

How to Ensure Access to Good Food for All in a Rapidly Urbanising World?

Seminar Report | December 8th 2016 | Impulse Building | Wageningen, the Netherlands

Introduction

On December 8th 2016, the seminar '*How to Ensure Access to Good Food for All in a Rapidly Urbanising World?*' took place at the Impulse Building, on the Wageningen University & Research (WUR) campus. The aim was to inspire innovations, exchange ideas and meet other stakeholders dedicated to urban food systems providing access to safe and nutritious food for all in the world's ever growing urban areas. The seminar was an integral part of short course 'Market Access for Food Security' of the [Centre for Development Innovation](#) (CDI).



Welcome and Keynote Speakers

The seminar was opened with a warm welcome from Jan Helder (CDI), course coordinator. Marion Herens (CDI), the seminar facilitator, introduced the key question of the seminar: 'How to Ensure Access to Good Food for All in a Rapidly Urbanising World?' and explained the importance of dealing with the challenges of food access in the urban areas.

The first keynote speaker was René van Veenhuizen of the [Resilient Urban Agriculture and Food Systems \(RUAF\) Foundation](#), which works with cities on food and sustainability challenges around the world. He focused on the trends and experiences on urban food policies and city region food systems. He paid attention to the balance between community and planning in city food planning. The concept of 'food systems' was introduced: the complex relation between actors and processes related to food production, processing, marketing and consumption. René explained that as food systems are changing, different sustainable governance systems are needed. Within



planning for the food system both top down and bottom up initiatives and approaches are needed to build resilient food systems in cities. A major challenge is how to involve communities in this process.

Jan Eelco Jansma of [Wageningen Plant Research](#) was the second keynote speaker and he talked about 'The Feeding City', giving the example of Almere's food system. He explained

the meaning of local-food-footprints by asking volunteers from the audience how many people you can feed from 1 hectare of land, elaborating that with an average diet 4 persons can be fed, with a vegetarian diet 6 persons, and with a vegan diet 9 persons. Local-food-footprints help us to organise urban food systems. Jan Eelco explained that in the current food system there is a clear boundary between urban and agricultural areas. This should change as the diverse linkages between food and city are important for future sustainable food systems in which citizens and the food system needs to be connected. He closed by stating that he hoped that we change our mind-set towards a more urban-oriented farming system as food is the most important part of all our daily lives.



The third keynote speaker was Remco Rolvink of [Dutch Alliance for Sustainable Urban Development in Africa \(DASUDA\)](#). He presented the Regional Agro Industrial Network (RAIN) project in Kenya, which seeks to integrate urban growth with local economy. The reason of existence for the RAIN project is based on the importance of planning in Nairobi's current rapid urbanization, the fact that agricultural potentials are not fully utilized, and the need to strengthen urban-rural relationship to enhance economy and liveability. The RAIN project is oriented toward regional city development, placing this within larger networks, through using a participatory process and linking policies, planning and realization. The project focuses on processing, as Roel pointed out that often this is the missing link in the supply chain between production and marketing. DASUDA uses big data for planning to map out challenges. Requirements for the RAIN project are robust business cases, availability of land, accessibility to sufficient quality of water, skilled growers and greenhouses management and maintenance.

This presentation was followed up by Felia Boerwinkel, who described the [Food Change Lab](#) in Uganda, a project of Hivos and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). These labs are multi-actor initiatives that address social and public needs, aiming to better understand these needs, generate and test creative ideas within the local context. Examples of initiatives under the Food Labs included learning journeys, food diaries and multi-stakeholder dialogues. The intended outcomes of the project are physical capital (services, infrastructure), human capital (capacities, skills), social capital (relationships, trust, collaboration) and intellectual capital (knowledge and learning). Important are methods for a collective understanding of a context, and methods to arrive at shared knowledge and motivation when planning for the food system. Two key challenges are to bring evidence to policy makers and let them own this evidence, and how to push on the



rights spots for things to change.

The final keynote speaker was Lara Sibbing of the [Municipality of Ede](#). She explained the idea of City Deals and their vision on food policy. It is a vital issue on the municipal agenda: the previous policies did relate to food, but they did not seem to fit the current challenges. Lara explained that Ede's food policy is focused on improving the economic and social strength of Ede by using knowledge and innovation, and a holistic approach. Their policy focuses on creating better opportunities for farmers, improving the health of citizens, and using food as a 'tool' for other policies, for instance for creating social cohesion. The goals of the food policy of Ede are: food education for children; addressing health related food issues; stimulating innovative food research and start-ups; and reconnecting urban and rural areas.

