SHARE CITY
Sustainability of city-based food sharing

SHARING FUTURES

Workshop:
The Future of Food Sharing Governance

September 2019
Talent Garden Dublin

INTRODUCTION

SHARING FUTURES, a two day workshop focused on the **governance of sustainable food sharing**, took place in Dublin in September 2019. Hosted by the **SHARECITY Research Team** based in Trinity College Dublin, the workshop brought together thought leaders in urban food policy to confront the policy challenges which impact food sharing activities, and to co-create scenarios of possible future **policy systems** aimed at supporting **sustainable food sharing**.

This document is a **Facilitator's Summary** of the workshop, the outcomes of which will further inform a suite of outputs targeted at policy, practitioner and academic audiences.

The SHARECITY team also welcome opportunities to develop further collaborative writing and research with participants on issues that emerged.

SHARECITY is a European Research Council funded project exploring the practices and sustainability potential of the diverse practices of **urban food sharing** that use information and communication technologies (ICT) to mediate their sharing.

SHARECITY's research has found that food sharing activities – from the shared **growing** of community gardens, through the collaborative **cooking and eating** activities of community kitchens, to the **redistributive** work of surplus food initiatives – are experiencing daily **policy challenges** which affect their activities.

For more information on SHARECITY please visit the website www.sharecity.ie

WHAT IS 'FOOD SHARING'?

As there is no agreed definition of what constitutes 'food sharing', SHARECITY has extended a dictionary definition of sharing:

"**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]".

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.

OVERVIEW

Welcoming the participants to the workshop, Principle Investigator of SHARECITY, **Professor Anna Davies**, gave an introduction to the SHARECITY research project and its outputs to date.

Dr. Agnese Cretella, Postdoctoral Researcher with SHARECITY, outlined the ongoing research into the policy challenges surrounding urban food sharing and the emerging findings.

Dr. Stephen MacKenzie, Postdoctoral Researcher with SHARECITY, provided a virtual introduction to the SHARECITY Sustainability Assessment Tool: SHARE-IT.

Vivien Franck, Research Assistant with SHARECITY, was part of the workshop organization and facilitation and ensured the smooth running of all workshop activities.

Marion Weymes from M.CO facilitated a series of workshop activities which focused participants firstly on the policy challenges associated with food sharing, and secondly on responding to these challenges.

Professor Anna Davies,
Principle Investigator of SHARECITY

Dr. Agnese Cretella,
Postdoctoral Researcher with SHARECITY

Dr. Stephen MacKenzie,
Postdoctoral Researcher with SHARECITY

Vivien Franck, Research Assistant with SHARECITY

Marion Weymes,
M.CO

FACILITATORS   **NOTE-TAKERS**

GROWING

Vivien Franck and Ferne Edwards

COOKING & EATING

Agnese Cretella and Monika Rut

REDISTRIBUTING

Anna Davies and Oona Morrow

The participants, made up of **academics, policy shapers,** and **food sharing practitioners**, worked in groups according to their food sharing expertise for a series of workshop exercises. The three sectors of food sharing were:

➢ **Growing**
➢ **Cooking and Eating**
➢ **Redistributing**

Each group was supported through the workshop activities by current and previous members of the SHARECITY Team who acted as Facilitators and Note Takers throughout the workshop; capturing ideas and key discussion points and sharing these with the room.

KEY THEMES

Throughout the workshop a number of **key themes** emerged across the three food sharing sectors:

- Local challenges facing food sharing initiatives cannot be discussed without looking at broader issues relating to **socio-economic factors**, **class**, and **power** imbalances.

- In general it was felt that **commercial interests** have a large influence on policy, which favours **GDP** over citizen wellbeing as a guideline and measurement of success.

- **'One size fits all' policies** designed for commercial food activities are not appropriate to regulate the majority of food sharing activities.

- The **social** and **environmental benefits** of food sharing are **difficult to evaluate, quantify** and **communicate**, and are thus not assigned appropriate value in policy considerations.

- **Better quality data**, **greater visibility** and a **common language** around food sharing and related concepts are needed.

- Food is a **human right** but there is **a lack of joined up thinking** and **long term planning** when it comes to making policies that impact on shared food activities.

- **Participation is crucial** – communities need a 'seat at the table' when policies are being discussed and opportunities to input based on what is important to them.

