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cities2030

Policy Briefs #1, #2, #3, #4

CFRS Labs for resilient, healthy, fair and environmentally friendly European food systems

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Summary

1. Policy Brief#1

1.1 Introduction

The context of Cities2030 project

Food is a territorial system closely linked to public health, social equity and land policy.

Firstly, eating habits are at the root of opposing effects, from the incidence of cardiovascular diseases to the phenomena of malnutrition. Moreover, the food system also has indirect impacts on the health of citizens all along its supply chains: pollution of air, water and soil as well as production of considerable quantities of waste. Secondly, food and its development along the value chain often entail social inequity: not only in terms of food injustice, resulting from a difficult accessibility to healthy and fresh food, but also in terms of power disparity among actors at the interface between the different stages of the value chain. Thirdly, food is acquiring, directly and indirectly, ever greater relevance in the tools of territorial government: programmes to reorient agricultural production models, rules and commercial agreements of the free market, objectives relating to land consumption, waste management and recycling.

In particular, the European Union is recognising food-related issues as urgent urban themes and, in addition to the Common Agricultural Policy, in recent years it has promoted further programmes to make the food system more compatible with the environment, more resilient to climate change and more equitable in relations between actors and between territories.

Against this background, the Cities2030 project is being developed, financed by the European Horizon 2020 programme, which brings together 40 European partners involved in various ways in the food system. The main objective of the project is to develop, in the 8 cities and 2 regions that are case studies, new food policies capable of reorienting existing systems towards more sustainable, resilient and fair models. The methodology agreed upon by the partners envisages the involvement of all interest groups and actors of the food system arena, through the installation of urban Policy and Living Labs. These City Region Food System Labs (CRFS Labs) will have, during the funding period, to work on the construction of new urban policies and pilot projects able to activate innovation processes in the food system of reference.

Scope of this document

The purpose of this policy brief is to introduce to the target audience of the urgency of urban issues related to food and the need to take the action outlined and therefore, serve as an impetus for action.

For this reason, a first part is dedicated to frame the policy context at the European scale, to clarify the background on which Cities2030 activities stand. A second part refers to an internal document produced and reviewed by Cities2030 partners, the Prototyping Toolkit, useful as a guide for the setting up of CRFS Policy and Living Labs. Finally, some recommendations are proposed to face possible challenges and difficulties that such type of approach can encounter.

This policy brief is the first of a series of four that will be published periodically during the development of Cities2030 project. It will be translated into local languages to be shared in the local food system arena of potential stakeholders.

1.2 European food policy framework

The policy framework of European Union

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Common Agricultural Policy

In December 2021, the new Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform was formally adopted, covering the seven-year period 2023-2027. The new CAP supports a sustainable future for Europe's primary producers even more strongly than in the previous seven-year period. In fact, rural areas and agriculture are central not only in this, but also in other

important European policies: the European Green Deal, the Farm to Fork strategy, and the EU biodiversity strategy for 2030. The CAP 2023-2027 is based on 9 specific objectives:

- to ensure a fair income to farmers;
- to increase competitiveness;
- to rebalance the power in the food chain;
- climate change action;
- environmental care;
- to preserve landscapes and biodiversity;
- to support generational renewal;
- vibrant rural areas;
- to protect food and health quality.

The main aim of the CAP is to support the sector in the transition towards production systems that are more compatible with the environment, fairer to producers and, at the same time, more competitive on the European and global market.

European Green Deal

The ultimate ambition of this policy is to make the European Community the first climate-neutral continent in the world, making it both resource-efficient and economically competitive. To do this, the European Green Deal aims to guarantee three criteria: no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050; economic growth decoupled from resource use; no person and no place left behind.

The European Green Deal aims to improve the well-being of citizens and future generations by implementing actions to:

- reduce impact on the climate and the environment;
- improve the energy efficiency and resilience of cities and production systems;

- extend the life of our goods in a circular perspective;
- promote sustainable public transport systems.

The issue of food is central to the European Green Deal, both because it aims to guarantee healthy and accessible food for all European citizens, and because it intends to improve the resilience, sustainability and competitiveness of primary production. In particular, the Farm to Fork strategy is dedicated to this aim. It aims to accelerate the transition to a sustainable food system that should have a neutral or positive environmental impact, adapt to and mitigate climate change, combat biodiversity loss, ensure safe, healthy and accessible food for all, and guarantee justice for all workers in the relevant economic sector.

Food 2030

This is a specific European policy to guide research in all fields of knowledge that deal in various ways with food systems. The ambition is to make European food systems resilient, healthy, fair and environmentally friendly, as they are currently both the effect and cause of the impact of climate change, resource scarcity, pollution and waste, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, population growth, malnutrition and diet-related diseases. The policy therefore addresses all aspects of the food system, the various economic sectors involved throughout the supply chain and the different disciplines involved.

The ambition of Food 2030 is to achieve four key outcomes, which in turn generate positive echoes:

- Nutrition for sustainable and healthy diets;
- Food systems supporting a healthy planet;
- Circularity and resource efficiency; Innovation and empowering communities.

Milan Urban Food Policy Pact

The Milan Urban Food Policy Pact is an international agreement of Mayors. It is more than a declaration; it is a concrete working tool for cities. It is composed by a preamble and a Framework for Action listing 37 recommended actions, clustered in 6 categories. For each recommended action there are specific indicators to monitor progress in implementing

the Pact". The MUFPP is therefore an operational tool that cities can use to implement sustainable food policies, taking as an example the good practises already implemented by the first 100 signatory cities that signed the pact in 2015. The pact focuses on the fundamental role of cities and towns, which are the main destinations for food produced, processed and transported and the main sources of organic waste and food waste.

MUFPP GOALS

The signatory mayors commit to developing ideas, programmes and policies to:

- Work to develop sustainable, inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse food systems to ensure healthy and accessible food for all within a rights-based framework for action, with the aim of reducing food waste and preserving biodiversity while mitigating and adapting to the effects of climate change;
- Promote coordination between departments and sectors at municipal and territorial levels, encouraging the inclusion of urban food policy considerations within social, economic and environmental policies, programmes and initiatives, covering, inter alia, food distribution and supply, social protection, nutrition, equity, food production, education, food security and waste reduction;
- Promote coherence between municipal food-related policies and programmes and relevant sub-national, national, regional and international policies and processes.
- Involve all sectors of the food system (including local authorities, technical and academic institutions, civil society, small-scale producers and the private sector) in the development, implementation and evaluation of food-related policies, programmes and initiatives;
- Review and amend existing urban policies, plans and regulations to support the creation of equitable, resilient and sustainable food systems;
- Use the Framework for Action as a starting point for each city to develop its own urban food system and share progress among participating cities, relevant national governments and international organisations, when appropriate;
- Promote the involvement of other cities in the framework of our Food Policy action. Food policies.

1.3 Cities Regions Food Systems Labs

Cities2030 partners provide a Prototyping Guidelines & Toolkit[1] that gives an overview of the main concepts and definition for the development of City Region Food Systems (CRFS) Labs and innovations as well as provides guidelines and tools for developing CRFS Policy & Living labs and mapping most prospective innovations.

City Region Food Systems

The complex network of actors, processes and relationships to do with food production, processing, marketing, and consumption that exist in a given geographical region.

Living labs

User-centered, open innovation ecosystems based on systematic user co-creation approach, integrating research and innovation processes in real life communities and settings.

Policy Labs

PLs contribute to the shaping and/or implementation of public policies, using a networkcentered governance that focuses more on promoting, enabling andpartnering.

CRFS Labs is an umbrella term for multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary collaboration that takes place to develop different types of innovation and increase the ability to tackle complexity and challenges in different environments. The goal of the CRFS Labs is to generate CFRS knowledge and make an impact by developing innovation in CRFS practices - new products, services, processes (CRFS Living labs) and sustainable policy frameworks (CRFS Policy labs) on a small scale and to find solutions that can be implemented on a larger scale.

The aim of CRFS Labs is to design solutions (actions or policies) not only for citizens but also design these solutions with them. This way, user involvement is not limited to passive feedback, gathered through different voice-of- the-customer methods.

[1] The Cities2030's Prototyping Guidelines & Toolkit is available in the project website at the link https://cities2030.eu/results/

The approach is rather co-creative and encourages all relevant stakeholders to work together. According to a site-specific case, CRFS Labs partners can develop different forms, roles, activities for Policy Labs and/or Living Labs.

CRFS Labs aim at generate novel policy framework and experiment, text and improve innovation and best practices through a process that include four phases: to understand and to explore CRFS recognising the paths of change; to set up CRFS Lab organising resources and time available; to co-create, to co-design, to experiment real-life testing of proposed innovative activities; to evaluate results, monitoring the experiments and learning from them.

One of the key elements for the open innovation ecosystem in CRFS Labs is the involvement of different stakeholders, because the innovation co-creation process in the Labs depends on which food systems actor drives their activities. Monitoring and evaluation are fundamental in the work of CRFS Labs, because all the experimentations and innovations must be not only put in place and tested locally, but also analysed in their potential effects on the food system.

INNOVATION

Within the Cities2030 project the innovation is used in the most comprehensive way applying to any innovative or already existing product, service, approach, policy, process, mechanism or system that is currently implemented with successful results to enhance and contribute to the sustainability of urban food systems.

