COME DINE WITH ME
Food sharing, health, wellbeing & sustainability

Anna Davies,
Trinity College Dublin

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FOOD SHARING THEORIES

“Humans share food unlike any other organism”

“[food sharing] reflects ... the origins of human hyper-sociality...”

“...research on food sharing has focused on food transfers ... in small-scale societies”

“the patterning and complexity of food sharing among humans is truly unique ...”

“Co-operation with social norms and free riding are key features of sharing”

Source: Kaplan and Gurven, 2001
“having a portion [of food] with another or others; giving a portion [of food] to others; using, occupying or enjoying [food and food related spaces to include the growing, cooking and/or eating of food] jointly; possessing an interest [in food] in common; or telling someone about [food].”
(Adapted from Oxford University Press, 2014)

This definition emphasises the practices and experiences of having things in common and doing things together around food, including but moving beyond commensality; the practice of eating or drinking together. Such a definition includes attention to what is shared, from raw materials (e.g. crops) to products (e.g. processed food products, tools and cooking utensils) and services, as well as capabilities (knowledge and skills) and spaces (e.g. fields, allotments, gardens, and kitchens).
FOOD SHARING PRACTICES

https://sharecity.ie/research/sharecity100-database/
PROVIDING PLACES TO GROW TOGETHER

SKIP GARDEN & KITCHEN

“... a moveable urban food growing garden in the middle of the King’s Cross development site. Amongst the rise of glass and steel buildings, it is an urban oasis in which herbs, chillies, apples, sweet potatoes and cabbages grow out of skips and planters made out of scaffold boards and other reclaimed materials.”

“... the kind of food-growing meant that there’s lots of opportunities for people to get involved and work together and get their hands in the soil and understand the seasons and share food together ... there was a hunger from people, from local communities, to take back their land and start growing food. And there’s something really powerful about growing food.”

“... it’s become a mutual dependency. You know, people coming here after a day’s work are so different after gardening, being part of the cycle again. So for mental health alone it’s worth an awful lot.”
“... All of this helps to nurture a close-knit and collaborative community, which cares about its environment and about the planet as a whole ... I work with a group of ten volunteers that are coming regularly, helping maintain the garden. They give away about a thousand hours a year of work to maintain the garden.”

“There’s a mysterious and undeniable discovery of our own soul when we start to become more connected to our food ... Working with plants is therapeutic and rewarding.”

“People pay attention to other people. They also pay attention to animals and plants. They behave in such a way that they do no harm to anyone. That's what we want in the Himmelbeet. That all face each other with respect ... Everyone works together at Himmelbeet. Working together is easier than on your own. Therefore, offer your help if someone needs help. You can accept help or friendly say "no".” [transl.]
“... when I do Twilight Gardening ... I set them a task and then I turn around and walk away and then I give them like sort of thirty seconds and suddenly they start talking and I know that I’ve won again. You know, they’ll make friends, they’ll start talking, they won’t feel lonely. You know they’ll feel part of something again. And that’s important, especially in London ... This [I, we, planet] approach provides space for people to increase awareness of self, to connect to each other and to connect to the natural world ...”

“... one can learn a lot more from each other by meeting regularly in the garden and by the joint engagement with pleasant things ... And actually one can enter into a different relationship than if you just pass by at each other on the street.” [transl.]
CULTIVATING LEARNING

“... the development of environmental and social intelligence, by providing experiential, non-formal education for sustainable development for all ages ... Organisation Earth promotes knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a better future ... by methods that motivate and empower the learners to change their behaviour and to take action...To expand our visitors’ capacity so that in their everyday activities they can identify and adopt attitudes and practices that ameliorate the planet’s future, while contributing to collective prosperity and a better quality of life”

SKIP GARDEN & KITCHEN

“ So it’s not just a garden, it’s an outdoor classroom and you use growing to teach kids about maths, geography, history. You know, it’s a very powerful tool that works extremely well with children that might not be really great inside the classroom”

“There are many books on gardening, but not one in easy language. The aim of the project is to write a book about gardening with an inclusive group that can be read by all. The project enables a group process that gives space to friendship and exchange, but also to disagreement and conflict ... The participants find solutions themselves and exchange ideas about needs and barriers.” [transl.]
FOOD SHARING: A WAY TO WELLBEING?

- **Be Active** ... Go for a walk or run. Step outside. Cycle. Play a game. Garden. Dance. Exercising makes you feel good ...

- **Keep Learning** ... Try something new. Rediscover an old interest. Learn to cook your favourite food. Learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun ...

