

## F2F Web#1 FAL BARCELONA

### Citizens' involvement

#### Main objective of the initiative

Development and piloting of open source food technology, and affiliated processes, that can facilitate the management, monitoring, socialization, and efficiency of food production, elaboration, consumption and recycling in cities.

#### Sub-objective (and the focus of the presentation):

Socializing food tech as a tool to solve community challenges while building capacity in its use and hacking in communities of practice



#### Levels of citizen's involvement

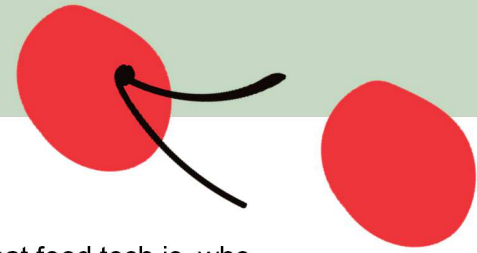
- citizen collaborating: steering committee (SC) & open call
- informing: online events and participation in dialogues
- consulting: attending events and talking with community members
- empowering: educating on what open tech solutions are, why we should prioritize them, who can create them, and how they can be used in online events and in our SC

## Starting point of the citizens' involvement: Our first target community on our path to do this: Barcelona's food activists

- through 1-1 conversations and our participation in local dialogues
- Ownership of food tech in citizens and local initiatives. This enables policy makers to consider citizen food tech as an issue to take up
- 1 year of engaging with vocal actors in Barcelona's dynamic food community
  - Who are these actors: those leading the charge for innovation and policy in the food community
- Key actors were invited to the Food Tech 3.0 Steering Committee
- Key moments:
  - 2nd SC meeting at Connect Hort (local urban garden)
  - Remix el Barrio exhibition and activity at Connect Hort
  - Steering Committee participants (Doris and Edith) actively proposing methodologies for engagement and reflection with the Food Tech SC – U-theory method
  - Participation in local events related to food and stakeholder mapping with the Municipality

## Economic rationale

- Securing funding is validation of an approach. In order to secure funding, and make alternatives appetizing to the market, we need to continue to socialize their potential and use
- How can we secure funding for open and citizen-centered projects? Especially when they do not propose to operate like traditional, capitalist ventures (i.e. economic gains are only 1 of their goals, not the only goal)
- The market is not currently designed to support alternative initiatives.
  - One of the main questions we have is how to secure competitive funding for citizen-centered projects. Now, there are ample groups of social impact investors but will that funding be enough or be accessible to support food tech innovators?
  - The second question is ensuring that there is funding available to support open initiatives.
- We plan to explore a variety of funding options, including public funding, crowd-sourcing, but also traditional forms of investment.



## Challenges at the beginning

- There was (and still is) a general lack of understanding about what food tech is, who creates it and who uses it. Currently, people associate food tech with large agtech groups like Monsanto or the wide variety of labs making meat in a petri dish.
- This became a central point in ALL of our meetings with steering committee members and stakeholders and in presentations. It was clear we needed to explain *what* Food Tech was but also differentiate between the current field of food tech and the field of food tech that Fab Lab Barcelona and other food tech actors who are supporting open, equitable and fair solutions are striving for and *HOW* this could impact the food community at large. We worked to overcome this by offering existing, tangible examples and imagining hypotheticals using our steering committee's innovations as examples.
- For example, we frequently use the **Smart Citizen Kit** example to show how it could support professional urban or peri-urban farmers or a citizen working on their balcony garden.
  - This was most effective when participants could actually engage with the tech artefact-- conversations and powerpoints can only take us so far, which was a limitation during the first year of the project due to COVID-19

## Current challenges

- Ensuring that **there are** citizen-centered food tech initiatives to compete with big, traditional food tech
- **Creating support** for tech alternatives to ensure that there are **viable** citizen-centered food tech initiatives to compete with big food tech. The past year of talking about food tech and helping bring forward the idea of alternatives does not mean anything if the alternatives that are developed are not accessible to potential users. Here, accessibility might refer to the financial aspect or the socialization of the initiative or even legislative limitations.
- Another is ensuring there is support, both from innovators and from the market for open innovation. Communities like the maker community associated with Fab Labs works with open practices, but there are worries, especially from non-practicing innovators that are curious to incorporate open practices, that their work might be stolen, particularly by larger corporations, and scaled at a price that they are not able to compete with. We need to understand how we can balance protecting innovators' work and pushing for open innovation, which means that we're also experimenting with mixing open and closed practices.

## Key-points relevant for my LAB - Lessons learnt Good practices

- Start slow & build trust
  - Integrate in the food community: Fab Lab from passive to active participation
  - 1-on-1s to understand the city context & present our concept to key actors (--> steering committee)
  - Facilitated meeting new actors
- Creating familiarity & a space for interaction
  - Fostering familiarity with food tech through real examples
  - Providing space for SC to offer input to how their approach can impact food tech (2nd steering committee meeting, in-person October event)
- Key actors demonstrate ownership of new definition of food tech
  - SC explained their contribution to Food Tech and how Food Tech is relevant to what they're doing
  - Facilitate onboarding of new actors
- Sharing the message through an "Open call" for food tech initiatives: sharing the message and inviting innovators to participate in a holistic mission

## Mistakes and Bottlenecks

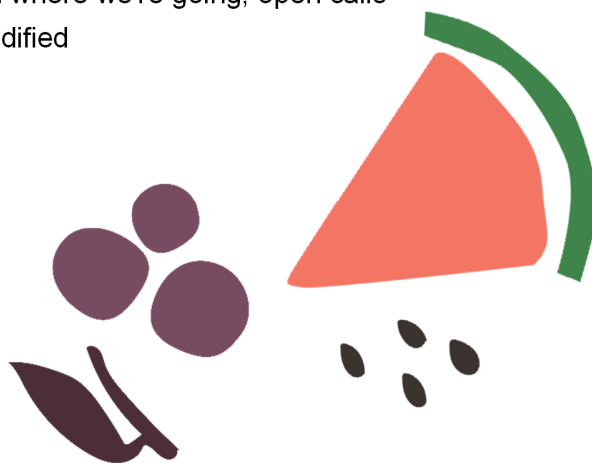
- Sharing the overall aims of food tech and foodSHIFT at the start of conversations with new actors (the idea was too new and there wasn't a trajectory for how to achieve the aims, which made actors uneasy and created expectations that weren't necessarily in line with how the project actually evolved)

## Key recommendations for other citizens' initiatives

- Use artefacts to demonstrate new ideas to make them more relatable; create spaces for key actors to demonstrate that they understand where we're going; open calls to invite new actors in once the message is solidified

## Framework conditions

- Step-wise approach!!!
- Participatory technology



## Q&A - Solutions designs

- Do you think some of the food tech solutions could be shared/implemented at Baumhaus?
- After the first year of scaling at the Barcelona level, we can work with Baumhaus to introduce the Food Tech 3.0 innovations in their community
- Baumhaus team could potentially serve as mentors for the food tech 3.0 acceleration program
- testing the innovations we already have in Fab Lab (smart citizen kit) in Baumhaus to present the concept of alternative food tech (tech that is open, accessible, just and citizen-driven)