1.4 Recommendations for policy makers and stakeholders

In order to make the work of CRFS Labs useful for the territories in which they will be set, it is crucial to take into consideration a number of issues:

- the existing situation for what concern the whole food system, from production to transformation, from transportation to purchase behaviours, from civil society composition to specific challenges between actors and/or sectors;
- the involvement of all the potential groups of interest, both private and public, from public authorities to enterprises, from civil associations to professional ones; the starting point of CRFS Lab in terms of available people, priorities, social

and economic resources, in order to make the ambitions of the Lab itself plausible and to plan the work on the basis of the resources actually available;

- the maintenance of a systems approach to food-related issues because, although some experiments may concern a particular phase of the supply chain, the suggested methodology or innovation favours transversal interaction between the various actors and in different food supply chain phases;

- the collaboration between the CRFS Labs' participants/ stakeholders in the construction of shared ideas and projects, in order to build and/or consolidate cocreative networks between food system actors and identify collaborative solutions to critical issues in the food system;

- the planning and assessment of the feasibility of the co-creation activity, through the preliminary studies focus on the timing, costs and risks of the activity itself before the field test.

In terms of risks, it is also important to not underestimate the fact that the development and management of CRFS Labs is not an easy process, as it involves many different stakeholders who probably have not worked together so far, and innovations inherently are unpredictable, risky and time consuming.

The continuous and fruitful exchange between CRFS Labs of different case studies is certainly a valuable aid in the implementation of innovations at the local level. Similar territories or conditions can talk to each other to overcome obstacles and difficulties together or to devise innovative and original solutions that can be adapted to the different cases included in the Cities2030 project.

2. Policy Brief#2

2.1 Introduction

When we talk about food policies we refer to a rather broad field of experiences, theories, methodological approaches and innovative tools. The choice, use and application of these tools must take into account the urban and territorial scale of reference, as well as the specificities of the territory under examination.

Large cities can develop real food plans, small cities can build Food Strategies that bring together different thematic aspects related to the food system, village networks can organize Food Councils capable of structuring exchange networks and innovation niches.

Depending on the scale of the city or region we consider, we can find the right tools. The reference time scale is also a useful aspect to consider when assessing which approaches or tools to adopt in the case under study. Some forms of food policy can be seen as different "evolutionary phases" of an increasingly structured process of activities that the Policy Lab can take on.

The **Food Council** can coordinate ongoing activities related to various associations or departments, constituting a first step towards a holistic view of the food system as an urban and territorial issue.

A **Food Strategy** has a broader scope, useful for building a future vision of the reference context, implies a sharing of intentions and values and allows the definition of work and commitment trajectories, as well as the involvement of local actors.

A **Food Plan**, on the other hand, has a more structured form of planning food management in the area, it implies that the public body takes charge of the development of a specific government tool for the food system, with consequent implications in regulatory terms.

Depending on the scale and complexity of the territory and/or the public entity involved, these tools can be steps in an evolving process or even alternative forms of management/planning of the food system (a metropolis can go through all these phases, a small might even have just one Food Council).

2.2 Tools for the Food Policy within CITIES 2030

Food Council

Food councils "primarily refer to governance tools that help connect stakeholders and food issues by defining the spheres of action, goals and processes needed to define, implement and measure policies" (Calori and Magarini, 2015, p.39). To apply these collaborative principles, local governments and associations around the world have begun to use the tool of the "food council." This can be defined as "a structure that brings together stakeholders from different food-related areas to examine how the food system works and propose ways to improve it" (Haysom, 2015). Introducing this type of governance tool does not mean taking power away from local government but accepting that multiple levels of action are needed to address the complex challenges of the food system. Participation is at the heart of these new governance tools-between rural-urban areas, territory, citizens, institutions, businesses-redistributing power. Food councils seek to return power to each actor in the supply chain, starting at the local level, using the experience of the individual as leverage to change small pieces of a larger system.

Bremerhaven

The Food Council MOIN! - Ernährungsrat für Bremerhaven, das Cuxland und umzu e.V. (Food Council for Bremerhaven, Cuxland and the surrounding area assoc.) is a local association that addresses issues of food, agriculture, sustainability and healthy eating in the city of Bremerhaven and its surrounding rural area (County Cuxhaven). The council was initiated in 2021 out of the local project "Wissen schafft Lebensraum" (KnowledgeCreates Habitat) to address challenges in the regional food system and promote positive changes in dietary habits, food production and distribution, and environmental concerns. The aim is to promote sustainable, regional, seasonal and fair food production. This also includes promoting the marketing and consumption of such products, accompanying information work and calling for political framework conditions for a sustainable nutrition strategy. The emergence of the Bremerhaven Food Council stems from the growing awareness of the importance of sustainable and healthy nutrition. Bremerhaven, as a port city with a huge fish and food processing economy and the surrounding region with an agricultural tradition, has recognised that local food systems play an important role in providing healthy food to the community while reducing environmental impacts. The Food Council was created to bring together stakeholders from different sectors such as agriculture, gastronomy, education, health, environmental protection and administration to work together on solutions for sustainable food. The purpose of the Bremerhaven Food Council is to improve food security in the region, promote access to healthy and sustainable food, strengthen local food production, increase appreciation for regional and seasonal food and reduce the environmental impact of food production. The Council is working on concrete projects and initiatives to achieve these goals. These include measures such as promoting organic farming, supporting local farmers and producers, organising educational events on nutrition education, creating urban gardens and promoting the use of regional food in schools and public institutions.

Food Strategy

Food strategies are intended as expressions of shared visions for the future of a certain food system, related to an urban or territorial scale. contains recommendations to address the major issues facing the food system: climate change, biodiversity loss, land use, diet-related disease, health inequality, food security and trade.

A food strategy can help improve the conditions of a city or territory's food system in terms of sustainability (social, economic, and environmental), independence from imports, and resilience with respect to climate change.

Food strategies are generally promoted by public institutions and land-government agencies, which are responsible for taking a medium- and long-term view of future programs and transformations.

Food Strategies can include specific policy tools, such as Food Plans.

Bruges, Belgium

should be seen as a guideline for sustainable nutrition and is also an important link in the realization of the 2030 Climate Plan. It is built around six objectives:

- Stimulate urban gardening;
- More plant-based foods (education);
- Limit food loss;
- Sustainable urban agriculture;
- Local food production and short chain;
- Fair trade.

This strategy was co-created in 2015 with the city, citizens, companies, local organizations, knowledge institutions and hotel schools. At the same time, they launched the platform 'Bruges Food Lab'. The Bruges Food Lab is a network that connects and strengthens various actors who work on sustainable food. The Bruges Food Lab is a booster of initiatives and overarching projects within Bruges' sustainable food strategy. The coordinator is embedded in a local non-profit (stadsmakers vzw) but payed by the city and they work closely together with the policy officer climate/food.

Food waste has always been an important pillar of the strategy and various actions are implemented in the last decade. In 2016 an strategic analysis was performed to measure where food is wasted and in what quantities. In particular, after estimating that a large amount of edible food was being wasted by retailers (750,000 kg/year), the city of Bruges launched an ambitious Zero Food Waste strategy. This strategy put a focus on specific sectors, such as health, which in 2015 wasted a total of 318 tonnes of food per year (for hot meals alone). After 2 years, important results have been achieved: Bruges has become an exemplary case in Europe for saving 43% of food waste in the main local hospital; in fact, the hospital has also saved part of the money usually invested in food waste prevention. For this in 2017 the city of Bruges was awarded at the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact conference with a special mention on food waste (CRFS Policy Lab Action Plan, Cities 2030).

Seinajoki, Finland

The case of Seinajoki shows how a medium-sized city of 64.000 inhabitants can effectively tackle food by developing a specific local food strategy and two more comprehensive Road maps that concern two specific issues transversal to food. The Local food strategy, inscribed in the national one, is nowadays improving the local food consumption in order to raise the usage of it in the entire food system and develop the local food culture. The two road maps concern the relationship between the food system and environmental threats. The first one is the Climate Road Map for the food sector in South Ostrobothina. This road map identifies the main development areas of the food chain in the province which have an effect to the climate change. The second one is the Low Carbon Road Map for the Food Processing industry. This road map maps and suggests actions to reduce the food processing industry's carbon foot print (CRFS Policy Lab Action Plan, Cities 2030).

Food Plan

Today, in many European urban contexts, the historical link between inhabited areas and productive areas of the territory is increasingly weak, above all due to the opening up of the scale of the markets which involve, on the one hand, heavy imports to supply the urban areas, on the other production often oriented to external markets.

However, many cities have returned, in recent years, to increasingly consider their local area as a potential supplier of local food and the awareness that food is a complex system that involves all phases, activities, the actors and spaces of the supply chain.

In order to be governed, this complexity requires planning tools to develop policies to support the transition of food systems.

Marseille, France

Marseille is the second largest city in France, after Paris, with 870,000 inhabitants within the municipal perimeter and 1,600,000 inhabitants throughout the urban agglomeration. The food system and its relationship with the city are the subject of two major plans: the first is a territorial food plan covering the entire food system, and the second, a plan for the development of urban agriculture.

Since 2016, the Aix-Marseille-Provence Metropolitan Area and the Pays d'Arles Pole of Territorial and Rural Equilibrium (PETR) have been involved in a strategic and operational process to jointly draw up a Territorial Food Project (Projet Alimentaire Territorial - PAT) for the Bouches-du-Rhône region. Created in 2014, these plans are the result of the national 'Law on the Future of Agriculture' and are drawn up collectively on the initiative of local actors (local authorities, agricultural and agri-food businesses, craftsmen, citizens, etc.).

The aim of the PAT is to include regional players in the whole food chain (production, processing, distribution, consumption), to enable them to build a comprehensive agricultural and food policy. And, by doing so, to relocate food and agriculture in local areas by supporting the installation of farmers, short food supply chains and local products in public canteens. The aim is to build a food governance system that brings together local production and local consumption in all three dimensions: economic, environmental, and social (CRFS Policy Lab Action Plan, Cities 2030).

