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How to develop and deliver a national food policy: a global perspective

Report of the City Food Symposium 2019

**Centre for
Food Policy**

Educating, researching, influencing for
integrated and inclusive food policy

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1. The 2019 City Food Symposium

On April 30th 2019, the Centre for Food Policy hosted the eighth annual City Food

Symposium: **How to develop and deliver a national food policy: a global perspective.**

The event aimed to share and generate insights about national food policies – in some cases termed ‘national food strategies’ – and assess best practices and challenges.

To further our understanding and generate knowledge to inform the development and delivery of national food policies across the world, the 2019 Symposium brought together 250 participants and speakers from several continents, working in research, policy and advocacy. We heard from speakers who have participated in different capacities in developing and delivering food policies across the globe; they gave examples from across Europe, Asia, Africa and South America.

Through workshops and panel discussions we explored learnings, challenges and issues to consider for developing and delivering integrated national food policies. The Symposium featured the following:

- An opening address from Henry Dimbleby (Non-Executive Director, UK Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and co-founder of Leon and the Sustainable Restaurant Association) who has been tasked with preparing a review to support the development of a national food strategy for England.
- Nine short talks on learnings from recent efforts in the UK and around the world in developing and delivering integrated approaches to food policy at the national and city level.
- Eight workshops that aimed to foster shared learning and generate insights to inform the development and delivery of national food policies anywhere in the world.
- A presentation by Dr Kelly Parsons (Research Fellow, Centre for Food Policy) on findings from her research providing insights into whether England is ready for a national food policy.
- A panel discussion on how a national food policy for England should be developed and delivered.
- A summary of the day by Anna Taylor (OBE, Executive Director, The Food Foundation) and Professor Corinna Hawkes (Director, Centre for Food Policy).

This report shares the recommendations that emerged from the Symposium for developing and implementing integrated national food policies and how they can be improved if already in place. All talks and workshops are briefly described in the Annex, with some talks available as videos:

<https://www.city.ac.uk/about/schools/health-sciences/research/centre-for-food-policy#unit=news-and-events>.

2. Recommendations for Developing and Delivering a National Food Policy

During the Symposium, participants and presenters shared their experiences, learnings and challenges around developing and delivering national food policies across the globe. Based on these insights across the spectrum of research, advocacy and policy, the following recommendations have been formed as a guide for moving forward (Box 1):

| Recommendation | Main Rationale | Main Challenge |
|---|--|---|
| 1. Create a Shared Vision | A shared vision enables differing world views, framings, and solutions to cohere around what all stakeholders would like to achieve | Finding coherence among these differing world views, framings and solutions among such a diverse set of stakeholders in the food system is difficult due to tensions and competing priorities |
| 2. Take a Food Systems Perspective | Connecting different aspects of systems allows synergies to be identified and inconsistencies to be addressed | Involves navigating huge complexity across economic, environmental, health, political and social dimensions and managing tensions |
| 3. Ensure Broad-Level Participation | Listening to the perspectives of a large spectrum of stakeholders ensures buy-in balance across different needs and interests | Requires time, patience and economic resources and can be hard to reach and engage all relevant stakeholders |
| 4. Involve all of Government | Working across-government ensures synergies in an integrated approach | Siloes within government are entrenched and coordination structures rarely fit for purpose |
| 5. Secure Political Will | Enables implementation by anchoring in government beyond political cycles and affiliations | Taking a long-term view and investment is challenging for governments focused on short-term political cycles |
| 6. Develop an Action Plan and Ensure Implementation | A strategy on paper is meaningless if not put into practice; support and clarity is essential so stakeholders take responsibility in delivering action | Funding to implement action often not prioritised |

Box 1. Recommendations for developing and delivering national food policies across the globe

2.1 Recommendation 1: Create a Shared Vision

Rationale

Based on experiences of developing and implementing food policy across the globe, the first recommendation is the necessity of creating a shared vision. This means examining differing world views, framings and solutions, reflecting on why they differ - and developing a shared vision so they can become more coherent.

This recommendation emerged from the frequency with which participants and presenters spoke about how visioning out the desired result of a food policy needs to be the starting point. Olivier de Schutter, who led the process of developing a blueprint for a common food policy for the European Union (EU) stated that it was vital to “ensure that the reform of food systems across the EU is guided by an overall vision”. According to Mjabuliseni Ngidi, the National Policy for Food and Nutrition Security in South Africa was said to enable different government departments to come together around a common vision:

“South Africa does not have a single coherent strategy, so this policy is helping the country to have now a single strategy to address issues of food and nutrition insecurity. So there is now a common vision for all government departments to work towards achieving the same goal.”

