

Identifying the sustainability impacts of urban food sharing initiatives and how best to communicate them through a process of co-design

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SHARECITY

SHARECITY is a 5-year research project funded by the **European Research Council** which is exploring the practice and sustainability potential of city-based food sharing economies.

Aims & Objectives

To establish the **significance** and **potential** of food sharing economies to transform cities onto more sustainable pathways

- 1) Develop **deeper theoretical** understanding of contemporary food sharing
- 2) Generate **comparative international empirical** data about food sharing activities within cities
- 3) Assess the **impact** of food sharing activities
- 4) Explore how food sharing in cities might **evolve** in the future



TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN
COLÁISTE NA TRÍONÓIDE, BAILE ÁTHA CLIATH

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF DUBLIN



European Research Council

Established by the European Commission



Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation



The SHARECITY100 Database

Interactive Searchable Database: www.sharecity.ie/research/sharecity100-database/

CITY: ALL | WHAT IS SHARED: ALL | HOW IT IS SHARED: ALL

4008 food sharing activities on map [List View](#)

Top 10	
London	201
New York City	185
Melbourne	144
Berlin	133
Sydney	108
Barcelona	106
Philadelphia	81
Chicago	72
Buenos Aires	70
Vancouver	68

DESCRIPTION

WHAT IS SHARED

- Plant icon
- Apple icon
- Leaf icon
- Seedling icon
- Hand holding plant icon
- Seedling icon
- Message icon
- Plant in pot icon

HOW IT IS SHARED

- Person icon
- Gift icon
- Exchange icon
- Money icon

SHARING ORGANIZATION

- Heart icon
- Group of people icon
- Dollar sign icon
- Person icon
- Group of people icon
- Group of people icon

Map data ©2017

4008 FOOD SHARING ACTIVITIES ON MAP

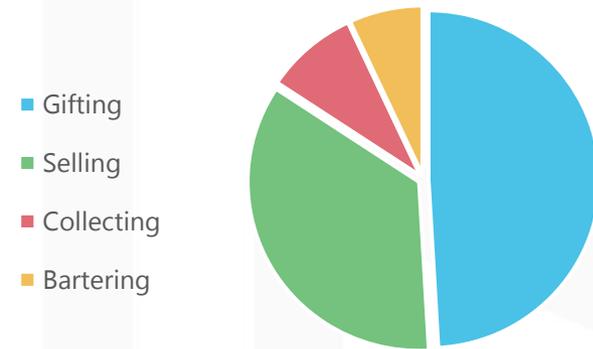
Food Sharing – very diverse

- 70 % of initiatives share multiple food related stuff, spaces or skills
- 53 % of initiatives share via multiple methods
- 21 % of initiatives use multiple organisational structures

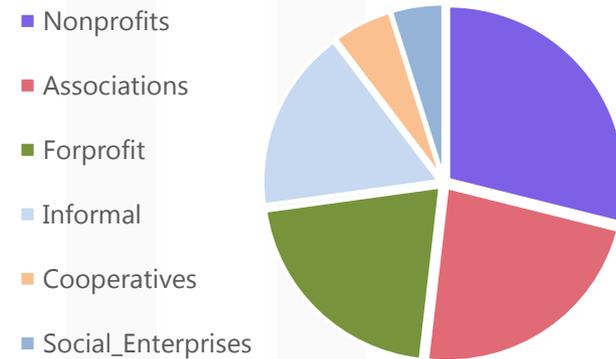
WHAT IS SHARED



HOW IT IS SHARED



SHARING ORGANISATION



In-depth ethnographies

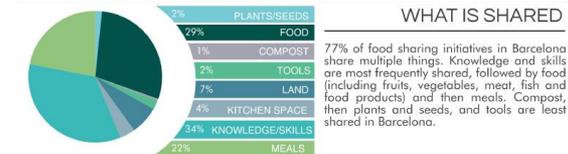
SHARECITY project conducted in-depth ethnographical research with food sharing initiatives in 9 cities of contrasting contexts embedding themselves in the activities of diverse food sharing initiatives in these locations.



SHARECITY PROFILE

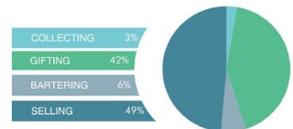
BARCELONA

Barcelona is ranked 6th in the SHARECITY100 Database of global ICT-mediated food sharing, with 106 initiatives currently active in the city.



HOW IT IS SHARED

Selling is the most common form of food sharing in Barcelona, followed closely by gifting. Collecting and bartering are relatively infrequent modes of exchange. Only 8% of initiatives share via multiple methods, the most common combination being gifting and selling.



