

SHARECITY BITES

FOOD SHARING STORIES FROM THE SHARECITY PROJECT

EDITED BY

ANNA DAVIES & VIVIEN FRANCK

MARCH 2019

WWW.SHARECITY.IE



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

PART I – SHARECITY STORIES

1. [INTRODUCTION](#) – ANNA DAVIES & VIVIEN FRANCK
2. [HOW IS TECHNOLOGY CHANGING THE WAY WE SHARE FOOD?](#) – ANNA DAVIES & MARION WEYMES
3. [THE SHARECITY100 DATABASE OF FOOD SHARING INITIATIVES](#) – ANNA DAVIES
4. [INSPIRING INITIATIVES FROM THE SHARECITY100 DATABASE](#) – MARION WEYMES
5. [WHO NEEDS ANOTHER SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT?](#) – STEPHEN MACKENZIE
6. [CO-DESIGN OF THE SHARECITY SHARE IT TOOLKIT](#) – VIVIEN FRANCK, STEPHEN MACKENZIE & ANNA DAVIES
7. [SHAPING FOOD SHARING FUTURES](#) – ANNA DAVIES

PART II – FOOD SHARING IN CITIES

8. [ATHENS – FOOD SHARERS OF ATHENS](#) – BRIGIDA MAROVELLI
9. [BARCELONA – FOOD SHARING IN BARCELONA](#) – FERNE EDWARDS
10. [BERLIN – FOOD SHARING IN BERLIN](#) – OONA MORROW
11. [DUBLIN – INVESTIGATING FOOD SHARING IN DUBLIN](#) – BEN MURPHY
12. [LONDON – LONDON IS OPEN\[ING\] TO FOOD SHARING](#) – BRIGIDA MAROVELLI
13. [MELBOURNE – FOOD SHARING IN MELBOURNE](#) – FERNE EDWARDS
14. [NEW YORK – FOOD SHARERS OF NEW YORK CITY](#) – OONA MORROW
15. [SAN FRANCISCO – FOOD RESCUERS IN SAN FRANCISCO](#) – MARION WEYMES
16. [SINGAPORE – SUSTAINABLE FOOD NARRATIVES IN SINGAPORE](#) – MONIKA RUT

PART III – THEMES & DREAMS FOR URBAN FOOD SHARING

17. [FOOD BEYOND THE MARKET](#) – FERNE EDWARDS
18. [SHARING FOOD SURPLUS SAFELY](#) – ALAN DOWDELL
19. [COMMUNITY MAPPING AND FOOD SHARING](#) – OONA MORROW
20. [FROM AQUAPONICS TO URBAN FOOD SHARING](#) – VIVIEN FRANCK
21. [FOOD SHARING AND THE SDGS](#) – VIVIEN FRANCK & ANNA DAVIES
22. [TIPS FOR CO-COOKING SPACES](#) – MARION WEYMES
23. [HOW SUSTAINABLE IS SHARING?](#) – STEPHEN MACKENZIE
24. [CITY GROWERS](#) – MARION WEYMES & OONA MORROW
25. [FOOD WASTE ACTIVISM AND CONVIVIALITY](#) – BRIGIDA MAROVELLI
26. [THE URBAN GOVERNANCE OF FOOD SHARING](#) – AGNESE CRETELLA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all contributing authors for their hard work both as researchers in the field and also for their commitment to science-communication beyond academic circles illustrated by the contributions in this document. We would also like to thank the food sharing initiatives, urban food activists, and academics who have inspired us along our SHARECITY journey.

‘SHARECITY: The practice and sustainability of urban food sharing’ is funded by the Horizon 2020 European Research Council Consolidator Award No: 646883. We are extremely grateful for this support without which the research could not have taken place.

Anna Davies and Vivien Franck, March 2019

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Agnese Cretella is a researcher with SHARECITY and a social scientist whose research focuses on the intersection between food and urban studies. Her academic research revolves around urban food governance. She empirically explored these themes while working towards her PhD at the Department of Political Science of the University of Amsterdam.

Anna Davies is Professor of Geography, Environment and Society at Trinity College Dublin and the Principal Investigator of SHARECITY. A specialist in environmental governance and sustainable consumption, Anna advises the Irish Government as a member of the National Climate Change Council and is also a member on the board of [The Rediscovery Centre](#), a social enterprise that is the national centre of excellence for the circular economy and the [International Science Council](#), which seeks to advance science as a global public good.

Alan Dowdall was awarded a BSc in Environmental Science from Trinity College Dublin in 2016 and participated in SHARECITY as part of his MSc in Environmental Sciences from Trinity College, Dublin in 2017. His research interests include environmental sustainability, food sustainability and food safety. Alan's MSc dissertation focused on the multilevel governance of food with a specific focus on food safety and the redistribution of surplus food.

Ferne Edwards is a cultural anthropologist with a PhD from the Australian National University (Canberra, 2015). Her work explores the socio-cultural contexts, ethics, politics and sustainability potential of diverse social food economies in cities. In 2013 she was appointed a World Social Science Fellow by the International Social Science Council. Previously a researcher with SHARECITY, Ferne is a Research Fellow with the RMIT Centre for Urban Research and Work Package Lead for the EU EdiCitNet project based at RMIT Europe, Barcelona.

Vivien Franck is a researcher with SHARECITY and an urban ecologist with a special focus on urban agriculture and science communication. She has four years of experience working in interdisciplinary projects in urban food and water research, most recently at the ROOF WATER-FARM project in Berlin. Vivien was awarded a BSc in Biology from Berlin's Free University in 2013 and an MSc in Urban Ecosystem Sciences from The Technical University of Berlin in 2016.

Stephen Mackenzie is a researcher with SHARECITY who focuses on sustainability challenges in the food sector. He has six years of experience working on collaborative projects developing models of agricultural systems and their environmental impacts, as well as developing tools to assess how these impacts can be reduced. He was awarded a PhD from Newcastle University in Animal Science in 2016.

Brigida Marovelli has a PhD in Social Anthropology at Brunel University, West London, UK, with a thesis exploring the dynamic relationship between place, history and landscape in an urban food market, Catania, Sicily. She was a researcher with SHARECITY from 2016-2018, Brigida is also a passionate food activist, co-founding the Dinner Exchange, a social enterprise, aiming to generate debate around food sustainability and food waste.

Oona Morrow is a feminist geographer whose research is broadly concerned with the economic politics of everyday life. Her PhD research conducted at Clark University on urban homesteading in Boston examines the social, economic, and nature-society relations that

develop around self-provisioning practices, such as do-it-yourself, urban agriculture, and cottage food production. A researcher with SHARECITY from 2016-2018 Oona is currently an assistant professor at Wageningen University.

Benjamin Murphy was awarded a BA in Geography and Politics from University College Dublin in 2013 and participated in SHARECITY as part of his MSc in Environmental Sciences at Trinity College, Dublin in 2016. His research interests include food sustainability, urban sustainability and sustainable transport. Benjamin is particularly interested in food sustainability having trained and worked as a chef for 8 years before returning to academia to pursue an interest in geography, politics and the environment.

Monika Rut is a researcher with SHARECITY and a cultural entrepreneur and interdisciplinary scholar interested in how digital technologies are transforming socio-economic, political, and cultural relations. Her background is in political science and environmental and cultural economics (University of Bologna, 2009). Her research interests include sharing cities, economy 4.0, new institutions, self-organizing society and sustainable development.

Marion Weymes was a researcher with SHARECITY from 2016-2018. She was awarded a BA in Earth Science from Trinity College Dublin in 2013 and an MSc in Sustainable Development from The University of Exeter in 2016, where she was a recipient of the Exeter Award. Marion is particularly interested in food waste prevention and previously worked with The Devon and Cornwall Food Association to encourage food suppliers to reduce food waste and redistribute surplus food to charities and community groups.

PART I

SHARECITY STORIES

1. INTRODUCTION

SHARECITY Bites is a compilation of blogs written by SHARECITY team members between 2016 and 2019. [SHARECITY](#) is a five-year research project funded by the European Research Council, which identifies and examines the diverse practices of urban food sharing that use information and communication technologies to mediate their sharing. It has four key objectives:

1. To advance theoretical understanding of contemporary food sharing.
2. To generate a significant body of comparative and novel international empirical knowledge about urban food sharing initiatives and their governance.
3. To design and test an assessment framework for establishing the impact of urban food sharing economies.
4. To co-design scenarios for sustainable urban food sharing futures with stakeholders.

SHARECITY Bites has three parts, Part I outlines the structure and focus of the research phases, documenting our collaborations along the way. Part II provides insights from our in-depth ethnographic fieldwork across nine cities around the world and Part III provides reflections from the research team on key themes that have emerged in our research.

We hope you enjoy these nuggets of food sharing. If you want to know more about the [SHARECITY](#) project please visit our website where all our outputs are available open access. If you'd like to find out more about food sharing initiatives you can explore thousands through our open access interactive database of urban food sharing [SHARECITY100](#). Please drop us an email at sharecity@tcd.ie or follow us on twitter to find out our latest news [@ShareCityIre](#)

Anna and Vivien, 21 March 2019

2. [HOW IS TECHNOLOGY CHANGING THE WAY WE SHARE FOOD?](#)

Food is one of our most basic needs and food sharing has long been a bedrock of human civilization, so it is not surprising to see many inspirational examples of food sharing around the world. The increasing availability of accessible Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) through interfaces such as webpages, blogs, wikis, Facebook and apps is changing the face of many of these existing activities and stimulating a new generation of enterprises.

We, the international [SHARECITY team](#), based in [Trinity College Dublin](#) in Ireland and funded by the [European Research Council](#), are exploring the following set of questions around the influence of ICT on food sharing—what we call “ifood-sharing”:

- How does ifood-sharing differ from historical practices?
- What does the global landscape of ifood-sharing look like today?
- What role might ifood-sharing play in supporting any transformation towards a more sustainable society in an era of planetary urbanisation?

We have already identified ifood-sharing across a range of activities, and developed an ifood-sharing spectrum. This spectrum includes the sharing of food itself (from seeds, through to compost) and food-related stuff (including kitchen appliances, gardening tools and other devices), to the sharing of skills and spaces for growing, cooking and eating. These activities also adopt diverse ways of exchanging food from informal activities and gifting or bartering, to more formalized social enterprise and for-profit models.

By focusing explicitly on food sharing activities enabled by ICT, we are looking to identify activities within 100 global cities to populate the [SHARECITY100 Database](#).

At this stage of our research, and in the spirit of the collaborative co-production, we are now reaching out to the sharing community, to gather information for the open access SHARECITY searchable database. This will help us build an accurate picture of ICT-enabled city food sharing around the world, which we can then share with everyone.

We aim to include all the cities, which form part of the [Sharing Cities Network](#), as well as others identified through their participation in other networks related to urban food management, resilience and sustainability. A [scoping study](#) conducted by the team has already identified a dynamic landscape of activities across Europe and North America, but if we are missing a hotbed of food sharing, particularly in Asian, Middle Eastern, African or South American cities, please do let us know!



Written by Anna Davies and Marion Weymes, 28 March 2016

This post originally appeared on [Shareable.net](#)

3. THE SHARECITY100 DATABASE OF FOOD SHARING INITIATIVES

[SHARECITY100](#) is a database of more than 4000 food sharing enterprises across 100 cities around the world, including Asia, Africa, Australia, North and South America, and Europe. The first major output of [SHARECITY](#), a five-year research project at Trinity College Dublin, SHARECITY100 was created to assess the practice and sustainability potential of information and communications technology (ICT)-enabled food sharing within cities.

Enterprises are coded by what is shared, including foodstuff, skills and spaces, and how it is shared e.g. collecting, gifting, bartering or selling. The database is open-access and searchable meaning people can choose to search by cities, by what is shared, by how it is shared or by all three criteria, narrowing down searches to find precisely what kind of sharing they would like to know more about. [Shareable](#) and the Shareable community helped us by identifying potential sharing organisations that the research team could explore and code for the database. We are very grateful for this input.

The motivation for creating SHARECITY100 was to make visible the landscape of food sharing in cities by mapping it consistently across a large number of cities. This helps demonstrate that the creative and innovative actions of individual enterprises are not isolated experiments, but part of a burgeoning movement to reconfigure urban food systems.

The SHARECITY100 database has multiple functions:

- Help citizens find out where they can share food, grow and cook food together or even to share skills and experiences around food
- Help connect sharing activities across the globe, facilitating learning about sharing, particularly around the challenges and opportunities to move towards more sustainable urban development
- Inspire budding food sharers to establish enterprises in their own cities

The high-level findings from the database are fascinating as they indicate the diversity of actions and the multifunctionality of many sharing activities. It is not unusual, for example, for individual enterprises to share food, spaces *and* skills and for that sharing to take place through multiple modes, perhaps gifting and bartering, or gifting and selling.

Linked to this, there are enterprises, which have both for-profit and not-for-profit parts of their organisation in order to meet their goals. The tables below give some indication of the overall findings when reading the global landscape of urban food sharing.

The top cities in terms of number of sharing enterprises are London, which came out as the top ranked city with 198 food sharing enterprises identified. This was followed by New York City (188), Melbourne (144), Berlin (137) and Sydney (108). Porto Alegre (4), Doha (5) and Dakar (6) came out at the bottom of the database ranking.

In terms of what is shared, the Knowledge and Skills category of food sharing was found to be the most frequently identified service across the 4028 initiatives, being shared by over half of all enterprises (53.5%). This was followed by Meals (35.3%) and Fruits and Vegetables (31.7%). The Meat and Fish category was the least likely to be shared (4.3%) just below Compost (5.6%).

Overall, 70% of all enterprises shared more than one food category. For example, Nomadic Community Gardens in London shared Knowledge & Skills, Fruit & Vegetables, Compost, Tool, and Land. So, while 53.5% of enterprises share knowledge and skills, only 16% of all enterprises share only knowledge and skills.



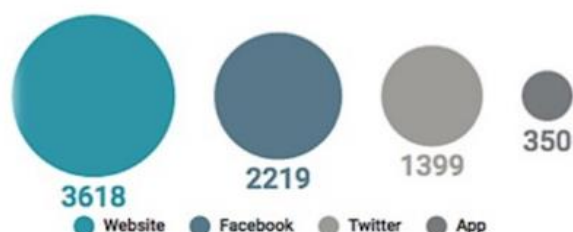
In terms of how sharing occurs, gifting was found to be the most common mode of sharing with 59.2% of all enterprises sharing via gifting. This was followed by selling (for profit and not-for-profit) (42.3%), collecting (10.4%) and least commonly of all, bartering (8.3%).

As with what is shared, albeit to a lesser degree, one enterprise may utilise more than one mode of sharing across its operations. Overall, we found that 21% of all enterprises shared via multiple modes. The most common combination found was gifting and collecting with 14% of all enterprises simultaneously engaging in both. Many of these enterprises comprise community gardens, gleaners and food rescue organisations which collect food from farms, gardens and retailers and then gift it to charities or people in need.



All food sharing initiatives recorded in the database were required to have an active ICT component that enabled, enhanced or supported their food sharing activities in some way. One of the goals of this database was to explore the level of ICT use across enterprises. The graphic below indicates the number of enterprises that had various ICT components. The results show

88.8% of all enterprises had an official web page, just over half (55.1%) had a Facebook page and just over a third (34.7%) had a Twitter account. Unsurprisingly, given the resources and skills required to develop and roll-out app technology, only 8.7% of food sharing initiatives used a mobile app as part of their activities.