Examples of such visions came from some of the presenters. Referring to the Swedish national food policy, Anna-Karin Quetel described the overall goal as building “a competitive food supply chain that increases

overall food production while achieving the relevant national environmental objectives aiming to generate growth and employment and contribute to sustainable development throughout the country.” In the words of Tim Smith referring to the possibility of a new national food strategy for the UK:

“what we want is a sustainable, affordable, healthy food system that’s produced in a way which provides benefit for all of its participants. And in that participant list I’m not just including humans. It’s animals too.”

The workshop discussion led by Anna Taylor demonstrated the necessity of creating a vision for a food strategy. In the discussion, participants explored the key outcomes a national food strategy in England should deliver; answers ranged from fair incomes for everyone in the food chain, to reduction in non-communicable diseases (NCDs), to a reduction in food waste. This range of potential visions highlighted a future need for a common understanding.

Two main guiding principles emerged for the creation of this vision. First, that creating shared visions involves finding synergies when coming from different perspectives. For example, Ruth Davis emphasised the importance of finding common ground between different stakeholders:

“I can’t conceive of a situation where we make the change we want without there being a huge sense of solidarity, for example between environmentalists and growers. It seems impossible to me that we can do that, so fundamentally where do we find the common ground to build that opportunity?”

Jyoti Fernandes highlighted the need to address tensions and competing ideas to create a coherent vision:

“we do have to make sure we coalesce around a vision for our food system, and it’s got to be one that unifies loads of tensions and loads of different things. But we also have to fundamentally understand that there are competing visions for our food system out there.”

Discussions around finding synergies surfaced in the workshops. The workshop led by Liv Elin Torheim and Jody Harris on an integrated, multisectoral approach, questioned whether a truly shared vision could be agreed by industry and the public sector given the potential tensions between these sets of stakeholders. Separately, participants in a workshop on policy coherence led by Kelly Parsons concluded that a process of reframing issues could ensure closer synergies among stakeholders coming from different perspectives.

The second guiding principle is that a vision for food policy needs to be based on a long-term perspective. Participants emphasised that fulfilling short-term goals must not undermine longer term goals in food policy; and focusing on the longer-term would more likely address the root causes of problems.

Challenges

There were undoubtedly challenges in creating a shared vision. Differing world views were identified as a principal barrier. Corinna Hawkes spoke about “different views of the world” as one of the main tensions in developing food policies. Divergent

perspectives on priorities and solutions were highlighted as a major challenge. For example, in engagement workshops in France, “the key challenge of the workshop stage was that each organisation came with their own needs and priorities. This created conflict” (Clément Cheissoux).

Finding common solutions was also not easy. The complexity of different stakeholders proposing different solutions for the same problem was highlighted by Jody Harris who reported from her work in Zambia that: [after describing a map of the Nutrition Policy Subsystem in Zambia] “within this network there are very different coalitions with different views on what constitutes the best way forward for food and nutrition.” Others also commented about the difficulty of coming to an agreement on solutions; for example, in one of the workshops, participants discussed how food policy needed the coordination of a wide range of activities, however many felt that the details of what needed to be done were often very contested. Addressing climate change was given as an example; while there is broad agreement on the need to address the issue, there is no consensus on which specific actions need to be taken and by whom.

A further challenge underlying these different perspectives is the comprehension of concepts in food policy. In the workshop on policy coherence, participants acknowledged how difficult it was to agree on priorities in light of differing underlying interpretations of the issues at hand; what exactly is a sustainable diet or how is affordability of food exactly defined? In another workshop participants debated how food security could mean

something different for everyone. The challenge of creating a shared vision also emerged as being tied to different interpretations of a food policy. This was raised by Kelly Parsons who explored how food policies meant different things to different people: “One civil servant I interviewed understood the forthcoming national food strategy as an economic food plan. Another health official regarded a national food policy as unnecessary when there’s already a Childhood Obesity Plan.”

Summarising these interlinked challenges, a participant, who took part in a workshop aimed at identifying the contested areas of food policy, reflected on how difficult it was finding consensus on problems, definitions and solutions even in a room of people dedicating a day to national food policy.

2.2 Recommendation 2: Take a Food Systems Perspective

Rationale

Based on experiences from across the globe, a second recommendation that emerged was a need to take a food systems perspective when developing food policies. Although this results in complexity, for effective solutions which tackle root causes, a food systems perspective is essential: taking into account the interconnected dimensions of the food system means policy interventions can be managed to have impacts across the system and to balance trade-offs.

This recommendation was based on participants highlighting the necessity of taking a holistic view of the food system when

developing food policies. The importance of taking a food systems perspective was raised for instance by Olivier de Schutter:

“reforming food systems can only occur if it is holistic. In other terms, if it tackles the different components of the food systems and, therefore, combines different disciplines, public health, economics, political science, in order to provide viable proposals to policymakers.”