Why focus on urban food sustainability?



~ 70% of global population living in cities by 2050

Issues for Urban Food Systems

Social

- Increased Isolation (dining alone), Food Poverty, Detachment from Food and Nature

Environmental

- Land Use Change, Food Waste, Increased Meat Consumption

Economic

- Fair Returns to Farmers, Affordability and Accessibility, New & Diverse Food Economies



SOCIETAL META-CHALLENGE

To transform urban food systems in a just and sustainable manner

SHARECITY INNOVATION

Reframing debates to include city-based food sharing economies



Current phase – Co-Design

- **SHARECITY is currently co-designing an online toolkit which will enable food sharing initiatives to report the impacts they have on urban food sustainability.** The whole process will have 4 stages over 2018-2019:

Phase 1 – Establish the fundamental concepts and structure of the toolkit by working closely with 6 initiatives from 3 cities (London, Dublin and Singapore) to develop a framework

Phase 2 – Work with developers to create a open access online version of this toolkit

Phase 3 – Open the toolkit out to much wider number of initiatives in the SHARECITY100 database for beta-testing

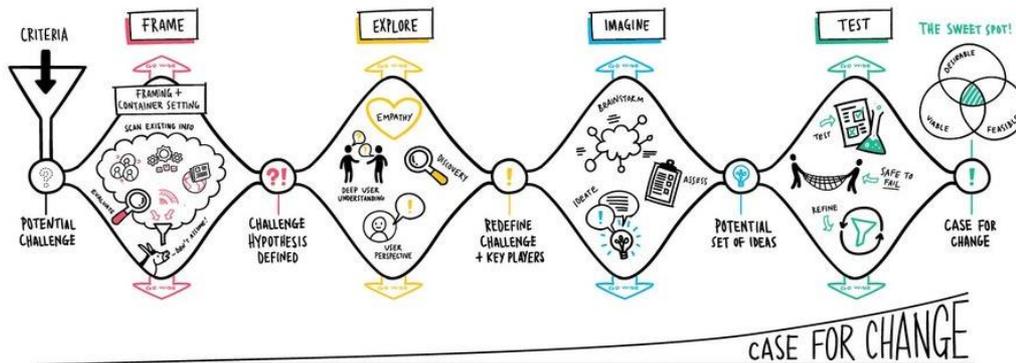
Phase 4 – Public launch of the open access toolkit online



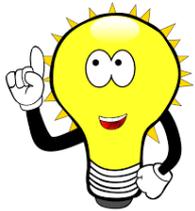
Co-design Phase 1

- Co-design steps:
 1. Identify gaps in what is available for food sharing initiatives currently and establish their potential user needs and desires for an online toolkit
 2. Establish the a list of impact areas and indicators that will be included
 3. Propose a framework for how initiatives will actually be able to use the toolkit (i.e. the structure of the interface)