The second plan is the Metropolitan action plan for the development of urban agriculture (Plan d'action métropolitain en faveur de l'agriculture urbaine). The main objectives of this plan are: the promotion of local production of fresh products for the inhabitants of the metropolis, as well as raising their awareness of healthy eating and urban agriculture; the control or reduction in the urban fringes of the risk of forest fires and the mitigation of the increase in temperatures due to climate change; the reactivation, through agriculture, of the social link between the inhabitants through shared, collective or school gardens.

The plan is developed in three strategic axes. The first axis aims to support local production and food. It is deployed at an urban planning level, for example by securing existing agricultural land and setting up Protected Agricultural Zones (ZAP), or by setting up more favourable water access tariff conditions for food producers. The support of local production is also provided through installation assistance via access to land, the establishment of a coordination-installation group and support for local distribution and marketing via the construction of a hall and dedicated sales windows. This axis aims to have the status of urban farmer recognized at the national level.

The second axis pursues different actions. The mobilization of urban agriculture in the service of strengthening nature in the city; the management of urban fringes via eco-grazing, bee nurseries and the creation of an experimental orchard; and finally, support for the circular economy by installing composters and reusing green waste from communities.The third axis promotes the emergence of an inclusive city. Via the creation of a resource center for collective gardens, the support for the installation of pilot projects of urban micro-farms in Priority Districts of the City, and the establishment of a support system for the creation of farmers' markets, baskets and solidarity AMAPs in food deserts.(Métropole Aix Marseille Provence, 2019).

Others: where food is included in other programs

Haarlem, Netherlands

Haarlem is a medium-sized city in the Netherlands with 160,000 inhabitants. The municipality of Haarlem has initiated an extensive sustainability program that focuses on climate adaptation, energy transition and circular economy. Within this programme are a specific policy and a Roadmap related to the theme of food. In particular the Circular City policy aims to stimulate urban agriculture. Thanks to this municipality's program, by 2030, 50% of Haarlem's farms will be familiar with a circular food system. Furthermore, by 2030, every neighbourhood will have possible forms of urban or vertical agriculture. Local food cooperatives known by 50% of the inhabitants of Haarlem were activated, including the municipality's main countryside. Residents have developed bottom-up initiatives in the various neighbourhoods, supported by the municipality. Through campaigns and plant-based menus/activities, organic food is stimulated and encouraged for all social groups. The Roadmap Sustainability of Haarlem (Chapter 8, Chain Responsibility) has set goals that are necessary to achieve a more circular food dynamic between now and 2040. The city also supports organic food, through campaigns and the promotion of menus and activities, also to stimulate and encourage greater plant-based consumption (CRFS Policy Lab Action Plan, Cities 2030).

Reykjavík, Iceland

Reykjavik is the capital of Iceland and home to 140,000 inhabitants. Two food policies concern the territory of the city and the entire country.

At the national scale the Food Policy for Iceland until 2030, that emphasises increasing local food production and value along the value chain, reducing food waste and carbon footprint. The five focus areas of the policy are value creation, consumers, appearance and safety, environment, and public health. At the scale of the city the Reykjavík Food Policy 2018-2022 is a comprehensive policy for development of food system in Reykjavík with seven focus areas for improvement: shorter and more localised food value chains; in-creased sustainability and quality; improved access to healthy food; improved food culture; and reduced food waste (CRFS Policy Lab Action Plan, Cities 2030).

At the scale of the city the Reykjavík, Food Policy 2018-2022, which was designed in 2018 and is currently being revised, is a comprehensive policy for development of food system in Reykjavík with seven focus areas for improvement: shorter and more localised food value chains; increased sustainability and quality; improved access to healthy food; improved food culture; and reduced food waste (CRFS Policy Lab Action Plan, Cities 2030). Its main objectives include but are not limited to improving food culture in the city, increasing a number of vegetable gardens, local food markets in city's neighbourhoods, reducing food waste in schools and city's canteens, increasing a number of food stores within walking distances from residential areas, and disclosing information about food's origins and environmental impacts.

2.3 Conclusions

This Policy Brief presented some of the approaches and tools developed in recent decades that fall within the broader field of Food Policy to build a food system that is fairer, healthier, more sustainable.

Gathering and studying these cases has allowed us to understand part of the current state of experimentation on food system issues, the tools available to public bodies and territorial governing bodies, and the methodologies available to those who question the food evolution of contemporary inhabited territories.

We have seen that both the time factor and the scale of action influence the choice of instruments to be deployed. Food councils act more directly to coordinate and strengthen existing initiatives and launch new ones, acting at a local scale, which can be adapted to the context of village networks or small towns. The Food strategy consists of a long-term programme, which does not end at the planning stage, but rather aims to achieve results over a longer period of time. The same happens in planning expressed through the Food Plan, which allows the problems of the food system to be understood and mapped in order to identify the actions to be launched. This is why Food Strategy and Food Plans may be more suitable tools for metropolises or medium/large cities that have the resources and tools to field and manage these specific forms and models of government.

Finally, we have also seen that the Food Council, Food Strategy and Food Plan are not mutually exclusive, but on the contrary can be simultaneously included, thus enabling more complete collaboration and coordination between public, private and third sector organisations.

3. Policy Brief#3

3.1. Selection criteria for practices and projects

The case study selection methods are based on an initial overview of all the activities carried out by the Cities2030 partners. From this we identified some CRFS Labs that seemed to us to focus in particular on actions and strategies linked to food spaces and environments. We subsequently decided to contact these partners to ask for a contribution for the most truthful and detailed description of their respective projects. We have therefore structured a questionnaire which will be explained below. An internal call was launched targeting CITIES partners who are curating the activation of a CRFS Lab, in order to collect ongoing examples and best practices. Specifically, we asked the partners to identify those initiatives or projects that have a direct impact or relationship with public and private space. For these selected innovative projects, we had them compile a form that, in addition to indicating the technical information of the initiative, answered the following questions:

1. Relation to space: how does your initiative concretely relate to space, how does it involve and connect public and/or private space? how does it involve for example the green and blue network of the area, how does it reactivate issues of slow mobility (cycle-pedestrian routes, etc...)

2. Spatial relationships at the level of public/private dimensions: what type of space does it involve (public/private/both)? How does your initiative give rise to or create new synergies between these two spatial dimensions? What instruments, such as agreement/convention/other, are activated?

3. Relationship with urban plans and planning tools: does your initiative relate to existing or under construction urban and planning tools? If so, in what way?

The examples given in the document are just some of those currently in progress within the CITIES2030 project.

For a more extensive description of these and other ongoing practices, please refer to the project website, where all City Region Food System Labs are listed and described (https://cities2030-community.gisai.eu/).

3.2 Spatial initiatives for the food system

The physical transformations of city and spatial spaces are not only related to the effects of urban planning policies and tools (such as the expansion of certain crops, or the installation of new commercial poles). When we observe the food system, we realise that many spatial modifications and regenerations are the result of bottom-up initiatives, local practices, activation of groups of citizens and/or producers, as well as other projects promoted by local institutions. These are transformations on a minute scale that are enabled incrementally, but are no less significant for that. In fact, they are capable of producing significant effects in the inhabited territories: they reactivate abandoned areas, regenerate fragments of the city, strengthen social and economic networks, overcome the slowness of bureaucracy, and bridge the gap between society and institutions.

The food system is an urgent issue because, besides being one of the systems on which human life depends for its survival, it has obvious spatial impacts on territories and cities. Dealing with the spaces of food is as urgent as dealing with the policies. The spatial perspective can be adopted to explore the entire food chain as a whole: from the spaces of production, mobility and logistics, to the places of consumption, waste and reuse. The "spatial turn" proposed by Soja as a new approach to the observation of our reality (Soja, 1989, 1996), is a relevant key to addressing the food issue. As we shall see, the spatial perspective in the study of the food system can help to understand, imagine and design food initiatives and their relationships with cities, territories and inhabited regions. These spatial relationships can indeed influence our food behaviours and play a central role in all the social, political, economic and environmental challenges posed by contemporary food systems. By profoundly determining the characteristics of a community and the configuration of the landscape it inhabits, food strongly conditions the spatial and environmental justice of the territory it refers to (Alkon, Agyeman, 2011).

Based on the results of the questionnaire described above, we have identified four large families of spaces linked to specific food practices and projects: urban and peri-urban spaces for agriculture; open air farmers' markets and organic food markets grouped under the broader group of 'local markets'; schools, sport and recreational facilities; cultural spaces and events.

Urban and peri-urban spaces for agriculture

Urban and peri-urban agriculture (UPA) has played an important role in the food supply of cities and territories. Increasingly internationally recognised as a key player in the nutrition of urban populations (FAO, 2022), UPA can meet local demand by shortening supply chains and helping to reduce the distances between producers and consumers, in some cases favouring self-consumption. UPA supported by spaces such as community and allotment gardens, vertical agriculture initiatives, agri-urban park can also bring numerous benefits with respect to social (Duchemin et al., 2008; Noll, 2020), educational, environmental and economic issues by contributing to fairer and more sustainable food systems in cities and inhabited regions. Through urban agriculture, populations develop their attention to care, both in their search for meaning and in addressing health issues (Brown, Jameton, 2000). UPA is also an expression of resistance and collective efforts by associations and individuals to reclaim and cultivate land in metropolises (Paddeu, 2021) and is recognized as central in urban and planning food strategies (Viljoen, Bohn, 2005; Morgan, 2009, 2015).