He further explained that there was currently a lack in taking a holistic view of the food system in policies relating to food. As an example, he described siloed policies at EU level which would need to be synergised for effective solutions:

“We have, in fact, no integrated comprehensive food policy at EU level. We have, of course, a Common Agricultural Policy. We have a Health Policy. We have an Environment Policy. We have a Trade Policy. We have a Rural Development Policy. We have a policy in the area of Social Protection. But all of these policies are disconnected from one another. They are not connected to one another through an umbrella approach of which that allows synergies to develop and allows inconsistencies to be better addressed.”

The necessity of taking a holistic view of the food system also surfaced in workshops. For instance, in a workshop focused on overcoming barriers to the development and delivery of a national food policy, participants spoke about how ‘food needed to be considered in all policies’. Summarising the above points during the afternoon panel

discussion, Minette Batters spoke about the need for a joined-up plan.

Participants highlighted two essential points as part of taking a holistic perspective of the food system. This first involved prioritising and negotiating economic, environmental, health and social outcomes, rather than taking a purely economically focused approach to food policy. During the Symposium, participants were concerned about an emphasis on market-focused fixes; a more holistic approach to food needed to be taken as the market had failed to provide affordable, sustainable food. This was expressed by Jyoti Fernandes who stated that “food is a basic human right and every person in society has a right to input about what we want about a better food system. That discourse can’t be dominated by a system that believes that food and farming is about market economics.” Another example came from Scotland, where Pete Richie spoke of the first attempt at a food policy in 2009, which “was all about the industry. It wasn’t about health, it wasn’t about the environment, it wasn’t about animal welfare, it wasn’t about all the other things that civil society wanted to talk about.” However he added that the most recent policy, the Good Food Nations Bill of 2019, was in contrast forming “the legislative basis of that we’re hoping to establish the Right to Food. And again, very much picking up the points of the other speakers seeing the Right to Food is broader than a focus on food insecurity but not as broad as a food systems issue.”

A second learning was the importance of ensuring that local contexts are considered, even when taking a broad systems

perspective. Participants gave the example of needing to be careful of pushing sustainable diets as a general solution, while it was not necessarily appropriate for people who were undernourished.

Challenges

Taking a food system perspective was seen as hugely complex. Symposium participants reflected on multiple challenges in navigating the complexity of taking this approach. First of all, participants spoke about the complexity of working across so many diverse, currently siloed areas and stakeholder groups. This was expressed by Emily O’ Brien, working on city level food policy, who explained that “despite doing it at a tiny, local level” it is challenging “to look at food systems because they’re so vast you have to work across so many different areas and so many different people and stakeholders.” Biraj Patnaik referred to how there was currently a gap in bridging different areas of the food system in India’s National Food Security Act:

“The third aspect that perhaps is fundamental today to any discussion around legislation on the Right to Food is the food systems approach....And I think that lack of connection between agriculture and the food system, and the Right to Food in our legislation, there’s a big gap.”

A second challenge was that finding solutions to various issues when taking a systems approach is highly complex; examples included finding solutions to food poverty, food prices and climate change. In this context, Alison Tedstone referred to the challenge of managing tensions in the system,

such as integrating health and economic priorities, when looking for solutions: “I think that none of the solutions are the easy solutions. We need to work out a way of having a vibrant food economy, against the health consequences...”

A third challenge is bridging local and global systems. In a workshop on overcoming barriers to the development and delivery of a national food policy, participants spoke of the connection between local and global food systems as a challenge. They highlighted the need to take local contexts into account, while simultaneously raising questions of how far addressing issues at a local level would affect global issues; how can changes in the UK food system help solve global challenges? How to have impact without trying to fix the whole system at once? During the panel discussion, presenters and participants also provided a specific example of such an issue that spanned from the local to the global context. They engaged in a long debate around the myriad factors involved in global food prices and the tensions surrounding this issue; this clearly reflected the difficulty of developing and implementing food policy, when taking a food systems approach.

And lastly, taking a food system approach also posed challenges for balancing breadth with depth in food policies. This challenge was raised by Kelly Parsons when pointing out the risk of a food policy “trying to be everything to everyone by keeping the scope very broad, to keep all stakeholders on board, and ending up pleasing no one with the end result.” During the panel discussion, a participant in the audience also spoke to this point, concerned

about an ultimate lack of action when taking a broad view of the food system:

“it’s really great that you’ve taken a really broad view of the national food strategy. And I too care about the way that the food system impacts on the economy and the environment, and sustainability. But I fear that by taking such a broad view we fall into the trap of saying nothing can be done until everything is done.”

2.3 Recommendation 3: Ensure Broad-Level Participation

Rationale

Engaging diverse stakeholders is essential to ensure different perspectives are worked through in what can be an intensely ideological and political space.

This recommendation is based on discussions among participants highlighting the importance of engagement in developing a multi-faceted food policy; there was consensus among presenters and participants that engagement was crucial. For example, Henry Dimbleby stated that a vision for a food policy for England needed to be formed through a process of engagement:

“I think that [establishing a vision is] actually something that needs to be a national democratic process and we’re thinking about how we inject some democracy into this process, so we don’t create another top-down review.”

