



PARTICIPATION AND LOCAL FOOD-SYSTEM GOVERNANCE: ADVANCING THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND NUTRITION IN EUROPE

MODULE 5
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PARTICIPATION AND LOCAL FOOD-SYSTEM GOVERNANCE: ADVANCING THE RIGHT TO FOOD AND NUTRITION IN EUROPE

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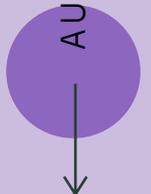
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INTRODUCTION



In territories, regions, and cities of all sizes across Europe there has been an increase in local public policy addressing issues of food security and food systems more broadly. When the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact was adopted in 2015, it triggered a wave of local food policies around the world, especially in Europe. The Milan Pact is an agreement, facilitated by the Municipality of Milan, as a way for cities to commit “to developing sustainable food systems that are inclusive, resilient, safe and diverse, that provide healthy and affordable food to all people in a human rights-based framework, that minimize waste and conserve biodiversity while adapting to and mitigating impacts of climate change”. Although not a perfect document, it has served as a key framework that continues to facilitate exchange among local governments on key food-systems issues and underscores the need for stronger local authority and local democratic processes.

More and more cities and territories across the world continue to adopt and develop local food policies, while also creating participatory structures for policy making, such as food policy councils. While the exact number of such spaces in Europe has not been determined, there is clearly interest in formulating strong policy and practice to work towards local and territorial-based food systems. The establishment of food policy councils, food boards, and citizen food initiatives, among others, has been an exciting and promising development in terms of the potential for more inclusive and participatory food-system governance and in order to address issues such as inequalities, climate change mitigation, and how to better design urban spaces.

Once the Milan Pact and other similar international efforts were underway, many European cities began to initiate urban or local food strategies and other structures. Therefore, local food policies are generally relatively new to local administrations in European countries. This relatively recent shift involves rethinking how policies are drafted, as food-systems issues “have traditionally been subject to the corporatist regulatory regime at a European and national level”¹. What’s more, civil society is increasingly active at a local level, pushing for local authorities to tackle food-systems issues.

At the same time, issues of social justice, equity, and human rights in general are noticeably lacking from many European food policies, as compared to places such as North America and the U.K², as is any mention of human rights or the right to food and nutrition. National-level frameworks for food security and the right to food and nutrition (or lack thereof) also overlook these key issues, as outlined in the Module 1 of this series. In contrast, civil society-led initiatives and food-system policies across Europe often focus more on sustainability, and especially on climate change mitigation.

The right to food and nutrition is not enshrined in the European Social Charter, nor in the constitutions of most European countries (although that is changing in places such as Scotland). This can be explained in large part by the European states’

1 Alexandra Doernberg, Paula Horn, Ingo Zasada, Annette Piorr, “Urban food policies in German city regions: An overview of key players and policy instruments”, Food Policy, Volume 89, 2019.

2 See analysis done by Jeroen J. L. Candel in “What’s on the menu? A global assessment of MUFPP signatory cities’ food strategies”, Pages 919-946, Published online: 29 Jul 2019.

historical understanding that as long as the right to work and the right to social security are guaranteed, then there is no need to enshrine the right to food³. However, with the decline of the welfare state, rising energy and food costs, and the impacts of Covid-19, the need to address not only social justice, but human rights as well, within Europe is imperative. Although some cities are working towards generating human rights-based policies in their local context, the specific perspective of the right to food and nutrition, and other social rights, has yet to be clarified and promoted strongly. Many European urban food policies and strategies include terms such as “fair”, “accessible”, “resilient”, or “inclusive”, but the exact meaning of these words is rarely explained⁴. At the same time, power dynamics and methods to engage those most affected should also be further addressed.

Like national governments, local and regional governments also have human rights obligations, and they arguably have the most direct role to play in ensuring the fulfilment of human rights for all. Local governments are in more direct contact with people and can react more quickly and meaningfully to human rights violations, demands, and complaints.

Local and territorial governments have the potential to operate as crucial spaces for policy-making and democratic participation in the struggle to guarantee the right to food and nutrition and human rights in general. At this level of governance, it is possible to create place-based public programs and policies, which can support local economic development and local food production, as well as improve community health. The local or territorial level can also facilitate dialogue with people and groups who experience marginalization in and by the industrial food system, which affects their right to food and nutrition. Therefore, in order to fully ensure that this right is realized, participation of those most affected must be centered.

Local policy making has begun to address food-systems issues at a time when the waters of global food governance have been shifting radically over the past several years. It has become increasingly closed off to participation of social movements and organizations of Indigenous Peoples and small-scale food producers, as many national governments have taken a back seat⁵. This has led to corporate-friendly strategies and narratives at the expense of human rights-based approaches; meanwhile the concept of “participation” is distorted under the umbrella of multistakeholder governance or “multistakeholderism” (see below).

At the same time, the shortcomings of the dominant global food system based on corporate concentration, industrialization, and global trade, have become glaringly visible. We are facing a multifaceted crisis of hunger and malnutrition, climate collapse, biodiversity loss, indebtedness, disruption of public services, among other problems, and all on a global level. Also in Europe, for decades, **small farms have been disappearing** as they cannot compete with global industrial markets and/

3 P. Alston, ‘International Law and the Right to Food’ in A. Eide et al. (eds) *Food as a Human Right* (2d printing, Singapore: United Nations University, 1988) p. 162-174, at 17; Jonsén, Jennie. n.d. “Europe and the Right to Adequate Food and Nutrition: Assessing a Decade of Progress, Shortcomings, and Challenges Ahead”, *unpublished*

4 Sara A. L. Smaal, Joost Dessen, Barend J. Wind, and Elke Rogge, “Social justice-oriented narratives in European urban food strategies: Bringing forward redistribution, recognition and representation”, in *Agriculture and Human Values* (2021) 38:709–727.

5 For further information and analysis on current food systems debates, and in particular the UN Food Systems Summit and follow-up, see [materials](#) created by FIAN International and A Growing Culture.

or access land and resources, while at the same time communities across the continent are facing increased levels of poverty. The Covid-19 pandemic laid bare the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of the global industrial food system, and further exposed the inequalities therein. At the same time, the local or territorial scale was re-inforced as a key player for feeding communities in times of crises. The need to re-think where and how we build our right to food policies also became clear.

The lack of transparency in international policy making and the **overt takeover by corporate powers** has fomented distrust and frustration at the international level. This has fueled a growing desire to better understand how to make real change at the local and territorial levels.

Local governments have an important role in supporting the transformation of food systems. They can play a significant part in supporting small-scale food production and rural economies, bolstering small and medium-sized enterprises across rural and urban regions (i.e., through public procurement processes, public markets, etc.), and creating programs that address the root causes of food insecurity as well. Right-to-food responsibilities and duties are found at all levels and with all agents of government. Across Europe there are opportunities to focus advocacy and organizing within local policy making. However, in order to do so, it is necessary to expand and enrich understanding of how and where decisions are made, as well as how to ensure the conditions for meaningful engagement.

Objective: This module provides guiding questions for practitioners of the right to food on: how to gain a deeper understanding of where and how food-related decisions are made, how conditions can be created for people to participate in decision-making, and how to assess decision-making spaces and risks and opportunities related to multistakeholderism, in the realm of territorial/local food policy decision-making, and especially in food policy councils.

Methodology: These materials were developed based on the key information-gathering experiences of FIAN International in their work supporting and facilitating participation in policy making across various policy processes at different levels. Input from project partners included food councils and a case study based on the local experience of the Heidelberg Food Policy Council.