CRFS Lab of Marseille (P40 CITAG)

Name: land identification and reactivation in Marseille

Location: Marseille, 14th arrondissement

Time references: since summer 2023 (this activity is still ongoing, the process of implementation is an innovation itself)

The actors/agents/stakeholders involved: Aix-Marseille Métropole, Société des Eaux de Marseille, Cité de l'agriculture, landowners, urban farmers.

The Marseille region is traditionally a fruits and vegetables production region and was self-sufficient until the 1950s. Marseille still has a great potential for local production, both in terms of pedoclimatical conditions and in terms of available land (around 230 ha). The urban sprawl has left a patchwork of fringes, former agricultural lands that now lack a farmer. But once that land has been identified on a map, there is much work to be done. Many landowners, in fact, do not see the agricultural value of their land and do not have the skills to cultivate it themselves, nor the knowledge of potential project holders who could cultivate it. This initiative is to help landowners understand the agricultural value of their land, the potential for the local economy, and lift the obstacles (irrigation, contract…) where a farmer is willing to set up but does not have access to land.

Our initiative involves mostly private space, since public institutions have done a good work in the past years identifying and installing farmers on their land. This good work is an inspiration and an example that we showcase to the private landowners to illustrate what their land could look like if they rent it to a farmer. Being well identified by local stakeholders, CITAG is able to connect landowners with the appropriate projects, given their constraints (land size, access, water, storage, etc.). When owners and projects meet, CITAG is also able to help find an agreement and contract that is safe for both parties.

The initiative was born with the help of the Aix-Marseille Métropole, in particular due to the will of the Métropole to create a 700ha agri-park in the North of Marseille. This political will led to public consultations and thus to the identification of landowners interested in the agricultural potential of their land. CITAG works hand in hand with the Métropole and the SEMM (water supplier of Marseille) to solve the technical problems that may arise on the way to new farming installations. Urban plans in France have the power to make a piece of land buildable or not, and therefore strongly influence the willingness of landowners to keep their land in hope of a future financial benefit. Lately urban plans in Marseille have shown strong signals towards the preservation of agricultural land, favouring an initiative like this one.

CRFS Lab Agrotopia (P6 INAGRO)

Name: H2Orti

Location: Roeselare, Belgium

Time references: April 2023 – June 2024

The actors/agents/stakeholders involved: Growers & researchers from Agrotopia

Horticulture in greenhouses relies on rainwater for the irrigation of plants. Traditionally, next to the greenhouses large basins are placed which are used to store the rainwater. In urban areas, the place is limited to store rainwater and hinders the full development of urban horticulture.

This issue needs to be tackled if we want to rethink city food regions and bring food production closer to the people. Therefore, the project H2Ortiinvestigates and demonstrates which other alternative water sources could be used to irrigate tomato plants in the rooftop greenhouse of Agrotopia, INAGRO headquarters. Researchers are looking at local level and using run-off water from impervious surfaces such as parking lots or rooftops which are ubiquitous in an urban environment.

By demonstrating the potential of these water sources to the public and local governments it is possible to tackle several problems. On the one hand the system provides a water source for local food production. On the other hand, in several Western countries such as the Flemish region, there is a problem of a lot of impervious surfaces and large canals which divert the water quickly to the sea. Thus, by capturing part of this water for irrigation it is possible to optimise this resource, instead of using tap water which is a valuable source for human consumption. The project is not yet related to urban plans or planning tools; however, the effectiveness of the system and the demonstrative phase of the initiative could inspire planners and policy makers and push towards a new way of thinking about water cycles at the local scale. The scaling up of this system, in fact, represents a potential for urban water management, in terms of reduction of freshwater extraction and reuse of runoff water.

CRFS Quart de Poblet CRFS Lab

Name: Revitalizing Quart de Poblet: Restoring Abandoned Agricultural Land Along the River Landscape

Location: banks of the river Turia, Quart de Poblet, Espagne

Time references: Ongoing since 2021

The actors/agents/stakeholders involved: Local producers, regional government, public representatives, Environment Department of the Municipality

The banks of the Turia river that flow through the municipality of Quart de Poblet are affected by illegal occupation. The lands are, on the one hand, spaces of the natural park of the River Túria and, on the other hand, private fields that are currently abandoned. These lands are currently used for agriculture with cultivation methods that negatively affect the water quality of the Turia river.

The natural park is under the administration of the Valencian Community Government and Quart de Poblet has no jurisdiction over these areas. However, the municipality has considered that the best strategy to address this situation is to approach the people who currently occupy these areas and initiate a dialogue with them to raise awareness about the use of this land; train them in the use of sustainable agriculture; reverse the pollution of the river and involve them in employment workshops in which they can use their knowledge of agriculture.

This activity is part of a municipal initiative to create a municipal policy on agriculture and sustainable cities. Dialogue with land occupants is a further axis; the aim is to dialogue with stakeholders and at the internal political level on what the municipal strategy will be for the coming years.

2.2 Local markets

Open air farmers' markets and organic food markets can be considered the historical pillars of local food systems, and the "keystones" in their reconstruction (Brown, C., & Miller, 2008). Farmers' markets are alternative food networks that connect producers and consumers through direct sales and have benefits for both actors (La Trobe, 2001). On the producers' side, this allows them to retain profits from the sale of their products and to be in direct contact with customers. On the consumers' side, they can obtain fresh products directly from a local producer with whom they can discuss the cultivation methods used. Farmers' markets can play a role in building a sense of community (Johnson, 2013). It must be emphasised that the concept of "local" remains vague and can be a subject of discussion (Born, Purcell, 2006).

CRFS Lab of the Venice Lagoon (P38 IUAV)

Name: Mercato Biologico Solidale di AEres

Location: Venice and Mestre

Time references: since 2012 (the CRFS Lab represents the possibility for this project to expand and build network with other local food initiatives)

The actors/agents/stakeholders involved: AEres - Venezia per l'Altraeconomia, Apicultura Restante, El Tamiso Mercati Ortofrutta Bio, la Casara dei Boracia, El Forno A Legna, Municipality of Venice.
The fairtrade organic market is an initiative promoted by the Venetian association AEres - Venezia per l'Altraeconomia, which has the fundamental aim of building and supporting a Venetian "Rete di Economia Solidale e Sociale (RES)" (Solidarity and Social Economy Network) between the realities that operate in the solidarity and social economy, with a view to structuring a real "Distretto di Economia Solidale" (Solidarity Economic District) based on alternative modes of production (organic food, local and bulk products, etc.), consumption (short chain, purchasing groups, etc.), saving (ethical finance, microcredit, etc.) and work (social cooperation for work integration, microcredit, etc.), consumption (short supply chain, purchasing groups, etc.), savings (ethical finance, microcredit, etc.) and work (social cooperation for job placement, etc.).
AEres does not only operate within the agri-food chain, however, this aspect is particularly important for the organic solidarity market. Indeed, the market focuses on the involvement of local companies such as Apicultura Restante which produces honey and other beekeeping products, El Tamiso Mercati Ortofrutta Bio which brings together small organic farmers, la Casara dei Boracia a dairy which produces local cheeses, El Forno A Legna which produces bread in an artisanal way.
The market takes place three days a week in two different locations: in Mestre, on the mainland, in the cloister space of the M9 museum; in Venice, in Rio Terà dei Pensieri, located in the neighbourhood of Santa Croce. In both cases, the market revitalises and gives new meaning to the urban spaces involved. In Mestre, the usually empty cloister that gives access to some tertiary activities located on the ground floor, under the arcades, is transformed during market days. The stalls, in fact, occupy the central space overlooking a pedestrian pathway that cuts diagonally through the cloister, and the market includes a space of staying, a sort of small city living room where readings for children, talks and book presentations are organised. Producers interact with customers, letting them taste the products and giving advice on use and preparation.
In Venice, the Rio Terà is a wide calle (street) that, during the market, is occupied by the stalls placed side by side, leaving the central space for walking lengthwise, transforming a place of city passage into a place for being and meeting.
The market, which also includes foreign vendors and producers, carries forward the intention of integrating different cultures and populations living in the same city, promoting exchange and interaction through the discovery and knowledge of local and faraway products.
AEres has an agreement with the municipality for the use of these spaces, on the three days of the market, and has consolidated this relationship both with the administration and, above all, with the citizens. However, the association is conducting an intensive dialogue with the administration in order to obtain the possibility of using the spaces all week, expanding the spaces in use, as well as the producers involved. Furthermore, AEres would like to establish a more direct and mutually beneficial relationship with the Mestre city market, which takes place not far from the cloister of the M9 museum.

Schools, sport and recreational facilities

The way we eat is influenced by the local food environment and the places we live and frequent, and food policies have a major influence on this issue (Schwartz et al., 2017). In this sense, school canteens, sports and recreation facilities play an important role in influencing the diet of children and adolescents.

The school environment is an important place for the nutrition of children and adolescents who consume at least one main meal a day in school canteens. Promoting healthy eating in the school environment can have a positive impact on the eating behaviours of adolescents, by counteracting the use of unhealthy food (Driessen et al., 2014; Micha et al., 2018). National policies on school nutrition can have a positive influence on improving the food distributed at school and thus on the diet of children and adolescents (Mensink, Schwinghammer, Smeets, 2012; Hart, 2016).

Public sport and recreational facilities can provide children and adolescents with access to free or affordable physical activities, combating unhealthy food environments. At the same time, such spaces may provide unhealthy food products that can promote unhealthy dietary patterns among children and adolescents. Indeed, most items in vending machines in schools, sports and recreational facilities are unhealthy. In fact, the consumption of sugary drinks and energy-dense foods may be linked to dysfunctions and diseases that undermine the health of children and adolescents. Many studies show that recreational and sports areas are a priority environment for supporting healthy eating behaviours among children and adolescents (Naylor, Olstad, Therrien, 2015; Olstad et al., 2020).

