Making the case and measuring progress: towards a systems approach to healthy and sustainable food

Sustainable Food Cities – Cardiff University
2 – 2.05  Housekeeping

2.05 – 2.20  1- Sustainable Food Cities & the problem of measuring impact, Alizee Marceau

2.20 – 2.40  2- Linking research and practice - how the project came together, Dr. Ana Moragues Faus

2.40 – 3  3 - Drilling into the details – how this toolbox works, Alizée Marceau

3 – 3.05  4 - Measuring impact: a work in progress, Dr. Ana Moragues Faus

3.05 – 3.30  Q&A
1- Sustainable Food Cities & the problem of measuring impact

Alizee Marceau
Currently 47 Sustainable Food Cities Network members

www.sustainablefoodcities.org
The Sustainable Food Cities approach is about...

- Creating a city-wide **cross-sector partnership** of public agencies (health, environment, economy), businesses, NGOs, community organisations and academic bodies.

- Developing a **joint vision** and **common goals** on how healthy and sustainable food can become a defining characteristic of their city.

- Develop and implementing an **action plan** that leads to significant measurable improvements in all aspects of food, health and sustainability.

“It is about completely re-imagining, and ultimately reshaping, a city (or town, borough, district, county) through the lens of good food”
Six key issues

1. Promoting healthy and sustainable food to the public.
2. Tackling food poverty and increasing access to affordable healthy food.
3. Building community food knowledge, skills, resources and projects.
4. Promoting a vibrant and diverse sustainable food economy.
   Eg:
   Action 1: Support new sustainable food entrepreneurs
   Action 2: Protect and/or re-establish vital food infrastructure
   Etc...
5. Transforming catering and food procurement.
6. Reducing waste and the ecological footprint of the food system.
The Awards structure...

... is designed to recognise and celebrate the success of those places taking a place-based, systems approach to food and that are achieving significant positive change on all key food issues.
The Sustainable Food Cities model is...

- **place-based**: action focused around cities and city-regions
- **systems approach**: focused around improving all aspects of the food system
Problem of measuring impact

Practitioner
How can I show the impact my project is having?

Policy maker
How can I be confident that my limited resources are being invested effectively to achieve my outcomes?
2- Linking research and practice - how the project came together

Dr. Ana Moragues Faus
A participatory action research process

Demand from SFCN and other cities to measure impact: The future of our food

Measuring progress and impact from the bottom-up:
• Practitioners needs, perspectives and knowledge
• Useful: toolbox
• First step in the journey: ESRC Impact Accelerator Account

Methodology:
1. Literature review
2. Workshops
3. Consultation
4. Application
Literature review

Local level: Developing tools for mapping and assessing sustainable city region food systems (CityFoodTools) RUAF Foundation (coordination), Laurier Centre for Sustainable Food Systems, FAO-Food for Cities

National level: Sustainable food system indicators for the UK (UK Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, DEFRA 2013)

International level: Sustainable Development Goals Indicators (UN, 2016)

Participatory workshops

Cardiff on the 5th of November 2015
London on the 2nd of December 2015
Edinburgh on the 10th of February 2016
Liverpool on the 22nd of March 2016
## Basic definitions

Frameworks to develop indicators: theme-based and goal oriented

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>An overarching aim, e.g. heathy cities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outcome</td>
<td>A state or position which is reached in order that the goal is achieved, e.g. Low incidence of diet-related illnesses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td>A measure of progress towards delivery of an outcome, that is, an increase/improvement/change in /movement in a relevant and measurable parameter; e.g. decrease in the number of diet-related illnesses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Defining goals and outcomes
Indicators Criteria

**SMART Criteria:**

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Relevant**
- **Time-bound**

**Measuring progress. Indicators should:**

- Not be resource intensive or too expensive.
- Use existing data as far as possible.
- Look at what's already there - adopt it.
- Not be meaningful - specific to what we're doing.
- Quantitative measures may take a long time, but qualitative may be a quicker way to measure impact.
- Note: proxy measures can be easier in the short term.

**Not exclusive - a resource for people to choose from:**

**Important:**

- Measures of what we're doing.
- Indicators of whether we're having an impact.

**Actions working?**

- How can we be part of SRTW?
- What is our evidence?
- How do we feel we are important?
- What always fit award criteria?
## Indicators Criteria

| Available | - easy to gather information  
|          | - open source and shareable  
|          | - using what’s already there  
| Low cost | - resource-light in terms of time, people  
|          | - inexpensive to collect (where appropriate)  
|          | - recognise that some indicators will require investment and resources  
| Accessible | - easy to understand and communicate  
|          | - meaningful to relevant audiences, especially decision-makers  
| Relevant & useful | - measuring things that actually have an impact – causality  
|          | - measuring progress towards Sustainable Food City outcomes  
|          | - measuring things that practically encourage positive change  
| Comparable | - capable of being compared between different places and at the same place at different times  
| Timed | - measureable regularly throughout the process  
|          | - consistent in terms of the time period being measured  
|          | - easy to repeat at different stages in the process  
| Credible | - reliable, robust, consistent and rigorously collected  
|          | - transparent and with confidence in their validity  
|          | - not based on assumptions  
| Collectively-generated | - collected and owned by programme participants i.e. not requiring external expertise (unless unavoidable)  
| Diverse | - a variety of different types of measures – a basket of options  
|          | - both qualitative and quantitative  
|          | - capable of being used in conjunction with each other – triangulation when specific or direct indicator is not found  