PART I

Participation and Right to Food and Nutrition



Ensuring processes are accessible for people facing marginalization, discrimination, and social exclusion is an essential part of creating public policies and programs that meet their needs - from the local to the international level. The frameworks and standards that shape the right to food and nutrition have developed over several years through the claims, demands, and experiences of grassroots organizations and movements and frontline communities who bear the brunt of violations of these rights. Since the adoption of the Right to Food Guidelines in 2003, standards have evolved and developed towards a greater understanding of the scope of this right⁶, and more visibility has been afforded to the most affected communities and people. Guaranteeing space for social movements and grassroots communities to shape and develop evolving right to food and nutrition standards is just as important as the standards themselves. At the international level, their participation has led to tremendous advances in land tenure⁷, peasants rights⁸, and women's rights⁹, amongst others.

Participation is a key principle in a human rights-based strategy: dialogue between communities whose rights have been violated, between oppressed communities and policy makers and public servants, and with those persons most affected by the issues on the table.

Participation means that each and every person is entitled to active, free, and meaningful participation in and contribution to decision-making processes that affect them. Participation can look different for different groups – from direct participation, representative organizations or networks, consultation, and even participating in referendums or other legislative opportunities. However, the necessary conditions and space for people – all people – to participate are not always a reality, and there are often deep structural barriers preventing many people from participating in decision-making processes. Nevertheless, their involvement is essential. People and communities experiencing marginalization should not simply be passive recipients of programs or policy measures, but rather active agents in setting the agenda and the direction of the discourse.

A reoccurring obstacle for meaningful participation is that the context blurs the roles, interests, responsibilities, and power of the different actors coming together. This can happen when, for instance, government representatives, citizens (regardless of nationality and legal status), and representatives of foundations and of the private sector gather around a commonly defined goal, but the rights and participation of marginalized groups are not prioritized, and private interests are not countered or controlled. Such a setting for participation can be deemed “multi-stakeholderism” (see box below).

6 For more information on the advances made around the right to food and nutrition frameworks and standards, please see the 2018 CSM report monitoring the Right to Food Guidelines, and the 2022 release of the Peoples Monitoring Toolkit, by the Global Network for the Right to Food and Nutrition.

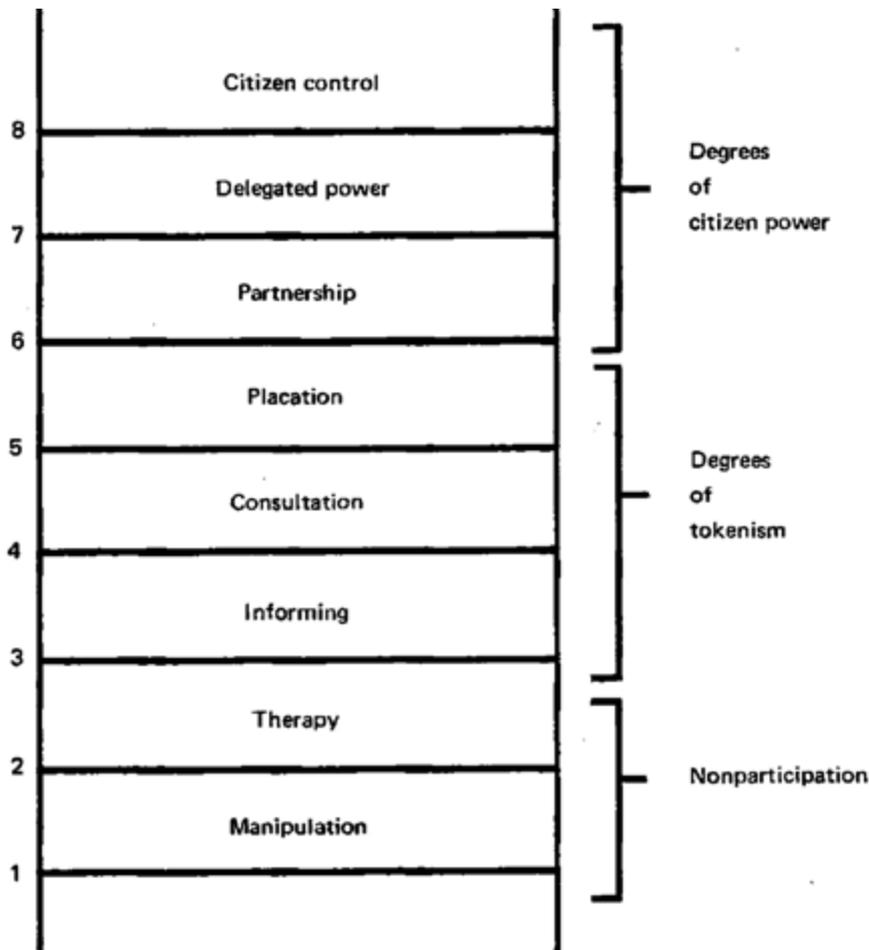
7 Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, endorsed on 11 May 2012, by the UN Committee on World Food Security

8 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas : resolution / adopted by the Human Rights Council on 28 September 2018

9 General recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women, adopted by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Meaningful participation, and identifying those who deal with marginalization and food insecurity

Creating policy processes that meaningfully engage with those who are marginalized in and by the food system is essential to addressing inequalities. Moreover, it is important to determine what is meant by “meaningful”. Simply establishing a multistakeholder space where everyone can come to the table is not enough. As Shelley Arnstein aptly puts it: “participation without redistribution of power is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless”¹⁰. Arnstein describes citizen participation as a ladder with different rungs of participatory power from “non participation” (no power) to “degrees of tokenism” (a sort of false or perceived power), and “degrees of citizen power”, which implies meaningful engagement in a democratic process (see illustration below). While not a perfect model, it does illustrate the nuanced nature of participation, and the need to closely examine the details of how participation is managed.



[HTTPS://ORGANIZINGENGAGEMENT.ORG/MODELS/LADDER-OF-CITIZEN-PARTICIPATION/](https://organizingengagement.org/models/ladder-of-citizen-participation/)
BASED ON THE THE ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATION PUBLISHED BY ARNSTEIN IN
“A LADDER OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION,” JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN PLANNING
ASSOCIATION, VOL. 35, NO. 4, JULY 1969, PP. 216-224.

¹⁰ See Sherry R. Arnstein’s “A Ladder of Citizen Participation,” Journal of the American Planning Association, Vol.35, No.4, July 1969, pp. 216-224.

In international processes for right to food and nutrition issues, identifying these different degrees of power has been challenging, and reaching the top of Arnstein's ladder- degrees of citizen power – continues to pose an almost insurmountable challenge for social movements. Spaces like the Committee on World Food Security have represented an important shift in participatory power, however the realities of multistakeholderism, as discussed earlier, have adversely impacted the possibility of meaningful participation and change.

At the local level, decision-making spaces are, in theory, more accessible to communities, and more likely to include those who are often excluded. However, there is a need to intentionally create space and conditions for “citizen power”. Many people and groups come up against structural roadblocks to participation – from racism and other exclusions and prejudice to the denial of power redistribution – enacted by both governmental and non-governmental actors. As a starting point, it is essential to actively identify who is most marginalized and assess the conditions of power and how to redistribute it in order to ensure a human-rights space. It is critical that, at a minimum, conditions guarantee participation of representative groups of marginalized people, and that there are measures to regulate and control the participation of large corporations, businesses, and other powerful actors. Without these kinds of safeguards, participation can be debilitated and morph into tokenism, or used to validate policies that hurt or further disenfranchise certain groups.

In food-governance spaces at all levels, other actors besides communities and authorities/government are often present. Although these groups may be quite diverse in nature, the participation of all private actors must be scrutinized. The role of private actors becomes more nuanced at the local and territorial level, where there is a need for strong local economic development and support for small and medium-sized enterprises, including food producers. Thus, the “private sector” has different connotations in the international sphere, where it primarily refers to large corporate interests. However, at the same time, transnational food and agricultural corporations are reshaping food systems at the local level, influencing decision-making, programs, and our food environments. The full extent of corporate interference in local food policies has yet to be entirely comprehended. Nevertheless, it is essential that the same sort of assessments and critical lens applied to international food governance are also enacted at other levels, including the local arena. Some lessons from international food governance are included below that may be helpful in asking key questions about who is participating, and what their participation means for others' rights.