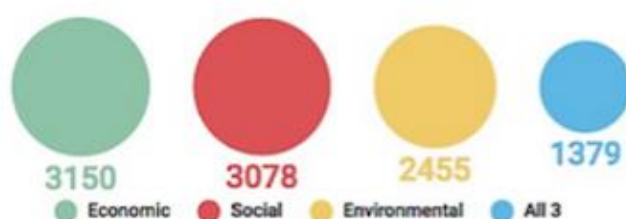


To illustrate the impacts of sharing, enterprises were coded according to the benefits that arise from their activities. At this stage of the research this can only be identified through the benefits that are claimed in the online materials, images, and texts that are available through enterprise's website, Twitter, Facebook, or app. For example, economic benefits were recorded when the enterprise identifies opportunities for additional income generation through the sharing of skills, experiences, spaces and food stuff, or where the potential for income savings were created via the provision of foods for free or at reduce cost, or through the avoidance of costs normally incurred when disposing of food waste to landfill.

Similarly, social benefits were recorded when claims were made to support the development of additional community relations and interactions, or enhanced community capacity, improved health, or social well-being.

Environmental benefits were recorded when enterprises claimed their activities sought to reduce food waste, produce local food thus reducing impacts from transporting food, or produce food (or food related products) in ways which are low in terms of resource intensity.

Overall, 78% of enterprises claimed some form of economic benefit, 76% claimed social benefits and 61% claimed environmental benefits. Just over a third (34%) of enterprises claimed all three benefits.



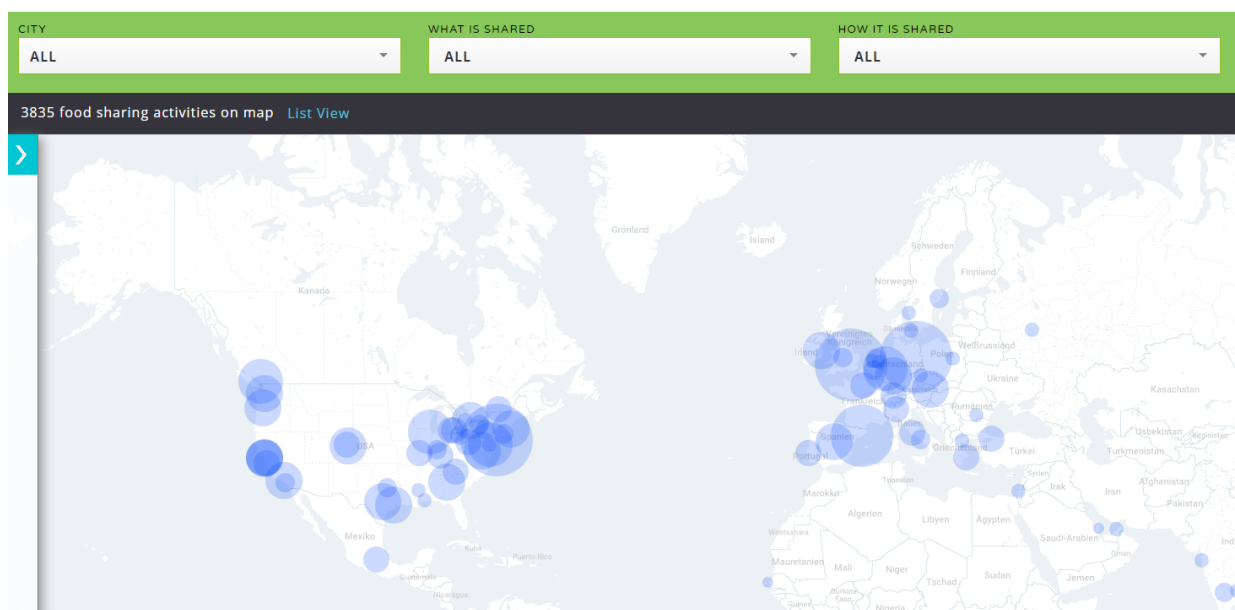
How to Use the Database

SHARECITY100 houses information for over 4000 ICT enabled food sharing initiatives. To enable users to explore the database, we created a map to locate these sharing activities at the

city level. We have provided filters so you can search by City, What is Shared, and How it is Shared to discover activities in our selected 100 cities around the world.

The mapping platform is designed to be a user-friendly way for anyone interested in food sharing to explore activities around the world. There are a number of ways for you to interact with the database and find out what is going on in one city or across the globe.

A simple way to use the platform is to explore the map directly using a mouse. Each city we researched is represented by a circle, the size of which is related to the number of initiatives located there. Hover over a circle to see what city it represents, and how many activities match your search. In the example below the selected city is Mexico City and it has 33 food sharing enterprises. Click on the city name to bring up the results for that city. This list is shown below the map so scroll down to learn more about these activities.



In addition to exploring the map directly, it is also possible to use the search bars to find particular types of food sharing initiatives in specific places. You can select a city, organized by world region, from the dropdown list. Alternatively, choose All to see the results for all 100 cities around the world. You can also filter by What is Shared and/or How it is Shared to narrow the results and search for specific kinds of food sharing activities.

As the vocabulary of food sharing differs from country to country, we have created generic categories. For example, if you are interested in finding:

- Urban gardens, filter by Land and What is Shared
- Food swaps, filter by Bartering in How it is Shared
- Supper clubs, filter by Eating Together in What is Shared
- Food banks and pantries, filter by Gifting in How it is Shared
- Foraging, filter by Collecting in How it is Shared

Scroll down to see the results of your search below the map. The icons listed for each entry provide a snapshot of what each enterprise shares, how they share it, and how they are organized. Many initiatives are multifunctional. This means that they involve sharing a number

of food related stuff, skills and/or spaces, sometimes through multiple modes of sharing. In Melbourne, for example, Ashford College Permaculture Food Garden shares food, land and knowledge/skills through gifting and bartering.

For more information about enterprises click on the URL, Facebook or Twitter media icons beneath the name of the enterprise and this will take you to their homepage of the relevant ICT.

Limitations

As the first foray into mapping the landscape of food sharing internationally, we have had to make decisions about what to include and not include in the database and how to categorise and classify different and often dynamic activities. As such, we see SHARECITY100 as a snapshot that will evolve throughout the project.

The global scope of the project means that over 23 languages were represented across the 100 selected cities. In addition to the research team's linguistic skills, we also recruited volunteers with specific language abilities to help us search in native languages. We also reached out through networks, colleagues and the enterprises themselves to inform us of food sharing activities in their areas.

Food sharing is a dynamic arena; we appreciate that some enterprises have been missed, others have ceased operations, and still others are newly emerging. We very much welcome feedback and suggestions for updates. While resources are not available to replicate the entire data collection process again, we will aim to revise the database based on information from users twice a year until 2020.

We would like to say a special thank you to everyone who helped us build content for this database, in particular: Ellen Von Holstein, Birim Mor, Laura Martins, Hounaida Abi, Haidar, Shan Jiang, Yuki Blakeney, and Hyunwook Choo, Vangelis. Their help and language expertise helped us build a more accurate map of global food sharing.

Written by Anna Davies, 15 October 2016

This post originally appeared on Shareable.net

4. INSPIRING INITIATIVES FROM THE SHARECITY100 DATABASE

The [SHARECITY100](#) is an interactive database of **food sharing activities** in 100 cities around the world. From food banks and community gardens, to meal sharing platforms and secret restaurants, it catalogues a variety of initiatives, determining what is shared, how it is shared, and how the sharing is organised. This searchable database is for anyone who is interested in finding out more about the innovative and creative ways people around the world are sharing food, skills, and stuff, and the experiences of growing, cooking, and eating together.




The SHARECITY team have picked 10 of their favourite food sharing initiatives to give an idea of the type of inspiring activities detailed in the SHARECITY100.

Social Hops – Dublin, Ireland

WHAT IS SHARED	HOW IT IS SHARED	SHARING ORGANISATION
		

In 2015 the global hop crop was failing by 25%. The same year Social Hops was established with the aim to create a local hop economy by encouraging and connecting Dublin hop growers with local micro-breweries. Growers are provided with 'starter packs' (group deals exist for community gardens) containing everything needed to produce hops along with ongoing support, resources and community events. Once the perennial hops are mature Social Hops organises a harvest event where growers swap them for locally brewed beer.

Falling Fruit – Global

WHAT IS SHARED	HOW IT IS SHARED	SHARING ORGANISATION
		




Foraging and dumpster diving (a.k.a. skip surfing) have been seeing a revival in popularity in recent years, as city dwellers seek stronger connections with food and nature and concern over food waste heightens. Falling Fruit is an interactive mapping platform, self admittedly not the only nor first of its kind, which locates edible material, from fruits trees and fungi to bountiful dumpsters. The majority of sites listed are on public property though some are private and come with notes that permission to pluck is required.

The Freegan Pony – Paris, France

WHAT IS SHARED	HOW IT IS SHARED	SHARING ORGANISATION
		

Having transformed a large, illegally squatted, concrete hall into cosy restaurant, The Freegan Pony serves only vegetarian food which has been salvaged from the bins of wholesale food markets. Run entirely by volunteers including a rotation professional chefs, it tackles the challenge of food waste whilst keeping prices on a 'pay what you can afford' basis.

[FoodSpark](#) – St. Louis, MO; Miami, FL, USA

WHAT IS SHARED	HOW IT IS SHARED	SHARING ORGANISATION
		

All around the world, throughout history, food has had the ability to bring people together and foster discussion and innovation. FoodSpark is harnessing this power of food, bringing citizens together in themed potluck-style dinners with the aim of sparking conversation on local social issues and challenges and generating creative ideas and solutions. Though initially founded by the team at [Civic Creatives](#) the concept of FoodSpark has spread and they are now organised by individuals and groups across many locations.

[Permablitz](#) – Across Australia

WHAT IS SHARED	HOW IT IS SHARED	SHARING ORGANISATION
		

Originated in Melbourne, Permablitz combines the concepts of 'permaculture' and the 'backyard blitz' by bringing people together to design and transform individuals' yard into edible landscapes. Based on the reciprocity, volunteers can also have their own yard 'permablitzed' for free after participating in 3 projects for others.

[Edible Garden City](#) – Singapore

WHAT IS SHARED	HOW IT IS SHARED	SHARING ORGANISATION
		




In a land-scare and import-dependent Singapore, the team at Edible Garden City is working to design, build and maintain food gardens in a dense, urban environment. They repurpose under-utilized spaces such as rooftops and sidewalks with the belief that growing food reconnects urban dwellers to nature, conserves natural resources and increases food security.

[Puertas Cerradas](#) – Buenos Aires, Argentina

WHAT IS SHARED	HOW IT IS SHARED	SHARING ORGANISATION
		

The concept of 'Puertas Cerradas' or 'Closed Door' restaurants emerged in 2001 following the economic crisis in Argentina. Hosted in the homes of individuals, often by the city's top professional chefs, they are somewhere between a private dinner party and a restaurant, with food often served at communal table.

[Growing Home Inc.](#) – Chicago, USA

WHAT IS SHARED	HOW IT IS SHARED	SHARING ORGANISATION
		

Since 2002 Growing Home Inc. has been providing paid, farm-based experience to people facing low incomes and employment barriers in Chicago. Originally built on lots which had been laying vacant for over thirty years, the urban farms also provide fresh, organic produce to the local community. Growing Home Inc. sees the connection between healthy communities and economic stability, and supports people on the path to self-sufficiency fulfilling employment.

[Watscooking](#) – Across India

WHAT IS SHARED	HOW IT IS SHARED	SHARING ORGANISATION
		

New technology and communication platforms have recently been making waves in the food industry. Watscooking is an online platform which offers amateur chefs in India the opportunities to sell their homemade produce or offer home-based classes. Chefs can offer their meals as a dine-in, take-away or delivery option to those who are looking for inexpensive and tasty alternatives to restaurants.

[Espigoladors](#) – Barcelona, Spain

WHAT IS SHARED	HOW IT IS SHARED	SHARING ORGANISATION
		

Aesthetics, ripeness and low sales are all reasons why edible fruits and vegetables may never even leave the farm, save in a bin. The Spain-based Espigoladors is embracing this rejected food, connecting with farmers in Catalonia and sending volunteers to harvest any produce not destined for market. It is then donated to charitable enterprises such as soup kitchens to provide vulnerable people with fresh, healthy food.

Written by Marion Weymes, 19 January 2017

This post originally appeared on [Shareable.net](#)

5. WHO NEEDS ANOTHER SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT?

Hello again everyone out there following SHARECITY! After thinking through some fundamental questions that have been posed to us several times in various forms from some very intelligent and thoughtful people during the co-design process of the SHARECITY toolkit I have ended up writing a couple of blogs and this is the first. Here I ponder one recurrent question:

Why create a toolkit to measure the sustainability impact of food sharing initiatives at all?

First, if you are wondering what I am going on about regarding the SHARECITY sustainability impact assessment toolkit some background information can be found [here](#).

So why create a toolkit in the first place? There are loads of sustainability assessment toolkits [for food systems](#) and even specifically [urban food systems](#) (also see [here](#) and [here](#) if you don't believe me!). In establishing the [SHARECITY100](#) database and conducting detailed ethnographical research of food sharing in 9 global cities, SHARECITY collected a lot of qualitative evidence that these initiatives are contributing to and improving the sustainability of urban food systems. It was clear that these initiatives tackle issues outlined in the [UN sustainable development goals](#) including #2 *zero hunger*, #11 *sustainable cities and communities*, and #12 *responsible consumption and production*. In some cases, foods-sharing initiatives were founded to tackle a defined sustainability goal directly related to the food system such as reducing food-waste or food poverty. However, despite the fact that in the majority of cases food-sharing have [defined sustainability goals](#), in many cases their impacts do not easily fit into established impact assessment frameworks for urban food systems such as the [city regional food systems framework](#) (CRFS) developed by the FAO.



A major reason for this is that food and food systems are often secondary considerations in the impact of food-sharing initiatives. To expand a little on this, what I mean is that the shared experience relating to food (for instance preparing a meal together) is often the most important reason that people participate in food sharing initiatives. From feedback we have received during the co-design process it is clear that people do not necessarily attend community canteens because they love the food, nor do people establish a community garden solely because they want or need to grow their own food. A common theme for many food sharing initiatives is that they help to tackle the problem of loneliness and social dislocation in modern cities. We live in an age of unprecedented mobility (a long observed cause of [loneliness](#)) and [migration](#) is a major driver of growth in urban populations around the world. While technology has vastly increased our ability to connect with people across the globe, these online interactions ultimately leave less time for face-to-face communication (although [some researchers dispute this](#)). Loneliness can be extremely [negative for people's health](#) and wellbeing and is associated with an [increased mortality risk of around 26%](#).

Food-sharing initiatives such as community gardens or canteens often represent so-called “third places” (other examples are public swimming pools or libraries) which allow people to mix with others in their community informally. Many food-sharing initiatives are particularly attractive as accessible third places because they are either free to access, or in many cases actually giving

away food. But online food-sharing platforms also have a role to play here, they can facilitate for instance enabling [new connections between people over shared meals](#), both in their locality but also across cultures while travelling. While it is not common for social initiatives or charities to communicate their impacts in terms such as the number of shared meals they facilitate, shared eating is known [to reduce loneliness, increase feelings of engagement with the local community](#), and make people happier. In western societies, people are increasingly dining alone, with nearly 50% of meals in the US and UK now eaten solo. Tackling loneliness and increasing community cohesion through shared experiences around food would seem to be an impact worth shouting about! It's also just one example of the type of impact food-sharing initiatives have in modern cities that is not accounted for in typical sustainability assessment frameworks of food systems.