CRFS Lab Seinajoki (P12 INTO, P13 AGRIA)

Name: Healthy snacks' vending machine
Location: Jalostajankuja 4, 60100 Seinäjoki, Finland
Time references: 12.4.2023
The actors/agents/stakeholders involved: Seinäjoen voimistelijat ry, Global Vending Oy, Into Seinäjoki oy/Cities2030

A vending machine with healthy snacks has been installed in the Seinäjoki gymnastics training hall, at the initiative of Into Seinäjoki/Cities2030. It is available to all the gymnasts and their parents in the lobby of the training hall. Healthy snacks can be purchased from the vending machine. The training room is used exclusively by the Seinäjoki gymnasts' association. The association and the company providing the vending machine service have a mutual agreement, in which it is agreed, among other things, which snack products are sold and how they are supplied. The implemented pilot project can serve as an example when the city of Seinäjoki and its steering group The Healthy Kids of Seinäjoki start preparing their own food strategy in 2024 in cooperation with the employees of the Cities2030 project.

Name: School canteen into school restaurant

Location: Kirkkokatu 7, 60100 Seinäjoki, Finland

Time references: On-going process, ready in Spring 2024

The actors/agents/stakeholders involved: The City of Seinäjoki/the school Seinäjoen Lyseo, ProAgria Etelä-Pohjanmaa/Rural Women's Advisory Organization

Hot lunch is free and available to all middle school students in Finland, but still many pupils skip lunch. To make lunch more attractive, the physical space of the pilot canteen will be transformed into a more welcoming and pleasant one, involving the pupils in the process of change.According to the surveys conducted, the most common reasons for not liking lunch are not related to the taste or the quality of the food, but to social factors: pupils feel uncomfortable with someone watching what they eat, or making comments on what they have chosen to eat, etc. Part of the solution is to convert the school canteen into a more attractive dining space by re-organizing the routes and seating to provide more privacy to the pupils with their food tray. Some of the canteen decorations were also made by the pupils not only to enhance their creativity, but also to feel more connected to the school community. These changes in the physical environment are expected to tackle some social obstacles that make pupils not take advantage of the free school lunch. The implemented pilot project can serve as an example when the city of Seinäjoki and its steering group The Healthy Kids of Seinäjoki start preparing the city's food strategy in 2024, in cooperation with the Cities2030 project workers.

Name: The Food Business Club

Location: Kirkkokatu 7, 60100 Seinäjoki, Finland

Time references: On-going process, ready in Spring 2024

The actors/agents/stakeholders involved: The City of Seinäjoki/the school Seinäjoen Lyseo, ProAgria Etelä-Pohjanmaa/Rural Women's Advisory Organization

In "Seinäjoen lyseo" public school, a kiosk has been in operation for years. Inspired by the Cities2030 programme, the kiosk has changed its food supply to make it healthier. In addition, leftovers from the school canteen, which would become food waste, are reused and some products are cooked together with the pupils, guided by the home economics teacher. The project activates the space while the kiosk is open, once a week after lunch time. The implemented pilot project can serve as an example when the city of Seinäjoki and its steering group The Healthy Kids of Seinäjoki start preparing the city's food strategy in 2024, in cooperation with the Cities2030 project workers.

Cultural spaces and events

Multidimensional cultural and artistic spaces and events, such as public libraries and food festivals could offer great potential to spread education on healthy eating and enhance a more sustainable food culture in general.
Public libraries have the potential to participate in the food justice movement by creating opportunities to distribute healthy and quality food, teach and educate in community-based agriculture, cooking and preparing healthy foods, disseminate and implement food justice programs (Lenstra, D'Arpa, 2019). Public libraries could be promoters of a 'green education' including how to grow food sustainably, ways to host community gardens, teach people how to garden, and educate on the use of local seeds (Kurbanoğlu, Boustany, 2014). These are practices that could be implemented globally (Schuman, 2018).
The meaning of urban food festivals should not be subjected to the simple logic of the consumerist or neoliberal approach (Hollows et al., 2014). Beyond considering food festivals as a promotional tool to achieve the economic objectives of a place, in fact, there are non-economic effects such as feelings towards a place and the sense of uniqueness of the place that are equally important in the construction and dissemination of a local culinary culture (Lau, Li, 2019). Furthermore, local food festivals can improve social sustainability and provide opportunities to create new ties between different social groups and encourage coexistence (Jong, Varley, 2018). Finally, food festivals could be read as rural and marginal communities' response to the phenomenon of their social marginalisation (Fontefrancesco, 2020).

CRFS Lab of Vicenza

Name: The Ortobook – The International Library "La Vigna"

Location: Vicenza - Italy
Time references: since 2020 (this activity is still ongoing, the process of implementation is an innovation itself)

The actors/agents/stakeholders involved: The International Library "La Vigna", with its owners (Municipality, Province of Vicenza, Veneto Region, Accademia Olimpica), Scientific Board, universities and researchers, local environmental and cultural associations, gastronomes and chefs, citizens, schools. The International Library is an Institute of documentation specialised in agricultural and rural world culture studies. It was founded in 1981 thanks to the successful intuition of Demetrio Zaccaria, an entrepreneur from Vicenza who got fond of collecting books about viticulture, agriculture and enology in the 1950s. In 1980 he purchased the building where "La Vigna" currently has its headquarters: Palazzo Brusarosco Zaccaria. The following year, on the threshold of his seventies and worried that the book heritage collected over many years should not be lost after his death, he donated the Palace and the entire collection to the Municipality of Vicenza. In 1981, in agreement with the representatives of the Municipality, the Chamber of Commerce, the Olympic Academy and the Consortium for the management of the Bertoliana Library, he founded the Center for Rural Culture and Civilization (which the Province would also join in 1984), with the aim of conserving, managing and increasing the book heritage of "La Vigna", as well as promoting studies, conferences and research activities.

Today, the Library conserves more than 62.000 books (some of them dated back to the XV century) on food, wine and agriculture. Furthermore, on the top floor of Palazzo Brusarosco Zaccaria there is an open space renovated by the Italian architect Carlo Scarpa. It is a place often used for meetings, dinners, tastings, conducted by local wineries or consortia, and dialogues between different realities and stakeholders.
All these spaces of the International Library La Vigna, named The Ortobook, are a place where it is possible to cultivate knowledge and prompt the culture of open innovation to improve urban and region food system.
The Library has the aim of promoting and facilitating studies, conferences and round tables on works and topics relating to the progress of agriculture and the knowledge and diffusion of peasant culture and civilisation, as well as enhancing the International Library "La Vigna", improving its use and increasing the existing book heritage. Numerous agreements have been activated with local stakeholders to promote and enhance food and the city region food system, making all the spaces of the building available, both the internal rooms and the external garden. It represents a real-life Living Lab where citizens meet researchers, where knowledge is preserved and developed to prompt open thinking and establish an open innovation environment. Here researchers, entrepreneurs and citizens meet to share knowledge and increase skills to develop a more sustainable food ecosystem.
Furthermore the garden, located in the city centre, is a green lung managed by the "Amici dei Parchi" association and creates an open museum of trees and shrubs, as well as a place open to artistic installations.
Thanks to the Cities2030 project, The International Library "La Vigna" is improving its skills in developing capacity building and dialogue system activities with numerous local entities and associations, sometimes in collaboration with the Municipality of Vicenza. In this sense, therefore, La Vigna is becoming a reference point for issues related to the food system and sustainability, addressing not only institutions but also businesses and citizens. All the initiatives of "The Ortobook" lab are moments of dissemination of the knowledge inherent in La Vigna's heritage to open up to citizens, to other realities, and to establish new functional alliances for the development of the territory.

CRFS Lab Seinajoki (P12 INTO, P13 AGRIA)

Name: Food education in a happening
Location: Törnävänsaarentie 1, 60220 Seinäjoki, Finland
Time references: week 20 in May
The actors/agents/stakeholders involved: The Culture Services of the City of Seinäjoki, ProAgria Etelä-Pohjanmaa/Rural Women's Advisory Organization

The children's culture event "Pikku-Provinssi" (="small" Provinssi), is organised annually in a large festival area in Seinäjoki. It is a multi-dimensional, widespread, cultural and artistic event that is able to temporarily transform the area where it takes place, which is usually empty, for about a week. The area is also known as a festival site of "Provinssi", a large and well-known music festival, which is targeted to adults. In the area of Pikkuprovinssi there are several points where various activities can take place and almost all first-graders visit the festival with their schools. The week ends with a big party with many children's bands, art and culture shows etc etc. The space changes radically while the Pikkuprovinssi is on. In the past, the only food available in the festival was sold by a snack kiosk operating during the day, selling candies, sodas and chips, and so on. Now, the Cities2030 project has added new food content to the festival week (Monday to Friday), including a learning space on the cultivation of pea sprouts. The festival and especially the new food-related activities stimulated the children to think about how to be active citizens and grow some of their own food at home and how food gets from the field to the table. There was also a further effect of this action: the food services of the City of Seinäjoki set up their own stand in the festival to ask children what food they prefer to eat during school lunches.

3.3 Final considerations

This paper intends to emphasise the relevance of a spatial observation of food-related transformations, on the one hand because innovative initiatives take place and are enabled in the spaces of the city, neighbourhoods, peri-urban and extra-urban areas; on the other hand because the presented projects are capable of transforming spaces: reactivating them, regenerating them, giving them new meaning, new accessibility, making them become new meeting places.

The reflections of the early 2000s produced by scholars such as Viljoen, Bohn and Morgan on the role of **urban and peri-urban agriculture** are still valid after twenty years: the proximity between places of production and consumers is fundamental to mending the idea of a city separated from the countryside in order to return to reflecting on territorial pacts based on local food that can give greater autonomy and food security to the communities living there.