DAY 1: CHALLENGES

Day 1 introduced the participants to the **challenges** identified by SHARECITY across the three food sharing sectors – **growing, cooking and eating**, and **redistributing** food. The workshop discussion was focused on three **key questions**:

1. What are the **biggest** policy challenges?

2. What policy challenges are **missing** from SHARECITY's list?

3. Which of these challenges have known **responses**?

Where responses were identified for these challenges, they were marked with a tick for further discussion on Day 2 of the workshop.

GROWING

The 10 key **challenges** relating to the shared growing of food in urban spaces identified by SHARECITY were:

1. Strict food safety regulations which have been developed for commercial operations
2. Lack of policy attention to the impacts of shared food growing
3. Difficulties accessing land for shared growing activities
4. Difficulties securing land tenure for shared growing activities
5. Lack of policies encouraging local government to use vacant land for shared growing
6. Privatisation of public land that could be used for shared growing activities
7. Few opportunities to influence policy that affects shared food growing
8. Public plans for shared food growing not being acted upon
9. Few policies for addressing food security
10. Policies preventing food growing in public parks and spaces

GROWING

As part of the first activity, participants involved in the shared growing of food **voted** on the challenges they felt were the biggest by using coloured stickers to reflect their primary role as an academic, policy shaper, or food sharing practitioner.

Considering the challenges identified, they suggested and discussed a number of challenges they had encountered or were aware of that were not included on SHARECITY's list, and agreed on four further challenges to be added:

11. Lack of common language between stakeholders

12. Lack of infrastructure for selling or redistributing food in shared gardens

13. Lack of policy support for inclusive participation in shared growing

14. Policy makers preoccupied with commercial food

KEY CHALLENGES

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]

COOKING & EATING

The 9 key **challenges** relating to the shared cooking and eating of food in urban spaces identified by SHARECITY were:

1. Food safety regulations preventing or limiting shared cooking and eating in public places

2. Food safety regulations making home-based shared cooking and eating activities difficult

3. Limited recognition in policy of shared cooking and eating activities and their benefits

4. Difficulties accessing affordable and culturally appropriate food for shared cooking and eating activities

5. The focus of policy on commercial food activities

6. Limited financial resources for shared cooking and eating activities

7. Heavy bureaucratic and administrative demands on shared cooking and eating initiatives

8. Difficulties dealing with policies across different government departments

9. Limited support for engaging marginalised communities around food

COOKING & EATING

Following a group discussion, it was agreed that **four challenges** should be added to the SHARECITY list:

10. Limited access to different kinds of resources for cooking and eating (e.g. space, social support, housing)

11. The focus in policy making on economics instead of on human rights

12. No common language to communicate to/with policy

13. Limited access to appropriate funding focused on equality and ethical issues around food

KEY CHALLENGES

Observations and themes which emerged in relation to a number of key challenges surrounding the shared cooking and eating of food included:

- The complex policy landscapes around food, and particularly the lack of common vocabulary about food issues, means they are difficult to navigate for new entrants such as food sharers [Challenges 3 and 12]

- The focus of policy is primarily on GDP and the needs of corporations and consumers rather than of citizens, wellbeing and human rights [Challenges 5 and 11]

- Uneven power structures in society affect marginalised communities, hindering inclusion and reinforcing race, class and gender inequalities around food [Challenge 9]

SHARING FUTURES WORKSHOP
COOKING & EATI

	Challenges	Vote 1	Vote 2
1.	Food safety regulations preventing or limiting shared cooking and eating in public places	●	
2.	Food safety regulations making home-based shared cooking and eating activities difficult	● ● ●	
3.	Limited recognition in policy of shared cooking and eating activities and their benefits	● ●	●
4.	Difficulties accessing affordable and culturally appropriate food for shared cooking and eating activities	● ●	
5.	The focus of policy on commercial food activities	● ● ● ● ● ●	● ● ●
6.	Limited financial resources for shared cooking and eating activities	● ● ● ●	
7.	Heavy bureaucratic and administrative demands on shared cooking and eating initiatives	● ● ● ●	● ● ●
8.	Difficulties dealing with policies across different government departments	●	●
9.	Limited support for engaging marginalised communities around food	● ● ● ● ●	● ● ●
10.	Limited access to different kind of resources (space, social support, housing)		● ● ● ●
11.	SWITCH PERSPECTIVE FROM ECONOMIC TO HUMAN RIGHTS (IN POLICY MAKING)		● ● ● ● ●
12.	NO SHARED/UNIFORM LANGUAGE TO COMMUNICATE TO/WITH POLICY CLARITY IN THE ARTICULATION BY POLICY REQUIRED REQUIRED		● ● ●
13.	Limited access to appropiate FUNDING (ETICHAL /EQUAL)		● ● ●
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			

