors with multi-scale and mixed crop/livestock operations.

Farmers markets, retail & wholesale markets, food hubs, and community gardens in the urban core enable access to fresh, locally produced food resources.

Coastal resources are managed for biodiversity, scenery & recreation, storm surge protection, and aquaculture.

Riparian zones are managed for biodiversity, flood control, wildlife and pollinator movement, urban heat island control, and aesthetic & recreational benefits.
Overall purpose of the programme:

- Strengthen capacity of local authorities and other stakeholders within a local food system to improve food and nutrition security of urban dwellers
- Reinforce urban-rural linkages for more inclusive, efficient and resilient activities of small scale agriculture within a local food system
Focus and scope: looking beyond urban boundaries

- production, processing, marketing and consumption
- urban centres, surrounding peri-urban and rural hinterland
- exchange and flow of food, people, goods, and ecosystem services
- urban and rural linkages; nexus between people, agriculture, biodiversity, water and energy
### Integrated approach: Components of a Food System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food and Agriculture</th>
<th>Natural resource management</th>
<th>Socio-economic and health factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agro-biodiversity</td>
<td>Soil and water</td>
<td>Hunger and malnutrition</td>
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<td>Livestock and aquaculture</td>
<td>Land tenure</td>
<td>Food safety and street food</td>
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<td>Food markets/supply</td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Shifting diets and habits (sustainable diets)</td>
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<td>Forest and trees</td>
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<td>Migration and labour</td>
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</table>
Define boundaries and flows: area of the study

• Jurisdictional boundaries: municipality, sub-region, province
• Natural boundaries: rivers, sea, mountain ridges, watersheds
• Influence of the city on the region and influence of the region on the city.
• Transport distance and mode to the city
• Production potential/capacity in relation to the city’ food demand (for at least fresh products)
• Social/cultural exchange, people coming for shopping/recreation to the city etc.
Relevant aspects of the City region food system

- Who feeds the city region; where does the food come from; what and how much food is produced locally in the city region?
- Food processing and manufacturing: which companies prepare/manufacture the food consumed in the city region?
- Food wholesale and distribution: who supplies the food to businesses/markets that sell food to the consumers?
- Food marketing, catering and retail: where do citizens buy their food?
- Food consumption: what do people in the city region eat?
Relevant aspects of the City region food system

• Food and organic waste: where and how much food and organic waste is generated along the food chain and how is it managed?

• What are the strengths and vulnerabilities of the current city region food system
  • To what extent is the current food system resilient to shocks? Which areas, what parts of the food chain and which stakeholders are more vulnerable?
  • What are weaknesses and needs of local smallholders?

• What are the priority areas that need to be addressed What are the 5-10 main critical issues that require further research and in-depth assessment?
MANY THANKS!

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Canada

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Ontario

Laurier
Balsillie School of International Affairs

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MANY THANKS!