Workshop rounds and reflection

After the keynote speeches, the seminar participants split up into five groups to explore the cases in a more in depth fashion. After one hour, all came back to a plenary session in which five participants were invited to share the eye-openers, the main obstacles and the main insights/lessons discussed during the workshop.



The first workshop was led by René van Veenhuizen (RUAf) and emphasised the balance between community and planning in food planning, the dynamics of urban migration especially by young people, and what kind of role cities and its actors could play.

- Eye-opener(s): Calculating the food foot print is important to see what kind of impact we have on our environment. In developing countries, the food foot print can be improved at the consumption side.
- Challenges: Every location has different challenges, which require a different approach and solution. For instance, in Ethiopia there is a huge migration trend toward the cities. Often city planners try to build markets to deal with employment and food needs, but there is a lack of follow-up – they are not created with 'the client' in mind.
- Main insights/lessons: Different solutions are needed that are based on the assessment of local situations.

Jan Eelco Jansma of Wageningen Plant Research led the second workshop and discussed the meaning of local-food-footprints and how we can use this to organise urban food systems.

- Eye-opener(s): To start the debate on food in urban setting, awareness needs to be generated with the use of food foot print: what is your food foot print, where does your food come from, and how can we organize it in a sustainable way?
- Challenges: How to organise the food systems to come to a low food foot print?

- Main insights/lessons: The problems are unique and wicked and, therefore, there is no 'one-size-fits- all' answer. A holistic view is helpful to answer the problem, using the perspective and initiatives of stakeholders. Planning is important and a follow-up is needed to see if implementation is working.

The third group was facilitated by Remco Rolvink (DASUDA) and debated about what is needed for a business case, and the ways in which business can be interested for/participate in the implementation stage of the concept of the RAIN project.

- Eye-opener(s): GIS systems need to be incorporated in planning, because they have a better chance at influencing policy decision making. Another eye-opener was that a trickle down-effect must be considered; we should first target the people who can afford to buy higher quality food, which will help to change the food system to change towards higher quality food making it more affordable for people in the slums.
- Challenges: How to ensure food security in a profitable and sustainable way? A second challenge is that a city grows faster than you can plan, resulting in chaotic cities. A final challenge is how to ensure inclusion and to decide who you include.
- Main insights/lessons: We should bring it back to doable projects by searching for key areas, and work in a market-driven way without seeking to design a huge master plan.

The fourth workshop was given by Felia Boerwinkel (Hivos) and zoomed in on how to use citizens' voices in a multi-stakeholder advocacy process and how to bring this knowledge to policy makers and other groups to arrive at a shared knowledge and motivation for planning the food system.

- Eye-opener(s): Language is important in building a sustainable food system; it is important that everyone has the same understanding of the situation. Another eye-opener was that illegal food players should be taken into account. The same holds for the consumer.
- Challenges: How to adapt to the local challenges.
- Main insights/lessons: It is important to involve all stakeholders; government, farmers, food production industry, non-food related industry, researchers, community, etc.



Lara Sibbing facilitated the last workshop and focused on how governments use different policy frames to develop integrated food policy and what the consequences are of using different frames.

- Eye-opener(s): There are different starting points and frames for food policy that have different consequences. Ede stepped forward in food policy and focused on social and economic issues to come to a holistic approach. Different starting points can

be health, agriculture, environment, economy, logistics, food sovereignty, waste, education, consumption, gender, culture, etc.

- Challenges: In many ways the Ede municipality is pioneering this type of policy approach. This means that it is often difficult to decide on starting point and which frame to use; what is included and what not? Another challenge is the communication to the community.
- Main insights/lessons: We should first try to identify the problem, which policy frame fits this problem, which solutions are appropriate and how to communicate this to the community.



Wrap-up and follow-up

After the finalisation of the seminar, participants were invited to a networking lunch at the Impulse building.

On January 19th, 2017 CDI organises another seminar related to this topic as part of the short course on 'Market Access for Food Security'. This seminar is called '[Smart Solutions for Urban Food Supply](#)'. For more information, please contact Marion Herens (CDI).

A short video about the two seminars will be shared soon with the participants via e-mail, the CDI website and via the organisers' social media accounts. The workshop reports will be made available online and shared with interested participants.