Jyoti Fernandes also emphasised the need for a people-centred food policy. She was of the view that policy “needs to come from the ground up...that needs to be done through

processes that engage civil society in a way that's well recognised and well organised, where we're given equal space to speak up."

During the symposium, presenters also shared different variations of public engagement in food policy from their countries. An example of intense efforts of engagement came from France, where the government had organised a consultation on the General State of Food; this consultation involved 14 systematic workshops held with farmer and company unions, major corporations, public agencies, local governments, and civil society at large. In addition, 17,000 citizens engaged via an online platform. An example of an extensive engagement process also came from developing a city-level food strategy action plan in Brighton and Hove, UK; as Emily O'Brien explained, the consultation involved mostly policy makers and people and organisations delivering services. She spoke of the importance of "engaging people with lived experience to genuinely and meaningfully influence the strategic direction of policies and services."

Summarising experiences from these international examples, Corinna Hawkes identified civil society and community engagement as one of the three biggest opportunities for a national food policy to affect change. Similarly, when concluding the Symposium, Anna Taylor spoke about the many discussions around engagement of citizens during the Symposium and the need to ensure that developing a national food policy for England "is a strategy process which helps us to build a better society where

ordinary people, citizens of Britain can see in that strategy their own lives."

Throughout the Symposium several key points emerged as important to consider in the engagement process, mainly raised in a workshop focusing on lessons from efforts to enable public participation in the development of integrated food policies at the regional, national and city-level. For instance, participants focused on the need to engage a broad range of stakeholders in the food system. Reflecting this point, Olivier de Schutter referred to the importance of engaging "a large spectrum of actors" when developing a food policy on EU level:

"one of the key recommendations we make in this blueprint for food policy for the EU is to establish a Food Policy Council at EU level representative of a range of interests that are involved in the food systems across the EU. And capable of broadening the political imagination of policymakers and making proposals that have legitimacy resulting from the fact that they are the result of this dialogue across a large spectrum of actors."

This was also emphasised by Ben Reynolds, who said that the development of a food strategy for England needed to involve a "really wide range of involvement of citizens, businesses, NGOs, [and] relevant government bodies".

A further discussion focused on representation; did experiences of individuals represent experiences of the group they belonged to? Some responded that one needed good civil society and community

groups that accurately represent the people they claim to.

Presenters also shared different ways of framing a consultation. Some saw it as useful to set broad objectives prior to a consultation in order to provide momentum and build consensus. Others agreed that providing participants with information and framing helped the direction of consultation. On the other hand, presenters had had good experiences with using more open-ended questions without the use of a specific framing.

A further debate focused on resources. People thought it was necessary for citizens and NGOs to be compensated for their time when involved in engagement processes.

In these discussions of points to consider and various ways of designing public engagement processes, participants referred to the trans-local food cities network in the UK, Sustainable Food Cities, as a good resource to share practices of engagement, including co-design of the engagement process.

Challenges

Symposium participants also shared and discussed multiple challenges of engaging stakeholders. One challenge was a lack of time and resources to be able to conduct in-depth, long-term engagement, which was seen as a real barrier. On the one hand, Emily O'Brien spoke about insufficient resources on behalf of NGOs to engage the public; in her case, the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership had barely had enough resources to engage people, and thus were not able to follow up on the success of a consultation. On the other

hand, a lack of resources on the side of people and NGOs engaging in consultations was also mentioned. Clément Cheissoux, who had participated in the consultation conducted by the French government, made the observation that small NGOs often lacked the resources to engage; it was thus important to make sure they were reimbursed for participating. Emily O'Brien also spoke to this point, explaining that she would love to "have that real meaningful engagement with somebody right the way through the process but you do need to have the capacity to be able to support that person doing that. And also, it's quite expensive if we have a principle around paying people for their time."

A second challenge focused on being able to reach a broad range of stakeholders, as well as involving a representative mix of people. For instance, Nick Jacobs, who had been involved in the public participation to support the development of IPES Food's Common EU Food Policy, shared that it was not easy to ensure the participation of big private companies. Pete Ritchie, referring to a consultation performed by the Scottish government for the Good Food Nation Bill, emphasised that "you do what you can to engage a broad range of people, but you can't reach everyone". There was a repeated sense among participants that consulting a broad and representative range of groups and individuals was difficult and perfection was not possible.

Presenters also saw an issue in people not being sufficiently informed of how their views were going to be used. Pete Ritchie touched on this, stating that participation by filling out a form was not sufficient: "there needs to be a

feedback loop, the participants have a right to be told how their consultation has been used”. Related to this issue of feeding back to participants, others brought up the question of responsibility when conducting consultations; is it ok to engage with people about problems, although one cannot deliver solutions?

Participants also brought up a general lack of engaging with people. For example, in the case of the Zambia Nutrition Policy process, Jody Harris referred to how “discussions generally took place among technical experts behind closed doors. And very little community engagement, or engagement of those experiencing food insecurity and malnutrition”.