MULTISTAKEHOLDERISM

(adapted from analysis of the CSIPM and the
counter-mobilization to the UN Food Systems Summit)

Key ingredients of participation are not only ensuring marginalized groups and communities can engage, but also regulating the participation of other actors. Different groups are affected by food-system dynamics in very different ways. Power differentials between actors must be recognized and addressed if the goal is truly to realize the right to food and nutrition for all. **The mere existence of dialogue spaces or platforms (including multi-actor platforms) does not automatically generate an inclusive, equitable, transparent and accountable process, nor does it automatically produce outcomes geared towards realizing human rights.** The rise of “multistakeholder platforms” in the context of food security and nutrition, including through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), has brought about risks, including confusing the roles of states, intergovernmental organizations (IGO), civil society, and the private sector. For example, classifying corporations, private investors, communities and the social movements which represent them all as “stakeholders” who negotiate on equal terms on issues related to the right to food and nutrition will inevitably lead to injustices. Such a sweeping category ignores the power and resource asymmetries that exist among the different groups. It also fails to follow a human rights approach that would clearly define duty bearers (the state), rights holders (individuals), and third parties (private sector). It also does not call into question the role and interests of, for example, corporations participating in public decision-making, and often silences the voices and lived experiences of impacted communities.

Striving for greater inclusion: Who are we talking about?

Part of ensuring meaningful participation also includes identifying who faces marginalization and why. The goal of this is to ensure that 1) they are included in policy debates, and 2) that policies and programs are developed to target their specific needs. For example, in terms of food security, many programs have significant short-term measures to fulfill basic food needs, but they fail to address the underlying causes of food insecurity which are often rooted in poverty and forms of structural discrimination. For more on this issue, please reference **Module 2** (Responses to Hunger) and **Module 3** (Social Exclusion) of this series.

While governments and authorities have an enormous role to play in identifying exclusionary mechanisms and practices, it is also possible that locally based groups organizing and pushing for food-systems change may not operate with equity in mind. Therefore, work must be done in both institutions and civil society.

Every territory has a different reality: different histories, tensions, socio-cultural makeup, and economic conditions. Therefore, the groups and communities that face inequalities are also different. People experience food insecurity or lack access to nutritious or culturally adequate food for various reasons. A holistic approach to the right to food and nutrition addresses the structural barriers to realizing the right to food and nutrition and is founded in food sovereignty. Food sovereignty brings the dimension of power to the center of analysis and debate: who controls natural and productive resources, who makes decisions about our food systems, and who regulates powerful actors. Interpreting the right to food and nutrition through a food-sovereignty lens ensures that questions regarding power imbalances remain central to realizing rights. That is, the struggle for participation remains a key issue in the struggle for the right to food and nutrition and other human rights. Violations of the right to food and nutrition, at their core, are a result of inequalities, oppression, and in many cases what Arnstein (aforementioned) might refer to as “non participation”. Hence, understanding how people experience inequalities and exclusion, and how these are manifested in the right to food and nutrition is of critical importance. If the question of power is not tackled head-on, it is difficult to create policies that truly fulfill the right to food and nutrition. People and groups experience discrimination in many different and often intersecting ways. So, for this reason, creating the conditions for real and meaningful change requires acknowledging that discrimination and conditions of marginalization do in fact exist. And structures must be put into place that engage communities directly in the process of making that change.

Different groups to consider including in food-policy processes to promote greater inclusion of marginalized groups (this list is not exhaustive):

- small and medium-size food producers (farmers and peasants, livestock keepers, fisherfolk, etc.)
- small and medium-scale food retail
- food cooperatives
- labor unions and organizations for food-system workers
- migrant rights groups
- people experiencing poverty and anti-poverty networks
- women’s rights groups
- food access organizations
- historically marginalized groups and communities

Tools: Mapping of Food-System Decision-making

In order to create the conditions for meaningful participation, it is important to understand where food-related decisions are taken, who operates within the local food system, as well as challenges different actors face.

The following questions are designed to guide actors who want to engage with their local/territorial food system. In order to understand the main problems and strengths of a local food system, the first part includes questions on the current situation. It has questions on inequalities, as well as a section on public procurement. This was added to support the specific case of the Heidelberg Food Policy Council, as it was deemed a priority issue for the group given their objective of making a greater impact on the local food system.

A second set of questions examines possible points of entry for influencing decision-making at the local level, in order to help actors be effective in their claims and identify relevant spaces and forms for engagement.

Lastly, a third part focuses on portraying the nature of the participatory space, in order to assess risks of multistakeholderism and investigate social inclusion.

I →

Understanding the food system

1. What does your local food system look like in terms of production? (Description of status quo, e.g. agricultural area and activities and actors, land ownership, structure of local food economy (restaurants, smaller shops and supermarkets, markets, direct marketing, etc.), direct contracts between local producers/processors and public and private food procurement)
2. What does your local food system look like in terms of consumption? (Food consumed in the city/region: e.g., percentage coming from local/regional production? Percentage of organically produced food? Fairtrade?)

On inequalities:

1. Is adequate, healthy, and sustainable food accessible and affordable for everyone and in all neighborhoods? Can you identify any location-related barriers?
2. Are there any marginalized groups in the food system (e.g., People who lack access – physical or economic – to healthy and sustainable food; people who suffer from poor working conditions or severe economic pressure in their food-related activities; people who suffer from the negative effects of food on their health)?
3. What systems are in place to help people who are in crises (i.e., lack of sufficient income, lack of access to food, etc.)?

- Who implements the support (public/private)?
- Is it sufficient?
- Is there support to navigate these programs/structures?

On Public Procurement/ Communal catering:

1. In which facilities do public vendors procure food?
2. How are the facilities supplied and what food is used (percentage of different food groups, organic food, fairtrade, unprocessed food, etc.?)
3. What kind of public procurement tenders are available and who can participate in the process (e.g., decision-making processes, selection procedures, budgets, catalog of criteria, contract lengths)?
4. Have there been any evaluations of public procurement/communal catering?
5. Which important communal catering spaces are procured by private entities? What are those entities? How is the situation in those spaces?

II →

Entry points/decision-making options/responsibilities in the local or territorial government

1. On which aspects of the local/territorial food system can the local/territorial government make decisions (as opposed to which decisions can only be taken at other levels)?
2. Which areas of the local government/administration are responsible for tackling issues related to food systems/food security? Are the responsible departments dealing with the issue? Which do not do so, but have the capacity to do so? Do the different departments/sections work together? What are intersecting interests/goals?
3. Can you identify important existing policies, programs, and regulations related to food systems/food security that are defined at the regional, national, or international level and that play an important role for the local/territorial level? Can the local/territorial level influence those?
4. Can you list existing policies, programs, and regulations, including self-commitments, related to food security/food systems that are defined at the local level and what they cover (i.e., land use planning, school meals, agriculture subsidies, incentives for shifting to organic production, food or income subsidies, regulations regarding the marketing of ultra-processed foods, targeted programs/policies including monitoring systems, etc.? How are they implemented? How are those different policies, etc. prioritized?

III →

Assessing and improving spaces for participation at the local level

If there is a participatory or multi-actor decision-making body in existence or under development...

1. Have relevant actors, including marginalized groups, been identified?
2. How is it organized?
 - Is it governmental? On a civil-society basis? Hybrid?
 - If it is governmental: in what department is it located?
 - Are there paid staff? Where does staff funding come from?
3. How are decisions made? (e.g., by a representative group, by all participants, by majority, by consensus, by groups representing different constituencies, etc.)
4. Who participates in local decision-making?
 - Which organizations, associations, etc.?
 - How are relevant actors, including marginalized groups represented?
 - Who is not participating that should, and why? How can they be better included?
 - Are food producers participating?
 - Communities or representatives of people experiencing poverty and/or food insecurity?
5. Do private actors engage and how?
 - What role do they have?
 - What kinds of private-sector actors?
 - Is their participation regulated? (For instance, are there safeguards against conflicts of interest)?