● Academics
● Policy shapers
● Practitioners

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REDISTRIBUTING

The 9 key **challenges** relating to the redistribution of food identified by SHARECITY were:

1. Concerns about liability risk from redistributed food

2. Food safety regulations designed primarily for commercial activities

3. Policies constraining food redistribution and food harvesting in public places

4. Lack of statutory policies for implementing food security measures

5. Limited policy supports to promote consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables

6. Lack of joined-up actions to reduce food waste across the food system

7. Lack of access to policy makers and policy making

8. Lack of support for not-for-profit food redistribution initiatives

9. Lack of data on food consumption and food waste

REDISTRIBUTING

Following a group discussion, it was agreed that **11 challenges** should be added to the SHARECITY list:

10. Lack of incentives for food industry to redistribute surplus
11. Lack of clarity over labelling such as best before dates
12. Lack of public awareness of surplus as 'edible food' relating to social stigma
13. Lack of awareness of impacts of food waste e.g. climate change
14. Lack of policies providing fundamental basic income or services to people dealing with food poverty
15. Lack of policy recognition of social benefits of redistribution (e.g. improving social cohesion)
16. Lack of public infrastructure for redistribution
17. Lack of regulation of junk food (including surplus junk food)
18. Lack of support for meeting diverse food needs
19. Conflation of food waste and food poverty policy
20. Lack of accessible healthy food

- 🔴 Academics
- 🔵 Policy shapers
- 🟢 Practitioners

Challenges	Vote 1	Vote 2
1. Concerns about liability risk from redistributed food		
2. One-size-fits all food safety regulations designed primarily for commercial activities	✓	
3. Policies constraining food redistribution and food harvesting in public places		
4. Lack of statutory policies for implementing food security measures		
5. Limited policy supports to promote consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables		
6. Lack of joined-up actions to reduce food waste across the food system		
7. Lack of access to policy makers and policy making		
8. Lack of support for not-for-profit food redistribution initiatives		
9. Lack of data on food consumption and food waste		
10. Lack of Incentives for food Industry to redistribute surplus		
11. Lack of clarity over Best Before dates (Norway)		
12. Lack of public awareness of surplus as 'edible' food (inc. social stigma etc.)		
13. Lack of awareness of the impacts of food waste (inc. climate change)		
14. Lack of policies providing fundamental basic income /services (food poverty)		
15. Lack of policy recognition of social aspects of redistribution (eg. social cohesion)		
16. Lack of public Infrastructures for redistribution		
17. Lack of regulation of junk food (inc. surplus junk food)		
18. Lack of support for meeting diverse food needs		
19. Conflation of food waste and food poverty policy		
20. Lack of accessible healthy food		

KEY CHALLENGES

Core issues which were discussed in relation to a number of key challenges included:

- Concerns about liability with regard to food safety regulations through redistributing surplus food, which does not reflect the level of risk from the food redistributed [Challenges 1 and 2]

- A lack of joined up actions to reduce food waste across the food system and a lack of robust data in relation to food waste and food surplus [Challenges 6 and 9]

- A lack of general awareness of food surplus as edible food and a lack of awareness of the impacts of food waste (e.g. climate change) [Challenges 12 and 13]

DAY 2: SOLUTIONS

Day 2 focused on responses and solutions to the food sharing policy challenges identified by SHARECITY and those added on Day 1 of the workshop. The discussion was concentrated on three key questions:

1. Where have **responses** been developed in relation to these challenges?

2. What **new or novel responses** could help to overcome these policy challenges?

3. How can these responses be **replicated** and **scaled**?

KNOWN RESPONSES: GROWING

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 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)

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)

NOVEL RESPONSES: GROWING

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].

KNOWN RESPONSES: COOKING AND EATING

A set of challenges were considered by the group focusing on shared cooking and eating activities:

1. Food safety regulations preventing or limiting shared cooking and eating in public places

Responses included:

- Not serving **meat or fish** to reduce food safety risks

- **Ignoring policies** and starting initiatives anyway!