2.4 Recommendation 4: Involve all of Government

Rationale

Cross-government involvement is an essential criteria for effective, integrated food policy. To achieve this, efforts need to be made towards overcoming existing siloes within governments.

The importance of ensuring cross-government involvement was frequently raised during the Symposium. Presenters emphasised the importance of this premise and shared success stories from their countries in achieving cross-government collaboration in the development and implementation of food policies. For instance, Cecilia Rocha spoke about city-level food policy in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. She referred to the participation of various departments in government in policy and programmes; this “intersectoral approach” enabled the programmes to be later scaled up

to the national level. In France, the government consultation on the state of food consisted of 11 workshops, piloted by 11 different ministries. According to Clément Cheissoux, who took part in the consultation, this demonstrated that the “entire scope of politics [was] concerned.”

During the afternoon panel discussion several panel members highlighted the necessity of “multi-ministerial collaboration”; this included Ben Reynolds, who spoke about how successful food policies had “cross departmental buy-in”, as well as Ruth Davis who concluded it to be fundamental for food policy to “create the space in institutions for us to go and to work together.”

Challenges

Although seen as highly important, working across government departments to enable an integrated approach was identified as challenging. The main challenge was seen in continued siloed action between government departments. This was raised by Kelly Parsons; her research showed a lack of transparency on who is doing what on food and a continued siloed approach in UK government. Others shared specific examples of this, including Pete Ritchie who spoke about a lack of coherent policies across government departments in relation to dairy production in Scotland:

“In terms of government join up, the Rural Economy Portfolio is split from the Environmental Climate Change Portfolio after the 2016 Election and although there’s connectivity in government, I think it’s fair to say there’s limited coherence. So we

have a Food and Drink Policy that's wanting to increase dairy production by 50% and a Climate Change Policy that wants to go to zero emissions as soon as possible, so you can't do both of those things at once."

This challenge was also witnessed in the government-initiated consultation in France. Although there had been "a real attempt to overcome the siloed governance" by conducting workshops piloted by 11 different ministries, the topics of the workshops, which included access to food, sustainable diets and food waste, were still addressed independently, resulting in contradictory proposals for policy and action.

An additional challenge was identified in negotiating power relationships when aiming for cross-departmental collaboration. For instance, Clément Cheissoux stated how a shared responsibility of leadership between the Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environment in France had resulted in a power struggle posing "several limits on the cooperation process itself".

2.5 Recommendation 5: Secure Political Will

Rationale

Political will and commitment is essential to ensure enduring, effective food policy. It means national food strategies will become anchored in government beyond electoral cycles and beyond political affiliation.

Symposium presenters highlighted how food policies in their countries had been initiated by or were anchored in governments, reflecting

the presence of political will. For example, in the case of Belo Horizonte, Brazil, the city-level food policy had been initiated at government level:

"the alternative food system created and maintained in Belo Horizonte was government-driven with the contribution and participation of civil society."

An example of political will from South Africa was given by Mjabuliseni Ngidi, where the National Food Security Policy was led by the president's office. Also in Scotland, Pete Ritchie explained that there was "very strong cross-party support for [the Good Food Nation Bill of 2019]".

The importance of political will and commitment was raised further in workshops and during the panel discussion. Participants identified points as crucial that had been present in the international examples above. For instance, Kelly Parsons emphasised in her presentation that "political will inside government is one of the main factors associated with whether policies succeed or fail". Further, in the panel discussion Jyoti Fernandes highlighted the need for legislation on government level; Ben Reynolds spoke of the necessity of a food policy "getting the buy-in of the Prime Minister and being owned by Cabinet Office, but certainly getting much more backing." He also saw it as essential to have "cross party buy-in...we might have an election, and we might have a completely different shape of government." Concluding the Symposium, Anna Taylor reiterated how political will and commitment had been identified as essential by Symposium participants, adding that there is current

opportunity for this UK government: “we’ve got [political will] now in Michael Gove, and how do we guarantee that we keep it?”

Challenges

Symposium participants mentioned challenges in ensuring political will and commitment.

First, participants saw constantly changing governments as a threat; without cross-party support there was a danger in commitment to a food policy only lasting as long as certain parties were in power.

Second, there was concern about a short-term perspective among politicians. In a workshop focused on overcoming barriers to the development and delivery of a national food policy, participants discussed how politicians’ desire to be popular among voters and being re-elected stood in the way of necessary radical change. In addition, politicians were assumed to not necessarily take a long-term perspective on food policy, as their time in office was usually limited. To overcome this challenge, high-risk legislation by brave politicians was seen as a path to real change. Questions from participants further revolved around a concern of a food policy in England being tied to a specific government in these unstable times.