PART II

Organizing a food policy council: the example of Heidelberg



Like in the rest of Europe, food policy councils in Germany are a relatively new way to organize food debates at the local level. The first councils were developed in recent years: in 2016, in the cities of **Berlin** and **Cologne**¹¹. Approximately 40 to 50 councils have come together across Germany since then¹².

In Germany, and arguably in the rest of German-speaking Europe¹³, food policy councils (FPCs) are largely organized as civil society or non-governmental platforms, and in many cases are registered as an “eingetragener Verein” (registered voluntary association) or an NGO. This is different from a more traditional model that emerged in North America where a structure is embedded within the local government (i.e., health department, sustainability unit, etc.), with different levels of citizen involvement in governance. This non-governmental form of organizing is not necessarily good or bad, rather it is just a method. In some sense its capacity in terms of policy is more of an advisory function, as it lacks a dedicated public budget or structures. But, on the other hand, the group also benefits from being insulated from the election-based political arena and can therefore work consistently and operate under a long-term plan for change. The vision and drive in many of these councils comes from the perspective and organizing of civil society. However, in order to realize cross-sectoral change, many of these councils advocate for buy-in from public officials and policy makers as an essential component.

Germany, like other countries around the world, continues to experience **rising inequalities**, with an increasing instance of what could be called the “working poor”. **Food bank usage** is also on the rise, due to the long-lasting impacts of the pandemic, rising inflation and living costs, in addition to inadequate or out-of-date unemployment and other social benefits, more and more people find themselves subject to unbearable pressures (see other modules in this series for similar conditions in other countries). At the same time, as stated before, the Covid-19 pandemic revealed vulnerabilities in the industrial food system and brought about new pressures and opportunities at the local and territorial level. Local food policy has always been relevant; however, the present-day reality has created a different space for that dialogue.

Over the course of the development of this module, the initiative for a food policy council in Heidelberg served as an example to reflect upon and validate the tools generated. At the same time, this module is designed to contribute to ongoing efforts to build a food policy council in the city.

11 Sieveking, A. (2019). Food policy councils as loci for practicing food democracy? Insights from the case of Oldenburg, Germany. *Politics and Governance*, 7(4), 48-58. <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.v7i4.2081>

12 Estimates vary. A list with some degree of detail of approximately 27 food policy councils, exists as part of a project site, and others sources indicating that there are more than 50 across the country.

13 See for example, the [Vienna Food Policy Council](#) (Austria)

About Heidelberg

Heidelberg is a mid-sized city of approximately 160,000 inhabitants, in the southern German state of Baden-Württemberg. The city is home to large centers for science, research, medicine, academics, as well as private corporations. The main employers in the city are the University of Heidelberg and the university hospital. Furthermore, the city boasts several other hospitals, specialized knowledge technology firms, and growing cultural and creative industries. Furthermore, it is located in a rural area: surrounded by farmland and of course farmers.

According to a **2018 report** on the social situation in Heidelberg, poverty in Heidelberg is in decline (however, this study was completed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and its manifold repercussions). The demographics most acutely affected by poverty are single parents and families with several children, as well as individuals who have been unemployed for a long period of time. In addition, not all parts of the city have equal access to the same services. For example, the districts of Boxberg and Emmertsgrund, which are home to some low-income communities, have rather poor public transportation, and do not have a weekly farmers' market. Supermarkets, on the other hand, are found in all districts.

The city of Heidelberg provides support services to low-income households through a program called **Heidelberg Pass**. Benefits include free lunch in daycare centers, kindergartens, and schools, among other things. The Office for Social Affairs and Senior Citizens also initiated a program offering a €1-lunch in senior citizens' centers for residents aged 65 and over who are recipients of basic social security benefits. And as of 2019/2020 this benefit has been included in the Heidelberg Pass and a promotional campaign was conducted to inform potential beneficiaries.

There are various support services for low-income people that offer free or low-cost food. These include: the Obdach e.V. association (open breakfast meeting), ecumenical options "Frühstück im Winter" (*Breakfast in Winter*), "NächstenMahl" (*Next Meal*) and "KaffeeKlatsch" (*Coffee Gossip*), and the Manna-Treff or daycenters of the Katholischer Verein für soziale Dienste Heidelberg e.V. (Catholic Association for Social Services, SKM).

Quantitatively more significant than these services are "Südstadttafel" ("Rat und Tat", *advice and action*), which is jointly run by the Caritasverband Heidelberg and the abovementioned association SKM, the Diakonie shop Brot und Salz (Bread and Salt) and the Heidelberger Tafel e.V. While the first two services support disadvantaged individuals, the Heidelberger Tafel e.V. is a purely delivery-based service. This means that it collects and receives donations and then distributes the food directly to social institutions.

The Heidelberg Food Council

The city of Heidelberg has an active civil society, but in the past had no forum dedicated to tackling food issues at the local level. At the same time, since 2019 the Heidelberg City Council has had a climate action plan including commitments to more sustainable food production and consumption (see the annex for more details: questionnaire point 2.4).

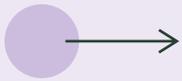
The Heidelberg Food Policy Council (FPC) began to take shape in 2019. A small group of dedicated persons working in food initiatives in and around the city began to work together following an event during a conference called “Together towards a sustainable Heidelberg” organized in April 2019 by the Eine-Welt-Zentrum (an umbrella organization of CSOs working broadly on issues related to the environment and development in the city). Once this event came to a close, a permanent work group was founded on sustainable food and nutrition with different actors, e.g. Foodsharing, Edible Heidelberg, and others.

After debating and reflecting more together over the course of a year and a half, the group decided to take action towards founding an FPC in Heidelberg. The goal was to create a space for relevant local actors to participate in local food-systems decision-making, to connect different actors, to push the issue of food and nutrition higher up on the local agenda, and to develop strategies and actions towards a more sustainable, healthy, and just food system at the local level. The FPC has an interim website that includes its mission statement¹⁴.

Who is involved in the FPC and how it works

At the time of writing (April 2022) there are approximately 30 people involved with the council, from various organizations and initiatives in Heidelberg, representing various sectors such as human rights, community supported agriculture, nutrition, food producers, sustainability organizations, etc. (see more details below). The Heidelberg FPC is a civil society initiative. However, there is exchange and interaction with the city administration and individual members of the city council. During a two-year process, interested and relevant actors have been identified and have been in contact with each other through the FPC. The focus was on bringing together particularly committed people in the field of food systems and food policy and, if possible, reach actors from different food-system sectors. Especially marginalized groups have not yet been identified and brought into the process; however, there have been discussions on how to achieve this. The FPC runs on a voluntary basis, and there is no funding yet. Since two members work for FIAN and one works at the Eine-Welt-Zentrum, some of their work time can be dedicated to the FPC, to a small extent, and their premises can be used for FPC events.