- Starting **broader movements** around food and the human right to food

- '**Pay as you feel**' systems (e.g. UK)

9. Limited support for engaging marginalised communities around food

Responses included:

- Initiatives focussed on including marginalised communities such as **refugees** (e.g. Berlin)

- **Funding tailored** to employing people with disabilities (e.g. UK)

- **Public participation in assigning budgets** to organisations and transparency in the process

NOVEL RESPONSES: COOKING AND EATING

Headlines and article summaries for the novel responses generated in relation to shared Cooking and Eating policy challenges included:

Community Food Action TV Launches!

A TV station is dedicated to community food activities. Initiatives can use video based reporting to apply for funding, reducing bureaucracy and leading to increased visibility [Challenge 7].

### How Toronto became 'One Big Table'

A group comes together to create shared dinners, demonstrating why a policy that encourages city-wide community gardens, kitchens and dining spaces is worth supporting [Challenge 10].

A Seat at the Table

A common language unites people, organisations and politics, meaning that everyone can be involved in participatory and accessible policy making [Challenge 12].

Food to be a Human Right by January

Citizens demand the decommercialisation of food, with corporations required by a UN agreement to give ownership to new 'food citizens' [Challenge 5].
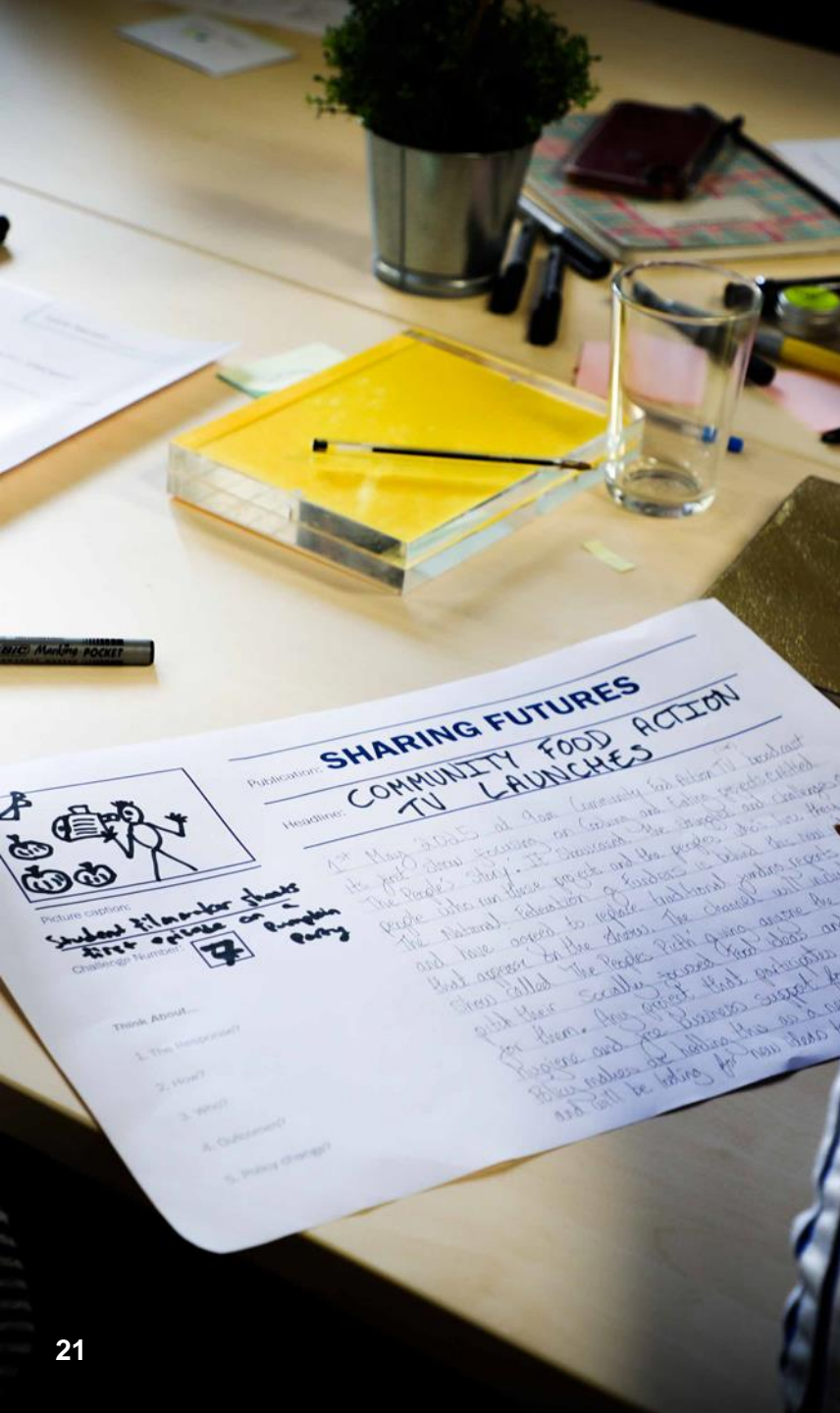
KNOWN RESPONSES: REDISTRIBUTING