- **Give** ... Do something nice for a friend, or a stranger. Thank someone. Smile. Volunteer your time. Join a community group. Look out, as well as in ...

- **Connect** ... With the people around you. At home, work, school or in your local community. Think of these as the cornerstones of your life, invest time in developing them ...

- **Take Notice** ... Be curious. Notice the changing seasons. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you.

- **Care for the Planet** ... look after your community and the world. Make small changes to your life that will reduce your consumption, small steps to a greener life can make a difference.

(c) SLaM  [https://livewellkent.org.uk/six-ways-wellbeing](https://livewellkent.org.uk/six-ways-wellbeing)
Fears for inner city as Bridgefoot Street community garden set to close

Residents have spoken about how much the garden has meant to their community.

Inter city Dublin is set to lose an important community garden by the end of the year, as plans are underway to transform the area with a new park.

While a community garden is included within the future plans, residents in the Bridgefoot Street area are concerned about the interim plans - and what it means for existing crops.

On December 31, the Bridgefoot Street community garden will close in its location nestled between Thomas Street, Usher Island, and Oliver Bond Street.

"We wish it wasn’t closing down": Edmonton food kitchen closure forces clients to search elsewhere for a meal, friendship

National News | September 25, 2019 by Chris Stewart Attributed to: 0 Comments

Growing pains: The Dublin community gardens under threat

As the housing crisis deepens, allotments are being earmarked for development.

City shuts down the community garden

As of June 2018, 506 Acres is no longer providing advocacy support in New York City. Our tools remain online but no staff is able to assist with crafting campaigns. Community land access advocacy continues to be done by New Yorkers - we are so glad to have contributed to shaping a movement.

CHAMPIONING RESIDENT STEWARDSHIP OF LAND

TO BUILD JUST AND EQUITABLE CITIES
Examining key challenges, and in particular recognising the central role for land use planning, a number of themes emerged which included:

- Insecure access to land due to a lack of long-term planning for shared growing spaces by planners and policy makers [Challenge 4]

- A lack of common language to communicate the positive impacts of urban growing, and shared growing, between the different stakeholders involved [Challenge 11]

- Commercial and financial interests hold significant power and are given priority when it comes to forming policy and shaping planning decisions [Challenge 14]
The groups identified a number of challenges for which they already knew of responses and explored where these took place and who was involved.

**Challenge 4: Difficulty securing land tenure**

Responses included:
- Displaying the positive impacts for public land (e.g. Amsterdam)
- Changing building codes (e.g. Oslo)
- Lawsuits & legal tools to protect land such as land trusts (e.g. USA, UK)
- Public pressure and champions for urban agriculture
- Identifying diverse spaces for growing (e.g. rooftops)

**Challenge 13: Lack of Inclusivity**

Responses included:
- Training (anti-racism) for staff (e.g. New York City)
- Preserving spaces and funds for marginalised groups to get active and self organise
- Meeting people where they are (e.g. Portland)
- Personal contact and adapting communications for different communities (e.g. language considerations)
Taking challenges for which no, or few, responses had been identified, participants brainstormed novel responses, describing them in articles for the fictional ‘Sharing Futures’ Newspaper, and thinking about the impacts of the responses. Headlines included:

**Gardenville Spared Storm Surge Disaster!**
Recognising the need for refuge and food in the city, a garden oasis was created, leading to improved health and wellbeing, community cohesion, and food production [Challenge 2].

**Green Over Grey – Locals grow their city!**
Using different communications media, citizens are able to propose vacant spaces (e.g. rooftops) to grow food in a non-bureaucratic process [Challenge 5].

**Dublin Creates Metropolitan Food Policy Council!**
A Food Policy Committee is created which is inclusive of a wide range of urban food growing stakeholders, from community growers, activists and NGOs, to academics and commercial urban growers [Challenge 7].
For the final activity, the participants considered the **next steps for action**. Suggestions and pledges included:
CONCLUSION:
Cultivating the conditions for change

For a sustainable future, we need to reconnect with what we’re eating – and each other

https://theconversation.com
Thank you

This presentation draws on research from SHARECITY, a collaborative project involving a multidisciplinary team and the participation of many food sharing initiatives internationally.

All outputs from the project are available online:
Website: http://sharecity.ie/  Twitter @ShareCityIre
Emails: daviesa@tcd.ie and sharecity@tcd.ie

Free (Open Access) book:
Urban food sharing
https://policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/urban-food-sharing