This "stitching" takes place in different spaces: in farms, where farmers activate forms of direct sale of their products and educational activities such as educational farms, but also in **city and local markets**, whether in the main squares or in neighbourhood gathering places. The activation of these spaces through the trade in local agricultural products, as Johnson (2013) notes, can play an important role in strengthening the sense of community.

There are spaces, then, that are particularly important because they are experienced by particularly vulnerable members of society, such as children. This is the case of **schools, sport and recreational facilities** where meals are often consumed but which do not always guarantee sufficient quality standards and which, instead, represent an important opportunity to supplement and extend the nutrition education that children and young people receive at home.

Food education – which clearly should not only be aimed at children and young people, but at all members of society – is not only about human health and the quality of the products consumed, but should rather expand in meaning to include reflections on the justice of food supply chains (Lenstra, D'Arpa, 2019) and their impacts on the environment (Kurbanoğlu, Boustany, 2014). In this sense, other places such as **public libraries and cultural spaces**, or **public events** involving many people, should be understood as important opportunities for the exchange between cultures and knowledge and for the strengthening of connections between social groups.

The projects presented in this Policy Brief – just a selection of the many ongoing activities – show how Cities2030 contributes to the international debate and ongoing experiments, precisely because of the cases that work directly on the spaces of the city, thanks to initiatives that can make themselves effective and concrete in improving the conditions of the food system.

It should be pointed out, however, that individual initiatives, although innovative and potentially positive and effective, need coordination and support. Not only that, they need new spaces to expand, to replicate, to network, to meet the citizenry.

Certain organisational/strategic issues between actors and socio-poetic and economic dynamics can be location-neutral. However, a food strategy, a food plan, an urban food agenda, should be as situated and place-based as possible. They should avoid giving overly general indications or guidelines because they risk not being able to interpret existing innovation niches, the specific trends in place and thus miss the objective of strengthening and supporting the food transition.
A careful reading of the spaces of the city and the territory, observed through the lens of food, is therefore necessary to stimulate specific and effective initiatives, and to build local policies capable of supporting the change underway with effective measures built ad hoc on the territory of reference.

4. Policy Brief#4

Scope of this document

Policy Brief #4 (D3.5) makes a lunge at bottom-up and citizen-guided initiatives.

The first objective of the document is to provide some indications on the importance of identifying, promoting and supporting these initiatives to accompany the transition of city-region food systems (CRFS), providing keys and useful examples for their possible scaling up.

The second objective is to raise awareness of emerging initiatives within the cities and Labs of the CITIES2030 partners. We will see that cities and CRFS Labs play a central role in recognising and supporting these initiatives, as they are often fragile and encounter numerous difficulties on their way. Therefore, being able to root them in situated food ecosystems and make them endure is crucial to bring about real change in the dominant food regime.

CITIES partners were therefore invited to contribute to this policy brief by indicating ongoing innovations that are particularly relevant in their city-region and are particularly representative. Partners were asked to identify exemplary experiments that can also serve as inspiration or models for other cities and CRFS Labs in Europe.

4.1. Introduction: Supporting bottom-up and citizen initiatives for the transition of food systems

The transition of city-region food systems (CRFS) requires addressing global challenges at the local level and bottom-up citizen-led initiatives play a central role in this (De Schutter, 2018). These initiatives are transitional niches that are fostering new ways of innovating, thinking and reorganising the food system by contributing to rebuilding equitable and sustainable food ecosystems (De Schutter, 2012).

Today, a growing number of bottom-up local coalitions are emerging in several European cities to experiment with innovative, multi-level solutions (Hopkins, 2008; Geels, 2018). These coalitions are often led by mixed groups of active citizens who share the common goal of achieving social and systemic change in their respective food ecosystems. Bottom-up initiatives are capable of strengthening resilience, and making food communities better equipped to tackle contemporary global challenges.

These initiatives can be significant in the long run, but they often emerge from fragile contexts and face several difficulties to endure. They can, however, help to drive real change in the dominant food regime, and for this to happen it is then necessary to support these transitional niches. In this sense, cities and CRFS Labs can play a crucial role in recognising, promoting and supporting these initiatives. Cities and CRFS Labs can create the conditions and co-design food policies that allow initiatives to develop, flourish and multiply to promote new ways of addressing global food system challenges at the local level, interacting with other actors in a multi-level dynamic.

Moreover, numerous studies show that the involvement of bottom-up initiatives in food policy co-design is crucial. Since the co-design process can be, if well used, a tool for empowering stakeholders, this same process can make them more aware of their role as catalysts in the transformation of the socio-territorial food system (Dansero et al. 2019).

Recongnize the importance of bottom-up and citizen initiatives

Several principles or concepts describe the importance of recognising and supporting bottom-up initiatives to transform food systems.

The first relates to food system innovation and the role of these initiatives in triggering innovation processes in current food systems. Indeed, citizen-led initiatives can be seen as a form of social innovation, which together with product, process and governance form the four cornerstones of food system innovation (Wascher et al., 2015).

The second relates to the relationship between these initiatives and the notion of Food Sovereignty. Food sovereignty is the idea that people have the right to define their own food and how, by whom and how that food should be produced. As defined in the international debate by la Via Campesina (1996) and subsequently introduced by numerous food policies and strategies in many European cities, the notion of Food Sovereignty then synthesises a large number of the objectives that these bottom-up initiatives bring.

Thirdly, these initiatives can rebuild a democratic model of food system in order to transform a dominant food system that produces high volumes of products at low costs, but has enormous social and environmental externalities that are borne by society and not reflected in food prices (De Schutter, 2014). Indeed, Food Democracy is about citizens regaining democratic control over the food system and its sustainable transformation (Baldy, 2019; Booth&Coveney, 2015).

Finally, the notion of Food Citizenship shows that citizens recognise that their purchasing power can be used to develop a new terrain of social and political action that brings new responses to the crisis of the globalised food system (Booth et al., 2022; Affre et al.,2024; Renting et al., 2012; Wilkins, 2005; De Tavernier, 2012).

Policies, strategies and projects promoting these initiatives

The transition to sustainable food systems requires parallel changes in policies, strategies and projects that promote these initiatives. For some time now, many political agendas of European cities have emphasised the need for local solutions directed by citizen-centred development and the idea of multi-level development and cooperation (de Cunto et al. 2017).

Since 2015, the Milan Urban Food Pact has emphasised that civil society and the private sector have major roles to play, and today the European Farm to Fork Strategy is supporting many projects such as the EU Food 2030 Project Family that identify, promote and support precisely these forms of initiatives[2].

It is now acknowledged that the role of citizens in collaboration with local insitutions is central to the birth and development of forms of local food governance such as Food Councils, Food Districts, Food Communities, which have led to the adoption of true local food policies in numerous European and American cities (Piorr et al., 2011; Schiff, 2008; Harper, 2009; Dansero et al., 2020).

What cities and CRFS Labs can do for these initiatives: the opportunity of upscaling

Although promising to accelerate the transition to future-proof systems, these initiatives are often small and hyper-localised and often struggle to take root due to inherent socio-cultural challenges. They are social initiatives that often face a lack of capacity and resources, which hinders their survival or growth potential. Up-scaling can help overcome such challenges to root these initiatives in more stable ecosystems at the local level, and both cities and CRFS Labs can play an important role in this process.

On the one hand, cities have a in important role to play in engaging civil society and bottom-up initiatives to identify emerging food system problems and response gaps early, and to build capacity across agencies, policy sectors and levels of governance. Cities have a strong interest in involving bottom-up initiatives enabling participatory processes to co-create their food strategies and support them by long-term urban food policies. Identifying, supporting and facilitating these initiatives can ensure an inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach that truly addresses the contextual needs of urban food populations (De Cunto et al., 2017).

CRFS Labs also play an important role in this process and can prove to be a springboard by proposing some concrete measures. Many of the CRFS and Living Labs supported by European programmes have played an important role in accelerating initiatives through upscaling and

[2] The EU Food 2030 Project Family is a collaboration of five EU Horizon projects: FoodSHIFT 2030, FOODE, Food Trails, Cities 2030 and FUSILLI.

broader policy measures at the city-region level[3]. We will see that Cities2030 cities and CRFS Labs have also played a pivotal role in identifying, supporting and up-scaling these initiatives.

Up-scaling cannot present a one-size-fits-all solution and can have several purposes: implementation of the same initiative for long-term impact, sharing knowledge and results with other interested communities, or replication in similar contexts (Marradi, Mulder, 2022). A work carried out on the citizen-drive initiatives of the Edibles City Network programme emphasises that "there are rarely 'one-size-fits-all' solutions" and that each up-scaling strategy must be studied according to the specific social, cultural and geographical conditions in which the initiative fits (Plassnig et al., 2022). Furthermore, a number of simple and easy-to-understand recommendations can guide up-scaling choices[4].

4.2 The bottom-up and citizen initiatives in CITIES2030 Labs

Types of initiatives for innovation and transition of food systems

There are many examples of citizen-led innovations in urban food landscapes, and the rich diversity of these initiatives already indicates the powerful innovation role citizens can play in their local food systems, even when such initiatives are not yet recognised by policies.

This local bottom-up food activism is also referred to as 'citizen-driven initiatives' (Specht, Bohn, Simón-Rojo, 2022) 'grassroots initiatives' (Gernert et al., 2018; Sage et al., 2021), or 'community-base initiatives' (Othmen et al., 2023).