A number of **responses**, including policies, processes, and initiatives were discussed in relation to the redistribution of surplus food:

10. Conflation of food waste and food poverty policy

Solutions included:

- **No discrimination** in who receives the food
- Giving people **choice** in the foods they receive

Organisations mentioned:

- OzHarvest (Australia)
- foodsharing.de (Germany)
- Real Junk Food (UK)

8 and 7. Lack of support for not-for-profit food redistribution initiatives and lack of public infrastructure for redistribution

- Government supported **platforms** for redistribution (NYC)
- **Public procurement** requirements for surplus food (e.g. Copenhagen, Rome)

1. Lack of incentives for food industry to redistribute surplus

- Solutions included **tax breaks** for businesses and organisations redistributing surplus food (e.g. USA, Italy)

NOVEL RESPONSES: REDISTRIBUTING

Headlines and article summaries for the novel responses generated in relation to food redistribution policy challenges included:

EU Unveils Scale Adapted Food Safety Regulation

New categories of food organisations – small businesses and community led initiatives – are adopted by the EU to reflect the need for tailored and appropriate policies in relation to food [Challenge 2].

Data Sharing Futures

Supermarkets are obligated to collect data in relation to food waste and food redistribution, leading to the availability of reliable data to inform policy responses [Challenge 9].

…And they're out!

New laws tackle the production of 'junk food', connecting public health, waste, and environmental policies [Challenge 17].

OVERCOMING POLICY CHALLENGES

For the final activity, the participants considered the **next steps for action**. Suggestions and pledges included:

- Personal Action – research local authority food policies in my areas
- Create umbrella lobby group for grassroots food sharing
- Demonstrate and communicate the social and ecological value of shared growing
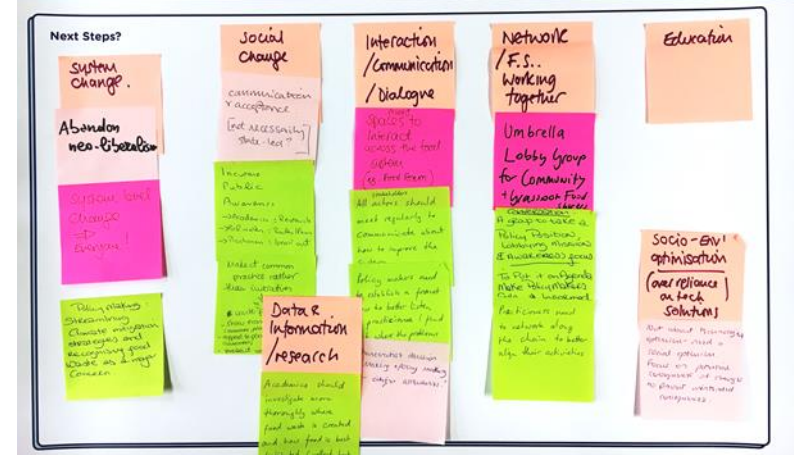- Academics should develop metrics for food sharing
- Lobby policy makers to be more participatory
- Change policies to recognise food waste as a climate concern
- Academics should focus more on race and gender in relation to food
- Personal action – run for office!
- Highlighting stories of successful initiatives

THANK YOU!

A huge **thank you** to everyone who volunteered their time, experiences and insights throughout the **SHARING FUTURES** workshop. Your input is invaluable to the SHARECITY Project.

All research outputs can be found at www.sharecity.ie and you can be kept up to date on the project through our social media accounts.

SHARE CITY

Sustainability of city-based food sharing