¹⁴ <https://wechange.de/group/ernaehrungsrat-heidelberg/>



REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL GROUPS PARTICIPATE IN THE FOOD POLICY COUNCIL:

In the active circle:

- Community Supported Agriculture
- Eine-Welt-Haus
- FIAN International
- Nutritionists
- FIAN Germany
- Educators from a low-income neighbourhood

In the extended circle of participants (active at events/in active exchange):

- Civil society:
 - BUND Heidelberg and Rhein-Neckar-Kreis (Friends of the Earth Germany · Heidelberg group and regional group)
 - Vegan in Heidelberg
 - Other representatives of Community Supported Agriculture
 - Employees of municipal daycare centers and kindergartens, and Päd-aktiv, the association for afternoon care at primary schools
 - Over the Edge of Your Plate Association
 - Foodsharing
- Producers
 - Organic vegetable growers
 - Bioland nursery
 - Food coop Auntie Turnip/Living Project Convisionary
 - Fair & Transverse (Biological supermarket)
 - Servicegesellschaft Nordbaden (PZN Wiesloch hospital kitchen)
 - Gastronomer/ Cook your future
- Research & Education
 - Heidelberg University of Education
 - University of Heidelberg
- Politics & Administration
 - Agenda 2030 Office City of Heidelberg
 - Green Party Members of the Heidelberg City Council Rhine Neckar District Office · Forum Nutrition

The FPC has yet to establish a structure which would, for example, provide for representation through elections. However, the council is in the process of registering as an association and will therefore define a clear structure as part of that process. At the moment, all interested actors are invited to participate in the regular plenary meetings (held every 14 days) and in the work groups: Lighthouse Project in Community Catering, Lobby/Politics, and Establishment of Association/Public Relations. As mentioned above, marginalized groups have not yet been explicitly identified. However, the Lighthouse Project is focused on involving more food producers and addressing particularly socially disadvantaged groups.

Food producers are part of the extended active circle; but they are not regularly active in the Food Policy Council due to their capacity constraints. The FPC is in the process of developing formats to address food producers' concerns without requiring a large investment of time on their part. Some ideas are conducting interviews or introducing regulars' tables, for instance.

Small businesses (organic vegetable growers, Bioland nursery, organic shops and catering, and a cooking project with refugees called "Cook your future") as well as a representative of the Servicegesellschaft Nordbaden (kitchen in a large hospital) participate in the FPC as well. At this time, private sector actors are only involved in events and to a small extent. So far, there has not been a need to regulate their participation. However, the FPC is aware that actors from larger companies, such as supermarket chains, will need to abide by special rules to ensure that the FPC is not co-opted by private interests.

Defining Priorities

The group organized different events throughout 2020 and 2021 in order to start building a network of relevant and interested actors and to reflect on the key topics and areas of work that such an initiative should address. The areas identified as most relevant include: transforming public procurement for healthier and more sustainable communal catering, promoting local organic food production and diversified related economies, and reducing food and packaging waste.

As the FPC has developed its members' and strategic agenda, it has proven to be important to gain a better sense of how the local food system operates, how decisions are made, and who is involved. The questionnaire for mapping food-systems decisions (see above) was created, utilized, and further improved through its application to the Heidelberg context. The results of the questionnaire for Heidelberg can be found in the annex.

Following a workshop organized at the end of 2021, FPC participants decided to refine their agenda, and identified public procurement as a priority issue since it is a strategic policy lever at the municipal level for several reasons (thus the questionnaire also focuses on this issue). Firstly, reforming food procurement for communal catering can have a greater impact than household changes, because of the quantity of food procured. Furthermore, there are social and equity aspects: communal catering (i.e., at schools, daycares, hospitals, etc.) is for the general public and is

able to reach especially marginalized groups such as children, youth, and the elderly. Therefore, access to healthy and sustainable food for all can be guaranteed through public procurement. There are social welfare programs in place to ensure all children, youth, and elderly can access communal catering (see questionnaire point 1.7). In addition, communal catering also has an educational component, especially for children and youth, and can be complemented by other activities such as planting school gardens. Lastly, the City of Heidelberg is responsible for food procurement for communal catering (see point 1.3). Therefore, there is an opportunity for the FPC to wield influence in this regard. It should be noted that the Green party has an initiative to improve communal catering. Thus, the FPC has direct points of contact and can engage with them to further strengthen and inform ongoing attempts to transform communal catering in the city.

Based on these reflections, the questionnaire was completed with a focus on communal catering and an event was also organized around this topic in March 2022. The topic attracted an increased number and variety of actors, such as people working in kitchens, childcare facilities, schools, and catering, along with mothers concerned about the quality of the food their children consume in different facilities. In this sense, the event was helpful to broaden the participant basis for the Food Policy Council. As a result, the council was able to identify concrete entry points for advocacy with the local government and lobbying activities. Furthermore, new members joined the active group and became engaged in creating the Lighthouse Project for Heidelberg and in further contributing to establishing the FPC. The event also included a reflection session on how to guarantee the participation of local food producers and other relevant food-system actors without requiring a large investment of time on their part.

The act of completing the questionnaire also proved to be a very interesting process for the FPC as it inspired internal reflection and exchange with different people in order to compile the information. The result constitutes a remarkable resource especially for advocacy work, but also for identifying relevant actors and for strategizing on the possible focus for the FPC. The council's work is still ongoing as they are defining their agenda collectively and working towards ensuring meaningful participation in local food-system decision-making.

Next steps

Currently, the FPC is primarily focusing on preparing a cooking project for youth in cooperation with a neighborhood association (under the framework of its community catering work group), engaging in exchanges with other FPC at a regional level, developing a brand and website, and on establishing itself as a "verein" (association) in order to be able to apply for funding. Participation continues to grow as several individuals, who are especially interested in issues of health and equity, have joined in the past weeks and months.

Key Insights from the FPC in Heidelberg:

Firstly, the experience of the Heidelberg FPC demonstrates that local actors are interested in engaging on food system issues from different perspectives. It has also become clear that public administration and local policy makers are interested in working with an active civil society and in receiving support and feedback from them to work towards changes that address their demands. At the same time, it is clear that civil society participation is generally not envisioned in municipal policy processes, e.g., in a process establishing criteria for local public procurement. It is also evident that a civil society initiative that aims to channel demands towards the city must first make itself known and begin by interacting with a variety of local government and administrative actors in order to be heard.

At the same time, the process of organizing the FPC itself has come up against several challenges, in particular regarding participation. The completely voluntary and self-organized basis of FPC engagement, lacking commitment or consistent funding, does not foster capacity for facilitation or consistent levels of engagement, and it makes it difficult to include small-scale food producers and other key groups. In order to increase democratic space and participation at the local level, not only would a clearly established space for advocacy focused on the municipality be helpful, but financial support for self-organizing civil society as well.

Even though the FPC has made significant progress in defining its priorities, the pending topics to tackle are still quite vast and thus it is easy for participants to lose focus. Furthermore, for instance with the topic of public procurement, while it may be clear where the FPC can engage with the municipality, there is still a plethora of possible foci to advance this issue at the local level. For example, the council can engage with a specific facility rather than trying to address policies and regulations. This variety of possibilities can be detrimental in that it pulls participants' capacity in different directions.

The FPC in general is participatory as it is open for anyone to join, though the main target is clearly civil society and small and “alternative” food-system actors; and for the time being there are no indications of conflicts of interest. However, at this time participation is limited to more traditional food-system actors (producers, alternative food organizations, etc.) and the proactive work needed to engage groups facing different forms of exclusions in Heidelberg, has not yet been done. Without their engagement, there is a risk of reinforcing the inequalities discussed earlier in this module, and of creating policies and actions that fail to incorporate the necessary human-rights approach. What's more, it is difficult to determine if participation is meaningful in the way described above because it is merely a voluntary engagement in a civil society initiative and interaction with the local government is not yet clearly defined. The Heidelberg FPC is still in its nascent stage of development, and it is evident from those who are part of the process that there is a strong commitment to implementing concrete changes and creating an environment of openness and solidarity for all residents of the city.

CONCLUSION



The local level has emerged as an important arena for organization and advancement of the right to food and nutrition. The proximity of policy makers to communities, and the possibility of making more meaningful, place-based interventions could be the necessary step to truly developing and implementing human-rights based policies, as well as supporting localized food systems. However, as with any policy process, challenges arise on different fronts. Local governments have differing levels of autonomy from their national governments, with varying abilities to craft authoritative policies or regulations. Therefore, different methods will be capable of effecting change depending on the specific context. Additionally, there is the risk of recreating barriers to participation that exist at other political levels (i.e., multistakeholderism), or building structures that reinforce inequalities and fail to foster meaningful participation.