Certainly, we are yet to find a suitable – read easy and practical to use – **framework, which urban food-sharing initiatives can pick up to evaluate their sustainability impacts**. Many food-sharing initiatives are relatively young organisations (in the [SHARECITY 100 database](#) 68% of initiatives, which we know the start date of, are 10 years old or less) and do-not have secure long-term funding. These initiatives are often urgently working to deal with immediate issues around food in urban areas and do not have a lot of time to dedicate to additional data collection and impact reporting. We need to ensure our toolkit is as accessible and user-friendly as possible in order to make this project relevant to food-sharing initiatives on the ground.

So this blog was about why we have decided to make this toolkit, but what about our approach? There are many different ways we could develop this toolkit and one particularly important issue we need to tackle is where and how to make use of **quantitative and qualitative approaches** to indicate the impact of food-sharing initiatives. Some of the concepts we deal with in the toolkit are incredibly difficult to quantify so we have to think carefully about these questions.

Written by Stephen MacKenzie, 5 September 2018

6. CO-DESIGN OF THE SHARECITY SHARE IT TOOLKIT

A big hello to everyone interested in SHARECITY's research! We have been busy developing the [impact assessment toolkit](#). As you might know from our previous [blog](#), we are in the midst of creating an online tool, which will assess the sustainability impact of food sharing.



To ensure that this innovation will not gather virtual dust in an online library, we are creating the tool in the form of a co-design process. This means, we have

been meeting with six of our many food sharing initiatives to generate a user-friendly and useful tool for a wide range of food sharing initiatives.

We would hereby like to shout out a big thank you to [Food Cloud](#), [Muck and Magic community garden](#), [Be Enriched](#), [Skip Garden](#), [the Singapore Food Bank](#) and [Edible Garden City](#) for providing us with much valuable feedback over the course of the last months!

The third and last round of meetings began with a trip to London, where we met with Jane, Sadhbh and Jocelyn from [Skip Garden](#), one of the involved educational initiatives, and Kemi from [Be Enriched](#), a food sharing initiative, which facilitates shared eating experiences. During our stay, we were blessed with both beautiful autumn weather and meaningful feedback.

The following week we met with Aoibheann from Food Cloud and John from Muck and Magic community garden, two very different initiatives both in terms of their goals and operations. While [Food Cloud](#) is a registered social enterprise with an increasing cohort of paid employees, which focuses on the redistribution side of food sharing, [Muck and Magic community garden](#) is a neighbourhood-based growing initiative which implements the collective planting and harvesting of food. As a result, the feedback we got was unsurprisingly heterogeneous.

A valuable insight we gained from the co-design process, was that presenting [relevant data](#) for impact assessment would be highly useful for both securing funding and improving performance within food sharing initiatives.

In terms of designing the tool itself, there are a couple of issues, which have been pointed out to us more than once. Firstly, food-sharing activities are extremely diverse in their impact. Some impacts are easy to quantify e.g. the number of saved meals within a certain time period, others are a lot harder to jot down. We will therefore have to create a tool, which makes quantitative but also qualitative data visible.

The second issue we addressed was that much of an initiative's impact might be indirect and happen as a result of the events they hold, interactions they facilitate online, or deliveries they make in person, rather than at the precise moment of interaction or exchange. For example, connections between people take place at a communal lunch, but the effects of this connection could endure beyond the meal itself (or not) and could shape interactions in the participant's lives beyond the site and timing of the lunch itself. Sharing can create affects that have spatial

and temporal dimensions beyond the immediate site of sharing. However, this makes it very difficult to track and capture the cumulative impacts that sharing initiatives create and also makes it difficult to influence how an initiative's interventions can be managed to ensure optimal sustainability outcomes.



Many food sharing initiatives are particularly looking to change people's relationship with food, trying to ensure that [they waste less of it](#), [eat healthily](#), and have a [greater connection to where it comes from](#). They can be trying to influence users of an app, attendees at events, or volunteers who deliver recovered food. Some initiatives are using food as a gateway to engage [young people to consider their relationship with the planet and society or to enrich local life](#) and cultivate respect through connecting people over a bite. Behavioural change is though notoriously hard to measure and identifying a concrete causal relationship between any one factor (such as volunteering with a food-sharing initiative) and specific impacts, particularly if that impact is experienced as a feeling, is practically impossible given many people's complex lives. Without using invasive sensor or medical technologies for data capture – which in many food sharing initiatives would not be appropriate given the vulnerable or marginalised participants who participate – we are left with self-reported data from participants to quantitatively report impact in this area which of course has its [limitations](#).

So how will we respond to these challenges? One strategy we're already adopting is to ensure that the online toolkit is applicable to diverse kinds of food sharing initiatives, from growing to redistributing and relevant to initiatives with diverse sharing modes from gifting to selling and different organisational forms. Our co-design partners are providing us with invaluable insights into their food sharing practices, which is helping us do this. We will also be piloting the toolkit with other initiatives once the technical online component is complete.

Part of this strategy includes providing indicators, which are light on demands for data collection, as well as indicators, which require higher resources. In this way, we hope to be able to meet the needs of start-up food sharers or small-scale grassroots operations as well as those, which are much more established in their activities.

Written by Vivien Franck, Stephen MacKenzie, and Anna Davies, 20 November 2018

7. SHAPING FOOD SHARING FUTURES – SHARECITY SHARING CAFES

In September and October the SHARECITY team ran two international co-design workshops inspired by the [world café](#) participatory mechanism. The first of these took place in Trinity College in Dublin, and the second at the [European Roundtable for Sustainable Consumption and Production](#) (ERSCP) on the beautiful island of Skiathos in Greece. With participants hailing from around the world the workshops brought together people from different backgrounds and with different experiences to talk about their encounters with food sharing, to brainstorm around the ways in which we might be able to identify the **impacts of food sharing**, and to think through what supports might be needed to help food sharing work towards sustainability.

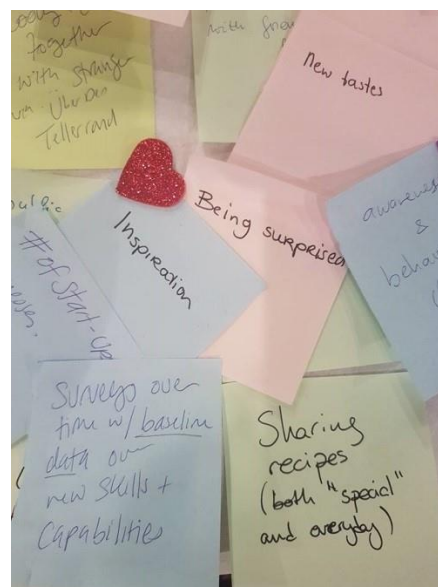
Each workshop followed a similar structure. SHARECITY PI [Anna Davies](#) welcomed the participants and introduced the SHARECITY project and our interest in their experiences and insights. [Brigida Marovelli](#) then took up the reins and outlined the goals and structure of the workshop before dividing up the room into smaller groups, each with a facilitator to guide them through the questions.

What are your personal experiences of sharing?

The first section of the workshop invited participants to discuss their personal experiences of sharing. The purpose of this exercise was to get people thinking about what it means to share food. Initially, the experiences offered were similar and familiar such as sharing meals at home with friends and family, but with a little help from the facilitators participants began to think more laterally about experiences surrounding food and what it means to **share and experience food collectively**.

We asked whether they had borrowed gardening tools from a neighbour, or volunteered for a food donation programme; whether they had ever given their fridge contents to friends before going on holidays or used a community composter.

Equipped with the expansive **SHARECITY definition of food sharing** participants were then able to provide a wealth of personal experiences for discussion, allowing for group reflections on the commonality and differences of these experiences. These were written on post-it notes and clustered by each group (according to e.g. what was shared, who was sharing, where did the sharing take place), setting up the tables for the next key question of the day.



What are the outcomes of sharing?

Leading on from the process of assembling experiences of food sharing participants were asked to think about the outcomes or consequences of these acts. We were interested in finding out what happened during or after these activities. How sharing made them, or others, feel, and what impacts did it have. These prompts led to overwhelmingly positive responses, ranging from personal feelings of happiness, inspiration, and social connection, to broader assumptions of

improved food access, reduced food waste, and community building. However, as with any activity, less desirable outcomes can occur, and some tables ventured into deep discussions on trickier issues related to food sharing. Concerns were expressed over the quality of donated food, particularly surplus or 'rescued' food nearing use-by and best before dates, and ethical questions surrounding 'free food' and the long-term impacts of access to and dependency on food donations. Questions of dignity and choice were raised over acts of surplus food redistribution which could be seen as the dumping of one person's 'food waste' onto people in need (or those who offer provision for them). There were concerns that donated surplus food may not lead to a reduction in food waste, but may perpetuate practices of over-purchasing if retailers and consumers feel they have a channel to dispose of it without putting it in the bin.

What emerged from the discussions was that many of these outcomes are not easily discerned, quantified, measured or even articulated. When participants were asked to identify the outcomes which were most difficult to capture, the non-physical and intangible aspects were quickly proposed. Whilst the material substance of food can be tracked, counted and weighed, how might we measure and record a feeling? What metric might reflect community spirit and how can we be sure of any direct causal relationship between the performance of sharing and improved health and well-being? The final question of the day focused on how we might approach these hard to measure outcomes.

How do we deal with these hard to measure outcomes?

Participants were invited to brainstorm potential means to address the hard to capture outcomes of sharing, with discussion ranging from familiar tools and approaches such as [Bhutan's Gross Happiness Index](#) and existing psychological tools for measuring emotional well-being



(e.g. mood diaries and mood metres), to the imagining of new (if unlikely!) methods such as the capacity to measure brainwaves. Despite the collection of tools and innovative ideas for future methods, there was consensus that measuring social outcomes posed a great challenge, particularly those which are essentially emotion-related, often fleeting and affected by multiple influences. Longitudinal surveys were advocated by some participants as appropriate for addressing behaviour change, as well as determining increases in knowledge and skills. Identifying other forms of sharing that may spin-off from an act of food sharing, or related social enterprise or business ideas, may be used as an indicator of inspiration and social support. Other suggestions included adapting existing evaluation tools for food sharing activities such as those in use for tracking life outcomes following the [release of people involved in prison gardening projects](#). However, all of these require significant investment in systems of data collection and long-term reporting practices that may not be available to many sharing initiatives.



Moving away from the focus on individual moments of sharing within initiatives there were suggestions that broader assessments might take place by comparing places which have supportive structures for sharing food, such as the U.S. Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Law, with those that do not. Whilst not a direct impact of sharing activities themselves, these kinds of comparative practices may highlight some of the barriers and supports for food sharing activities.

Conclusion

Overall, both workshops facilitated productive discussion and debate on a wide range of experiences, outcomes and rules associated with a variety of food sharing activities. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the participants for their attendance in the workshops and for sharing with us their experiences, insights, ideas, and enthusiasm. As an embodiment of food sharing, we shared Greek Heirloom Tomato seeds with participants and we hope they will bear fruit and remind people of the practice and potential of food sharing.

The workshops provided an essential launching pad for the next phase of our research where we will face head-on the challenges of isolating the benefits of food sharing using a co-design process to develop a toolkit to better understand and communicate the [sustainability impacts](#) of food sharing activities and the initiatives that facilitate them.

Ultimately, SHARECITY hopes to explore, not only what food sharing is, but how it can be supported to optimise sustainability benefits. We encourage any food sharing initiative who would be interested in testing a beta-version of our online sustainability toolkit later this year to get in touch at sharecity@tcd.ie.

Written by Anna Davies, 27 March 2018

PART II

FOOD SHARING IN CITIES

8. ATHENS – FOOD SHARERS OF ATHENS

During my time at Sharecity, I had the pleasure to spend six months in [Athens](#) carrying on ethnographic research about food sharing. The four initiatives selected as case studies for this phase of SHARECITY's research were: [Boroume](#) (Μπορούμε – We Can), a surplus food redistribution charity; [Organisation Earth](#) (Οργάνωση Γη), an environmental and educational food growing not-for-profit organisation; [O Allos Anthropos](#) (Ο Άλλος Άνθρωπος – the Other Human), an informal collective social kitchen; and [VizEat](#) (now Eathwith), an international social dining platform.

Boroume

I will never forget my first engagement with Boroume, as it was the very first day I landed in Athens. Springtime was in its full swing and almost everyone was busy getting ready for Easter, which can be considered the most important religious celebration in Greece. That day I joined the energetic Boroume's coordinator, Anna, at a loud and chaotic local market. The 'laiki agora' (λαϊκή αγορά), literally translated as 'people's market', occurs weekly in many of Athens neighbourhoods. Boroume collects surplus produce at the end of the market day in more than 10 markets and redistribute it to local charities. Far from being an easy task, the cheerful team of volunteers engaged with each vendor, explaining the project, clarifying the aims and reassuring that the surplus will be distributed to those in need. I witnessed the exact same zeal in every site of Boroume's activities: farmers markets, gleaning, food growing, education in schools, fighting food poverty. Boroume's approach embraces much broader challenges than just diverting edible food from landfill, by raising awareness around food waste, running international collaborations, participating in European research projects and by trying to respond positively to the limitations imposed by Greek bureaucracy.



Organization Earth

To my great surprise, I found Organization Earth, when looking for food growing spaces in a city that is visibly overbuilt. Indeed, the Centre of the Earth (Κέντρο της Γης), Organisation Earth's lush and blossoming park and garden, hides behind a concrete block of commercial outlets. It is a 25,000 m² park, located in the metropolitan area of Athens, where school children can learn about nature, food growing and sustainability. It is here that Organization Earth promotes its mission, raising environmental awareness and introducing children and citizens to sustainable practices





through experiential approaches. The Sunday events are particularly popular: alongside workshops and activities for children, the Centre of the Earth is transformed in an open-air collective kitchen: visitors, mainly children and their families, chop and help preparing a meal that is then cooked and shared. Organisation Earth also focuses on farming training for people who are unemployed, education for sustainable businesses in sustainable food growing and for the blue economy, intended as the sustainable

use of sea resources for economic growth. The initiative has a strong emphasis on solidarity that is reflected across all their programs, particularly in Earth Refugee, which provides a wide range of services for three refugee camps in Athens (health assistance, dental aid for children, language courses, sport practice, employment support).

O Allos Anthropos

Another initiative that has been on the frontline in helping newcomers to Athens is O Allos Anthropos. O Allos Anthropos is an informal social kitchen, which engages in cooking and distributing free meals in public spaces. Since 2014 they also have a physical centre, where they provide services such as laundry and washing facilities, food and goods distribution. Spending time on the street with Kostas, Allos Anthropos' charismatic leader, and the rest of the crew, I realised that most of the volunteers now involved in the meal preparation had previously been on the receiving end. As the one-pot meal Allos Anthropos provides is cooked directly on the street, they transform public spaces into collective kitchens, creating a festive atmosphere around the meal. Indeed, every Tuesday the widow of a popular Greek singer celebrates her husband memory, offering a meal in Monastiraki Square, the very heart of the Athens. As Kostas tirelessly reiterates, the social kitchen does not only deliver food, it offers love to fellow humans.

VizEat

Across many different locations in Athens, I also joined enthusiastic chefs who hosted dinners at their homes via VizEat, a social dining platform that merged with EatWith in 2017. The international guests I met at the dinner parties were looking for authenticity and originality, searching something out of the mainstream dining options available in Athens. They also expressed the desire to see the place through the eyes of local people and have access to the way they live, how they cook and how they share a meal. These dining experiences became a journey into the rich gastronomic traditions of Greece, but they also provided an occasion of reflection on the relationship between the city, tourism and its food culture. Each host disclosed childhood memories, grandmas' recipes and their personal home space with me and the other VizEat guests. The platform also offered the chance to share the hosts' passion for food without setting up a commercial activity. Most hosts desire to work independently in hospitality: they would like to open restaurants or cafes, connect neighbours in food community projects or

building their own app to connect Athenians around food. Nevertheless, anxiety was expressed around the potential issues that such platforms raise around responsibility for food safety and taxation, since these areas are not fully regulated by Greek legislation.