A third barrier to political will and commitment raised by participants was the fear by governments of being perceived as a ‘nanny state’ by interfering in people’s food choices. This point was summarised by Ruth Davis, who spoke about the fear of politicians telling people what to eat and that government needed to be seen as a participant in the conversation:

“how many times do I hear from politicians, all kinds of people, ‘oh we can’t tell people what to eat’. And yet the reality is that human societies have talked about what people eat, the morals, the health, the cultural signals given by what people eat, forever....The question is seeing government not as a nanny state, dictating, but as a participant in the national conversation and a provider of information, and a support of choice.”

2.6 Recommendation 6: Develop an Action Plan and Ensure Implementation

Rationale

The development of an action plan is essential in driving change. Successful implementation of an action plan will need to be ensured by a budget commitment, as well as supporting stakeholders across the food system in carrying out actions. Taking a food systems perspective can result in huge breadth and complexity of an action plan, which is a challenge that needs to be managed.

The importance of having an action plan in place was a recurring theme throughout the Symposium. As Ben Reynolds put it, a food policy will only make a difference in combination with specific actions. Presenters gave examples of how action plans had been developed in various countries and cities. For instance, Emily O’Brien from the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership referenced their “really practical action plan” and how this plan was about “having multiple small actions on many different fronts all at the same time right across the food system.” In Zambia, a detailed

action plan had been developed on government level based on the National Food and Nutrition Policy. In the UK, Sustain, a non-profit organisation led by Ben Reynolds, has conducted a consultation and developed 25 actions for a UK food policy.

Symposium participants debated several points in relation to an action plan. Firstly, in a workshop exploring measurable outcomes of a national food strategy, Symposium participants emphasised how outcomes needed to be achievable and remain broad rather than too specific. Agreeing with the notion of keeping outcomes broad, Jody Harris summarised the discussion in one of the workshops, which entailed that goals should be soft, whereas specific actions needed harder instruments to make sure things get done. In contrast, other participants felt that very specific outcomes were necessary to hold stakeholders to account. Tim Smith suggested using the Sustainable Development Goals as measurable outcomes; he stated they offered “at least a basis of a foundational framework to allow us to measure what we’re doing.”

Secondly, the allocation of a budget for an action plan was mentioned as necessary. Summarising discussions in their workshop, Jody Harris and Liv Elin Torheim highlighted that funding was essential to deliver good outcomes. Also during the panel discussion participants echoed that a budget was necessary in order to achieve results. Speaking to this point, Jyoti Fernandes stated how food policy needed to be mandated at a government level, as this would be followed by a budget. The need for an action plan to be situated within government was also raised by

Tim Smith. He was of the view that a budget needed to be allocated by the government, which would result in successful implementation:

“Then we come into the area of setting budgets. Now that’s why Number Ten matters because if you set the budget right, and you deliver on it, then the metrics will be there for you to see. There’ll be a payback that one could measure as an industry person.”

A third area of discussion focused on public engagement in developing an action plan. Presenters shared international examples of engaging different stakeholder groups in the development of action plans. For example, Emily O’Brien spoke about consultations conducted by the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership, which had involved mainly organisations and policy makers:

“So we had to have a massive consultation exercise to pull together our last action plan which I have to say is slightly ridiculous, it’s huge.”

Jody Harris gave an example from Zambia. For the development of an action plan focused on addressing child stunting, the National Food and Nutrition Commission had held five large national workshops between 2009 and 2011, however the consultation involved mainly international development donors and lacked “links with community organisations and communities”. Another example came from South Africa, where many of the civil society organisations took part in the development of the implementation plan, although they had been excluded in the development of the National Food Security Policy itself.

Participants further spoke about learnings and points to consider for successful implementation of an action plan. Anna-Karin Quetel shared learnings from the implementation of the Swedish Food Policy; she concluded that “successful implementation of the strategy requires commitment and input from companies, organisations, and stakeholders throughout the entire food supply chain”. Symposium participants in a workshop exploring how to achieve an integrated, multisectoral approach to food policy added that it needed to be clarified how actors on the ground would be supported in carrying out actions. They also raised the need to consider scale; actions can be implemented at local, regional, national and global levels. In the case of Belo Horizonte, successful implementation of programmes was reliant on a cross-departmental approach in government. Emphasising the need for effective implementation strategies, Anna Taylor stated that “it’s no good having good policy on paper if it amounts to nothing in terms of real delivery and implementation.”

Challenges

Symposium presenters and participants raised multiple challenges in regard to developing an action plan and ensuring successful implementation. Firstly, a general lack of action and commitment to implementation was viewed as a barrier. This was reflected in comments by participants in a workshop focused on lessons from international efforts in taking an integrated, multisectoral approach; they discussed how commitments were easy to sign, however it was more

complicated to secure funds and thus implement a food policy.