Food policy councils are a relatively new found framework for policymaking and input in Europe that offer the potential of creating different conditions for participation in issues across the food system. However, food policy councils are not a one-size-fits-all option. FPCs are organized differently in different contexts, have diverse goals and priorities, and distinct capacities to engage community members. They are an important vehicle for local actors to participate in food-systems transformation, but their impact in terms of social inclusion and participation differs. Some councils which focus, for example, on climate issues or other targeted themes, might not prioritize issues that are not directly tied to food production systems (i.e., access to food or issues related to poverty). Social inclusion and equity are not issues that can be changed passively, but rather require proactive and specific strategies, as well as targeted identification of groups and their inclusion in processes. Because without these strategies, it can be difficult to create genuinely participatory space and meaningful change for all community members. Leaving excluded groups out - even because of capacity issues - simply reinforces inequalities, as they are once again ignored.

Food councils as a democratic form of participation have great potential for advancing the right to food and nutrition, but their future achievements depend on their members' interests and abilities, how they are organized, and their focus.

The human-rights potential of FPCs has yet to be fully explored in Europe. Therefore, there is still work to be done to create tools and assessment frameworks and conduct other analyses to support strong and more meaningful participatory food governance at the local level. While the drive for local food systems change is strong across Europe, it is fundamental that the sustainability movement is paired in equal measure with a human rights-based social transformation.



ANNEX: QUESTIONNAIRE

Comment: For the Heidelberg context, the order of the questionnaire was slightly modified in order to deal with the topic of communal catering at the beginning. The more general questions are also primarily focused on the topic of communal catering.

In order to answer the questions, publicly available data from the city of Heidelberg was referenced, as well as other documents from the city of Heidelberg, which were shared upon request. Interviews were conducted with a staff member from the municipal Agenda 2030 office, as well as with a local council member of the Green Party who is also active in community supported agriculture in Heidelberg.

1

QUESTIONNAIRE BLOCK I: UNDERSTANDING THE HEIDELBERG FOOD SYSTEM

What does the local food system look like in terms of production? (What agricultural land does Heidelberg have and what is the ownership structure? Which products are grown locally or regionally, and how and where are they sold? In what quality (organic/conventional)? Are there direct contracts between local producers and public or private community catering?)

1.1

Data from a 2016 survey provided by the city of Heidelberg:

- The urban district of Heidelberg has 1,824 ha of agricultural land, 82% of which is used as arable land. Grains are grown on 62% of it. About half of that is wheat, followed by spring barley.
- Vegetables are grown on 169 ha, most of them in the open. Among vegetables, lettuce is the most commonly grown crop.
- Heidelberg also has permanent grassland (238 ha). Orchards and vineyards constitute a very small portion.
- There are 74 agricultural holdings. 28 of them are arable farms and 19 are horticultural farms. 20 have livestock, most of which have cattle or dairy cows.

According to a study by Nabu, only 3% of Heidelberg's agricultural land is farmed organically.

According to a local councillor, direct contracts between local farmers and community catering are only known to exist between one local producer and the university hospital.

1.2 →

What does the local food system look like in terms of consumption? (is there general data on food consumed in Heidelberg and how it is grown? (e.g., What percentage of food consumed comes from the local area? Percentage of organic food? Fairtrade? Consumption of different food groups?))

These data could not be determined.

REGARDING PUBLIC PROCUREMENT/COMMUNITY CATERING:

1.3 →

What does public communal catering in Heidelberg currently look like?

1.3.1 In which facilities does public catering take place?

▶ The following answers refer to the information provided by the City of Heidelberg in response to the Green Party's question (https://ww1.heidelberg.de/buergerinfo/vo0050.asp?_kvonr=30423):

The city of Heidelberg offers regular lunchtime meals at municipal day-care centers, 29 schools, one senior citizen center, and three municipal canteens.

Daycare centers: Approximately 1,200 lunches are delivered daily to municipal daycare centers and heated on site. A meal costs €3.40, and the city contributes an additional €0.99.

Schools: For school lunches, there are open-ended service contracts with four caterers or operators who serve around 674,000 meals per year. One meal costs €3.77, and the city contributes about €1. (Update: A contract servicing four secondary schools was terminated by SRH (the caterer) and is currently being re-tendered; however hardly any information is available as all the related documents are confidential. (https://ww1.heidelberg.de/buergerinfo/vo0050.asp?_kvonr=32059)).

Senior Citizens' Center: At the Weststadt Senior Citizens' Center, 30 to 35 midday meals are prepared daily in the center's own kitchen. Guests pay €1 to 5 per meal; the municipal cost contribution cannot be calculated without additional effort.

Canteens: In the canteen at the service yard, which is run by the city itself, about 29,000 hot lunches are prepared annually, as well as dishes for the hot and cold counters. The price of a meal is €3.47, with the city contributing an additional €2.10. Two other canteens located in the theater and in the Prinz Carl administration building are leased. They serve around 54 and 100 meals, respectively, every day. Diners pay €3.72; the city contributes €2.35.

Catering services for events and conferences: Furthermore, (except during the Covid-19 pandemic), various events and meetings organized and/or sponsored by the city take place at which food and drinks are offered – primarily as a snack. These include, for example, meetings, receptions, information events, and cultural events. Different catering companies or bakeries are contracted for individual dates; usually the city bears the entire cost. Some offices stated that they pay great attention to various aspects of sustainability such as regional sourcing, seasonality, and vegetarian food.

1.3.2 Where are the facilities supplied from? And what food is used (percentage of the different food groups, organic, fairtrade, unprocessed food, etc.)?

▶ The following answers refer to various information provided by the City of Heidelberg in response to the Green Party's question (https://ww1.heidelberg.de/buergerinfo/vo0050.asp?_kvonr=30423):

Regional and seasonal: According to the responsible offices, mainly regional and seasonal products are offered in municipal daycare centers and schools, and in the Betriebshof and Prinz Carl canteens. The senior citizens' center obtains regional products.

▶ According to the city, however, it should be noted that there is neither an official definition nor a uniformly held idea about the term "regional" and that it is not always easy to trace the origins of ingredients and, if applicable, the location of processing.

Organic: Certified organic food is an integral part of school lunch menus; however, the exact percentage cannot be quantified (see also explanation in Annex 02). In daycare centers, organic food constitutes 40% of the menu, in senior citizens' centers: 10 to 40%.

Fair: In accordance with the City of Heidelberg's service directive, coffee, cocoa, tea, and other items in daycare centers, schools, and in the service yard canteen are exclusively fairtrade.

Vegetarian and vegan: In all three city canteens and in secondary schools, a vegetarian dish is offered daily; while in senior citizens' centers this is often, but not always, the case. At primary schools and daycare centers, vegetarian options are regularly integrated into the menus. Vegan dishes are not regularly served in any institution; in the Betriebshof canteen, they are available by pre-order. The offices responsible for the educational institutions explicitly refer and adhere to the recommendations of the German Nutrition Society.

Certified fish: MSC-certified fish is served at schools and daycare centers as well as in the Betriebshof canteen.

- ▶ **Food and packaging waste:** Particular attention is paid to reducing food and packaging waste at schools, daycare centers, and in the service yard canteen.

The responsible offices show a great willingness to make catering services even more sustainable, financial and personnel resources permitting.

1.3.3 What kind of public tenders are available and who can participate in them (e.g. decision-making processes, selection procedures, budgets, catalogue of criteria, contract periods)?

- ▶ The following answers refer to the information provided by the City of Heidelberg in response to the Green Party's question:

In general: for annual contracts of over €24,000 and up to €150,000, the main and finance committee is responsible; for contracts of over €150,000 for permanent or recurring services with a commitment of more than two years, the city council is responsible.