My fieldwork confirmed that Athens's food sharing landscape is characterised by the proliferation of informal initiatives, as previously indicated in the SHARECITY100 database of urban food sharing initiatives. Athens' civil society is responding to the humanitarian refugee emergency and to [the financial crisis](#) of the late 2000's and that is still affecting Greece in 2019.



The list of people to thank is endless, but I would like to say thank you to my case studies: Boroume, Organisation Earth, O Allos Anthropos, and VizEat hosts and guests. I would also like to thank the [Department of Anthropology at Panteion University](#), where I was based as Honorary Visiting Fellow; Despina and Eleni, for their precious assistance; Eleni Myrivili, Deputy Mayor of Urban Nature, and the [Resilient Athens office](#) at Municipality of Athens; Amalia Zepou, Vice Mayor for Civil Society and Innovation, Municipality of Athens, and the [SynAthina project](#); Niki Charalampopoulou, [Feedback](#) former director, who helped me in the early stage of the research to identify my case studies; and Greek friends and strangers, who facilitated my fieldwork in countless ways.

Written by Brigida Marovelli, 20 February 2019

9. BARCELONA – FOOD SHARING IN BARCELONA



For SHARECITY this year I've been exploring food sharing practices in Barcelona: planting vegetables in the community gardens of squatted hospital-turned-community education centre, [Can Masdeu](#); sorting produce at the consumer cooperative, L'Aixada based at the social centre [Ateneu Rosa de Foc](#); gleaning spring onions, artichokes and carrots that would otherwise be ploughed under in farmers' fields to donate to people in need with [Espigoladors](#); and testing out new technologies to participate in shared dinners in peoples' homes with [EatWith](#). These initiatives are based across Barcelona with Can Masdeu and Espigoladors located on either side of Barcelona's peri-urban zone, while EatWith is everywhere (it represents an international for-profit across more than 50 countries) and L'Aixada is based in [Gracia](#), an inner-city suburb full of cooperatives and alternative food practices: it is estimated that 20 percent of Barcelona's cooperatives are based in Gracia.

These examples range in food sharing modes from autonomous squats and collectives based on consensus decision-making, to social enterprise and capitalist start-ups. The Barcelona case studies go beyond simply sharing produce to also share space (such as gardens, kitchens and meeting halls), knowledge and skills, including horticulture and logistics while many enterprises hold emotional assemblies to learn how best to work together.

Barcelona's food sharing community is long-standing with all three local case studies still going strong beyond 15 years, as the initiatives develop over time matching their members' changing needs - often from youth to family form, while opportunities and pressures in Barcelona shift and fluctuate. Barcelona remains affected by the 2008 global economic crisis with [declines in employment and GDP](#), while contemporaneously taking on new identities, such as becoming a world centre for social innovation and technology, now home to the [Smart City Expo World Congress](#).

This selection of food sharing case studies reflects the city's multiple identities and motivations, with Can Masdeu and L'Aixada emerging from activist pasts that include key events such as the 15M movement, while Espigoladors represents an emerging shift to social enterprise corresponding with growing international concerns about food waste. Espigoladors actively harvest and redistribute food, provide education programs for schoolchildren and bottle up jams and chutneys to sell whilst working alongside the advocacy arm of PAA to push ahead legislative change to address food waste concerns in Europe. EatWith ([recently bought by VizEat](#)) alternatively represents a member of Barcelona's growing Food Tech community, with the city providing incubator hubs to support new initiatives. Similar local-based initiatives that are highly ICT-enabled include [Trybe](#) and [Kechyn](#).



Furthermore, Ada Colau recognised by the Guardian as possibly [the world's most radical mayor](#) leads municipal party, *Barcelona en Comu*, who together have provided a thriving and engaged political base on which to recognise how embedded politics within ICT requires truly democratic strategies to ensure data sovereignty. To attain this goal, Barcelona en Comu are developing initiatives and events such as [Barcelona's Digital City Plan](#) and [Procomun](#), while supporting the expansion of [social and solidarity economies](#).

This incredibly rich tapestry of food sharing practices within the diverse context of Barcelona has provided many new research insights towards understanding food sharing initiatives within and across cities. I would like to thank all the participants who welcomed me into Barcelona's food sharing community. I appreciate your generosity, kindness and patience for helping me to understand a new city in addition to overcoming Spanish and Catalan language requirements! I would especially like to thank my research assistant/ intern, Nacho, for his fantastic support!

Written by Ferne Edwards, 20 October 2017



10. BERLIN – FOOD SHARING IN BERLIN

I am back in Dublin with the SHARECITY research team after a month of field work in Berlin. I was hosted by [ZTG \(the Center for Technology and Society\) at the Technical University Berlin](#). At ZTG, researchers are working together on a number of exciting and trans-disciplinary projects about urban gardening, social innovation, smart cities, social movements, ICT, and sustainability. ZTG was a wonderful intellectual base – and a great place to defrost after a long day in the field.

There is a lot of sharing and gifting happening in Berlin, it is a lifestyle choice, but also a deep ethical and political commitment. Compared to other cities I have lived in, I was struck by how generous people were with their time. The people I met were never “too busy” and placed a very high priority on sharing skills, resources, food, clothes, and experiences with others. I can see why this environment has fostered the growth of so many subcultures, alternative economies, and money-free movements. There are numerous free shops, squats, alternative media centres, lending stores, seed libraries, swap shops, and [fairteiler](#) (public food distribution points). During my first weekend, I was the beneficiary of a shared meal and some new (to me) clothes at a Free Market that Yunity had organized in Kreuzberg’s Görlitzer Park. [Yunity](#) is a project that was started by members of [foodsharing.de](#) to develop a multi-sharing platform; it has since developed into a social movement dedicated to living the dream of unconditional sharing. This feeling of unconditional generosity proved to be a constant theme during my visit.



Berlin is also the urban gardening capital of Germany, and its high profile urban gardens like [Prinzessinnengaerten](#) and [Allmende Kontor](#) attract visitors from all over the world. Many Berlin gardens are also [inter-cultural gardens](#) that seek to promote cross cultural encounters, understanding, and social inclusion. For a month, I joined the ranks of international scholars and tourists who are descending on these gardens. I was fortunate to find a garden whose mission deeply inspired me – and would tolerate yet another garden researcher! I also had the chance to spend time with some wonderful urban gardening researchers – including José Carlos Lázaro from Brazil and Anna Dańkowska from Poland, and [Toni Karge](#), whose MA thesis on Himmelbeet has been an invaluable resource.



I spent much of my time with gardeners and neighbours at [Himmelbeet](#) an intercultural community garden in the diverse neighbourhood of Wedding. Himmelbeet places a high priority on social inclusion as well as the transformative potential of encountering others in shared urban spaces. Although the season was coming to an end, there were still lots of ways to get involved and spend time in the garden. Drinking a coffee in the low waste café. Baking bread and pizza in the community bread oven. Picking my own vegetables from the community garden beds. And screen printing, cooking, and sharing a meal with the wonderful people at TUMU, a unique project that stages a politics of encounter between people of diverse abilities and backgrounds through workshops and garden work. At Himmelbeet, food sharing happens in almost all of the forms we identified in the [SHARECITY100](#). Land is shared by community members and individual raised beds are also privately rented. Fresh veggies are sold through a pick your own scheme, and sometimes gifted. Meals are sold through the low waste cafe but also shared freely at community meals, especially during communal bread baking. Kitchens spaces and devices are shared, including a fantastic outdoor community bread oven. Knowledge and skills around gardening, cooking, sour dough cultures, bread dough kneading, bicycle repair, fire building, carpentry, and community concerns are widely shared. So is compost.

I also used [Mundraub](#) an online mapping platform for fruit and nut trees and edible plants in public spaces. After getting lost a few times, I was successful in harvesting a few end of the season hazelnuts growing on a residential street in Wedding. I also spoke with a few Mundraub users about their experience using the platform. And had the chance to meet Adrien Labaeye, a geographer who has been researching Mundraub and other online food mapping platforms for his PhD. He also contributes to a fantastic resource, [TRANSFORMAP](#), which is an open source platform for mapping alternative economy, food, and sustainability projects. However, rather than reinventing the wheel – this map “the mother of many maps” draws data from hundreds of already existing interactive maps and databases.

I was very impressed by the vibrant food waste cooking scene in Berlin. At [Baumhaus](#) in Wedding, I ate the delicious and convivial meals prepared by [The Real Junk Food Project Berlin](#), learned about several local CSAs, picked up some produce from foodsharers, and made some noise in the improvisational groove orchestra. At [Restlos & Glücklich e.V.](#) in Neukölln I returned to my long time job of waiting tables, and served a three course food waste menu to very appreciative eaters. The staff and volunteers are really dedicated, and the food is delicious too.



Finally, I'd like to call attention to the amazing people and collectives that are bringing it all together, making connections, organizing events, fighting for better policy, and building activist and political networks around food, solidarity economy, and sustainability. [Baumhaus](#) in Wedding is a community built event space and indoor tree house that fosters collaboration, innovation, and conviviality among change makers in the field of sustainability. Many Baumhaus and Himmelbeet members also cross-pollinate their skills and talents through [Wedding Wandler](#), the transition town network for Wedding, which facilitates several neighbourhood food sharing, gifting, and sustainability initiatives. Meanwhile [SoliWedding](#) is making a neighbourhood atlas of solidarity initiatives – their forthcoming online atlas includes everything from pollinator hotels to the locations of Berlin Freifunk (grassroots community WiFi). In Neukölln, [Trial & Error](#), is a kulturlab, which hosts repair cafes, CSA distributions, a swap shop, a foodsharing.de fairteiler, and numerous re-skilling, self-help, and solidarity economy workshops and events. Also in Neukölln, is [Agora Collective](#), an art, food, and co-working space that fosters reflection on alternative models for cultural, social and economic production. Nearby in Kreuzberg, [SUPERMARKT](#) curates fantastic workshops and events on digital culture, alternative economies, and new forms of work. And in Alt-Treptow [Lakunabi](#), the laboratory for art and sustainability keeps one of the most comprehensive sustainability events calendars in Berlin, and Carla “the network weaver” works tirelessly to connect sustainability actors working across diverse sectors, cultures, and neighbourhoods. [Transition Pankow](#), the transition towns hub for the Pankow district has also been a long time incubator for sustainable and circular economy projects in Berlin. They have done a great deal to promote and research the concept of edible neighbourhoods and promote sharing. And last but not least, Berlin's vibrant [Food Policy Council](#) is doing everything they can to bring together diverse stake holders, cultivate ideas, dreams, and policy proposals for sustainable food futures in the Berlin-Brandenburg region.

Thank you all for the very warm welcome, and I look forward to seeing you again this winter!

Written by Oona Morrow, 28 November 2016

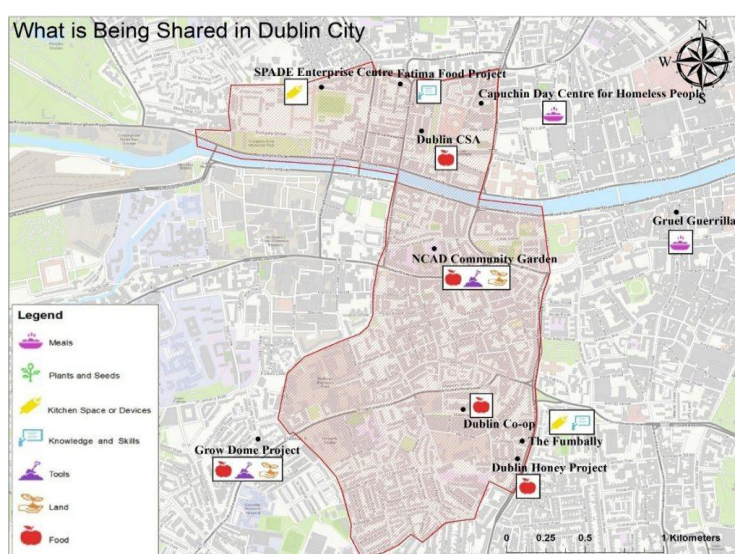
11. DUBLIN – INVESTIGATING FOOD SHARING IN DUBLIN

Having worked as a Chef for 8 years prior to returning to academia to complete an MA degree in Geography and Politics and an MSc in Environmental Sciences, focusing on food sustainability for my thesis was always something I had in mind. Learning about the research being undertaken by SHARECITY I was inspired to contribute to the exploration of the **urban food sharing** phenomena and the question of how greater sustainability within the world's urban environments can be achieved.

Background research for my project highlighted the extent to which the global food system is in need of a dramatic shift away from unsustainable practices. With over half of the global population residing in cities, and with global population and urbanization both rapidly increasing, increasing the efficiency of cities in terms of how their food is produced, distributed and consumed is paramount to achieving greater sustainability of the global food system.

Due to its multi-dimensional potential in terms of providing economic, environmental and social benefits, urban food sharing provided me with a comprehensive and dynamic research topic for exploring a potential solution to increasing food sustainability within the world's cities. The first step of my research was to geo-locate the Dublin based food sharing initiatives identified in the [SHARECITY100 Database](#) using Geographic Information Systems (GIS).

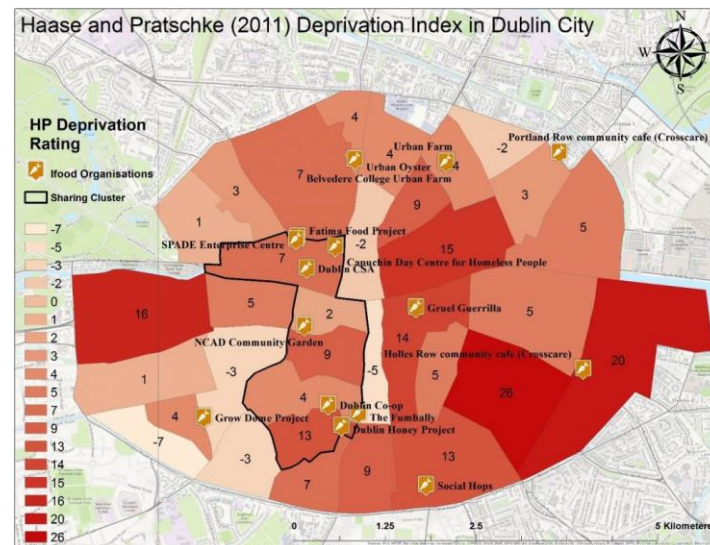
Using the [categories established in SHARECITY100 Database](#) the enterprises could be plotted in layers representing the types of food sharing taking place, visually illustrating [the diversity of food sharing in Dublin](#).



The process of geo-locating food sharing in Dublin was made difficult due to the very nature of many of these enterprises. For example, several initiatives do not have physical bases in Dublin, including supper clubs, which put on events in a variety of locations, or foraging websites which provide extensive interactive maps of wild food trails across the city. These activities could not be located as points on the maps produced for this research, such is the novel impact of the 'I' in ifood sharing.