Given the large number of types of initiatives and their complexity, there are many ways to describe their diversity. Indeed, one can start from different criteria, for example their forms of governance (Wascher, Arciniegas, 2020), or the type of challenges they face (Marradi, Mulder, 2022), or the geographical contexts in which they are set and the solutions that are implemented (Plassnig et al. 2022).

In this policy brief, we have decided to assemble some initiatives within the Cities2030 Labs that we have identified through two internal calls for contributions.

[3] As FoodSHIFT, DESIGNSCAPES (Building Capacity for Design enabled Innovation in Urban Environments), Edibles City Network.
[4] There are 11 key recommendations for up-scaling: There are rarely "one type fits all" solutions; Optimisation is a daily task; Stay flexible; Everything is driven by people; We are all experts! ; Networking and advocacy is key; Open your eyes to sustainable business models; Every mistake counts; Do good and talk about it! ; Most wanted resources are money and time; Reduce our ecological footprint and foodprint! (Plassnig et al., 2022:15).

Selection Criteria

The case study selection methods are based on an initial overview of all the activities carried out by the Cities2030 partners. We launched a first call to all Cities2030 partners in cities to identify some citizen and bottom-up initiatives that could be meaningful and representative (Tab. 1).

City, Country	Partner	Code	Name of the initiative	Website
Bremerhaven, Germany	TTZ	P16	Local food council	https://www.moin-ernaehrung.de/;
			Food sharing	https://foodsharing.de;
			Regional market	https://www.regiomarkt-beverstedt.de/;
			Zero-Waste-Pop-Up-Cafe	https://dasbeet.info/idee/ ;
			Transparenz schaffen	https://cux-landfrauen.jimdo.com/transparenz/
Matís, Iceland	Matís	P22	Freedge	https://www.icelandreview.com/news/we-take-food-for-granted-new-community-fridge-opens-in-reykjavik/.
Pollica, Italy	Future Food Institute	P23	Circe	https://circecilento.wixsite.com/circecilento
Vidzeme, Latvia	Vidzeme Planning Region	P24	Straupe Farmers' Market	
			Bioregion establishment in the territory of Gauja National Park	
	Latvijas Lauku Forums	P25	Communication platform for stakeholders	
			Meetings with Local action groups	
Skopje, North Macedonia	GGP	P26	Food Bank Macedonia	https://www.bankazahrana.org/
Skopje, North Macedonia	AGFT	P27	Urban Garden Bostanie	https://www.facebook.com/zelenataarka/?locale=mk_MK; https://meta.mk/en/bostanie-cooperative-garden-in-capital-

				of-north-macedonia-teaches-young-people-gardening/ ; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-hDES6uqwo
Iași, Romania	Iasi Municipality	P28	The Local Social Entreprise C.U.I.B.	
			ZERO WASTE Bistro from Romania	
Murska Sobota, Slovenia	ITC	P30	Green Point Short Food supply Chain	https://zelena-tocka.si/
	MOMS	P34	Centre for the Development of Sustainable Society	https://nasabauta.si/crtd-references/
Riga, Latvia	RTU	P39	REGION TASTE	https://novadagarsa.lv/
			Mūsu Bio tirgus	
Marseille, France	CITAG	P40	Sols Vivants	

Tab 1. List of bottom-up and citizen-driven initiatives provided by partners in the first call.

We then contacted the partners who responded positively to the call, whose answers we have grouped together in Tab. 1. We asked for their input for a more truthful and detailed description of their respective initiatives following a questionnaire that will be explained below. In addition to providing technical information about the initiative, partners answered to the following questions:

1. Which are the main goals of this initiative?

2. What relationships are developed between the food citizen/bottom-up initiative and the different types of actors and policies of the food system?

3. How does your initiative concretely relate to the space of your city?

We have subsequently reorganised the initiatives into four families based on the objectives that these initiatives promote: initiatives that promote soil protection; alliances between producers; valorisation of the role of women in the food system and their rights; recovery of food waste and food security. Of course, the examples given in the paper are only some of those currently underway within the CITIES2030 project. For a more extensive description of these and other ongoing practices, please refer to the project website, where all City Region Food System Labs are listed and described(https://cities2030-community.gisai.eu/).

2.1 Promoting Initiatives for Soil Protection and Regeneration

As emphasised by the European Commission and the EU Soil Strategy for 2030 (EU, 2020a) Soils are living ecosystems that underpin human life on Earth and are essential to the food system as they provide valuable services such as food supply and are crucial for ensuring food security.
However, today numerous anthropogenic activities related to the dominant food system have a direct or indirect impact on the proper functioning and health of soils. This is for example through intensive agriculture and the use of biocides, industrial food processing activities, but also numerous everyday citizen activities. Numerous practices related to dominant food system are today responsible for the degradation of a large part of soils (EU, 2020b).
As part of the Green Deal, numerous actions for soil protection have been taken in recent years in various European strategies that intersect with the goal of a transition to more resilient and sustainable food systems[5]. The focus on societal involvement is a recurring point of these actions: for example, the eighth objective of the EU mission A Soil Deal for Europe is to improve soil health by encouraging citizens to adopt more responsible soil health practices.
In this sense, supporting and promoting citizens' initiatives that act for soil health is very important, and cities and CRFS Labs are expected to work towards this goal.

CRFS Lab of Marseille (P40 CITAG)

Name of the initiative: Sols Vivants

Location: Marseille, 14th arrondissement

Time references: 01/02/2023 – ongoing

The Sols Vivants collective is a ground based, multi stakeholders' initiative that unites citizens, non-profits, research groups and militant groups in Marseille around soil preservation and revitalization. The group has been meeting in many various places in Marseille to discover, exchange and cross-learn about soil preservation initiatives, policy, political and/or technical leverages in the very specific context of Marseille city and urbanism. Our group was born from a common concern: Protecting living soils and fertile lands. There were few of us at the first meeting, but very quickly many already well-established collectives joined, and often in action for several years. Indeed, Marseille is teeming with individual and collective initiatives for the reappropriation of living lands. For us, having this concern means preserving the earth but not freezing the situation (not putting it under cover), it is taking care, paying attention to this living and fertile compartment, to what it has as potential.

[5] In 2020 the Biodiversity 2030, Farm to Fork and Chemicals Strategies, as well as the Circular Economy Action Plan and the European Climate Law. In 2021 the Fit for 55 package, the Zero Pollution Action Plan and the EU Soil Strategy for 2030 (Panagos et al., 2022).

The Sols Vivants were born from the desire:
- to bring local initiatives together and get to know each other (Marseille focus/extended scope of the PACA Region) and strengthen our collective:
- to connect these initiatives together to increase their capacity to act, pool their resources, move forward together and/or respond as desired, deploy;
- to invest more collectively, or in a complementary/articulated manner, in the discussion/decisions spaces, becoming a force of proposal which, because aggregated or composite, carries more weight in the public and policy debate.

Access to land, fertile and living soil is the key denominator to food production in and around the cities. Thus living soils in Marseille are in direct link with the food policy -or should be. Sols Vivants collective aims at making visible this direct link and put pressure on the political sphere to maintain soil preservation on the agenda. This in orderto raise the issue of living soils and fertile lands to the priority level that it deserves among citizens and decision-makers.

Sols Vivants collective manage:
- to learn to walk somewhere in order to feel anchored somewhere: the ground is not just a support, it is the support of our thinking and therefore of our action (bioregion);
- to build and carry a common vision that does not oppose agriculture and biodiversity, spontaneous dynamics of living things, soil regeneration (a certain agroecology allows this!);
- to consolidate the integrity of these living places, and their potential in the face of the precariousness of the legal and political means of protection implemented.

CITAG is a founding member of this collective and has been participating in this dynamic of cross-learning and advocacy creation towards a shared goal : a public event on the 5th of December 2023, to materialize the dynamic.

2.2 Supporting producer alliances

Producers are at the top of the food hourglass, they are the first level of the food chain and they ensure the production and care of the soils, waterways, air and biodiversity that guarantee food around the world. But producers are also the most affected by the dominant food system (Patel, 2009). They still suffer greatly in terms of income, as the Farm to Fork strategy points out in fact, the average farmer in the EU currently earns about half of the average worker in the economy as a whole (Farm to Fork Report).

The transition towards a sustainable food system should bring a sustainable livelihood for primary producers. Moreover, we know the impact that harmful production practices can have on their health, the climate and the environment, and their commitment to healthier, ecologically sound production can contribute substantially to changing course.

This is why it is essential to support initiatives that come directly from producers practising healthy agriculture that respects natural resources. Initiatives such as direct sales, small farmers' markets and other forms of cooperation between producers are central to creating favorable contexts and political conditions for their engagement in the transition of food systems.

CRFS Lab Murska Sobota (P30 ITC)

Name of the initiative: Green Point Short Food Supply Chain

Location: Murska Sobota, Slovenia

GREEN POINT (Zelena točka) Short Food Supply Chain in including more than 70 local farmers, food producers and cooperatives, covering the process of production in greenhouse and open-air fields, with logistics from own distribution centre and different means of sales such as public institutions (schools, kindergartens, Retirement homes, …), private institutions (Restaurants, health resorts, …), own retail store and online shop - GREEN POINT. The Green point SFSC is continuously implementing innovative business models and technologies, trying to increase proportion of local and safe food found on end-customer plates. The SFSC is very active on increasing awareness about importance of local food producers and safe, healthy and local food.
The Green point SFSC is operated as a Living lab (ENoLL member), based on a Multi-Actor Approach, involving input industry and technology providers, primary producers, food businesses, consumers, citizens, local authorities and other actors, promoted with a view to co-create innovative systemic solutions in support of food systems sustainability goals. Thus, the Green point Living Lab is implementing innovative models and technologies relevant for the Smart villages & Rural development concepts, piloting and demonstrating technological (blockchain, big data, …), economic (circular economy, Food loss and waste, …) and social (consumer participation, public awareness, food sharing, food locality, …) innovations.
City of Murska Sobota cooperates closely with Green Point Living Lab to continuously implement innovative business models and technologies. Both actors are cooperating together to increase the proportion of local and safe food for the citizens, whereby they decided to commonly restore the city market and offer food producers a way to sell their products. In addition they are organizing common promotional events and workshops, while monthly newspaper of the City administration has dedicated articles related to agri-food section with current challenges on the market and promotional activities related to local food.