At each stage we get input & feedback from our co-design partners



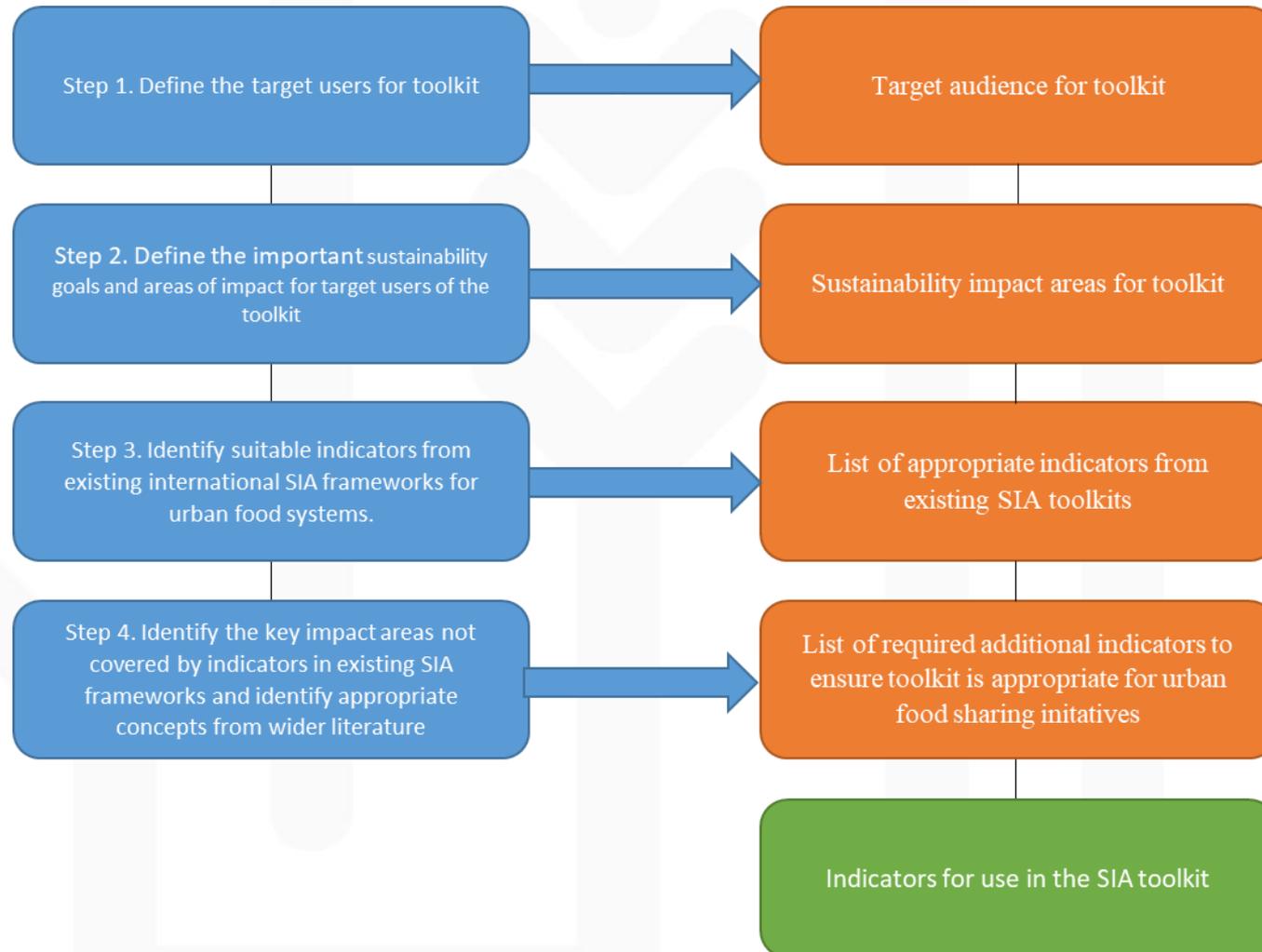
Feedback from interviews during step 1



- **No more paperwork** Partners are very interested in improving data collection but DO NOT want to increase it...
- **Developing knowledge and skills** Urban growing initiatives feel there can be too much focus on the reporting the physical aspect of their activities (food produced etc.) and not enough on their educational value
- **A fleeting impact?** Initiatives are interested in the temporal aspect of reporting and consider it important that they demonstrate long term impact, but this is difficult!
- **Is anybody out there?;** Initiatives would be interested in a resource where they can also connect and see best practice from others around the world



Identifying indicators for inclusion in the toolkit



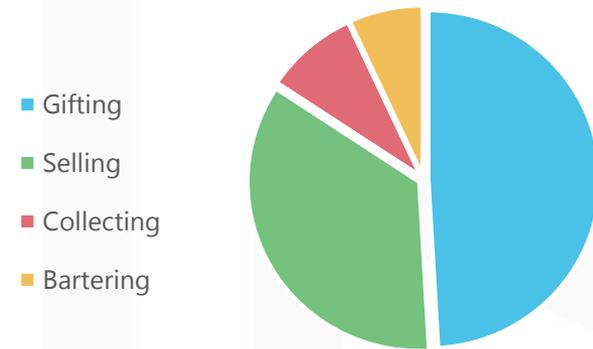
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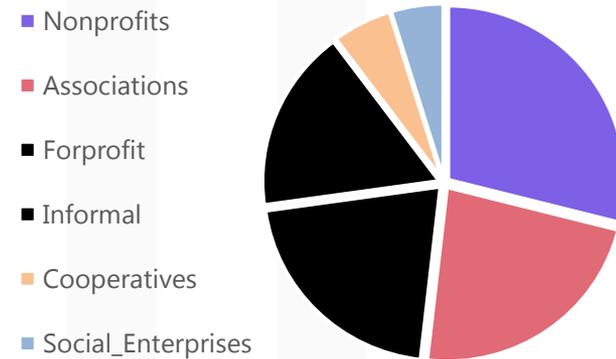
WHAT IS SHARED



HOW IT IS SHARED



SHARING ORGANISATION



Current sustainability goals and impact reporting

SHARECITY BRIEFING NOTE 3

GOALS & IMPACTS

Communicating goals and impacts of food sharing in online spaces

- The sustainability goals and impacts statements of 37 case study initiatives in the 9 profile cities were collated and analysed
- Goals and impact statements were categorised as to whether they were political, economic, environmental, health or social.
- For every category less than half of impact statements were quantitative and >30% of cases goals were not accompanied by any impact statement



Important existing international frameworks for evaluating urban food sustainability

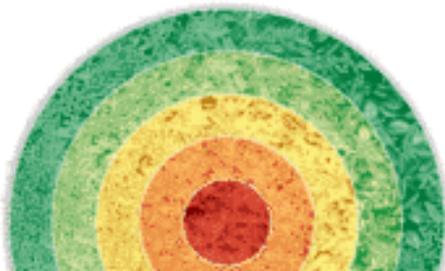


City Region Food System Toolkit

Assessing and planning sustainable city region food systems



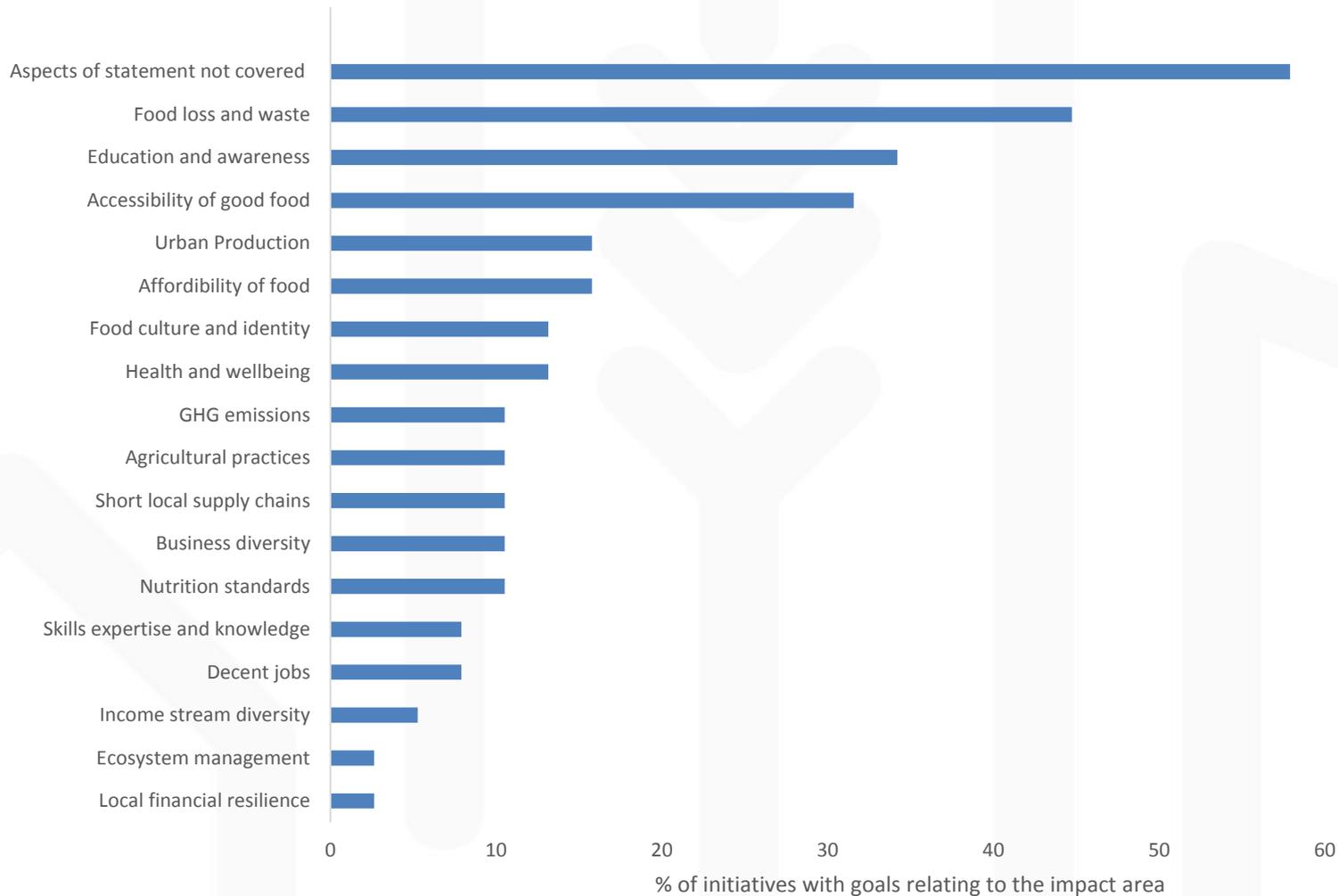
RUAF FOUNDATION



- A literature review identified 2 international sustainability assessment frameworks for food systems suitable to be building blocks for the SHARECITY SIA toolkit.
- Both frameworks contain a large number of indicators across all 3 pillars of sustainability assessment
- 52 indicators from these frameworks identified as potentially suitable for inclusion in the toolkit if adapted, we intend to narrow this down further



Analysis of statements of sustainability goals through the lens of the CRFS indicator framework



Case study example: Be Enriched

Name: Be Enriched **Focus:** Eating; Redistribution  

Summary: Be Enriched is a charity sharing food, knowledge and skills through gifting.

Stated Goals: *"Be Enriched is a **youth and community** charity set up in 2013 focused on supporting and developing the community. . . . [W]e develop **programs which balance inequalities whilst building community cohesion and developing skills** in young people." "We believe in **enriching local life through connecting people through community activities and cultivating respect over a bite.**"*

Impacts: There are some limited quantitative figures included on the website and references to community building.

Summary of Be- Enriched activities:

- Provide important shared eating experiences to those who may otherwise not have them
- Provide weekly access to balanced cooked meals using fresh ingredients for those who otherwise may get them
- Provide education on food safety, nutrition, cooking skills and food budgeting for youth groups and broader audiences in the form of cooking classes and take home educational materials
- Use platform (particularly online) to engage in activism to promote changes in food policy and increase access to healthy, affordable food for everyone through grassroots campaigns



The tricky bits: the value of shared eating experiences

- Be-Enriched quite specific that participants in their canteens say they come for the company not the food!
- Shared eating is known to alleviate loneliness and increase levels of life satisfaction, happiness and trust in local community (Dunbar, 2017)
- Dining habits themselves, and more specifically the number of meals consumed by an individual that are shared and with whom, are a modern indicator of social capital (Julier, 2013)
- In fact the frequency of social dinners has been shown to be correlated with the size of an individuals close support network (Dunbar, 2017)
- But can delivering shared eating experiences be reported as an impact in its own right? What value frequency, regularity etc.?



Case study example: Skip Garden & Kitchen (part of Global Generation)

Name: Skip Garden

Focus: Growing 

Summary: Skip Garden is a non-profit initiative sharing food, land, tools, knowledge, skills, kitchen space and meals through selling.

Stated Goals: *The Skip Garden is the homebase of Global Generation ("an educational charity, which works . . . to create **healthy, integrated and environmentally responsible communities**") where fruit and vegetables are grown alongside the café which serves healthy seasonal food. "The café also **offers work experience and employability programmes to those often marginalised by society, such as young people with special needs, the elderly and refugees. . . . All of this helps to nurture a close-knit and collaborative community, which cares about its environment - and about the planet as a whole.**"*

Impacts: Quantitative impacts focus on the number of people who have participated in events.

- Educational charity which looks to develop social, emotional and practical skills in young people so they can have a positive environmental and social impact on the world (**Youth Development**)
- Global generation have been involved in establishing 26 community and commercial gardens in various locations (**Urban Growing**)
- The main site, has a café which offers work experience and employability programs to often marginalised groups such as young people with special needs and refugees (**Routes to work**)
- Global Generation offer a broad range of educational programs for youngsters including a youth leadership program for 14-18 yr olds, a works program to develop important skills in young people age 16-30 and primary school sessions (**Food Education**)

SKIP GARDEN & KITCHEN



The tricky bits: the long term impacts from educational food sharing initiatives

- Global Generation are consciously trying to “create the conditions for change” in their activities and part of this means altering young peoples perception of themselves
- Self-efficacy is a concept we feel may be useful to capture the impact they are having on young people over the long term
- Self-efficacy “the belief in one’s ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task”
- Increased self-efficacy in many different contexts linked to positive long term outcomes for the well-being and health of young people and adults, including healthy eating behaviours
- But we face challenges around how to measure and communicate this impact



Conclusions

- Our toolkit can certainly be a useful resource by integrating concepts of value and impact not traditionally considered in the area of food sustainability but very relevant for food sharing initiatives
- Establishing and communicating the value of shared experiences relating to food and the educational value of food sharing initiatives will particularly important to the success and value provided by the toolkit
- The toolkit will need to also capture the impact and value of online sharing communities and networks as well as those which facilitate in person shared experiences
- We are still very much in the development phase, so ideas welcome!!!



Thank you!

Website: www.sharecity.ie
SHARECITY100: www.sharecity.ie/research/sharecity100-database/
Blog: <http://sharecity.ie/blog/>
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Assessing the Practice & Sustainability
Potential of City-Based Food Sharing Economies

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