Municipal canteens (refers to the theater and the Prinz Carl administration building - the service yard canteen is run by Waste Management and Municipal Cleaning on their own)

- Changes are only possible within the framework of new tender procedures;
- A new contract for the theater is in the process of being awarded at present, as the existing one expires in August 2022;
- Quality standards are to be defined for future tendering procedures; concrete and measurable specifications regarding sustainability aspects are to be included; and
- The change in canteen services is subject to co-determination; the entire staff must be represented.

Schools

Invitation to tender for catering services at the four public secondary schools in the city of Heidelberg

 https://ww1.heidelberg.de/buergerinfo/vo0050.asp?__kvonr=32059

The award procedure is conducted by the Office for Schools and Education with the support of the Procurement Department of the Legal Office.

The assessment committee for the award process consists of:

- Headmaster Volker Nürk, Executive Headmaster of public secondary schools in Heidelberg,
- Mrs Chilla, external consultant for school catering
- Mrs Graumann, City of Heidelberg - Procurement Department
- Mrs Teutsch, City of Heidelberg - Office for Schools and Education
- Ms Rohleder, City of Heidelberg - Office for Schools and Education

Information from the other 25 city schools is not available.

Kitas (childcare facilities for children under 3 years of age)

Result of the meeting of the Youth Welfare Committee on September 23, 2021 and the meeting of the city council on October 14, 2021

 https://ww1.heidelberg.de/buergerinfo/vo0050.asp?_kvonr=31948

The possibility of increasing the organic share was incorporated in the contract by mutual agreement. To this end, it was agreed that the contracting parties could negotiate increasing the organic share and adjusting remuneration. However, public procurement law must be observed. **Under public procurement law, it would, in principle, be possible to increase the organic share without conducting a new award procedure. The decisive factor here is the percentage by which the volume of the financial contract increases by expanding the organic share.** In the meantime, the organic share has already reached 40%.

In the appropriation for the financial year of 2022, an amount of €45,000 was planned pro rata from September 2022 to further increase the organic share in municipal daycare centers.

The Green Group moved:

- To formally terminate the catering contract with the municipal daycare centers by October 31, 2021 in order to be able to adapt the terms of reference through a new award procedure (e.g., organically produced fruit, vegetables, potatoes, dairy products, pasta and rice, meat and fish);
- To make the following adjustments until the end of the contract (August 2022): For every meal with meat, there is a fully vegetarian option for children who choose vegetarian meals in the daycare

center. The vegetarian option is listed on the notice board of the respective facility; and

- To increase the organic share, to the extent that the legal situation and budget allow.

The Youth Welfare Committee discussed this on September 23, 2021, along with other issues.

Ms Döring, employee of the Child and Youth Welfare Office (management of municipal daycare centers), explained that the Climate Protection Action Plan stipulated that the percentage of organic food was to gradually increase to 50%. Corresponding discussions on this have already taken place with the provider. Furthermore, **a catalog of criteria is needed for a new tender**, which still needs to be drawn up and approved by the city council. The demand for vegetarian catering was unclear.

Result: Work order to the administration:

- Formally terminate the catering contract with the municipal daycare centers as of October 31, 2022 and initiate a tendering procedure with a new award as of September 1, 2023.
- The administration determines the need for full vegetarian option and reports on this in one of the upcoming committee meetings

1.3.4 Have there already been evaluations of communal catering?

This is not known.

1.4 →

What are important communal catering spaces procured by private entities? What is the situation there (contract lengths, criteria, percentages of food groups, etc.)?

E.g.: English Institute School Heidelberg:

At the secondary school:

- 2 menus, 1 of which is vegan. (Vegan meal costs €1.30 less, but contains only one side dish, instead of two sides as in the non-vegan meal), plus a salad bar with regionally-sourced salads.
- Prepared by Mary Schütt and other local cooks and involves a great

deal of preparation. (<https://www.englisches-institut.de/schulleben/unsere-milchbar>)

At the primary school:

- Caterer VIT, their 10 guidelines have convinced the school both in terms of cuisine and sustainability.
- <https://www.vit-heidelberg.de/anspruch.html>;

 <https://www.englisches-institut.de/plaene-und-termine-grundschule/speiseplan-grundschule>)

Heidelberg College:

- Products mainly from the region and purchased directly from farmers, butchers, bakers, and other suppliers;
- School kitchen processes products;
- Daily vegetarian offering;
- Participates in Foodsharing;
- Discussion rounds, educational workshops, etc. on the topics of sustainability, healthy nutrition, and food waste; also public relations work, e.g., advocating for supermarkets to reduce food waste, support for solidarity farming, and networking via cooking events, campaigns, festivals etc.
- <https://www.heidelbergcollege.de/aktuelles/teufels-kueche/>

Augustinum Senior Citizens' Residence:

- Freshly prepared dishes;
- Participated in a food-waste prevention pilot project for two years;
- Out-of-home catering: Commitment to cut down food waste by half in kitchens and restaurants by 2030 (more regular food-waste monitoring and management);
- Leftover ingredients can be used again the next day;

- Significant planning for ingredient quantity to cut back on leftovers;
- Promotion week: when, for example, you can order "half portions" or dishes cooked from yesterday's leftovers;
- Vegetable broths are prepared with vegetable peelings
- <https://augustinum.de/rettetlebensmittel/dialogforum-ausser-haus-verpflegung-selbstverpflichtung-mit-ehrgeizigem-ziel/>
- <https://augustinum.de/rettetlebensmittel/>
- <https://augustinum.de/heidelberg/essen-und-geniessen/>

REGARDING INEQUALITIES:

1.5 →

Is adequate, healthy, and sustainable food accessible and affordable for everyone and in all neighbourhoods? Can you identify local obstacles?

Weekly markets are held in many, but not all, parts of the city: <https://www.heidelberg.de/hd/HD/Leben/Wochenmaerkte.html> .

The districts of Boxberg and Emmertsgrund, which have rather poor transportation access, do not have a weekly farmers' market. Supermarkets are located in all districts.

1.6 →

Are there any marginalized actors/groups in the Heidelberg food system? (e.g., people who lack access (physical or economic) to healthy and sustainable food; people who suffer from poor working conditions or strong economic pressures; people who suffer from negative effects of food on their health, etc.).

According to the 2018 report on the social situation in Heidelberg (<https://www.heidelberg.de/hd/HD/Rathaus/Bericht+zur+Soziale+Lage.html>), poverty in Heidelberg is in decline. The demographics particularly affected by poverty are single parents and families with several children, as well as the long-term unemployed.

1.7 →

What systems are in place to help people who are in crises?

1.7.1 Who implements the support? (public/private)

The city of Heidelberg provides support services to low-income households through a program called **Heidelberg Pass**. Benefits include, but are

not limited to, free lunch in daycare centers, kindergartens, and schools (https://www.heidelberg.de/hd/HD/Rathaus/Heidelberg_Pass.html).

The Office for Social Affairs and Senior Citizens also initiated a program offering a €1-lunch in senior citizens' centers for residents aged 65 and over who are recipients of basic social security benefits. And as of 2019/2020 this benefit has been included in the Heidelberg Pass and a promotional campaign was conducted to inform potential beneficiaries.

According to the 2018 report on the social situation in Heidelberg (<https://www.heidelberg.de/hd/HD/Rathaus/Bericht+zur+Soziale+Lage.html>), there are a number of support services for low-income people that provide free or low-cost food. These include: the Obdach e.V. association (open breakfast meeting), ecumenical offers "Frühstück im Winter" (Breakfast in Winter), "NächstenMahl" (Next Meal) and "KaffeeKlatsch" (Coffee Gossip), and the Manna-Treff or daycenters of the Katholischer Verein für soziale Dienste Heidelberg e.V. (Catholic Association for Social Services, SKM).