Identifying indicators

- Food businesses provide high-quality food to a high environmental standard
- Higher quality of new developments
- Increase local sourcing
- Increase in numbers of people involved in food growing spaces
- Increase of organic and other schemes with lower environmental impact
- Increase of food waste reduction
- Reduction of carbon footprint through the food system
- Reduce environmental impact of food transport
- Increase use of electric distribution systems
- Increase of local/regional distribution hubs
- Strong network of food growing spaces
- Increase of food growing spaces available
- Increase in number of food growing locations
- Increase of organic and other schemes with lower environmental impact
Selecting indicators
## Building a framework

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**Cardiff University**
Consultation

Ongoing:

• SFC network members
• Experts and practitioners from different organisations: city council, public health, WRAP, etc.
• International experts

Still open!

a) Do the **purpose and utility** of this document and its conceptual framework appear clearly? Do you consider it to be useful for your programmes/projects?

b) Are there any **meta indicators, activities, case studies or pieces of evidence missing**?
3 - Drilling into the details – how this toolbox works

Alizee Marceau
## Conceptual framework

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<td>MARKET BASED MECHANISMS</td>
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EVIDENCE

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<td>Improving physical and mental health and wellbeing by reducing food poverty; improving access to affordable healthy food; promoting healthy weight and healthy diets; and increasing participation in food related physical and social activity.</td>
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<td>Reducing the negative ecological and ethical impacts of the food system from production, processing and distribution to consumption and waste, including GHG emissions, soil and water degradation, biodiversity loss, waste and poor animal welfare.</td>
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| LEVERS FOR CHANGE     | PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION |
| (Proxy indicators)    | Policies & Strategies         |
|                       | Infrastructure                |
|                       | Public Services & Support     |
|                       | Knowledge & Awareness         |
|                       | Market Based Mechanisms       |

| EVIDENCE               | PUBLISHED RESEARCH, ADVISORY DOCUMENTS & CASE STUDIES |
## Meta-indicators

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<td>Decrease in the number of people requiring emergency food aid</td>
<td>Increase in the number of jobs in the local food economy</td>
<td>Decrease in food related greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decrease in the number of people overweight or obese</td>
<td>Increase in the amount of money circulating in the local food economy</td>
<td>Decrease in the consumption of meat and meat-based products</td>
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<td>Decrease in the number of people malnourished</td>
<td>Increase in gross value added within the local food economy</td>
<td>Decrease in the consumption of highly processed products</td>
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<td>Decrease in the consumption of salt, sugar, fat and meat</td>
<td>Increase in the number of viable independent local food businesses</td>
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(Visual representation of the framework, including icons and color coding for each section.)
# Levers for change

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## Levers for Change (proxy indicators)

| Infrastructure & planning | The Council works to prevent the development of food deserts (where people cannot access affordable healthy food within 500m) and food swamps (where the high street is dominated by fast food outlets). | The Council maps redundant retail and brownfield sites and makes them available to new food enterprises, for example through use of meanwhile and special leases and business rates reductions and holidays. | The Council maps green and brownfield sites that could be used for food growing, composting and local food processing and distribution and makes them available to local communities. |

- The Council/city protects and/or re-establishes vital local sustainable food infrastructure, such as Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land, local processing and wholesale businesses, food hubs and distribution networks.
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### Levers for Change (proxy indicators)

**Infrastructure & planning**

- The Council works to prevent the development of food deserts (where people cannot access affordable healthy food within 500m) and food swamps (where the high street is dominated by fast food outlets).

  - 1c 7a 8a 43a 49b CS13 CS14 CS15

- The Council maps redundant retail and brownfield sites and makes them available to new food enterprises, for example through use of meanwhile and special leases and business rates reductions and holidays.

  - 9a 10a 52a CS16 CS56

- The Council maps green and brownfield sites that could be used for food growing, composting and local food processing and distribution and makes them available to local communities.

  - CS17

- The Council/city protects and/or re-establishes vital local sustainable food infrastructure, such as Grade 1 and 2 agricultural land, local processing and wholesale businesses, food hubs and distribution networks.

  - 30a CS18 CS19
Evidence


   1c The report recommends that ‘Local authorities should establish food access plans that will identify any physical barriers to affordable, sustainable, nutritious food in their area and develop an action plan to overcome them. Local authorities should build on the work already being done by the Sustainable Food Cities Network to boost access to affordable, nutritious food in local areas.’ It specifically looks at the need to address physical inabilities to access a sufficient quantity and quality of food’ (p14) and the problem of ‘fat swamps’ in urban areas (p16).


   7a The Canadian study using GPS technology ‘showed that exposure to junk food outlets had a significant effect on a child's likelihood of making a junk food purchase’ and that therefore ‘bylaws and policies should be enacted that restrict the concentration of junk food outlets around schools.’
Case studies

CS13. London Borough of Waltham Forest has adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance to deny planning permission to new fast food outlets within 400 metres of schools.

CS14. Leicester City Council introduced a Street Trading Policy to prevent burger vans trading outside schools.
What we aim to achieve with this toolbox

Aim 1: For local food practitioners:
- to make the case for their local food programme
- to help plan and evaluate their work

Aim 2: For local authorities or commissioners:
- to have a robust and comprehensive collation of evidence showing the impact of local cross-sector sustainable food programmes
4 – Measuring impact: a work in progress

Dr. Ana Moragues Faus
Key considerations

- Bottom-up process:
  - Place-based
  - Tool for action
- Complexity
  - Measurements
  - Impact
- Cities, municipalities are not contained entities
Moving forward

- Integration feedback and results from Bristol and Cardiff
- Link to different processes
- Communication
- Resources: citizen science
- Integrate diversity and lived experiences
Contact us

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Alizee Marceau, Sustainable Food Cities amarceau@soilassociation.org