Incorporating socio-economic data from the Central Statistics Office into GIS enabled the relationship between the food sharing initiatives and the socio-economic characteristics of their

locations to be investigated. It became apparent that the areas of Dublin with slightly above average socio-economic deprivation were the most active in terms of food sharing. These findings correlate with previous studies which suggest that grassroots initiatives, similar to the food sharing initiatives being researched, are most likely to evolve in areas where socio-economic deprivation is prevalent enough to inspire pragmatism, but not to the extent that the required skills and means needed to establish an organisation are inhibited ([Davies and Mullins, 2011](#)). Unsurprisingly, slightly more deprived areas saw greater food sharing activities led by charitable initiatives which gift food, whereas less deprived electoral districts were found to be home to more commercially- or lifestyle-oriented food sharing such as urban honey production and fermentation workshops.



The second element of my research was to undertake case studies of four food sharing initiatives within Dublin. The aim of this was to employ qualitative research methods to illustrate the suite of sustainability impacts urban food sharing can offer. The next step was then to co-create a toolkit with the four initiatives to help them communicate the sustainability impacts of their food sharing activities.

The four initiatives collaborating in this research were:

1. [Urban Farm](#) - A rooftop urban farm in the heart of Dublin city centre which demonstrates a range of growing techniques including aquaponics and hydroponics as well as a heritage collection of 180 varieties of potato.
2. [Social Hops](#) - A community hops growing project whereby members grow their own hops in their gardens and come together to produce a locally brewed beer from their communal harvest.
3. [Urban Oyster](#) - A fledgling enterprise using spent coffee waste to grow oyster mushrooms in an urban environment.
4. [Hardwicke Street Garden Club](#) - A community garden in the heart of Dublin city, which aims to increase a sense of community and improve physical and mental health through horticulture.

Collaborating with these four initiatives helped to illustrate the multitude of benefits to society, the environment and the local economy that can be achieved through food sharing within cities.

Although modest in size, these initiatives showcase ways to grow food in cities all year round and in areas of limited space, to create a sense of community around a similar interest in urban agriculture, and to be more resourceful with food waste to name but a few.

[Common Ground](#) another organisation involved in urban food sharing located in Bray, Co. Wicklow also contributed to the consideration of factors that will determine the potential effectiveness of urban food sharing in establishing a more sustainable food system in Dublin. There was a general consensus on the importance of implementing food sharing into the education system as a means of increasing food sustainability consciousness and incorporating it into our broader culture.

A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis was undertaken with each organisation to facilitate self-assessment in relation to the sustainability of their activities. Undertaking the SWOT analysis helped them to reflect on their most successful approaches, thereby highlighting areas of performance that could potentially be measured through the creation of a toolkit, as well as helping to identify areas where improvements could be made and foresee any external opportunities and threats.

The case study initiatives explained the many ways in which the process of creating these toolkits was beneficial for them. They found that working with a researcher to evaluate their initiatives objectively and identify the extensive benefits offered through food sharing activities helped to revitalize their passion and ambition. The initiatives also felt that the toolkits would be useful in terms of tracking progress and ensuring they continue in a trajectory which correlates with their objectives. Obtaining data on their performances provided a sense of achievement and pride for those involved, and would aid them in the pursuit of support and funding applications. All four initiatives expressed that the toolkits would be useful in the future and would provide a valuable means of promoting the fruits of their labour through social media and advocating the extensive suite of benefits that urban food sharing offers.

I would like to thank the following for their collaboration and enthusiasm throughout my research and I wish them all the best for the future: [Urban Farm](#), [Social Hops](#), [Urban Oyster](#), [Hardwicke Street Garden Club](#), [Common Ground](#), [Bray](#).

Other food sharing activities in Dublin include:

- [FoodCloud](#); [Hour Kitchen](#); [Our Farm](#); [The Fumbally Stables](#)
- [Dublin City Centre CSA](#); [Dublin Food Co-op](#); [Grow Dome Project](#)
- [GIY International](#); [Dublin Honey Project](#); [WeShare Dublin](#)
- [Dublin Community Growers](#)

Written by Benjamin Murphy, 23 November 2016

You can read the full results of Ben's research [here](#)

12. [LONDON – LONDON IS OPEN\[ING\] TO FOOD SHARING](#)

Kids and adults tasting honey from urban bees in a yurt amidst King's Cross gigantic redevelopment site; a cooking session full of laughter, rescued vegetables and creativity involving students with learning disabilities in a community centre in Elephant and Castle; growing and harvesting chard and kale in a car park behind a recycling centre in West Norwood; a visit from an elderly Hackney-born lady who collects the coconut flour I was not going to use and tells me about the revived interest in neighbourhood food sharing thanks to an app. These are snapshots of just a few of the unexpected moments that unfolded during my fieldwork in London between January and April this year, where I conducted an ethnographic research around food sharing.

The four initiatives I chose as case studies range from educational food growing projects to surplus food redistribution, from social supermarket to community kitchens. I spent a lot of time in London volunteering and participating with these initiatives such as the [Skip Garden and Kitchen](#), an inspiring example of temporary food growing spaces. Such projects are fostered by [Capital Growth](#) – the UK food growing network run by [Sustain](#). [According to Capital Growth's recommendations](#), the temporary use of vacant land and sites awaiting development for food growing should be encouraged by local planning authorities.



Much more than just a garden and a café, the Skip Garden, run by the UK registered charity [Global Generation](#), has a strong focus on conviviality and new ways of living together with respect for nature, organising a wide range of activities to promote a reflection on our relationship with the planet. The way the space is organised immediately conveys a sense of originality and creativity, housing a yurt, a Glass Lantern made of recycled scaffolding boards and sash windows, and a 'grey to green' water recycling system that collects and filters the discarded water from the kitchen to water the garden. These temporary structures were co-created with different stakeholders, such as the UCL Bartlett School of Architecture. I also had the pleasure of seeing the first stages of Global Generation's new project. Adopting a similar approach involving a collaboration between designers, architects, residents and schools, this project will create a [Paper Garden](#), which includes a maker space and a food growing project within Canada Water development site.

Heading south, I participated in [Community Shop](#) in West Norwood, a social enterprise set up by [Company Shop](#), the largest redistributor of food surplus from manufacturers in the UK. Modelled on other European social supermarkets, it not only reduces food waste by diverting

edible food from landfill, but it also supports people in poverty by selling the surplus at a discounted price and offering training, support and advice for those seeking employment or in financial difficulties. Furthermore, Community Shop's café functions as a meeting place, boosting social interaction. Recently it has also established a growing space in its car park, thanks to the collaboration with [Urban Growth](#), a fellow social enterprise promoting growing spaces and environmental education.

Across three different locations in South London, I also joined enthusiastic and diverse teams of volunteers who come together each week at [Be Enriched's](#) kitchens in [Elephant and Castle](#), [Battersea](#) and Tooting to share their knowledge and skills, to deliver a free vegetarian meal for the local communities. Most of the ingredients are surplus donated by local food businesses and supermarkets. I followed with interest the developing of [Cooksforce](#), the latest programme by Be Enriched, which is a community cooking training funded by the [Evening Standard "Food for London"](#) scheme. Cooksforce aims to involve young people and kids in the kitchen and to teach them how to cook healthy meals on a budget. There is a focus also on reducing food waste within the households, by inspiring recipes that use parts that would normally be discarded, such as chicken carcass, herbs stalks, or beets leaves.

The cogency of food waste activism emerged as prominent in London as much as a tight collaboration between institutions, charities, social enterprises and innovative businesses to face the challenges towards a zero-waste city, as stated by the Mayor of London's latest [Environmental Strategy, which is still open for public consultation until November 17th, 2017](#). It is in this climate that the Zero Waste movement is gaining momentum. During my time in London, I attended talks and events about how to reduce the household waste and I spoke with many citizens interested in low impact shopping through bulk and packaging free buying. The use of technology and apps, such as [OLIO](#), has played an important role in facilitating this effort.



I used OLIO to exchange surplus food with neighbours, especially in Haringey and in Hackney where I was based. The smartphone app is globally available, but has a particularly strong presence in North London, East London, Bristol and Brighton and I soon realised that the local community was very active. Via OLIO, users can share food and other goods for free, but the start-up has contributed to creating online and offline communities of sharers. One of the most dynamic tool for volunteers to organise their actions consisted of the Facebook volunteer page, where users from different parts of the world connect and communicate around a wide variety of topics, but mainly on how to involve more people in food sharing. OLIO's team also created a zero-waste newsletter that circulates information about facts and strategies to reduce our environmental impact.

My fieldwork confirmed London as a hub of social innovation, previously indicated by its leadership in the [SHARECITY100 database](#) of urban food sharing initiatives, and I witnessed how London's thriving third sector is responding to the call for more sustainable diets and to socio-economic challenges. Austerity measures in the UK have affected the number of people in food poverty and many initiatives have reacted to this emergency, not only by providing meals

but by building a sense of community and sharing skills around cooking and food waste. Each of the initiatives I observed stresses the importance of education to sustainability and dedicates most of its resources to circulate knowledge and information.

The list of people that got involved in the research and that I am grateful to is long, but I would like to say thank you to my case studies: OLIO, The Skip Garden and Kitchen, Be Enriched and Community Shop. I would also like to thank [the Institute for Social Research](#) at [Birkbeck University](#), where I was based as Honorary Visiting Fellow; [Sustain: the alliance for better food and farming](#), [Stories On Our Plate - SOOP](#), [The London Food Link](#), [Feedback Global](#), [This is Rubbish](#), [The Brixton Pound- Pay-As-You-Feel Café](#), [People's Fridge Brixton](#), [the Connected Seeds Library](#), [West London Waste](#) and many others.

Written by Brigida Marovelli, 14 November 2017

13. [MELBOURNE – FOOD SHARING IN MELBOURNE](#)

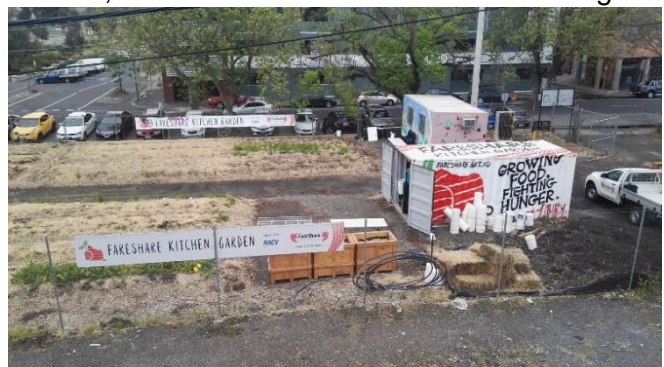
I recently returned from conducting an in-depth ethnography of food sharing activities in Melbourne. Melbourne's sustainable food movement has a long and rich history, as detailed in the [Melbourne SHARECITY profile](#) with Melbourne ranking third in the [SHARECITY 100 Database](#) with 144 initiatives. Over a three month period (September to December 2016), I conducted qualitative interviews, focus groups and participant-observation with people engaged in productive, distributive, experiential and ICT-mediated food sharing activities. In addition to gaining perspectives from government and grassroots' organisations, from the Victorian State Department of Health's [Streatrader](#) initiative, to not-for-profits and commercial enterprises, including [Cultivating Community](#), [FareShare](#), [Yume](#), and the [Open Food Network](#), I also conducted extensive in-depth research with four initiatives: 3000 Acres, Open Table, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre's Food Justice Truck, and Ripe Near Me.

[3000 Acres](#) is a not-for-profit organisation inspired by the [596 acres](#) project in New York City. Their goal: to "unlock vacant land across Melbourne to grow food and build strong communities". Through both their participatory online website and face-to-face support, they are unlocking and re-activating spaces across the city, connecting underutilized land from key institutions such as [Melbourne Water](#), VicTrack, local councils and developers, to make land available for local community groups and organisations. 3000 Acres' online map makes visible three stages of land access: potential, active and proposed community garden sites.

[Open Table](#) is also a not-for-profit organisation that is based on two key ideas: reducing food waste and meeting the neighbours. Open Table receives donated food from food rescue agency [Secondbite](#) and local stores that would otherwise go to waste to cook free feasts for everyone. Collaborating with [Neighbourhood Houses](#) and supported by the passion and dedication of volunteers, Open Table represents a regular social dining event where everyone is welcome to cook, share stories, or simply enjoy a healthy and tasty meal. [Six monthly events](#) are now held across Melbourne (Fitzroy, Carlton, Brunswick, Coburg, Coburg North and Richmond) with more due to open in 2017.

The [Food Justice Truck](#) is a social enterprise run by the [Asylum Seeker Resource Centre](#). Recognising that not all people seeking asylum can visit the Centre to receive food support, the Food Justice Truck provides a mobile fresh food market to offer people seeking asylum a 60% discount while selling to the general public at a market rate. Supported by a mammoth crowdsourcing effort to build their beautifully designed food truck, the Food Justice Truck embodies a 'pay-it-forward' approach, educates the public about asylum seeker and refugee issues in Australia, and offers an innovative distribution approach to address economic equality. In addition to attending festivals around Melbourne, the Food Justice Truck has three regular sites: the CBD, Thomastown and Dallas.

[Ripe Near Me](#) is an online map that enables people to map their backyard produce and food produced on public land to swap, sell and glean. Their goal: to increase home grown, urban and sustainable foods, to give foodies better access to fresh local produce, to provide



more variety, to reduce food waste, and more. Established in 2012 by Alastair and Helena Martin from Adelaide, the national RipeNearMe platform represents one of a cluster of emerging online web initiatives (see the [SHARECITY 100](#) Database to find more) that map produce that would otherwise go to waste.

Together, these four case studies represent a range of motivations, locations, and ICT approaches, as shown in the Table below. They share a blend of food skills, spaces, knowledge, produce, and places along the food chain from production through to distribution, consumption and waste. These case studies are representative of recent trends in Melbourne of pop up gardens and markets, a celebration of cultural diversity and welcoming asylum seekers and refugees through food, and ICT-mediated food sharing social enterprises. Through their actions, they add further socio, economic and environmental values to produce, place and person, illustrating how food sharing contributes to so much more than a meal. These case studies also highlight the geographies of potentially disruptive tensions across the city where socio-environmental change is being experienced as rules and regulations are revised to address different scales, locations and actors in emerging urban food sharing practices. Following on from this extensive data collection phase, I am now entering a phase of analysis and dissemination to share Melbourne's food sharing experiences with the world, before commencing fieldwork in [Barcelona](#), Spain.

I would like to thank all the amazing people and organisations who supported and welcomed me throughout my fieldwork. This research would not have been possible without them. While the goals of the organisations each differed, they were each strong and sincere. Even within such a short timeframe of research, it was notable the benefits that food sharing can bring. For more information on the publication outcomes, conference proceedings, and to learn more about other international cities to be researched, please visit the [SHARECITY website](#).

Written by Ferne Edwards, 20 February 2017

14. [NEW YORK – FOOD SHARERS OF NEW YORK CITY](#)

This summer I returned to New York City to research and volunteer with organizations involved in community composting, food rescue, community land access advocacy, and cooking and eating together. After researching food sharing in Berlin, everything here looked and felt different. While there are things that tie New York and Berlin together, like ongoing struggles over community land access and an [emerging solidarity economy](#), there are also big differences. Many food sharing organizations in New York receive recognition, support, and funding from the city through the [Department of Parks](#) and the [Department of Sanitation](#), and I came to really appreciate what a powerful role city government can play by setting policy and funding priorities around food waste and sustainability. In Ex-Paris agreement America, it seems more important than ever for cities to set the agenda on sustainability.

With [a ban on commercial organic waste](#), increased investments in community composting, and a number of local laws to address food waste New York is setting the stage for what a city can accomplish. Much of my time in New York was spent volunteering with the [New York City Compost Project](#) - a Department of Sanitation funded program that trains residents as community composters, provides technical assistance to a network of more than 250 community compost sites, and collects food scraps for Local Organics Recovery Programs at demonstration sites across the five borough.