CRFS Lab Vidzeme (P24 VPR, P25 LLF)

Name of the initiative: Straupe Farmers' Market

Location: Straupe, Cēsis Municipality, Vidzeme region, Latvia

Time references: Straupe Farmers' Market has been active since 2008

The market is the only regular market for small local producers in the Baltic States, which has been included in the prestigious Slow Food Earth Markets alliance. Slow Food is an international movement established to respond to fast food and food uniformity caused by globalisation, the disappearance of local food and the indifference of people to where food comes from, how it tastes and how our food choices affect our environment. Founders of Straupe Farmers' Market works hard to maintain the ancient skills and use traditional products. Straupe Farmers' Market has been active since 2008. From 2016 the market is in Old Post Station Straupe. The market is open on the first and third Sunday of every month.

The Straupe Farmers' Market plays a crucial role in supporting the local food system by making goods from farmers and producers more accessible to the public. This not only promotes the value of locally produced food but also emphasizes its freshness and responsibility towards sustainable agriculture. By providing a platform for Vidzeme inhabitants and others to directly engage with farmers and small producers, the Market fosters a sense of community and connection within the region. This direct interaction not only benefits consumers by offering transparency and quality assurance but also supports the livelihoods of local producers, contributing to the overall resilience and sustainability of the community food system.The Straupe Farmers' Market presents a successful model that other cities or regions could learn from. By offering a diverse range of fresh, locally sourced products, the Market not only benefits the local economy but also encourages healthy eating habits and food sustainability.
From 2016 the market is in Old Post Station Straupe. The market is open on the first and third Sunday of every month. Historically the Old Post Station Straupe was located on a strategically important road connecting Riga and Tartu in Estonia. Nowadays, the marketplace is keeping the tradition of organizing events dedicated to anniversary celebrations, various local events and traditions. Craftsmen, small producers, artisans, farmers, sometimes the whole family comes to trade. The Slow Food brand requires traders to have grown or produced their goods themselves, and can tell about them, and how to use them. They need to receive fair and appropriate pay for their work. In the Farmers' market everyone can purchase fresh, organically grown products such as various vegetables, fruit, berries, delicious cheeses, meat smoked according to ancient traditions, home-grown medicinal herb teas, home-made cakes and other delicacies.

2.2 Enhance the role and rights of women in food system transition

Women play an important role in food production worldwide (FAO, 2018). However, literature from many disciplines has explored how food can also be a key to their exploitation and oppression, and many challenges are related to the issue of gender differences at all stages of the food system (Avakian, Haber, 2005; Allen, Sachs, 2007). For example, women, even within their own households, are more vulnerable to food insecurity due to the unequal distribution of food resources between female and male members of a household (Broussard, 2019).

Recent studies show that food policies in cities still tend not to take gender inequalities into account, especially in the so-called Global North, indeed some food policies risk reinforcing existing gender stereotypes (Bergonzini, 2024).

While little has yet been done in this regard, some initiatives are emerging in countries such as Spain and in particular in the food strategies promoted by the cities of Zaragoza[6] and Barcelona[7]. In this sense, if more urban policy-makers and Living Labs supported and catalysed local food initiatives that are sensitive to women's rights and gender equity, they could guide and give rise

[6] https://www.zaragoza.es/sede/portal/medioambiente/alimentacion/
[7] https://www.alimentaciosostenible.barcelona/ca/estrategia-dalimentacio-saludable-i-sostenible-barcelona-2030

to food policies that in this way can contribute not only to a more environmentally sustainable food system, but also to a more gender-equitable one.

CRFS Lab Paideia Campus (P23 FFI)

Name of the initiative: CiRCE - Cilento Resilienza Consapevolezza Energia

Location: Cilento, Campania, Italy

Time references: 2022

The actors/agents/stakeholders involved: Future Food Institute, local farmers, local fishermen

The main goals of the CiRCE initiative are to empower women in the Cilento Region by fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and supporting diverse projects. It provides a welcoming, inclusive space for sharing knowledge, resources, and opportunities, thus promoting economic growth and bridging the wage gap. By enhancing creativity and resourcefulness, CiRCE aims to build a community where women are central to economic development.
The CiRCE initiative, born from the EWA program by EIT Food and organized by Future Food Institute, fosters strong relationships between food citizens and various food system actors. By empowering women through entrepreneurial support, it creates a collaborative network involving local communities, policymakers, and businesses. This bottom-up approach influences food policies by integrating grassroots creativity and resourcefulness, promoting inclusive economic growth, and addressing local food system challenges through diverse, community-driven projects.
The CiRCE initiative concretely relates to space by revitalizing local green and blue networks through community-driven projects. It encourages the use of local resources and landscapes, fostering a connection between women entrepreneurs and their environment. CiRCE promotes slow mobility by integrating ecologic tourism. This approach enhances the region's natural beauty and sustainability while supporting economic and social development.

2.3 Food waste prevention, recycling and food safety

Western countries are faced with a disturbing paradox: on the one hand, an increasing number of people struggle to find healthy food every day, while on the other hand huge amounts of food waste are generated. Eurostat (2022) estimates that 30% of EU food waste arise in production, manufacturing and retail, and that 70% of food waste arises in households, so the role of citizen in reduce food waste is central. European Commission proposes that by 2030 Member States should reduce food waste by 10 per cent at the processing and manufacturing stages and by 30 per cent (per head) at the combined retail and consumption stages (restaurants, catering and households).
Many solutions are emerging worldwide or find innovative answers to this contradiction in today's food system: from prevention by reducing surplus at the source, throught the recovery of food and its reuse for human consumption and finally by recycling food waste for feeding

animals, creating energy or compost (Mourad, 2016). Prevention means reducing the problem at source by optimising processes or adapting production to the needs of the food system. Prevention is a central element in the fight against food waste and the EU emphasises how we can all make a big effort to do this in our daily lives (EU, 2019).
However, others interesting initiatives are also arising for the recovery of food as recycling initiatives, composting and the most historical ones, the food banks that contribute in parallel to alleviate food hunger. Food banks, according to critics, are controversial cases because they only intervene on the effects of the food paradox and do not aim at addressing the structural root causes. But if placed in a context of prefiguration, autonomy, hybridisation and scalability, they can provide an exemplary model of social innovation that can be replicated in other contexts for the redistribution of food surpluses (Berti, Giordano, Mininni, 2021).

CRFS Lab Skopje (P26 GGP)

Name: Food Bank Macedonia

Location: Macedonia

Food Bank Macedonia aims to alleviate hunger and reduce food insecurity by collecting and distributing surplus food to individuals and families in need. Partnering with food producers, retailers, and distributors, they ensure that nutritious food reaches vulnerable populations. Food Bank Macedonia also promotes sustainability by reducing food waste and encouraging responsible consumption. They are also engaged in community outreach, education, and advocacy to address the root causes of hunger and promote long-term food security.
Food Bank Macedonia collaborates with food producers, retailers, non-profits, and government agencies to gather and distribute surplus food, ensuring that nutritious donations reach those in need. The organisation is also a part of a very significant working group along with the Food and Veterinary Agency, Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, Green Growth Platform (Cities2030 partner) and other relevant stakeholders which drafted a proposal for a law for the donation of food surpluses.
Food Bank Macedonia strategically situates itself within the urban region of the city of Skopje to efficiently distribute food to its beneficiaries with a fleet of distribution vehicles. This approach not only ensures timely delivery across the city region but also reduces environmental impact . By maximizing accessibility, the food bank promotes sustainable food access for individuals and families experiencing food insecurity. Food Bank Macedonia has close collaboration with the Centar Municipality in the City of Skopje in the process of identification of marginalized group of people that need help in food. Many citizen organizations representing different groups of socially disavantaged people are supported by the Food Bank Macedonia.

4.3 Conclusions

This policy brief dealt with bottom-up and citizen initiatives showing how decisive these initiatives can be in catalysing the transition of the food system.

We have seen that today an increasing number of bottom-up local coalitions are emerging in several European cities. These are an important number of social innovations that contribute to citizens regaining democratic control of the food system and its sustainable transformation (food democracy), with the idea that it is the people who have the right to define their own food and how, by whom, and how this food should be produced (food sovereignty). These initiatives move to make citizens more aware of their power to develop a new terrain for social and political action that brings new answers to the crises of the globalised food system (food citizenship).

While many European policies and strategies recognise the importance of these initiatives, they often remain small and hyper-localised and often struggle to take root. Cities and CRFS Labs then can play a role in up-scaling them to help them overcome challenges and embed them in more stable long-term ecosystems.

The diversity of initiatives presented in this Policy Brief makes it clear that up-scaling solutions are not generalisable; rather, the formulation of possible up-scaling pathways must be co-constructed, and each initiative must be considered in a situated manner. This policy brief stimulates ideas around emerging initiatives in the European context and makes it possible to identify some elements to actively support innovations for further advancement. It emphasises how necessary and crucial cooperation is between cities, CRFS Labs and bottom-up initiatives, as well as with key partners also at the regional scale, in order to multiply efforts with citizen support and to multiply new interest groups also in other european regions and countries.

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