



GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEMS

FOOD CITIES 2022: A LEARNING PARTNERSHIP TO HELP TRANSFORM YOUR CITY'S FOOD SYSTEM

BACKGROUND

Major transformations in the global food system are required in order to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition. The COVID-19 emergency exposed vulnerabilities in local and global food systems. The UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres said 'Our food systems are failing, and the COVID-19 pandemic is making things worse. We need to act now to avoid the worst impacts of our efforts to control the pandemic'.

The critical role which food systems and our diets play in shaping our natural environment, contributing to climate change, and determining our health is now undisputed; food system change is needed at a global level to ensure we have an environmentally sustainable system that can deliver healthy diets for all. In order to achieve this, a cross-cutting, collaborative approach across different sectors (e.g. health, trade, environment, education) and stakeholders (e.g. business, investors, young people, local and central governments) at different levels (i.e. local, national and global) is essential.

The Food Foundation has secured funding from the UK Government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) to shape and inform international action to transform food systems. This ties in with current activities and opportunities to galvanise political support and accelerate action towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A National Food Strategy is being developed for England and will be the first in the world to redesign the food system so that it can deliver biodiversity, climate and public health goals. Next year the UK is hosting the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) and the UN is hosting a

GLOBAL FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT.

This Global Food System project will use these and other international meetings including the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), Annual Gathering of Mayors and Nutrition for

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Growth Summit (N4G) to demonstrate commitment from UK actors to support food system change at the global level.

The work will focus on three groups of actors who will play an important role in driving food systems change over the next decade:

- 1. Young people** – to create a global youth movement campaigning for food system change.
- 2. Private sector** – to establish a group of UK businesses and investors who are committed to report on their progress for food systems change helping to catalyse other business commitments globally.
- 3. City authorities** – to develop a network of cities (Food Cities 2022) committed to working and learning together in order to improve local and global food systems.

THE ROLE OF CITY AUTHORITIES IN DRIVING FOOD SYSTEM CHANGE

There is growing international recognition of the role city authorities play in responding to food system challenges. The food system describes all the complex stages involved in the production, distribution, marketing and consumption of food. Food system challenges include ensuring food safety and nutritious food for all whilst reducing food waste and responding to global challenges such as the COVID-19, climate change and international relations. ►

Whilst globally there are few examples of countries or cities which have tackled malnutrition (obesity and undernutrition) or eliminated food waste, those that are making progress are transforming the food environment and making healthy, more sustainable choices easy and accessible. Municipal authorities have varying levels of control over the food system. However, many have policy levers that could allow them to shape the city food system to deliver healthier and more sustainable outcomes for their residents. These levers include driving procurement and purchasing from nearby producers (stimulating urban production), determining the quality of the food which is served in public institutions (e.g. schools, universities, hospitals and places of worship), regulating advertising in public spaces (such as on transport networks or advertising billboards) and controlling the licensing and safety of food outlets. These levers span the food supply chain and leave city authorities with considerable scope to impact the food environment and residents' diets, even if national policy frameworks are inadequate. Cities therefore have the potential to help prevent overweight and obesity and concomitant noncommunicable diseases, as well as undernutrition and food-borne illness. In many cities, these local authorities are strongly committed to reshaping the city food system, though whether their efforts are aimed at preventing malnutrition is variable.

The focus of action differs from place to place and can include:

- Urban agriculture initiatives aimed at shortening supply chains and reducing environmental impact.
- Improvement in food environments and support of healthier dietary practices.
- Planning of initiatives which seek to address access to land for food production and for healthier retail.
- Social justice initiatives which aim to link the poor more directly into productive urban livelihoods through the creation of food networks, etc.

ESTABLISHING A LEARNING PARTNERSHIP FOCUSED ON FOOD SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

The BINDI project (Birmingham India Nutrition Initiative) was launched in 2016 through a series of events in Birmingham, UK and Pune, India. Both cities have a common ambition to seize opportunities to support safer, healthier and more sustainable city food environments to prevent malnutrition in all its forms (overweight, obesity, micronutrient deficiencies and undernutrition). The Food Foundation worked with local authorities in both cities to design the partnership, based on citizen engagement and evidence from elsewhere around the globe.