All of the compost that is created at NYC compost project sites is used in community greening and food growing projects, contributing to the program's mission of "[rebuilding our soil, neighbourhood by neighbourhood](#)." I would like to especially thank the staff and volunteers at the [Brooklyn Botanical Garden's](#) compost site at Red Hook Community Farm, [the BIG Reuse](#) Compost site in Queens, [Earth Matter](#) on Governors Island, and the [Lower East Side Ecology Centre](#) in Manhattan.

When I was not in the compost pile, I was moving food around the city with [Rescuing Leftover Cuisine](#) a non-profit organization that uses an online platform to connect volunteers with restaurants who have made agreements to donate their surplus to local shelters and pantries. I would like to thank the staff and volunteers for helping me to better understand the opportunities and challenges of working in this space. Their efforts complement the large scale and long standing food security work at [City Harvest](#), and add to the diversity of organizations seeking to prevent food waste including [RoHo compost](#) and [Transfarnation](#).

I also visited community gardens, public meetings, demonstrations, and court hearings - where gardeners and advocates from [596 Acres](#), New York City's Community Land Access Advocacy Organization were planning new gardens, protecting existing ones, and resisting relentless attempts to enclose the commons they have created here. The organization has [mapped more than 600 acres](#) of vacant land, catalysed 37 new gardens, and transferred 39 gardens to the Parks department where they are protected by the public trust doctrine. I would like to thank the staff and volunteers for sharing their vision of racial justice, solidarity, and social change with me, and for continuing to make New York a city of commons.

Of course, I also had to eat. And I ate wonderful home cooked meals that I prepared with immigrant chefs from the [League of Kitchens](#). The business, originally conceived as a social practice art project by founder Lisa Gross, valorises the hidden and undervalued contributions that women and immigrants are making to our society and food system. Home kitchens serve as platforms for forging connections, dismantling stereotypes, and nurturing a family feeling between strangers. As the immigration debate in the U.S. spirals out of control, these spaces of connection and intimacy become all the more important. Thank you Angie and Jeanette for sharing your home and food with me, and Lisa and Sonya for making all of this possible.

I would like to thank the [Department of Nutrition and Food Studies at NYU](#) for hosting me as a Visiting Scholar, and all of the people and organizations who took the time to participate in the research, for sharing their reflections, insights, connections, passions and ideas. I look forward to staying in touch, and sharing the results of the research!

Written by Oona Morrow, 6 November 2017

15. [SAN FRANCISCO – FOOD RESCUERS IN SAN FRANCISCO](#)

Over the summer I was lucky enough to travel to the San Francisco Bay Area of California to spend a month exploring surplus food redistribution in the region. Also known as food rescue or food recovery, the practise involves the collection or gleaning of edible food that would otherwise go to waste and subsequent redistribution to individuals or communities in need. The Bay Area, a region with a rich history of social and environmental activism, is now home to a multitude of inspiring initiatives working to alleviate food insecurity and address food waste, many of whom invited me to meet them and gave me valuable insight into their activities.

[Food Runners](#) have been redistributing food long before the mainstream media realised over one third of all food grown is wasted, often failing to reach even the dinner plate. Run almost entirely by volunteers this grassroots organisation has been moving food around San Francisco since 1987, now delivering over 15 tons of food per week, enough to produce 10,000 meals. Yet in recent years the need for emergency food relief has grown, driven by skyrocketing housing prices and associated costs of living. Despite living in a fertile state that produces [almost half of all the fruit vegetables and nuts](#) in the US, a growing number of Bay Area residents are at risk of food insecurity and the city of San Francisco has one of the [highest percentages](#) of people living on the streets in US cities, a problem also seen in neighbouring cities such as Berkeley and Oakland.



Whilst many point the finger of blame at the local 'tech boom' and influx of young, skilled, and high-salaried professionals, technology is also being used to innovate ways of redistributing surplus food with greater efficiency and reach. Berkeley based [Replate](#) uses an advanced technology platform to match and move surplus food (often from tech offices themselves) to emergency shelter and food providers, collecting data on

wasteful food habits and reporting it back to the donors. [Food Shift](#) in Alameda are doing more than saving food from landfill, they are also running a kitchen with experienced Chef Terrell where rescued food is prepped, cooked and delivered to shelters in the area. This kitchen also provides training and jobs, truly tackling food insecurity at its roots.

The University of San Francisco is home to a chapter of the [Food Recovery Network](#), a nationwide student movement against food waste and hunger. Sacrificing their evenings and weekends, a dedicated group of students collect surplus food from not only campus cafeterias but also local cafés, restaurants and wholesale markets, and then drive it to areas in the city with high levels of poverty and homelessness. This, in addition to college work, exams, and many other demands of student life.

Wherever food is at risk of being wasted, from farms and supermarkets to cafés and offices, there are dedicated individuals and communities working to find a solution and give value back to the food. It was truly inspiring to see the huge amount of time and



energy being put into rescuing food and feeding people in a city as vibrant and diverse as San Francisco. It certainly provided many research ideas and insights, which wouldn't have been possible without the time and generosity of these initiatives. Thank you!

I would also like to thank the following initiatives for taking the time to speak with me: [Copia: Food Cowboy](#); [SF-Marín Food Bank](#); [Ampleharvest.org](#); [Imperfect Produce](#); [CropMobster](#); [Salvage Supperclub](#).

Written by Marion Weymes, 2 November 2017

16. SINGAPORE – SUSTAINABLE FOOD NARRATIVES IN SINGAPORE

This summer brought me back to the tropics of the Lion City to continue ethnographic research and to work closely with key players in the food sharing landscape, [the Singapore Food Bank](#) and [Edible Garden City](#), on the co-design of SHARECITY sustainability toolkit. When it comes to environmental efficiency and economic growth, sustainability is one of the most discussed topics in Singapore, in fact, over the last three years, the government-led [Sustainable Singapore](#) initiative has extensively prioritized sustainability targets such as zero waste and green economy, and has encouraged citizens to take proactive steps in promoting sustainable behaviours. However, for food sharing initiatives such as the Singapore Food Bank, Edible Garden City and [SG Food Rescue](#), which are providing new ground for sustainable practices to take root, sustainability goes far beyond narrowly perceived metrics and extends to intrinsic values which underpin well-being, sense of empathy, close relationships and community engagement.

For example, the (infamous) question of “what happens with food waste in Singapore?” raises concerns of environmentalists, food activists, charities and businesses. In fact, while incineration companies make waste magically disappear, food sharing initiatives are bound to a mission of ensuring that surplus is visible, edible and valued. I was lucky enough to join food rescue missions organized with SG Food Rescue, a volunteer-based initiative that took its roots from the [Singapore Freegan Community](#) in 2017 which has then become the largest online network that organizes diverse food sharing activities including rescuing and redistributing discharged surplus to charities as well as organizing advocacy events and potlucks known as [Kampung picnic](#). According to the [SG Food Rescue Facebook page](#), the volunteers rescue up to 2 tonnes of perfectly edible food products each week.

In my conversations with food rescuers, I learnt that those who participate in shared food rescue activities are driven by a joy of getting free food, sharing the thrill of food scavenging – an activity that is actually illegal in Singapore – and being able to act on a sense of moral responsibility, offering solidarity to food insecure communities to whom rescued food is redistributed.



While [SG Food Rescue](#) doesn't track their sustainability impacts as the initiative is still in its early stage of development, for the [Singapore Food Bank](#) and [Edible Garden City](#), reporting sustainability outcomes is an important credibility check for beneficiaries, customers, stakeholders and the government. However, the [Singapore Food Bank](#) reporting practices to the government and the US Food Bank Network overlook the qualitative element of food sharing, such as the value of education. As mentioned in the conversation with the [Singapore](#)

[Food Bank](#) Manager Jessie Tan, learning through volunteering provides a shared experience platform about the multifaceted challenges of food insecurity in Singapore, for example the danger of social isolation. In fact, not many people know that, food insecurity exists in Singapore, and it is often linked to feeling of loneliness and social abandonment and not only low-income status.

Thus, education for sustainability which has been seamlessly integrated in the core activities of food sharing initiatives has potential to increase social interaction and emotional support for those who are food insecure. According to the report on food hunger in Singapore released by the [Lien Centre for Social Innovation](#), education and public awareness are indeed the most important indicators for sustainable food support system that could tackle food poverty in Singapore.

Finally, it was also nice to catch up with the urban farmers at [Edible Garden City](#). Since last year, the social enterprise whose activities contributed to urban growing went through a trial and error process that helped them to reflect on their community farming model. While growing food is an important aspect of sustainable food systems, it might not be the most financially sustainable model to pursue in Singapore, given the cost of land, technologies and resources as well as the convenience driven mind-set of Singaporean consumers. But as I learnt from volunteers working with Edible Garden City, community food growing in Singapore has other sustainability goals than crops productivity. For Darren and Chris, the managers of [the Citizen Farm](#), urban growing is necessary to enhance liveability in megacities such as Singapore. In 2030 Singapore projected population will reach 6 million people and with increased population density grows the risk of reduced quality of living. Thus, for Edible Garden City, building edible gardens known as foodscapes has clear but yet difficult to capture environmental and social benefits; communal foodscapes in the city reduce the heat island effect and promote stress-free environments, better mental health and social well-being.



So, when the time to say goodbye came around, there was feeling of gratefulness that permeated the atmosphere around those who were part of the fieldwork, because the engagement brought us all together again in common goal, and left us with the belief that food sharing matters. We all came to the conclusion that new narratives for food sharing must be communicated that encourage people to participate which in turn cultivates stories that matters to them, and which will matter to others in the future. Simply put, all of this has a desirable impact on social, environmental, and economic performance in Singapore, which is consequently linked to eco-efficiency and

technological innovation for food systems and communities to be sustainable. Being part of a narrative that shifts food waste problem into social and environmental endeavour, or when land-scarce and import dependency translates over to community food growing, the needed engagement brings diverse participants together to envision and work towards not only imaginable but also shared food future.

Written by Monika Rut, 14 September 2018

PART III

THEMES & DREAMS FOR URBAN FOOD SHARING

17. FOOD BEYOND THE MARKET – GLEANED, GROWN & GIFTED

Economic uncertainty, a desire for more socially connectedness and a need for environmental sustainability, are all factors in recent years that have all contributed to the growth of ‘alternative food networks’, food pathways that build on an ethics of sustainability, social justice, health, and animal welfare. In this blog, rather than focus on food coops, farmers markets or organic food boxes, I draw on work from [my doctoral thesis](#) that investigates unfunded, unregulated and diverse social food economies. These largely non-capitalist food economies include both persistent local food traditions and the emergence of innovative models. Often hidden within the city, they are discussed through the lens of people who glean, grow and gift their food in Sydney, Australia.



‘Gleaning’ refers to the gathering, collecting, harvesting or picking of fungi or plants on public or private lands. The practice of foraging has previously flourished, faded and more recently been revived over the last century. In Sydney, a notable ‘gleaner’ is environmental artist, [Diego Bonetto](#), whose goal is to re-educate, inspire and reconnect people to their local landscape through the identification of non-indigenous plants. His interest in weeds stems from a childhood in Italy where fossicking for weeds, mushrooms and

chestnuts was commonplace. Bonetto argues that ‘weeds’ have hidden values containing nutritious, medicinal and socio-cultural qualities. Foraging for mushrooms is also a popular activity where migrants of Polish descent relish the wild mushrooms that bloom in the pine forests on Sydney’s fringe. While chefs seek out new ingredients from Sydney’s waterways and parklands to sell on restaurant menus, exploring new flavours and creative cooking techniques. Another ‘gleaner’ – quite the entrepreneur – has established his own business harvesting wild spinach to supply restaurants and events. Food mappers represent yet another type of ‘gleaner’, using online mapping tools to reveal and share the locations of food. Gleaning engages people from a range of ages, occupations and cultural backgrounds, incorporates ingredients that are complementary rather than complete, offering fresh, diverse and free flavours. A form of “gastro-entertainment” as expressed by Bonetto!

‘Growers’ in the PhD represent where people grow a substantial part of their food on Sydney’s fringes. Sprinkled throughout the backyards of Sydney but with a particular stronghold in the Blue Mountains, residents are investing their time, interest and knowledge to grow-their-own. Many growers belong to one of the many food-sustainability groups that exist in the region, ascribing to gardening principles of permaculture, biodynamics, and organics. Many gardeners here desire to be self-sufficient, yet many infrequently achieve this aim, in the quantity of food they produce, reducing the need to work outside the home, growing a diverse range of crops in addition to fish farming and chickens. Land sharing is also evident, as residents share their backyard space and produce with others, teach skills to their neighbours, exchange heirloom seeds, and lay claim to public land by participating in community gardens and growing food on street verges.

In contrast to the gleaners and growers whose resources are fresh and more-for-fun, 'gifters' highlight another food source and audience – surplus food that would otherwise go to waste to distribute to those in need. Australia, although a relatively wealthy country, suffers from issues of food insecurity and food deserts, spaces where affordable, healthy food is difficult to find. [OzHarvest](#) is one of a handful of not-for-profit food rescue organisations that receives donated food from restaurants, cafés, and supermarkets to donate to agencies who distribute produce and meals to the disadvantaged. The amount of surplus food is astounding – in their 2015 Annual Report, OzHarvest estimates they have rescued a total of 12,671,092 kilos of food from their eight sites since 2004. The agency, [Food Within](#), takes another approach, providing “a hand up not a hand out” with their bartering and education program to make healthy food more accessible.

In essence, my research reveals the capacity and desire of people in cities to realize alternative ways of accessing food across the city. Many activities go beyond economic value to ascribe cultural and new use values to wasted plants, people and places. While these pathways may not offer a complete meal, they certainly demonstrate a resurgence of interest in sharing skills, knowledge, passion and time towards creating more sustainable and socially equitable urban food futures. The recent emergence of information and communication technologies further stretches food sharing practices in new spaces. Given the challenge of planetary urbanization and clearly unsustainable food systems, these niche activities deserve more careful attention. SHARECITY's goal to map the food landscapes of 100 cities, to explore seven cities in detail, and to analyse across i-food sharing cities offers an important step towards better understanding the transformative potential of urban food economies.

Written by Ferne Edwards, 21 June 2016

18. SHARING FOOD SURPLUS SAFELY

Sustainable use of food resources plays an important role in the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#), which aim to tackle sustainability under 17 distinct themes. [Goal 12](#) deals with an important part of a sustainable lifestyle, responsible consumption and production. This goal aims to promote resource efficiency; essentially doing more, and better, with fewer resources. [Target 12.3](#) deals specifically with food waste, aiming to halve food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030. At a European level, the [Circular Economy package](#) states that Member States should take measures to encourage the prevention of food waste. Within Europe, some states including Finland and [Italy](#) have taken a proactive approach to tackling food waste and drafted specific guidelines and legislation. Within these states, [the redistribution of surplus food](#) has been identified as an important and effective method to help reduce food becoming waste. It is also being actively [encouraged by the EU](#) through guidelines for food donations. However, established food safety and hygiene regulations in their current configurations have been highlighted as a major barrier to this activity within the [EU](#), because of demands for full [traceability](#), [labelling](#) and the identification of a [responsible person](#) with respect to liability for any food safety issues. This places additional demands on organisations with often limited resources. Of course, food safety has a very important place in all [food production, consumption and redistribution](#). In fact, it is particularly important in this sector due to the high-risk nature of the food being shared and often the vulnerabilities of people receiving it. Regulations are the traditional form of enforcing these food safety standards, but this is difficult in an evolving sector such as [the sharing economy](#) as it is currently a legal grey area, with policy implementation hampered by accountability and liability issues.