Secondly, participants raised points on the complexity of this task when taking a food systems perspective. This was expressed by Biraj Patnaik who referred to the diversity of actions and players that were needed for real change:

“it’s not just one set of actions alone that achieves something like this. It’s not by legislative action alone, it’s not bureaucracy, it’s not just by public mobilisation, it’s not just by parliamentary lobbying, and it’s not just by the communications that are developed around a programme. If you have to change the fundamental attitude of a society to its food, to enshrine it as law within the constitution or through legislation, or through legal action, then it requires a combination of all of this to make it happen. Activists, academics, lawyers, parliamentarians, politicians working together.”

As part of this challenge of taking a food system perspective, reverting to siloed actions was identified as an issue. For example, as part of the consultation by the French government, a diverse set of food chain actors had developed their own action plans, which reflected “a very wide view on what should be done”. Clément Cheissoux explained that although NGOs were meant to monitor implementation of these actions, “in the end, we may just fall back in a siloed action.” A further challenge in taking the entire food system into account was the resulting breadth of action plans. For instance, the Brighton and

Hove Food Policy Action Plan entailed 200 actions for only a small geographical area:

“So we had to have a massive consultation exercise to pull together our last action plan which I have to say is slightly ridiculous, it’s huge....it’s got around 200 actions in it and involves nearly 100 partners including 26 separate council departments. And that’s what we need to really to look at food systems even in one place.”

Ben Reynolds also questioned if a single food policy could address the breadth of action that was needed; “what we’ve heard from our hundred national members so far...is the need for such a breadth of action I’m not 100% sure that a single piece of legislation can cover that.”

3. Annex: Summary of Talks and Workshops at the 2019 City Food Symposium

SHORT TALKS

European Union, A Common Food Policy for the EU

Professor Olivier de Schutter (Institute for Interdisciplinary Research in Legal Sciences, University of Louvain, and Co-Chair, International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food)) prepared a video in which he spoke about recommendations for developing a Common Food Policy at EU-level that IPES-Food aspire to achieving.

France, Etats Généraux de l'Alimentation

Clément Cheissoux (Programme Manager, Sustainable Food Systems France, Daniel and Nina Carasso Foundation) gave first-hand experience of the government-initiated national debate and consultation currently underway in France between the public, producers, farmers surrounding the French food system which began in 2017.

Sweden, A National Food Strategy for Sweden

Anna-Karin Quetel (Nutritionist and coordinator of the national Centre of competence for meals in schools, healthcare and social services) prepared a video in which she detailed the implementation of a Swedish Food Strategy initiated in 2016 by the former Swedish government; designed to create more jobs and sustainable growth as well as greater opportunities for consumers to make informed choices about the food that they buy.

England, The Brighton and Hove Food Strategy

Emily O'Brien (Brighton and Hove Food Partnership) discussed the city-level food strategy that the BHFP have developed, in particular how the initiative involved citizens and policy makers in its evolution.

Brazil, Belo Horizonte's Food and Nutrition Security Policy

Professor Cecilia Rocha (Director, School of Nutrition, Ryerson University and Research Associate, Centre for Studies in Food Security, Canada) gave a video presentation in which she outlined the first food strategy in 1993 in the city of Belo Horizonte, instigated by the Mayor of the Worker's Party in Brazil to address issues of hunger and food insecurity, and which led to the creation of the Municipal Secretariat for Food and Nutrition Security in the Brazilian government.

India, National Food Security Act

Biraj Patnaik (South Asia Director, Amnesty International; former Principal Advisor to the Supreme Court Commissioner on the Right to Food, India) prepared a video in which he detailed the struggle for a Right to Food campaign in India and the legal case led by the People's Union for Civil Liberties against the Indian government, and which led to the legislation and adoption of the India National Food Security Act in 2013.

South Africa, National Policy for Food and Nutrition Security

Dr Mjabuliseni Ngidi (Lecturer, University of University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa) described the National Food Strategy approved by the South African government in 2013, but outlined how questions of access and control have proved to become obstacles in creating a policy for implementing the strategy.

Zambia, National Food and Nutrition Policy

Dr Jody Harris (Post-doctoral Fellow, Institute of Development Studies) explained how child stunting, hunger and weight problems amongst citizens now require the revision of the Food Nutrition Act in Zambia (first created in 1967) to be fit for purpose.

Scotland, Good Food Nation

Pete Ritchie (Director, Nourish Scotland) outlined the Food and Drink Strategy developed by the SNP government in 2009 in response to the recession, aimed at tackling issues of food insecurity, obesity and poverty in Scotland, and how the Good Food Nation Bill of 2019 needs to adopt a people-centred approach.

WORKSHOPS

Creating a shared vision for a National Food Policy

Dr Laura Pereira (Research Fellow, Centre for Food Policy) led a workshop that adopted the Three-Horizons approach to explore what a future vision for a National Food Policy might look like and how one could be achieved.

