

**SHORT\_REPORT#1****INVOLVING CITIZENS AND PEOPLE IN URBAN FOOD COMMUNITIES AND INITIATIVES**

The FoodSHIFT 2030 project brings together urban communities committed to change in the way their food system operates.

A consultation process between cities has identified common themes for peer learning.

Involving citizens and people in urban food communities and initiatives is the theme of the first of several webinars.

There are two important dimensions to the places in which the communities in question participate. The first is the food local community. This community is a 'community of interest', i.e. a group of different people, who share a common interest for the food policy of the city, and related activities. But beyond a community of interest that offers a framework for collective reflection, community engagement can be an active participation in "Citizen driven innovation" which are grass-root initiatives, that are new (in an incremental or radical way) and initiated by city-region inhabitants.

The objectives of the webinar were the following:

- Sharing experiences in establishing local food community and initiatives, and in contributing to the success of citizens/people led initiatives
- Discussing main bottlenecks and difficulties
- Brainstorming about pathways and communication tools which could help (=solutions)
- Six cities actively participated in this learning process by exchanging experiences.

**Initiators, resources and finances**

The exchange of experiences between the six cities shows very different starting points, which can be grouped into three types of situations:

- ✓ The initiators are motivated volunteers who share an ambitious common objective and work towards it in an organised group (e.g. association) (Bari, Berlin)

- ✓ The initiators are municipalities that seek to involve their citizens in a sustainable change of their local food system (Avignon, Oostende)
- ✓ The initiators are companies or other actors, and one of their objectives is the mobilisation of citizens in a change of the food system (Barcelona, Copenhagen)

Because of their different configurations, the human and financial resources are very different, and the "good practices" that emerge from these exchanges are sometimes quite specific.

## Resources

	Volunteers	Municipalities	Private sector or Technology Competence Centre
Human Resources	Voluntary work that is inexpensive but sometimes complicated to manage	Paid work but can be perceived as politically charged	Paid but fund-raising work, which may have commercial connotations
Financial Resources	Difficult to obtain and to consolidate over time	Dependent on the will of the elected representatives (possible changes depending on the outcome of the elections)	Difficult to establish over time as it depends on the business model

## Trajectories for initiating the participatory process with the inhabitants

The initiatives each follow their own particular trajectory, which corresponds to their values, the operating culture and skills of the initiator and the human, technical and financial resources available to them.

Main Goal of the LAB	Type	Initiators	City
Setting-up a Children's Parliament	Dialogue platform	Setting-up by the municipality with human and financial resources	Avignon (FR)
Community-led initiative around the FoodHub setting-up	Dialogue platform	Facilitated by individuals without any starting-up fund	Berlin (DE)
Creating an urban gardening community on abandoned land	Dialogue platform	Facilitated by individuals without any starting-up fund	Bari (IT)
City dialogues around the AgriFood Park	Series of events	Facilitated and funded by municipality	Ostende (BE)
Strengthening the regional food system by creating awareness, recognition and learning about food system transition based on selected innovation actions	Series of events and training	Facilitated by a mix between private start-ups, university with municipality support	Copenhagen (DN)
Socializing food tech as a tool to solve community challenges while building capacity in its use and hacking in communities of practice	Series of events and training	Facilitated by a Fab-Lab at University	Barcelona (SP)

Participants to the discussion platforms being regular in attending events was identified as an important factor in initiating a real dynamic of collective participation. For this, access to public funding is an important key to sustaining the organisation of the dialogue events.

Another dimension is the communication around the events, relayed by social networks, but also by the local press or other networks (for example, the city's food council in Berlin). The moments of exchange between the participants, the conviviality around the meetings and the quality of the meeting place play an important role in the regularity of participants' participation and the motivation to get involved, almost always on a voluntary basis.

## Challenges

Mobilising citizens and city dwellers is complicated. But mobilising farmers is often an even more difficult challenge.

Other issues that often came up during the webinar were among the followings:

- ✓ Enrolling a wider circle of citizens and inhabitants than the beginners, especially developing collaborations within a growing 'city food network'
- ✓ Finding a balance between the participatory and "democratic" functioning and the efficiency and economic functioning, that could improve the establishment of the initiative
- ✓ Finding a way of communicating and stabilising the relationship between the municipal administration and the way of developing of citizens' rooted initiatives, which are often based on a mixture of voluntary work and salaried employment
- ✓ Developing unstructured spontaneous citizens' initiatives into an more formal organisation with sometimes legal existence and public funding, while retaining the enthusiasm and sometimes militant commitment of the initiators, e.g. in Bari transforming the collective gardening activity on abandoned land into a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) initiative
- ✓ Funding investments to increase the size and scope of the actions
- ✓ Finding land in the city to establish market gardening initiatives
- ✓ Finding farmers close to the cities in order to to supply food to consumers' initiatives that are willing to buy local (and organic) food
- ✓ Spreading the message of "food low tech" and acting so that low tech carried by citizen collectives assert an identity and a capacity to resist the high tech of big business

City dialogues help in:

- ✓ Raising awareness on new developments (wide communication needed!) and creating dialogue (pro & con) that could inspire people & create a positive vibe
- ✓ Thinking out of the box
- ✓ Involving politicians
- ✓ Coming back with changed plans and communicating the final plans.
- ✓ Raising awareness of the youth, for example empowering children through a "Parliament of Kids), who can test the implementation of their projects and ideas, i.e. rendering concrete the essence of their future "citizenship"

## **Framework conditions that support the enrolment process**

- ✓ Municipalities should care about setting-up conditions that really support the building up of long lasting structures initiated by citizens and inhabitants
- ✓ City council programmes should address the support of civic involvement through grassroots movements
- ✓ Municipalities should dedicate a global budget to implement the actions and also to provide a human support to the implementation of the food policy
- ✓ Municipality should care about proposing participatory ways to engage dialogue with the grass root initiatives, as it is a key aspect of their success

## **Out-of-the-box - Thinking ahead**

### ***Participatory budgeting***

This an incentive given by the Municipality, in order to make local food strategy more citizen-driven. Municipality make a budget available, and its use is decided upon citizens' voting.