Quantitatively more significant than these services are "Südstadttafel" ("Rat und Tat", *advice and action*), which is jointly run by the Caritasverband Heidelberg and the abovementioned association SKM, the Diakonie shop Brot und Salz (Bread and Salt) and the Heidelberger Tafel e.V. While the first two services support disadvantaged individuals, the Heidelberger Tafel e.V. is a purely delivery-based service. This means that it collects and receives donations and then distributes the food directly to social institutions.

1.7.2 Is it sufficient?

No information is available.

1.7.3 Does support exist to navigate these programs or structures?

The city's citizens' and public order office offers assistance. There are also associations (see above) that provide support. According to the report, Tafel also functions as a place of exchange.



2

QUESTIONNAIRE BLOCK: DECISION-MAKING OPTIONS AND POINTS OF ENTRY

2.1

What decisions can the city make regarding communal catering?

Limitations of the city's sphere of influence:

The city could not answer some questions because criteria for sustainable nutrition are not contractually regulated and no data is collected on this topic. The city of Heidelberg is not able to influence catering in all municipally funded facilities. For example, in some senior centers, the city finances the staff but not the catering. When events are held in external event spaces, the city is often obligated to work with associated caterers and their product range. It should also be noted that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, catering services at many facilities are currently operating at a greatly reduced capacity.

2.2

Which areas of the city administration are responsible? Are the responsible departments dealing with the issue? Do they work together? What are the intersecting interests and goals?

1. Regular lunchtime catering at municipal daycare centers, 29 schools, one senior citizens' center, and three municipal canteens
 - Responsible: Children's and Youth Welfare Office; Office for Schools and Education; Office for Social Affairs and Senior Citizens; Waste Management and City Cleaning; Office for Finance, Real Estate and Conversion; Theater and Orchestra.
 - In the case of the municipal canteens, the Human Resources Office is responsible, and the General Staff Council is involved as well. The legal department is involved in all major procurement procedures. And the city council is involved in contracts above a certain value (see point 1.3.3).
2. It also commissions catering services for events and conferences
 - Responsible: Department of the Mayor - Sessional Services and Protocol Matters, Office of Culture, Office for Environmental Protection, and Office for Economic Development.

2.3

Can you identify important existing policies, programs, and regulations related to Communal catering that are defined at the regional, national, or international level and that play an important role in the local/territorial level? Can the local/territorial level influence them?

- Due to **EU regulations**, tenders cannot stipulate, for example, which region(s) products must come from or the length of transport involved, as this would exclude some EU countries and hinder free competition. However, other criteria are permitted with which all countries must comply.
- **State level: The nutrition strategy** adopted in 2017 forms the framework for all state measures in the area of nutrition education. It also aims to ensure sustainable out-of-home catering. <https://www.heidelberg.de/hd/-/Lebenslagen/ernaehrung/leb5001433>. Interestingly this document announces, among other things, the "Competence Center for Community Catering" within a new "**State Center for Nutrition**". The local level can use different programs developed therein.

2.4



What are existing policies, programs, and regulations as well as voluntary commitments of the city that impact communal catering?

- City council resolution on sustainable procurement in 2007 (<https://www.heidelberg.de/hd/HD/Leben/Nachhaltiger+consumption.html>)
- In November 2019, the Heidelberg City Council decided that the amount of organic food in schools and daycare centers should increase to 50% by 2022. In June 2020, the organic share in daycare catering was 30% and in school catering, 10%. <https://www.oekolandbau.de/ausser-haus-verpflegung/stadt-land-und-bund/kommunen/bio-staedte-motor-fuer-mehr-bio-in-der-ahv/>

Climate Action Plan Heidelberg of 2019

- Increase the organic share of lunch catering in Heidelberg schools and daycare centers to 50% by 2022;
- Climate-friendly catering at city festivals, sporting events, and civic celebrations;
- Promote transition to organic farming; and



(https://www.heidelberg.de/hd/HD/service/22_11_2019+the+30-point+action+plan+for+more+climate+protection.html)

Heidelberg Biostadt

- On the implementation of the Climate Action Plan
- Heidelberg joined the network of cities that are dedicated to increasing organic production and consumption. However, being labelled “Biostadt” is only a self-commitment; there is no evaluation process or award.
- Focal points: Regional marketing, public relations, educational work, sustainable procurement

Climate Master Plan

- The topic of nutrition is not central but was introduced in the participation process.

Targets of the Urban Development Plan/Local Agenda 2030 (according to the city council meeting):

- Objective: Promote investments that have equal social, economic, and environmental benefits.
- Justification: Sustainable catering invests in the three pillars of sustainability.
- Objective: Promote environmental awareness and initiative.
- Justification: Sustainable catering enables diners to eat in an environmentally conscious way.
- Objective: Permanent protection of water, soil, air, nature, landscape, and climate.
- Justification: By offering sustainable catering, the city of Heidelberg contributes to the protection of water, soil, air, nature, landscape, and climate.



3

QUESTIONNAIRE BLOCK: ASSESSING AND IMPROVING SPACES FOR PARTICIPATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

If a participatory or multi-actor decision-making body exists or is being developed.

3.1

Have the relevant actors, including marginalized groups, been identified?

During a two-year process, interested and relevant actors were identified and were in contact with each other through the FPC. The focus was on bringing together particularly committed people in the field of food systems and food policy and, if possible, reach actors from different food-system sectors. Particularly marginalized groups have not yet been identified.

3.2

How is it organized?

3.2.1

Is it state-based? On a civil society basis? Mixed?

The Heidelberg Food Council is a civil society organization. However, there is exchange with the city administration and individual members of the city council.

3.2.2

If it is governmental: In which department is it located?

3.2.3

Are there paid staff? Where does staff funding come from?

The Food Policy Council is voluntary. There is no funding yet. Since two members work for FIAN and one works at the One World Centre (Eine-Welt-Zentrum), some of their work time can be dedicated to the FPC, and their premises can be used or rented for a low cost.

3.2.4

How are decisions made? (e.g., by a representative group, by all participants, by majority, by consensus, by groups representing different social groups, etc.)

The Food Policy Council has discussed the issue of decision-making but has not yet come to a conclusion. This is due in part to the fact that the group of members has changed slightly on several occasions. Decisions are basically made by consensus among all those present in the plenary.



Who participates in local decision-making?

3.3.1 Which organizations, associations, etc.?

Representatives of the following organizations and professional groups are participating in the Food Policy Council:

In the active circle:

- Community Supported Agriculture
- Eine-Welt-Haus
- FIAN International
- Extinction Rebellion
- State Ministry of Agriculture and Food
- Nutritionists
- FIAN Germany
- Educators from a low-income neighbourhood (Emmertsgrund)
- Parents

In the extended circle of participants (active at events/in active exchange)

- Civil society:
 - BUND Heidelberg and Rhein-Neckar-Kreis (Friends of the Earth Germany · Heidelberg Group and Regional group)
 - Vegans in Heidelberg
 - Other representatives of Community Supported Agriculture
 - Employees of municipal daycare centers and kindergartens or Päd-aktiv, the association for afternoon care at primary schools
 - Over the Edge of Your Plate Association
 - Foodsharing
- Producers
 - Organic vegetable growers
 - Bioland nursery
 - Food coop Auntie Turnip/Living Project Convisionary

- Fair & Transverse (Biological supermarket)
 - Servicegesellschaft Nordbaden (PZN Wiesloch hospital kitchen)
 - Gastronomer from Cook your future
- Research & Education
 - Heidelberg University of Education
 - University of Heidelberg
 - Dr. Rainer Wild Foundation
- Politics & Administration
 - Agenda 2030 Office City of Heidelberg
 - Green Party Member of the Heidelberg City Council
 - Rhine Neckar District Office - Forum Nutrition



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