FOOD CITIES 2022: EXPANDING THE BINDI LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

An online learning platform will be launched in Autumn 2020 providing cities with instant access to resources to develop their food strategies. A creative webinar series is also planned and will provide an opportunity for cities to showcase the progress they are making. Webinar formats will include interviews with experts, case-studies (live from the field), debates, live Q&As, audits and workshops. ➤

Participating in BINDI enabled the cities to:

- Secure senior political support for a city-wide food policy.
- Conduct food policy audits to determine levers of influence and change within city authorities.
- Organise stakeholder and citizen engagement activities to consult on food policy options. Stakeholders included business networks, large public sector organisations, voluntary sector organisations and partners working on the Smart City agenda.
- Secure funding to pilot activities that stimulate healthier, more sustainable food environments.
- Participate in high-level national and international events to secure political buy-in and galvanise local efforts to transform the food system.
- Influence national and international policy relating to food and sustainability.
- Respond rapidly to the COVID-19 food emergency.

Birmingham Covid-19 emergency food response

Providing school meals in Birmingham during the Covid emergency

Pune Covid-19 emergency food response

WEBINAR - COVID-19 – an opportunity or a crisis for food system transformation at the city level?

BINDI was funded by the Tata Trusts and the UK Department for International Development (DFID) through its

Maximising the Quality of Scaling Up Nutrition Plus (MQSUN+)

project. Additional funding has been secured from FCDO (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) to expanding this partnership through engagement of cities globally.

In India, the Government is supporting the expansion of the BINDI partnership through the Smart Cities for Eat Right Challenge. This is an initiative of FSSAI working in partnership with the Smart Cities Mission, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, to inspire cities to stimulate a healthier, secure, safe and sustainable food environment and develop a city food strategy. Cities will produce a food vision and develop a strategy aligned to the Eat Right initiative in consultation with stakeholders and citizens. The Food Foundation is the knowledge partner for this initiative and will be supporting participating cities through the development of an online learning described below.

This learning platform will also be accessed by other cities and countries focused on food system transformation in the coming years. The city of Birmingham is hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2022 and an international meeting will take place during this time to showcase the work of Commonwealth and other cities who have participated in Food Cities 2022.

FOOD CITIES 2022 LEARNING PLATFORM

 <p>Securing political commitment for food system transformation</p>	 <p>Engaging with national policy & international food policy makers & organisations</p>	 <p>Responding to the impact of COVID-19 on food systems</p>	 <p>Engaging food system stakeholders and citizens including young people</p>	 <p>Conducting a food policy audit to understand opportunities to stimulate a healthy food economy</p>	 <p>Developing a city-wide food policy and a coherent and comprehensive strategy</p>
 <p>Planning and funding innovative food projects</p>	 <p>Creating third sector partnerships for food system transformation</p>	 <p>Creating private sector partnerships for food system transformation</p>	 <p>Addressing food system and climate change challenges</p>	 <p>Developing skills and creating new jobs in a healthier, more sustainable food economy</p>	 <p>Tackling food poverty and establishing food collaboratives to support community cohesion and build community resilience</p>
 <p>Accessing and using data for food system transformation</p>	 <p>Establishing food incubators to encourage and support healthier, more sustainable food businesses</p>	 <p>Supporting small scale food producers and rural businesses</p>	 <p>Strengthening social protection systems for nutrition</p>	 <p>Promoting and protecting biodiversity</p>	

GALVANISING MOMENTUM AND CELEBRATING SUCCESS

A series of events are being planned in the UK and across the world to create meaningful opportunities which will help shape and inform international action to transform food systems. We will actively participate in these meetings and also create opportunities for involvement by cities who join the learning partnership. These key meetings include:

- The UN Food Systems Summit - September - October 2021
- Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP) Annual Gathering in Barcelona - TBD October 2021
- The UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26) in Glasgow - November 2021
- Nutrition for Growth in Tokyo - December 2021

The two-year project will end with a two-day meeting that takes place ahead of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham (July 2022 - date to be confirmed). Key note speeches will be delivered by international leaders and leading food system thinkers. An exhibition space will be made available for cities to present their food system vision. Businesses and investors will also be invited to exhibit products and services that support healthier, more sustainable food economies. We will host an award ceremony to recognise the progress made by cities involved in the learning partnership and the two-day meeting will end with a gala dinner serving a healthy and sustainable meal showcasing Birmingham's diverse cuisine. Participating cities will also be presented with opportunities to attend the international meetings that are due to take place in the next couple of years.



To find out about Food Cities 2022 and sign up to this learning partnership contact shaleen.meelu@foodfoundation.org.uk

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