Necessary to predefine themes under which actions can be developed and predefine budget that can be allocated to these different actions

How?

- Citizens can turn in projects related to strategic or operational goals.
- Citizens can vote for which project should be implemented
- Citizens can allocate predefined municipal budget to projects

### ***Change at farmers' school***

Farmers' motivation is weak in many cases, and for many reasons. One being maybe linked to the education at farmers' schools. Here, we could try to make them more aware about opportunities to enroll in citizens' led initiatives.

### ***Be innovative in your "Access to land" strategy***

There is an option for the municipalities to buy land, and contract a farmer to produce according to specific requirements. This could solve the issue of not finding any farmer willing to join any citizens' led initiative.

Recruiting or contracting farmers is very demanding, there should be more experience sharing to perform it.

Terre de Liens in France has a good model to make land accessible to innovative farmers.

### ***Develop social business models***

There is a need to find ways to long-term finance the initiatives, and not depend only on project's funding.

This is an important challenge, and can be solved case by case, for ex. Turning urban agriculture into Community Supported Agriculture, or developing trainings for the citizens.

Need to build competencies in setting-up social business models.

### ***Think what can move a "citizen letter" addressed to the Maire***

Some projects led by citizens can start from a citizen letter written to the Maire, like a child asking for the "Parliament of Kids" in Oostende

### ***Argue about your impact with evidences***

Transfer benefits into "numbers" to visualize them, show social return on investment. This may help in raising long term public funding.

### ***Link with other Cities***

After the first year of scaling at the Barcelona level, a joint work could be initiated with Baumhaus in Berlin, to introduce the Food Tech 3.0 innovations in their community

Testing the innovations experimented in the Fab Lab in Barcelona (smart citizen kit) would be then presented to Baumhaus initiative in Berlin, to promote the concept of alternative food low tech, i.e. tech that is open, accessible, just and citizen-driven.

# Annex

## Ways to go, Difficulties and Recommendations by the FALs

	WAYS TO GO	DIFFICULTIES	Recommendations
OST	<p>*Communicate key principles (cooperation, sustainability, etc.)</p> <p>*Work with coaches to help citizens how to reach other groups</p> <p>*Give nuanced interpretation in terms of voting</p> <p>-</p>	<p>Hard to link with every stakeholders who are needed for long term success</p> <p>Difficult to communicate to people from different background or to vulnerable groups</p>	<p>*To get finance, apply for funds through call for projects, here some tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tracking of the proposals that did not make it. They might be helped with other means.</li> </ul> <p>Scan the project proposals in terms of legislative barriers, etc.</p>
COP	<p>Worth to make the sense of your action explicit</p> <p>Communicate how easy it can be to be part of sustainable food system</p> <p>Offer several options for the citizens to make them easy to join your actions</p> <p>Get the first support, because once money is in the system, entrepreneurs are encouraged to invest again</p>	<p>On boarding food producers</p> <p>On boarding citizens</p>	<p>Cooperation across food chain</p> <p>Follow needs in society – eg Corona, climate</p> <p>1) Build system – 2) make it work with a few good cases, 3) scale</p> <p>Include many types of stakeholders</p> <p>Awareness of local conditions/issues</p> <p>Can be used as a way to educate consumers</p>
BER	<p>Combination of engagement practices:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Welcome culture,</li> <li>2. Narratives &amp; News,</li> <li>3. early engagement in building up process,</li> <li>4. Plat-form Principle</li> <li>5. regular activities</li> </ol>	<p>“too many cooks spoil the soup”</p>	<p>skilled leadership, sense of belonging, sense of ownership</p> <p><b>informing</b> about the food hub initiative</p> <p>Getting feedback (<b>consulting</b>) and <b>co-developing</b> narrative, system, logo, website content etc.</p> <p><b>Collaborating</b> in conducting an impact assessment, developing actions for the food hub, developing content for the website and food hub manual,</p>

			<b>Empowering</b> as a result of engagement process (involvement in decision-making taking control over food hub development)
BA RI	Capitalizing upon a successful experience of a urban network is an excellent starting point to start other initiatives	Bureaucracy	inform involve Promote participation revitalize common spaces
BA RC	Start slow & build trust with your citizens and inhabitants network Create familiarity with new food tech concept & space for interaction Create space for actors to demonstrate ownership of the new food tech definition Share the message and facilitate on boarding of new actors	Difficulty to sharing the overall aims of <b>food tech</b> 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)	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
AV G	Empower children who can test the implementation of their projects and ideas, i.e. make concrete the "citizenship"	The main challenge is not creating an "empty shell" Wrong is to trying to transfer the political and adults' projects on the kids. Not informing the kids enough to understand our internal way of working.	Trying to experiment the "Childrens' Parliament", giving it a real power of action by supporting them with human resources and funding