Building bridges: Using a national food policy to connect different food issues

Dr Kelly Parsons (Research Fellow, Centre for Food Policy) applied a food system goal ‘speed dating’ method in her workshop to explore the connections and tensions between national food policy goals; using a two-step process of discussing how issues are currently connected to each other, and how they might be better united for the benefit of both.

Overcoming barriers to the development and delivery of a national food policy

Dr Annabel de Frece (Teaching Fellow, Centre for Food Policy). This workshop used the Rich Picture methodology to explore the barriers to collaboratively and visually articulate the issues and solutions facing a National Food Policy and to identify ways of overcoming them.

Learning lessons from efforts to enable public participation in the development of integrated food policies at the regional, national and city-level

Nick Jacobs (IPES-Food); *Pete Ritchie* (Nourish Scotland); *Clément Cheissoux* (Daniel and Nina Carasso Foundation, France); and *Emily O'Brien* (Brighton and Hove Food Partnership) led a roundtable discussion to explore in more detail the process of engaging citizens in a National Food Policy, why and how citizens have been engaged, as well as the difference such consultations had (or

did not have) in order to determine what lessons can be learned as well as offering recommendations for other countries working on national food strategies.

What do international efforts to take an integrated, multisectoral, approach to addressing nutrition teach us about how to develop and deliver a coherent national food policy?

Professor Liv Elin Torheim (Oslo Metropolitan University, Oslo, Norway) and *Dr Jody Harris* (Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies, UK) led a workshop that provided an opportunity to learn about the experiences of Norway and Zambia - two countries to have developed national strategies to improve nutrition. The workshop drew on participant experiences and ideas around integrated, multisectoral approaches, and produced a set of issues that should be addressed by any country planning to develop and deliver an integrated food strategy.

Making the case for a National Food Strategy: developing a Theory of Change

Dr Rebecca Wells (Teaching Fellow, Centre for Food Policy) adopted a Theory of Change framework to trace the pathways through which a National Food Strategy should be adopted; learning about the Theory of Change, how it is used in food systems contexts, then working together in groups to identify the pre-conditions required to introduce a National Food Strategy.

Measurable outcomes for a National Food Strategy

Anna Taylor (Executive Director, The Food Foundation) led a workshop that explored the key outcomes of what a National Food Strategy for England should deliver and how these outcomes could be measured – including the pros and cons of having targets incorporated into the strategy, and how the desired outcomes might be given political sustainability.

What will be the contested areas in the development of a National Food Strategy and how to manage them?

Ben Reynolds (Deputy Chief Executive, Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming) guided a workshop that explored what contested issues a National Food Strategy might touch upon; the trade-offs between climate change, a sustainable food economy, and an accessible, affordable and well promoted food market; asking who might lose out, and what could be done to minimise the impact of these various factors.

PRESENTATION

How ready is England for a National Food Policy?

Dr Kelly Parsons drew on the findings of three of her research projects¹ to determine if England is yet ready for a National Food Policy, or if more work is still needed before this could be achieved.

PANEL

Minette Batters (President, National Farmers Union) talked about the importance of getting a food policy right before developing an agricultural policy, and how the NFU is united on the delivery of a UK-wide framework for this.

Tim Smith (Industry consultant and former Chief Executive, Food Standards Agency) asserted the need for a UK-based plan for a healthy, affordable, sustainable food system for both humans and animals alike, but one that is rooted in human health and can be secured for more than 25 years.

Ruth Davis (RSPB and DEFRA), spoke of the need for immediate change to address current health, biodiversity and health challenges facing the country. It is not possible to maintain the status quo, and assumptions also need to be challenged in order to achieve the changes needed.

Sarah Bradbury (Group Quality Director, Tesco PLC) explained that Tesco is supportive of a UK-based food policy framework – from supply and consumption to waste. Various health and environmental factors need to be considered, which leave no one out.

Alison Tedstone (Deputy Director Diet and Obesity, and Chief Nutritionist, Public Health England) warned that people are not eating healthy diets, and the cost of dietary ill-health and obesity is weighing down on the NHS. She asserted the need for education as a foundation of what the government need to do, but this is just a start. A vibrant food economy needs to be balanced with better health for all.

Jyoti Fernandes (Landworkers Alliance) highlighted the need to redress the balance between overproduction and food poverty, and asserted that more food needs to be produced agroecologically in the UK. People should decide what they want to eat, but any food policy should consider the environment alongside the question of food production.

Ben Reynolds (Deputy Chief Executive, Sustain) asked what difference, if any, a National Food Policy would make to England. More food should be British-produced, local, organic and MSC-certified. He also pointed out that the policies that have historically made a difference are those that have included specific action plans with workable metrics.

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- Dr Laura Pereira, Research Fellow, Centre for Food Policy
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- Ben Reynolds, Deputy Chief Executive, Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming

- Pete Ritchie, Director, Nourish Scotland
- Professor Cecilia Rocha, Director, School of Nutrition, Ryerson University and Research Associate, Centre for Studies in Food Security, Canada
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