In response, I investigated the intersection of food safety and food redistribution through a multilevel governance analysis at European, national (Irish and British) and local scales. Using the [EUR-Lex](#) database I analysed European policy documents relating to food safety for their impact on the operation on local food redistribution organisations. Surveys were conducted with the [Irish](#) and [British](#) national food safety authorities to ascertain how they viewed

the place of food safety in food redistribution activities and how they think regulations will change in the future. Surveys and interviews with local Irish and British food redistribution organisations identified through the [SHARECITY100 database](#) were also carried out, determining the place of food safety within their operations and how they think the regulations around food safety in the food redistribution sector could or should change in the future. In addition, a media content analysis of public fridges was included as a particularly contentious redistributive development in relation to sharing food surplus in the light of food risk and safety concerns.

I found that food safety has developed an increasingly visible place in European food policy, outlining the emergence and evolution of a risk-based, scientific approach to food safety management in regulatory instruments. Meanwhile, national food safety policy develops standards and procedures, providing more practical regulation of food businesses. At the coalface of food redistribution, local initiatives were all found to place a high level of importance on food safety and clearly understand the risks redistribution poses. However, the majority of

initiatives believed that current food safety regulations are restrictive and too strong, and would like to see changes to education and awareness, as well as guidelines on the interpretation of food safety regulations in redistributive services and the creation of a standard quality system for all actors involved in redistribution.

Overall, it's clear that the concept of food sharing is gaining traction in many spheres, but the focus in the future will be on how to implement it safely, to best serve those donating, redistributing and receiving the food.

Written by Alan Dowdall, 1 December 2017

You can read the full version of Alan's dissertation [here](#)

19. COMMUNITY MAPPING AND FOOD SHARING

Mapping can be used to draw boundaries between what is mine and what is yours, what is public and private, what is individual and what is shared. Maps are productive fictions; they can do more than reflect reality, urban landscapes, and the locations of fruit trees. They can also help produce new realities by making new worlds, resources, and realities visible and accessible. Community mapping can create a space for renegotiating the boundaries between public and private property – for making private spaces, knowledge, resources, and food public and shared.



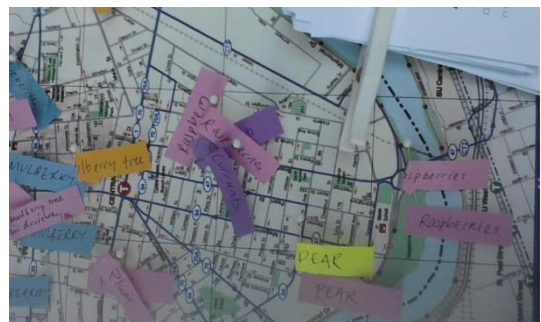
Fruit is a surprisingly abundant and underutilized resource in cities. Forgotten apple orchards, feral mulberry trees, inherited grape arbours, wild raspberry and blackberry brambles, peach and plum trees – are just some of the fruits I have harvested and tasted – in private backyards, on public rights of way, and at the edges of fences and sidewalks. These fruits are often overlooked by the untrained eye but always within reach.

Several food sharing enterprises are using community mapping to make urban fruit more visible and accessible, even enticing private property owners to share some of their bounty. In Greater Boston [the League of Urban Canners](#), a group of friends and neighbours harvests, preserves, and prunes backyard fruit trees and arbours at more than 300 sites. They collected these sites through word of mouth, by scouting out fruit trees and knocking on doors, and by inviting the public to share their knowledge of urban fruit at community fruit mapping events. Sharing jam, push pins, and sticky notes, they invited folks to plot their favourite foraging sites, their neighbours peach tree, and even their home address on cork mounted paper maps of Cambridge and Somerville. The sites were used to create a (private) searchable database and google map for harvesting by the League of Urban Canners.

In LA and in cities around the world [Fallen Fruit](#), an artist collective, has created beautiful maps of publicly accessible fruit inviting contributors to “collectively re-imagine the function of public participation and urban space, and to explore the meaning of community through creating and sharing new and abundant resources.” The collective also hosts public fruit jams and has been at the forefront of the [urban orchard movement](#).

Another US based outfit [Falling Fruit](#) has created a global searchable database and interactive map of public fruit. Their crowd sourced [online map](#) seeks “to unite the efforts of foragers, foresters, and freegans everywhere. The [imported datasets](#) range from small neighbourhood foraging maps to vast professionally-compiled tree inventories. This so far amounts to 1,664 different types of edibles (most, but not all, plant species) distributed over 1,181,273 locations.”

In Seattle, City Fruit has created an interactive fruit mapping tool to help “build community, steward urban orchards, share harvests, and help policymakers.” However, the disclaimer on their mapping tool that “the trees listed here are not for public harvesting as many of them are on private



property,” is an important reminder that online maps alone are not sufficient to facilitate food sharing in cities. Community mapping is a starting point, it allows us to glimpse a possible future of abundant and shared fruit. But, as I have learned through my work with the League of Urban Canners, it is relationships – that are built on trust and reciprocity, as well as shared knowledge, skills, meals, and resources that allows food sharing to occur. The League of Urban Canners goes to great lengths to maintain trusting relationships between property owners, harvesters, and preservers – signing liability waivers, sharing the preserved jams with owners, returning in the winter to prune trees and arbours, and inviting owners, harvesters, and preservers to share their bounty at potluck dinners.

These are just a few examples; there are hundreds more all over the world – many of which are listed on [Falling Fruit's Sharing Resources page](#). If you would like to create your own community fruit map grab a bike, a friend, a notepad, a map, and meet your neighbours.

Written by Oona Morrow, 14 June 2016

20. [FROM AQUAPONICS TO URBAN FOOD SHARING](#)

Hello to all friends of SHARECITY! I am pleased to introduce myself as the newest addition to the [SHARECITY team](#); I am an urban ecology researcher from Berlin and I joined as SHARECITY's new Research Assistant. Settling over from Germany to Dublin, I am amazed at SHARECITY's plentiful outputs so far (amongst others SHARECITY's [Briefing Note 3](#) and the [SHARECITY100 database](#)) and their impact on recent urban food sharing research!

Previously working in water-farming science, I have undertaken a journey from the front to the back end of the urban food supply chain, so it seems. At my last project, I conducted research on sustainable urban agriculture at the [ROOF WATER FARM](#) project at the Technical University of Berlin. ROOF WATER-FARM (2013-2017) explored ways of combining wastewater treatment with urban farming. As part of ROOF WATER-FARM's interdisciplinary team, I investigated if household wastewater and rainwater can be used for aquaponics and hydroponics on Berlin's rooftops.



Apart from urban agriculture, I have a strong interest in the effective and efficient dissemination of research results. Last year, I produced and instructed the [ROOF WATER-FARM Online Course \(MOOC\)](#), which was directed at technology developers, urban farmers, researchers, students, and the broad public. It is my firm belief, that fruitful science communication is directed towards academic as well as non-academic members of society to facilitate urban transition towards more sustainable cities.

Starting at SHARECITY, I am delighted to meet the numerous [food sharing initiatives](#) contributing to the project's success! Coming from a city that is heavily influenced by gentrification, I am particularly keen on learning more about the role of food sharing activities in sustainable urban development. Dublin – as many other cities in Europe – is currently facing a housing and homelessness crisis. Acknowledging the positive influence of food sharing initiatives in fighting urban poverty and food insecurity seems more important than ever.

Apart from working in the “online world”, I am a passionate community gardener, previously at Berlin's rooftop community garden [Klunkerkränich](#). During my first week at SHARECITY, I had the amazing opportunity to visit the [Muck and Magic Community Garden](#) in Ballymun, Dublin, together with Stephen. We were pleased to meet many fellow compassionate gardeners and delighted to harvest a bunch of delicious vegetables. Many thanks to the Muck and Magic team – especially for the Zucchini!

I am excited to join SHARECITY in the project's thrilling second phase - the next stage will be all about investigating the [impact](#) and [governance of urban food sharing](#).

Written by Vivien Franck, 23 August 2018

21. [FOOD SHARING AND THE SDGS](#)

Equal access to open green space is one of the key target goals under SDG 11 for transforming cities onto more sustainable pathways. Urban green space provides a range of [ecosystem goods and services](#) such as reduced air pollution and improved temperature regulation. Recently, research has uncovered additional [health and well-being benefits](#) of green spaces, particularly within urban environments, where it has been shown that just passing by green spaces can help to reduce stress, heartrate and blood pressure. In addition, research indicates that the [perception of crime as well as actual crime rates](#) are lower in neighbourhoods with access to green and open spaces. What's more, green space can also provide a physical site for enhanced human interactions particularly through shared and collaborative practices often seen in community gardens or edible parks. These spaces of interaction have been shown to combat social dislocation and [loneliness](#) in urban environments.

As part of the [SHARECITY](#) project we are identifying, mapping, analysing and assessing the practices and sustainability potential that spaces for shared growing in urban environments provide. We are focusing on those practices of shared growing that use some form of ICT to mediate their activities and seeing what difference those technologies make to the practices and impacts of sharing. We have mapped these across 100 urban spaces globally and you can interact with them through our [SHARECITY100 Database](#). This database was used to identify a suite of case studies in [nine cities](#) for in-depth examination with researchers spending many months in the field immersed in the activities of [thirty-eight food sharing initiatives](#). Shared growing activities comprise a third of our sample and include a range of innovative approaches to urban sustainability challenges.



[596 Acres](#) from New York, Unites States and [3000 Acres](#) from Melbourne, Australia, for example, seek to optimise the use of vacant land for communal growing activities. Both initiatives identify and map unused land using [online tools](#) and then provide support citizen groups to develop them into community gardens.

Other growing initiatives in the SHARECITY100 database, such as [The Skip Garden and Kitchen](#) in London, UK and [Himmelbeet](#) in Berlin, Germany, focus on creating inclusive intercultural gardens within which people can come together to share land, seeds, plants, food, compost, tools, kitchen space, knowledge, and meals through gifting and selling.

Himmelbeet is an intercultural food sharing initiative, which started in 2013. Currently, the community garden is located on vacant space in Wedding, a neighbourhood with one of Berlin's highest unemployment rates of 26%. Himmelbeet's main target goal is 'The good life for all. Not more but also not less.' The initiative enables access to healthy food and education, for some of Berlin's inhabitants for whom this turns out to be more difficult. One of Himmelbeet's current projects is the development of a book on gardening that is accessible to everyone, written in easy language. The 'TUML Buch' is composed in a collaborative manner with a diverse group

working together to develop the content, but also to provide space for knowledge exchange and friendships to develop. All outputs from the process are documented online and provided for free for others to use.

However, it is not always plain sailing for such community enterprises. Later in 2018, Himmelbeet's license to operate will cease and the land will be leased instead to a soccer organization for deprived youth, which will develop a sports and education initiative on the site where the garden currently resides. Despite trying to find a mutually agreeable compromise for the past three years, Himmelbeet will now have to find a new vacant space for their activities. As a community garden, they receive little protection from the state for their activities because they are not classified as a park, a school or a sports centre which have explicit teams within the local authority to plan and management developments.

Another growing initiative listed on the SHARECITY100 Database, which facilitates equal access to green space here in Ireland, is [Muck and Magic community garden](#) (MaM) in Ballymun, a suburb north of Dublin city centre.

A local volunteer group based in Ballymun, Dublin started MaM as part of the Ballymun Regeneration Plan in 2011. MaM is based on a piece of land, which is owned, by the Dublin City Council and lease to the initiative on an annual basis. The garden operates with the help of local volunteers and gardeners from the surrounding neighbourhoods. Amongst them are members from a local day centre for adults with special needs as well as a group that attends the garden from a local drugs rehabilitation project.

Over the course of seven years, the garden, which started with four raised beds for vegetable growing, now incorporates a garden shed, poly tunnel and a series of composts. The area is also covered by ornamental trees and harbours an insect hotel. In addition, MaM has a wormery and makes its own leaf mould following a circular approach of self-subsistence.

The garden is open to everyone and welcomes new and returning volunteers for gardening afternoons. In 2014, the garden was made wheelchair accessible and a series of surface paths were incorporated into the garden design. MaM's newest project is to develop a sensory garden which is due to open later this year which aims to enhance the outdoor experiences visitors enjoy when they visit the garden, as John from MaM notes below:

[... I feel the garden has great potential for people of all category of needs. I remember actually, the St. Michaels House Group, they invited us actually to the centre one day for lunch [...] what really struck me was I was asking about what other activities they have during the week and they all really are indoor activities you know and really, to spend half a day in an open air environment like our garden and having just an environment where there is to be lots of space around them and I can see it has a number of benefits...]

John O'Donoghue – Initiator and participant at MaM community garden

SHARECITY is working with MaM to co-design a sustainability impacts toolkit to help them establish exactly what kinds of impacts their work has on participants. This research will be published soon under impact assessment on our [website](#)!

Taking a closer look at shared growing initiatives, as the SHARECITY project is doing, confirms multiple potential benefits for urban populations. However, it also shows that more work has to

be done on establishing exactly the kinds of benefits that emerge from growing together and who exactly is benefitting from such activities. Similarly the governance of shared urban food growing is embryonic and this could undermine the achievement of optimal sustainability benefits from green spaces as community gardens and other edible initiatives fail to receive adequate attention and protection from land use planning authorities and other regulatory bodies. By better defining the benefits emerging from shared food growing and the kinds of regulatory actions needed to support them, we hope that the target goals under SDG 11 as well as other goals around hunger (SDG2) and responsible production and consumption (SDG 12) become achievable.

This blog was originally published as part of the [SDG blog](#) leading up to the GeoWeek on 30 October 2018. Each week from 3 September 2018, [the Geographical Society of Ireland](#) has published articles that highlight the relationship between the work of geographers and the themes of the Sustainable Development Goals.

*Written by Vivien Franck and Anna Davies,
6 November 2019*



22. TIPS FOR CO-COOKING SPACES

Community kitchens and commercial shared cooking spaces are growing in popularity, allowing local, small-scale food producers to initiate innovative enterprises by having shared access to low cost but high quality, health and safety approved facilities and appliances, as well as exchanging knowledge, skills and experiences with the other enterprises they share with. Last month [Newmarket Kitchen](#), the food incubator and kitchen space for food entrepreneurs based in Co. Wicklow in Ireland, celebrated its first anniversary. We asked marketing manager, Henry O' Brien, to give us some insight into a few of the lessons the co-cooking space learned over the past year. Here is what he had to say:

- **Proximity to other food entrepreneurs breeds motivation.** When you are surrounded by other food entrepreneurs who are grinding it out, it's hard not to be inspired to up your game.
- **Social and work go hand in hand.** Humans are social creatures. Having a social outlet is part of a healthy work environment. Independent chefs and businesses can work alongside others, making it a real community environment.
- **Find a place to be productive.** Working from home every day isn't as glamorous as it sounds. It is nice to get out of the house and mix with others.
- **High ceilings and natural light does wonders for productivity.** People's energy levels and general mood goes through the roof when they move into Newmarket Kitchen. The high ceiling and natural light help to create a more open, natural environment.
- **All-in-one can make all the difference.** It doesn't matter how laid back you are, having a set monthly membership fee that covers cleaning, water, waste, electricity and equipment repairs definitely takes a lot of stress out of the mix.
- **Good neighbours lend a hand.** Keep spare bowls at your bench. When people ask if you happen to have them and you do, they will think you are the most prepared person in the world.
- **Blending talent and backgrounds = magic.** Dublin has an incredible mix of food entrepreneurs. When you put them in the same room together, it is amazing to step back and watch what happens.
- **Plan as much as you can when working remotely.** Having an agenda or plan is always a good thing when working from a new environment. Try and set out daily and weekly tasks. There is no better feeling than crossing off items on your to-do list.
- **Inspiring surroundings are key.** Bray, Co. Wicklow boasts some of the most beautiful surroundings in Ireland. Just a short drive from Dublin (against the traffic) and you are watching the sunrise over the Sugar Loaf on your way to work in the mornings.
- **A supportive community is everything.** Most important lesson learned for the Newmarket Kitchen team this past year? People really want to see you succeed when starting a new business.



Written by Marion Weymes, 8 June 2016

23. HOW SUSTAINABLE IS SHARING?

Would you like to know your Sustainability Sharescore?

A big hello to everyone out there following the progress of SHARECITY. The gloom of January is lifting and the project is bouncing into its next phase full of purpose. Following on from the fundamental work that the project has done so far; both in constructing the [SHARECITY database](#) and documenting the stories of food sharing organisations around the world, it must now address another challenge that SHARECITY was established to tackle. What are the impacts of all these new urban food sharing networks in terms of the sustainability of the food we eat? Perhaps even more interestingly, what are the potential sustainability implications as these organisations become more common around the world and, in some cases, expand in scale? In aid of this effort the project has a new hire – [me](#)! I have a research background modelling the environmental impacts of agriculture systems and, in particular, developing [Life Cycle Assessment models of livestock production](#). In short, I am experienced at crunching the numbers and sorting through the nitty gritty of material and energy flows in food production systems to come up with useful answers on food sustainability, so that other people don't have to!!



A big challenge for SHARECITY is that it must try to push beyond the landscape of popular food sustainability assessments which can tell you what the carbon footprint of a [sandwich](#) is or whether a product is certified Fair trade or Organic (although that is not a criticism, these exercises are valuable in their own right). So much of the work done on food sustainability is product based, we either compare different products or we compare different pathways to the same product. At a higher level some researchers have begun to develop more complex frameworks to assess the sustainability of food as produced and consumed by cities or [nations](#). However, SHARECITY is a project very much focused on partnering with grassroots organisations. As such, it aims to capture the complex impacts that relatively small organisations can have on the social wellbeing and physical health of urban communities, as well as documenting the more obvious impacts of cases where organisations prevent food waste on a larger scale. A key element of my role with the SHARECITY project will be to work closely with partners of the project to **Co-design** an opensource toolkit, which will enable food sharing organisations to easily communicate their sustainability impacts. Addressing these complex intellectual challenges, while working closely with organisations which are demonstrating a positive vision for the sharing economy, is what excited me about the SHARECITY when I first came across the project and is why I was motivated to join it. I am 2 weeks into the job and brimming with enthusiasm so please get in touch if you wish to discuss any aspect of the project, particularly in relation to sustainability impact assessment and the toolkit co-design.

Written by Stephen MacKenzie, 31 January 2018

24. [CITY GROWERS](#)

In the majority of cities around the world, the price of land and housing is going up, at the same time that dwelling size and green space is going down. Yet many plots of urban land lie abandoned, ignored or discarded by developers, councils and communities, for years or even decades at a time. In Boston, a city of 700,000 people, it is estimated that 800 acres of land currently lie vacant. Last month [Margaret Connors](#), a co-founder of the Boston based social enterprise [City Growers](#), visited the SHARECITY team here in Dublin to discuss their experience accessing this land for intensive urban agriculture.

Established in 2012, City Growers works with community partners to secure land in the city for growing food and creating living wage green jobs, increasing agricultural production capacity, and improving food security and food access. However the transformation of vacant lots into productive farmland has not been easy, and City Growers have consistently faced an array of challenges as they attempt to build an economically and environmentally sustainable social enterprise.



Fundamental barriers to urban agriculture include urban land use and zoning policies, which have created landscapes in the US that are not supportive of urban food systems. Generally designed to accommodate and separate residential, commercial, and industrial uses, zoning has historically pushed agriculture out of cities, making safe, clean, and legal growing spaces increasingly scarce. The availability of urban land is critical for City Growers to continue to generate profit, grow sustainable jobs, and distribute local produce to businesses and community members, but unfortunately acquiring the right to farm on urban land means navigating a maze of red tape and regulation.

The regulation of urban agriculture is complicated by the fact that the concept remains poorly understood. Urban agriculture can be defined as the practice of cultivating, processing, and distributing food in or around a village, town, or city. Although widely practised across the world today, generating income and contributing towards food security for over 800 million people, it is fundamentally different from community gardens or allotments, which generally only grow enough for personal or family consumption and have more widespread understanding and acceptance.

Yet urban agriculture can be particularly important in low-income urban areas, where it can help community members generate income whilst meeting their food needs. In Boston, 75% of vacant land (e.g. potential urban farms) is located in the three poorest neighbourhoods in the city, partly the result of systematic disinvestment through histories of red lining and

discriminatory lending. The practice of urban agriculture has the potential to contribute to economic revitalization in these areas by creating local jobs and supporting local businesses.

Additional challenges for enterprises like City Growers lie in the soil itself, as much of the vacant land is polluted, containing lead and other toxins from old buildings, fires, and the illegal dumping of waste. Soil remediation is expensive, and it can take up to eight years for selected plants to take up heavy metals. This is time and money that urban growers can scarcely afford. Current solutions to this problem involve purchasing large quantities of clean soil and working in raised beds, although a more environmentally just approach might involve holding polluters accountable for the cost of soil remediation.



For Margaret, growing fruits and vegetables is about much more than just urban rejuvenation. Food is at the intersection of many pressing public health concerns, including obesity. City Growers hopes to make an impact by supplying fresh fruits and vegetables to local markets, restaurants and schools. In fact, one of the core visions of City Growers, and a big driver for Margaret's involvement, is to work with schools to provide nutritionally dense and locally grown lunches. School meals are widely accepted to be of poor quality, as school authorities are forced to distribute food deemed suitable by the federal government with little say over its source, nutritional content, or ingredients. Somewhat counterintuitively, frozen food is often being moved thousands of miles across the country, irrespective of the fresh produce being grown just around the corner and the avoidable transport-related carbon emissions. At present, the most consistent and profitable recipients for City Growers produce are local restaurants, though diners are often unaware that their salad greens were sourced so nearby.

Ultimately, a realisation many like Margaret have come to is that for local food systems to flourish, the mechanics, philosophy, education and policy surrounding food will have to be fundamentally redesigned. As Margaret reminded us, it is ironic that as Michelle Obama works hard to visibly promote healthy eating, particularly in schools, her husband is signing off on legislation that continues to subsidize commodity crops such as corn whilst neglecting the importance of fresh produce and local supply chains. Without a huge overhaul, initiatives like City Growers will be consistently hindered by regulatory systems and infrastructures designed to support the growth of a federally subsidized industrial food system.

The landscape of urban planning and food policy is frustratingly slow to change, leaving many who are attempting to build sustainable communities and local food systems unsupported and forced to operate in a legal limbo. Governments at local and national levels are consistently playing catch up with progressive citizens, generally remaining content to ignore issues and look the other way until the level of public interest, and in some cases, lawbreaking, grow to a point that they are forced to legislate

However, there is a parting in the clouds ahead for City Growers. An abandoned farm in Boston, with its original old barn still standing, is being restored by a community land trust that is working with City Growers to create an urban farming educational centre. City Growers now operates as a subsidiary of the social innovation non-profit [The Urban Farming Institute of Boston](#), which

supports urban agriculture in Massachusetts through education and training. Over the coming years City Growers aims to bring 20 acres of vacant land (made up of small ¼ to 1-acre lots) into food production the economy of scale essential for City Growers to become and remain profitable. Three acres is a start, but they are not quite out of the woods yet.

We wish City Growers and The Urban Farming Institute of Boston the best of luck, and look forward to following them on their journey.

Written by Marion Weymes and Oona Morrow, 17 October 2016

25. [FOOD WASTE ACTIVISM AND CONVIVIALITY](#)

The origin of the term ‘convivial’ traces back to the Latin *convivium* (banquet), which is composed by *cum vivere* – living together. The word *convivium* associates eating together and living together as one concept. In this post I would like to highlight how food activism in cities does not only tackle the controversies of food distribution, but it challenges social and cultural boundaries, creating experimental ways of consuming meals and potentially enhancing conviviality. I will illustrate this by drawing on a few examples of UK-based charities and organisations, which are on the frontline in the fight against food waste, all the while promoting the consolidation of positive local community relationships and the dialogues between individuals, organisations and communities.

In 2015, I had the pleasure to work alongside [Feedback](#)’s energetic team, coordinating the organisation of Feeding the 5000 Milan. On October 17th, 2015, Milan Municipality celebrated the signing of the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact calling Feedback, the world leading charity in the global movement against food waste, to organise Feeding the 5000 in Piazza Castello, right in the centre of Milan.

[Feeding the 5000](#) first took place in Trafalgar Square, London, in 2009 and since then has been held in many cities around the world, such as Paris, Athens, Vancouver and many others. The goal of Feedback is to temporarily occupy a significant public space by holding with a banquet for 5000 people that consists exclusively of ingredients that would otherwise have been wasted. Feedback’s initiatives are renowned, and rightly so, for their ability to draw attention to the food waste scandal. Nevertheless, I would argue that they also engage with an equally important politics of urban sustainability: conviviality, which is an often overlooked dimension of their initiatives.

During Feeding the 5000 in Milan the [Piazza Castello](#) was transformed into the city’s kitchen for a day, ready to host a massive feast open to everyone. Furthermore, we worked together with local schools, institutions, food businesses, and organisation. In the case of Milan we received the support of [Equoevento](#), [ReCup](#), [Milano Ristorazione](#), [Risteco](#), and many others. In every city, Feedback works in synergy with a cohort of local organisations active on the territory around food waste and food poverty, opening up a possible collaboration and offering the opportunity to combine their efforts. Feeding the 5000 is more than a one-off event; it also acts as a constructive endeavour to enhance communication between local activists and to be the catalyst of innovative urban initiatives. Below a short video, that highlights the atmosphere of Feeding the 5000 Milan.

Feedback also aims to reach out to as many citizens as possible by creating jovial and positive settings for their events. This brought them to include a Disco Soup (wherever the legislation allows it) in the range of activities organised around Feeding the 5000. [Disco Soup](#) is a global movement launched by the [Slow Food Youth Network](#) and particularly active in [France](#). At a Disco Soup people gather to chop, dance and cook together, rescuing food surplus from being wasted. Once again, it is a moment of joy, celebrating the value of food, not only by sitting at the same table, but also cooking together.



The Disco Soups organised in London were attended by local communities of the neighbourhoods hosting the events and by the vibrant and colourful crowd of food activists, engaged with the reduction of food waste in the city. The range of urban spaces where Disco Soups took place is also particularly wide and significant: from community centres to cafes such as [Save the Date](#) in East London.

Save the Date is part of [The Real Junk Food Project](#), another project tackling food waste and stressing the importance of sharing meals, which originated in Leeds and is now counting many cafes mainly in the UK, but also in France, Germany and Australia. The volunteer-run cafes intercept food surplus and transform it into nutritious meals for the local community. All the cafes of the network follow in fact a Pay-As-You-Feel policy, which allows everyone to afford a healthy meal, avoiding social exclusion.

Another example social enterprise aiming to tackle food waste in a lively and celebratory mood is [The Beggars Banquet](#). As they explain the recipe is very simple “Take a few pallets of food waste, add the culinary artistry of east London’s finest chefs, stir in circus, music, and a pinch of performing arts, serve a few times a year at various pop up venues, and you have an fine dining experience not to be missed”.

While addressing food waste issues, these practices help to build fruitful social relationships at many different levels, which enhance conviviality on a wider scale: first of all among volunteers, then involving people, organisations and communities. They offer novel ways of living together in a city, while cooking, sitting at the table, and eating with strangers.

Written by Brigida Marovelli, 13 July 2016

26. [THE URBAN GOVERNANCE OF FOOD SHARING](#)

As we all know, everyone needs to eat, but what shapes our decisions about eating? Drawing on previous [research](#), in SHARECITY we recognise that eating is a social practice shaped by a suite of [rules, tools, skills and understandings](#). Much of our research to date has focused on the tools, skills and understandings elements so SHARECITY is now giving special attention to rules! These rules can be social, which shape what is deemed acceptable to eat, when, where and how, but rules are also often legal instruments. What we do not often think about is that each step of the food chain that gets our food from farm to fork is regulated by many different layers of laws and regulations, whether you buy your food direct from producers or from big supermarket chains. To complicate things further, these layers are designed and implemented at different scales from the global to the local, influenced by different bodies (from international organisations such as FAO, and multinational agri-businesses, through to formal public governments and even people power) and have different capacities to effect change. To use academic language, food is an archetypal sphere of [multilevel governance](#)!

There are, for example, European food, waste and risk regulations to comply with, and countless of supra-national, national, regional and local laws that control and shape (or attempt to do so!) the way we eat today. The intertwining of all these different layers and scales translates into different governance configurations when we look at the [urban scale](#). The regulatory foodscape of Singapore as an autonomous city-state will inevitably differ from the ones of Athens, Berlin or Barcelona which are member states of the European Union. Comprehending all these context-specific regulations can become a particularly complex task for food sharing initiatives and complying with them can be a challenge practically and ideologically. For instance, cooking or redistributing food after its 'use-by' date is seen by some food sharers as an environmentally and socially just practice. However, it is considered illegal by many statutory regulations concerned with food safety. Let us just think about the recent public outcry generated by the stoppage of [Berlin's community fridges](#) on behalf of the [German Secretary for Consumer Protection](#).

At the same time, statutory regulations can be difficult to navigate not only for food sharing initiatives but also for the cities trying to reconfigure conventional food system practices into more sustainable and socially just trajectories. Even when city governments actively want to support food sharing initiatives, it is often the case that they can provide only temporary or precarious access to funding, buildings or land. As part of my PhD work for instance, I have researched precisely how the development of a Food Strategy in [London](#), despite aiming at improving access to sustainable and nutritious food for all Londoners, had little impact on the statutory governance of the city's food system.

SHARECITY has already collected precious data on the [amount, goals and impacts](#) of different food sharing initiatives in cities around the world. The next step of the project is to look at how the governance of today's cities actually affects food sharing initiatives: which specific laws and regulations are either hampering or enabling urban food sharing practices? What cities can learn from one another? What are the possible food governance futures for the making of more inclusive, sustainable and just urban food sharing?



As the [newest addition](#) to the SHARECITY team, I am thrilled to contribute in finding answers to these important questions! My research background is in both food and urban studies, and I have previously worked specifically on comparing the different kinds of food policy efforts developed across European cities. Despite having joined the SHARECITY team only a few weeks ago, we already have many exciting things planned for 2019! We are currently gathering data on the governance foodscapes of our case study cities and we are planning a multi-stakeholder

event focused on the future governance of sustainable urban food sharing. Our goal is to bring to the table futurists, practitioners, policy-makers, activists and researchers to map out future avenues to build effective and appropriate governance infrastructures for urban food sharing initiatives. More details and info will follow soon; stay tuned on SHARECITY to follow our research updates!

Written by Agnese Cretella, 31 January 2019

www.sharecity.ie



This publication was authored by Anna Davies and Vivien Franck of the SHARECITY research team. All or part of this publication may be reproduced without further permission provided it is acknowledged.

Please cite as: **Davies, A.R. and Franck, V. (2019) SHARECITY Bites, Department of Geography, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.**



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin



Horizon 2020
European Union funding
for Research & Innovation



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission