

In action



Joining forces to shape a resilient,
sustainable, safe & healthy food system!

March 2022

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In a foreword

Dear readers,

2 If we want to achieve the transition of our food systems, it is time to advocate also for a shift towards approaches that can foster sustainable and resilient food environments that promotes and facilitates the consumption of healthy diets. In most of the countries of the world, today current food environments are not making most of the time sustainable and healthy food choices the easiest one. Unhealthy diet is a major risk factor for chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer. To achieve food systems transition we need to transform the way we design food policies. Food environments are progressively at the core of debates about food systems change. In this edition of In Action we want to introduce the “sustainable food environments” approach and concrete cases to mainstream it as we think that it could bring an added value to foster the transition of food systems and integrate sustainable development planning and policy interventions. Having healthy food available and affordable in food retail and food service settings allows people to make healthier food choices. In this sense, when healthy foods are not available, people may settle for foods that are higher in calories and lower in nutritional value. Creating enabling food environments means ensuring that foods, beverages and meals that contribute to sustainable healthy diets are the most available, accessible, affordable, pleasurable and widely promoted. Such environments can help to make the healthy and sustainable choice the most desirable choice, while limiting the availability and promotional opportunities for foods associated with unhealthy and unsustainable diets. Sustainable food environments, furthermore, drive demand for better supply chains that takes into account also rural-urban linkages and ecological concerns.

This concept has been already adopted by a large number of leading organizations and incorporated in a number of public policy initiatives, such as the European Union’s (EU) Farm to Fork Strategy.



WUWM believes that wholesale markets are amid the pillars to enhance healthy and sustainable food environments. By ensuring adequate volumes and a large diversity of fresh food – and particularly fruits and vegetables- wholesale markets enable daily availability of fresh produce in retail shops, markets, schools, professional and public canteens, restaurants... making that healthy food choices become the easiest, most attractive and affordable ones to citizens. Food environments are also the recognition that food systems are not only about food production, but food consumption place also a fundamental role in shaping them. It is crucial to design strategies that can support citizens in making healthy and sustainable food choices that will also impact how food is produced. In this edition we are pleased to share the voice of different experts on this topic and some concrete examples on how to develop sustainable food environments.

We are also glad to introduce WUWM participation in important events such as the 12th meeting of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste and the Closing Event of the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables 2021. We also had the opportunity to talk with Lawrence Haddad, Executive Director of GAIN, about the recent MOU that WUWM has signed with GAIN.

Finally, we want to make a call to our members to build on the momentum of the policy developments and activities emerging from our partnerships to promote wholesale markets as part of the solution to climatic and health challenges. Once again, thank you for your continuous support and engagement in the transition to sustainable food systems.

Yours sincerely,

Stephane Layani,
WUWM Acting Chairman

Involved:



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF
FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
2021

WUWM was part of the official Closing Event of the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables (2021)

The closing ceremony of the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables (IYFV) 2021 took place on February 24, in an online format. Major organizations of the sectors, experts and stakeholders of the fresh food sector were present at the event to celebrate the achievements of the year by presenting the activities undertaken in 2021, their outcomes and impacts.

By declaring 2021 our International Year of Fruit and Vegetables, the United Nations drew attention to their critical contribution. The IYFV achieved to bring greater awareness to the importance of eating healthy fruits and vegetables; reducing waste and promoting sustainable food systems. Fruits and vegetables are the foundation of a healthy and diversified diet rich in nutrients. Yet, three billion people around the world cannot afford a healthy diet, and 2 million are overweight or obese. Mr. QU Dongyu, FAO's Director-General, made a call to continue to work to create partnerships and initiatives to foster concrete actions to improve fruits and vegetables consumption worldwide.

During the panel discussion, different actors of the food and vegetable presented the achievements of the year. Ms. Patricia Araya, IYFV Chair, highlighted the magnitude of the campaign: "More than 2000 people registered for this virtual event, more than 70 posts in different languages were spread through the main social media channels, reaching 47 million accounts». It was also discussed the importance of awareness of the sustainability of agriculture and diets, which is commonly neglected by the general population.

Some producers, small business owners, and private companies from around the world share how their innovative projects contribute to the consumption of fruits and vegetables. One of the panelists was Ms. Sylvia Kuria, a Kenyan young farmer who shared her experience in the organic movement and growing fruits and vegetables. Ms. Kuria pointed out that in order to include young people in producing and consuming healthy food, it is important to exploit their current interest in knowing where their food is coming from. And especially, encourage them to harvest native vegetables, because those have shown to be more resilient during the devastating effects of climate change. Finally, Ms. Kuria emphasized the need to focus on the retail and logistic aspects of the food chain. According to her, the focus has been on production, but they need guarantees that there will be markets with the capacity to distribute accessible and affordable organic food.

"We need to continue the efforts to promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables."

The conclusion of the event was centered on the importance of developing strong policy regulating fruits and vegetables consumption. As well, as the need to continue the efforts to promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables.

The World Union of Wholesale Markets reaffirms our commitment to promote fresh and nutritious diets worldwide. As one of the major suppliers of healthy diets, wholesale markets play an essential role in guaranteeing food security and accessibility to fresh products in urban areas. Therefore, we are happy to continue advocating for accessible, diversified, affordable, nutritious and healthy diets for all.





In the loop:

WUWM took part in the 12th meeting of the European Union Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste to boost the Union actions to reduce food waste!

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WUWM participated, for the first time as a permanent member of the platform, in the 12th meeting of the "European Union Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste" aiming to share with the members an update on the implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy and European Union (EU) actions to reduce food loss and waste, held by the European Commission on February 17th. We are pleased to present you some of the conclusions discussed in the meeting.



In order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), especially the target of climate neutrality by 2050, the European Union (EU) launched the European Green Deal with its landmark Farm to Fork and Biodiversity strategies. The Farm to fork strategy marks the beginning of a progress aiming to change the way EU agriculture operators produce and provides food for consumers. The program seeks to overhaul the EU's food system to make it fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly.

The EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste aim is to foster action to achieve the goals of the Farm to the Fork via the constitution of thematic sub-groups that will operate in the next five years developing ideas for prioritized areas of work. During the meeting the EU established the main objectives and deliverables of the sub-groups: Food donation, Food loss and waste monitoring, Consumer food waste prevention, date marking and Action & Implementation.

In her opening statement, Commissioner Stella Kyriakides emphasised that the platform aims to bring everyone to the table to build a momentum to fight food waste and its impacts on the environment, climate and society. The platform will allow to build a common methodology for measuring food waste levels at each stage of the food chain. This is particularly important, because without an accurate picture of the challenge, we can not hope to tackle it". In this regards this initiative could be scaled up at global level in the future.

"The platform aims to bring everyone to the table to build a momentum to fight food waste and its impacts on the environment, climate and society"

— Commissioner Stella Kyriakides

The platform will be used as another tool of to the Farm to the Fork strategy, which is the EU long term vision to transform how we produce, distribute and consume food. So far the the Farm to the Fork strategy has produce two main deliverables: the EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices and the contingency plan for ensuring food supply and food security. Many European companies, and also WUWM, have adopted the Code of conduct,

which shows their commitment to change the food system through tangible actions such as: reformulation of food products, reducing environmental food print and reducing food loss and waste. The Commission presented other the actions, besides the Farm to fork strategy, that EU is taking to reduce food loss and waste (FLW):

- Primary production: the Commission is ensuring the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) is aligned with the Food Loss and Waste (FLW) prevention programs.
- Food hygiene registration 2021: the Commission is adapting policies that facilitate the safe redistribution of food donation
- Food marking: the Commission is working on an impact assessment on how date marking impacts on consumers

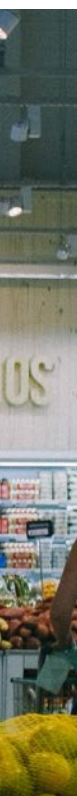
WUWM has been actively engaged from the beginning in the development and implementation of the Farm to Fork Strategy by being part of the permanent task force to design the EU Code of Conduct for Responsible Business and Marketing. We will continue supporting the EU strategy by sharing the experience and data collected by our members; providing input and comments to current and future policies and legislations, and contributing to the Commission goals. WUWM aligns with the core values of the strategy and through the efforts of our members and allies in the field, WUWM is committed to contributing to support the transition to sustainable food systems across the globe!

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In facts:

- An unhealthy diet is a major risk factor for chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer.
- Limited access to healthy food options contribute to unhealthy diet.
- Having healthy food available and affordable in food retail and food service settings allows people to make healthier food choices. When healthy foods are not available, people may settle for foods that are higher in calories and lower in nutritional value.
- Creating and supporting healthy food environments is an important part of public health work.
- The World Health organization (WHO) urged Member States to reduce the impact of the marketing of energy-dense, highly processed foods and beverages that are high in saturated fats, trans fats, free sugars and/or salt (HFSS).
- There is unequivocal evidence that HFSS food marketing has a harmful impact on eating behaviours and body weight and obesity, nevertheless implementation of the WHO Set of Recommendations has been patchy.
- "Marketing regulations" should cover not only advertising but all other commercial communications that are designed to promote, or have the effect of promoting HFSS foods.

"Having healthy food available and affordable in food retail and food service settings allows people to make healthier food choices."





Insightful:



Thomas Forster, from UN Habitat introduces the “Urban-rural linkages” Program and Guidelines, designed to create food environments, thought by strengthening the relationship between rural and urban areas.

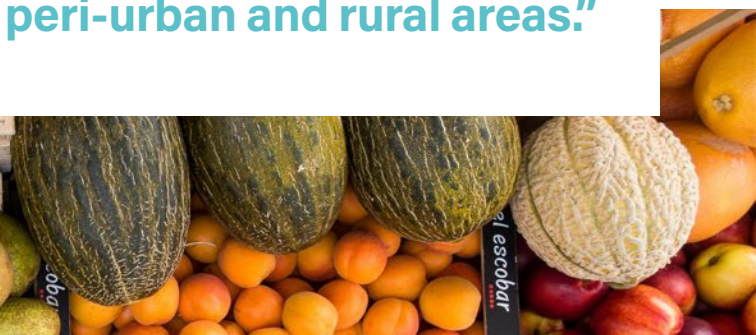
Could you briefly introduce the “Urban-Rural Linkages programme”?

The United Nations Programme for Human Settlements (UN-Habitat) created the Urban-Rural Linkages (URLs) Program in 2019 with the launch of the Urban-Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles and Framework for Action to Advance Integrated Territorial Development or URL-GP at the UN-Habitat Assembly. This framework of principles and actions was the product of the work of 40 organisations and more than 130 stakeholders over a year. The URL-GP is a resource along with companion learning tools and compendia of good practices to help governments at all levels to integrate sustainable development planning and policy interventions for urban, peri-urban and rural areas. This platform and related work streams are designed to support implementation of SDG 11 calling for sustainable urbanization and target 11.a calling for integrating planning for sustainable development across the urban-rural continuum. The URL-GP can be found in multiple languages on the Urban-Rural Program webpages in the Urban Policy Platform managed by the Policy, Legislation and Governance section of UN-Habitat.

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In both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda, it was established the importance of taking into account the multiple linkages and impacts that urban activities have on nearby and distant rural areas. The growing urban demand in combination with globalised supply chains and trade, is affecting the local availability of resources in distant areas of the world. To succeed in a sustainable transition of our food systems it is crucial to develop new and inclusive approaches that integrates the urban and rural communities and spaces, where no one is left behind. WUWM interviewed Thomas Foster, Senior Consultant of Urban-Rural Linkages at UN-Habitat, specialist of this topic and coordinating author for “Urban-Rural Linkages: Guiding Principles” (URL-GP) UN manual” that sets the guidelines, tools and compendia of good practices to help governments to integrate sustainable development planning and policy interventions for urban, peri-urban and rural areas.

“The URL is a resource to help governments at all levels to integrate sustainable development planning and policy interventions for urban, peri-urban and rural areas.”





An important part of your work focuses on highlighting the importance of creating better linkages between rural and urban areas for guaranteeing sustainable food systems. Could you explain to us why it is important to establish these connections and what is their relationship with food security?

Food systems by definition include both food producers and consumers and are thus both rural and urban. The foods that provision rural communities, town and all sizes of cities are predominantly produced in rural areas. In a rapidly urbanizing planet, urban areas are where the majority of food consumers reside. Hunger and food insecurity are rising in both rural and urban areas. In the recent evolution of market systems rural and urban areas have become less directly connected as food supply chains have become longer. However, in many countries, especially the low and middle income countries, the availability of food in informal and farmers markets where the connections between rural and urban communities is more direct, has been and still is a major factor in urban and rural food security. With increasing vulnerability of supply chains due to climate change and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, short supply chains that connect urban consumers and rural producers more directly are an important component of not only food security, but food system resilience.

How can we integrate the concept of “urban-rural linkages” with “sustainable food environments” framework? And if so how do you think that this should be translated at a policy level?

Food environments have come to be understood as including both built and natural environments, or both urban and rural environments. The food environment includes both the consumer interface with the food system in their urban and per-urban neighbourhoods and the productive environment of wild and cultivated species that are managed by farmers. Food environments span the urban-rural continuum. Sustainable food environments are also the spatial dimension of territorial ecosystems that are influenced by daily flows of people, goods, services, money and information that define urban-rural linkages. Policies that impact these flows are also impacting food

environments and can support sustainable, inclusive and resilient flows across the urban-rural continuum. There are new frameworks and policy tools being applied to address food environments that need healthy ecosystems to produce sustainable diets for both urban and rural communities.

You have pointed out on multiple occasions the importance of implementing informed public food policies. Could you explain what you mean by this and could you share one or two examples where informed public policies have positively affected food production and consumption?

Policy decisions should be informed by science-based evidence and good data wherever possible. In addition, policy to address the complex and changing conditions in both urban and rural areas, also needs to be informed by local contexts, histories and political economies. This “territorial intelligence” needs to be brought into policy spaces through inclusive processes that engage stakeholders in different parts of the food system, from producers to processors and distributors, market actors and levels of government. One example of multistakeholder policy mechanisms is the creation of food councils in recent years, found in many cities and other levels of government in developed countries. Food councils and multistakeholder mechanisms supported by policy have helped inform and co-manage public programs including public markets.

“With increasing vulnerability of supply chains due to climate change and COVID-19 short supply chains that connect urban consumers and rural producers are an important component for food security and food system resilience.”

What is the role of wholesale markets in ensuring linkages between rural and urban areas? And in your opinion, what can we do to improve their contribution?

Market systems are located at the intersection of urban-rural flows, and not only for food, but for other non-food services as well. Wholesale markets and their kindred hubs and distribution centers are critical infrastructure in market systems, without which there would only be the large vertical supply chains that do not use wholesale markets and the informal/farmers markets. Wholesale markets aggregate food products produced by many farmers of all scales. The access to wholesale markets may be challenging for smaller producers due to low prices, very tight margins and intermediary buyers' price controls. However, with the right policy mix of incentives and regulation, transparency, true cost accounting, and balancing the playing field so small and medium food enterprises

can be competitive, wholesale markets are a critical intersection of rural and urban sides of food systems around the world.

The mix of policy incentives that are needed for inclusive, resilient and safe wholesale markets will come from different levels of governance (municipal, subnational and national) in different countries. Municipal policy is usually where land-use zoning, capital improvements, public procurement and regulations governing the interactions of wholesale, retail and informal markets are generated. Regional or territorial governments can support access to markets for small to medium food producers and provide incentives ranging from technical and business development support for investment in cold chain, distribution, and processing infrastructure. National policy and investments can recognize and help coordinate the multi-level governance support for wholesale markets as core components of market systems, supplying both retail and informal markets and in some cases hybrid markets in one space. At each level of governance, blended private and public financing to strengthen markets systems should be a target in sustainable development and climate action planning across the urban-rural continuum.

“At each level of governance, blended private and public financing to strengthen markets systems should be a target in sustainable development and climate action planning.”

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In Focus:

Learn how the “Market Cities” Project and the “Livable Cities” Program” are bringing to the table cutting-edge strategies to foster sustainable food environments!

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Following the launch of the “Urban Rural Linkages Guiding Principles (URLGP)”, UN-Habitat has been organizing multiples series of events and webinars with experts aiming to understand more concretely how to foster sustainable food environments and strengthen urban-rural linkages. A first series of webinars was organized to identify key action points to provide effective responses to handle the connection issues between rural and urban areas during the Covid-19 pandemic. These responses include locally grounded interventions, integrated policies, social protection measures, and evidence-based responses. A second round of webinars was then organized to share more in detail, and exchange ideas and perspectives about concrete and effective projects that could be scaled up. The “Market Cities” project was amid the projects that were presented, and we wanted to introduce it to our lectors. We had the pleasure to talk with two of the experts of the Market Cities project coordinators: Kelly Verel, Senior Director, Programs at Projects for Public Spaces, and Kristie Daniel, Program Director, Livable Cities at HealthBridge Foundation.

Kelly Verel, Senior Director, Programs at Projects for “Public Spaces”

Could you briefly introduce the “Project for Public Spaces” and particularly the “Market Cities” Program?

Founded in 1975, the “Project for Public Spaces” is an international urban design and planning non-profit based in New York, NY, USA. We put community participation at the center of everything we do, from placemaking partnerships with corporations and foundations to our workshops, trainings, conferences, and more. Our interdisciplinary team has helped over 3,500 communities in 52 countries create inclusive places that change our society for the better.

The “Project for Public Spaces” developed the concept for the “Market Cities” Program in 2014. A partnership with Health Bridge Foundation and Slow Food International was formalized in early 2019 to develop the program together. Evolving out of Project for Public Spaces’ Public Markets Program, which dates back to 1987, the Program builds on over 30 years of international work, including projects with individual clients in more than 70 communities to develop new public fresh food markets and revitalize historic public markets.

The Market Cities Program is based on the idea that successful public markets help build communities rooted in well-being and equitable opportunity. We believe that public fresh food markets are ideal platforms for supporting regional food systems. Markets can improve regional food economies and strengthen local communities if they are provided with the appropriate organisation and support. That’s why we want to strengthen the regional systems behind the markets, connecting and supporting a diverse set of stakeholders through research, specialized training, and a network of peers.

“Markets can improve regional food economies and strengthen local communities if they are provided with the appropriate organisation and support.”

Can you share with us a few examples of successful “Market Cities» projects and what can we learn from them?

When we developed the Seven Principles of Becoming a “Market City” in 2019 we wanted to set a high but achievable standard for cities to strive for. No singular city entirely meets these seven principles, but there are cities that serve as strong examples, including Barcelona, Spain, and London, UK. We had the pleasure of hosting our International Public Markets Conferences in both cities (Barcelona in 2015 and London in 2019) and each city was selected to co-present because they viewed their public markets as a system, which is at the heart of our Market Cities Program.

Barcelona is world-famous for its markets, but what drew us there was the chance to showcase a market system that has benefited from massive infrastructure investment and is beloved by residents. London, while home to several historic markets, was just beginning to think of their public markets in a systematic way, but we were excited that Mayor Sadiq Khan not only recognized the value of London’s 200+ markets, he was investing in their potential through research, the formation of a London Market Board, the development of an economic opportunity program for new vendors, and financial support for market programming.

Since launching the Program in 2019, we have piloted three Market Cities projects in the United States and Canada, focusing on surveying, analysis, and mapping. These three cities are in the early to middle stages now of understanding the gaps and opportunities facing their market system, which is the first step of becoming a Market City.

We have seen that all the projects are developed with a multi-stakeholder approach: could you briefly speak about who are the typical partners of a Market Cities project? And why is it important for Market Cities to have diverse partners and stakeholders?

As mentioned above, Project for Public Spaces puts community engagement at the heart of what we do and the Market Cities Program is no different—in fact, collaboration is one of our Market Cities’ Seven Principles. The obvious stakeholders in a Market Cities project are public market managers and operators, vendors, and customers, but equally important for collaboration are city and state policymakers, public health institutions, small business advocates, and others. To become a Market City you need these other partners in order to establish policies and programs that maximize the financial health and community benefits of public market systems.

What is the role that markets play in ensuring sustainable food environments? And how is this related to access to healthy diets and safe food?

Public markets provide many benefits to the communities they serve, including promoting public health and supporting urban-rural linkages. Many markets, especially fresh food markets, are direct-to-consumer venues for local and regional farmers. These markets not only allow farmers the ability to get more money for their goods, but they encourage diversity and innovation in goods and products. Customers visit these markets to experience something out of the ordinary, and as a result, many farmers grow produce and/or raise animals that may not be viable in a conventional marketplace where homogeneity is a high priority.





We, at the Market Cities Program, do not pretend to be experts in wholesale markets (that's why we're grateful for WUWM) but, we welcome more opportunities for dialogue and learning. For example, we are excited about forthcoming research from the FAO Investment Centre, which found that wholesale food markets have served as key infrastructure during the pandemic, providing safe access to local products at fair prices while securing the food supply of cities and regions. Furthermore, their research found that countries that had organized and upgraded wholesale food market infrastructure networks, like France, Italy, and Spain, demonstrated a high capacity to deal with disrupting challenges while supporting traditional sectors and local production. For these reasons and more wholesale markets need to be seen as crucial stakeholders in a city's Market Cities strategy.

Do you think that WUWM could propel the Market Cities Program? If yes, in which ways could we foster action together?

The Market Cities Program is excited about the possibility of finding ways to work with WUWM! Our Program achieves its mission by working with cities on model projects, hosting events including training, conferences, and webinars, and providing connections and support to public market leaders through our newsletter, resource library, and other activities.

For each and every one of these activities, there is a role for wholesale markets to play. Our model projects would be strengthened through greater participation from local wholesale market leaders. Our events could feature wholesale market sessions and speakers. And, our newsletter and resource library could feature stories, research, and toolkits for and by wholesale market leaders.

One specific and exciting opportunity coming up is our 11th International Public Markets Conference to be held in 2023. We hope to announce the location later this year, but our finalists are Baltimore, Maryland in the United States, Guadalajara, Jalisco in Mexico, and Toronto, Ontario in Canada. All three cities benefit from their regional wholesale markets which could play an important role in the upcoming conference.

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Public markets are also excellent spaces to encourage healthy eating and behaviors in a way that is less intimidating than a doctor's office or hospital. Public health partners love to interact with the public in markets because they can make a direct connection between the consumption of fresh foods and improved health outcomes in a friendly atmosphere. In some countries, public market leaders have expanded on this through incentive programs, which increase the amount of money lower-income customers have to spend on fresh food, thereby making the healthier option more affordable. In the Global South, public markets, including informal and formal markets, might be the only source of fresh, healthy, and affordable food. In these locations, it is vital that these public markets have the funding and management capacity they need to be safe sources of food. For these reasons, resilience is another of our Market Cities' Principles. Our Program advocates for the development of distribution networks that prioritize and support healthy, affordable, and safe food, as well as other goods produced in the region.

What is in your opinion the role of wholesale fresh food markets could work in Market Cities? Can you share some successful examples?

Wholesale food markets play a pivotal role in facilitating the efficient exchange of food and goods, yet wholesale markets are often overlooked precisely because they are not visible to most consumers—they tend to be located on the outskirts of cities and some even require special permission to enter. However, they are vital in many countries around the world because the vendors at consumer-facing markets are often resellers who get their goods from wholesale markets. Without wholesale markets, cities will struggle to be resilient because they are so crucial to the distribution of goods.

“Without wholesale markets, cities will struggle to be resilient because they are so crucial to the distribution of goods.”

Kristie Daniel,

Program Director, Livable Cities at HealthBridge Foundation



Could you briefly introduce the Livable Cities Program?

The HealthBridge Livable Cities Program works with local groups in low and middle-income countries to improve the livability of cities through equitable access to healthy transportation, healthy foods, and parks and public spaces. Local public markets are a key area where we focus on conducting research to better understand local context, organize pilot projects as a way of demonstrating what is possible, providing capacity building workshops to communities and officials, and advocating for the adoption of policies to be put into action. We currently have projects in nine countries and 19 cities.

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Your organisation has conducted multiple studies regarding city planning. Based on your findings, what role did fresh food markets play in improving the livability of cities?

Fresh food markets are critical to the livability in cities and contribute to many Sustainable Development Goals. Markets obviously provide the spaces in the community where people can access healthy, fresh, and often local food. As a health organization, this is very important if we want to reduce non-communicable diseases. But local food markets are also an important source of income for many formal and informal vendors in cities. And, markets are known for supporting a more circular economy where the funds spent at the market are re-distributed in the community. Markets are often the places in the community where residents can gather, meet their neighbours and develop social connections. These connections are critical in times of disaster. So markets play a critical role in the livability of cities.

Our research has focused on understanding the transportation environment, the park environment and the food environment. In terms of the food environment, the role of markets is obvious. But what is particularly noteworthy is that a variety of markets is key to a healthy food environment. A study we conducted in Nepal showed that the city needed the mobile vendors, the permanent markets, and the semi-permanent markets in order to ensure walkable access for all residents. However, our work on transportation and public spaces also has an important link to food markets. In many cities around the world, both informal vendors and more formal farmers' markets are located in public spaces. For cities experiencing spatial inequalities in terms of market access, they can turn to public spaces to help fill those gaps.

For our research in transportation, markets are key destination for residents. So when we conduct transportation studies, we try and understand the street network surrounding markets as that will determine whether walking or cycling to a market is even possible. In addition, our studies try and identify ways that informal food vendors can be better supported within the street network so they don't block pedestrian traffic while at the same time providing their essential service.

What are the main challenges cities face to build inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and communities in the area of food governance?

The first challenge is that cities don't always understand the asset they have with their local markets. Many cities are unable to tell us exactly where the markets are located, how many there are, and what is their quality. If you don't understand your assets and what might be missing, it is challenging to develop comprehensive policy. This is why we always start with situational assessment research, which includes the policy environment, in order to fully understand what is happening in a city.





I also believe that many cities don't focus on looking at community food security in a wholistic way. Many governments at all levels focus almost exclusively on the supply side of food security and give little thought or attention to the distribution side. But as we have seen in the pandemic, making sure that food can be distributed is equally as important. Such wholistic thinking is going to become critical as we experience more disruptions as a result of climate change.

“Many governments at all levels focus almost exclusively on the supply side of food security and give little thought or attention to the distribution side.”

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Lastly, I would suggest that that the silos that are often present within governments act as a barrier to building liveable cities. Food policy is often under the purview of various government departments that don't speak to one another. Just as with public spaces such as parks, markets need to be part of both urban and transportation planning. The space needs to be saved for local public markets in urban plans and transportation plans need to ensure that the markets themselves are easily accessible. But in many places, they are often an afterthought, if they are thought of at all. Most cities have some sort of policy around food safety but many cities don't have comprehensive plans relate to food security. Producing food often falls under Ministries of Agriculture who may not speak to the urban and transportation planners. So dealing with jurisdictional issues becomes really important and ensuring that all of these departments and ministries speak to one another is important.

Can you share a few examples of how food markets can have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of people in vulnerable situations?

Local public markets help create healthy environments that encourage healthy eating. As low and middle-income countries experience the nutrition transition, whereby local traditional foods are being replaced with energy-dense, highly processed foods, the role of markets has become increasingly important. In order to eat healthy diets, people must be able to easily access healthy foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, at affordable prices. Local markets are the main distributor of healthy foods in many cities throughout the world and are particularly important for those living in poverty. The poor rely on markets in order to be able to buy smaller quantities, negotiate lower prices and request credit opportunities.

In addition, local public markets are important for the livelihood of traders and small local retail business. Local public markets are hospitable for small traders, especially when compared to shopping centres that favour larger businesses. In many countries local public markets are a source of employment for women. For example, there are an estimated 125,000 informal traders in Hanoi and approximately 59% of them are women. Local public markets are also important for women in their socially ascribed role as primary providers for families. Low- and middle-income consumers rely on traditional markets close to their homes to satisfy their need for locally available fresh food at affordable prices. As more and more women enter the paid workforce, the existence of markets close to home has been a major benefit as they juggle their daily responsibilities as workers and primary carers for families.

What are the most common challenges food markets face in terms of accessibility? And what is the role of wholesale markets in supporting healthy food environments?

Our research has identified two major challenges related to accessibility of food markets. The first is related to the transportation network within cities. Many markets are located in neighbourhoods but the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure that takes people from home to the market is poor. This is especially problematic for people living with a disability. Poor quality or non-existent sidewalks or footpaths are difficult, if not impossible, for someone living with a mobility or visual disability. This is often a problem both to access the market as well as within the market itself.

The second major challenge is what we refer to as the “spatial inequality of markets”. We want people to have easy access to healthy fresh food, which means that markets should be within walkable distance to where people live. Walkability research suggests that in most places “walkable” is 400 m to 800 m or a five to 10-minute walk. Many cities don’t have enough physical markets that would give everyone walkable access. This is where wholesale markets can play an important role. In those cities that are unable to add farmers’ markets or a physical market, informal and mobile vendors can help fill the gap. But these vendors purchase small quantities and are often large in number. This makes it difficult for farmers to work directly with them and puts the informal vendors at a disadvantage in terms of negotiating prices. Wholesale markets are much better positioned to work with these informal vendors.

“Local markets are the main distributor of healthy foods in many cities throughout the world and are particularly important for those living in poverty.”

Today, we speak a lot about food security in the forthcoming decades, and how can we foster the transition of food systems through better eating patterns. Do you think changing the ways we build or live the cities could propel the transition? Can you share some insights on how to do this?

How cities are built can absolutely help propel us to a more food secure world. One of the things that the pandemic showed us was how important it is for people to be able to access what they need close to home. During the pandemic we didn’t want people travelling all over the city. That means when city planning is underway, we need to consider where people are going to access food. Most urban planning considers where workplaces, schools and institutions are located. Food also needs to be part of that discussion and part of that planning.

Despite the many important roles that markets play in communities, there is a trend in many low and middle-income countries to close local public markets and replace them with supermarkets and not build new markets in the expanding areas of the city. This is having a negative health impact because supermarkets, especially in developing countries, tend to sell predominantly highly processed foods that are low in nutritional value. The changing food environment is impacting what food is both available and accessible in communities. The type of outlets selling food, such as local markets, small stores and supermarkets, have a large amount of control over what food is accessible, available and affordable and are very influential in determining the food choices people are able to make.

Although there are policies that can make heavily processed foods less attractive and this includes measures such as taxation policy, such policies are only part of the solution. In public health, we refer to the need to “make the healthy choice the easy choice.” Markets play a really important role in ensuring that the healthy choice is the easiest choice. So, if we reimagine our cities to ensure that markets are considered assets that contribute to health, livelihoods, social connections, and resilience we’ll be more likely to prioritize them.





“Wholesale markets offer vital levers to ensuring food quality, safety and reduced food loss and waste – all of which are essential to the health and well-being of people and planet.”

Interview with Lawrence Haddad

15 **Executive Director of GAIN, about the recent MOU which they just signed with WUWM**

WUWM) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) on February 1st, 2022. This new partnership seeks to improve the resilience of traditional fresh food retail markets, in Asia and Africa. We had the opportunity to exchange with Lawrence Haddad, the Executive Director of GAIN, about the organization, GAIN projects and how he thinks that this MOU could help to foster sustainable food environments.

Could you briefly introduce GAIN to the readers of this newsletter?

‘GAIN’ is short for the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. We are a Swiss-based foundation working to improve the consumption of nutritious and safe food for all, especially those most vulnerable to hunger and malnutrition. We have offices in five countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and four in South and Southeast Asia, as well

as representative offices in Switzerland, Netherlands, United Kingdom and USA. Across global fora, in-country and within cities, we implement projects on the ground and engage intensively in policy processes. We work in partnership with like-minded organisations, and very often bridge public and private sectors.

Can you tell us about the projects that GAIN is carrying out to promote at local level the transition of food systems? In which countries are they being implemented and what results have they obtained so far?

GAIN is currently working on over 100 projects! Our closest partnerships with city and county administrations are located in: Addis Ababa (Ethiopia); Kiambu and Machakos (Kenya); Dar es Salaam (Tanzania); Beira and Pemba (Mozambique); Rawalpindi and Peshawar (Pakistan); Dhaka (Bangladesh), and Surabaya (Indonesia). In these cities, for example, we have: refurbished fresh produce markets, helped establish multi-stakeholder planning and governance fora as well as local food system monitoring systems, and we have worked together with policymakers to co-design options to keep food systems functioning during Covid-19. Together with the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact and RUAF (Hivos) we also manage a city to city, knowledge sharing platform, Food Action Cities (www.foodactioncities.org). This puts inspiration, experience and resources, from cities who are working towards reshaped, resilient food environments for all, in the hands of decisionmakers, across the world, via their mobile phones or computers.

What are the observations that GAIN could make about the link between street food markets and ensuring «sustainable food environments»?

Food environments are where food and people meet. Our analyses show that for many low-income households in Africa and Asia, “traditional” and/or “municipal” food markets are key places where vendors and consumers engage – making food accessible, earning income, sharing knowledge and purchasing food. These markets particularly provide access to fresh food, such as vegetables, fruits, and animal-source foods. As these are precisely the foods that contribute most vitamins and minerals to the diets of these consumers, GAIN’s market resilient projects have an emphasis on efficiency, food safety, sustainability and governance.

What goals does GAIN hope to achieve by partnering with WUWM?

By partnering with WUWM, GAIN hopes to combine our expertise in nutrition and lower-income settings with WUWM’s expertise in... markets! We hope to promote more investments in markets in Africa and Asia, jointly develop better governance and operations models for important markets in those settings, and to share our learnings more widely.

In your view, what is the role that wholesale markets can play to foster the transition of our food systems into more sustainability, availability and accessibility?

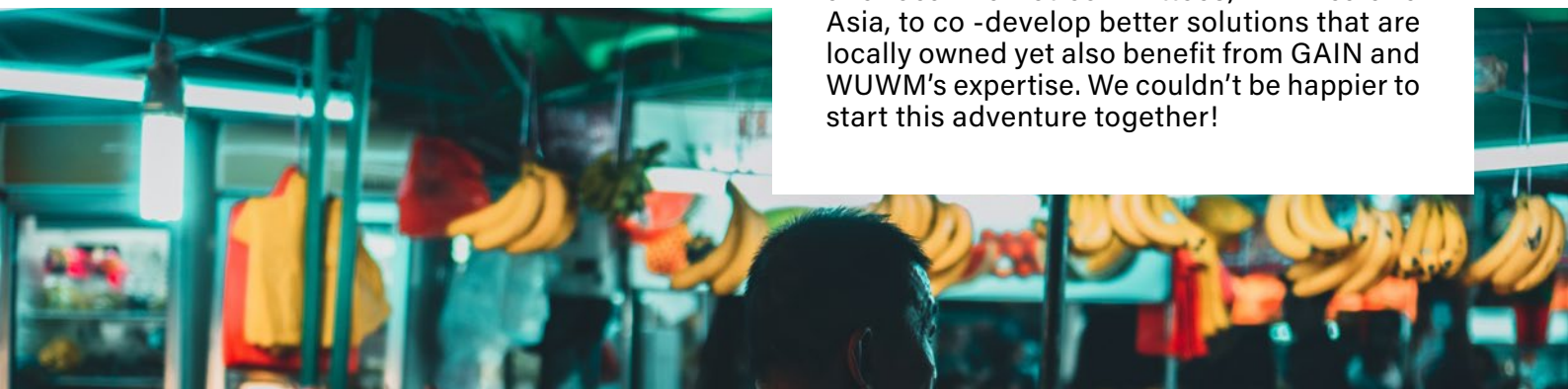
Wholesale markets are a key food distribution node, particularly in urban food environments. They efficiently connect with the wider food system, bringing a variety of food physically closer to urban communities. These markets supply food to neighbourhood retail markets, and to a whole range of vendors

“By partnering with WUWM, GAIN hopes to combine our expertise in nutrition and lower-income settings with WUWM’s expertise in markets.”

and prepared food outlets. Wholesale markets influence local food prices and as such these markets play an important role in making safe and nutritious foods more affordable. Furthermore, wholesale markets offer vital levers to ensuring food quality, safety and reduced food loss and waste – all of which are essential to the health and well-being of people and planet. Finally, they can model good governance and operational management for other smaller retail markets, including the use of renewable energy.

Do you think that GAIN and WUWM joining forces can be a game changer into improving in a concrete way at local level food systems and promote healthier diets for the most vulnerable populations? If yes, in which ways?

Yes! Markets in Africa and Asia are beset by governance challenges, especially to the detriment of those who suffer most from hunger and malnutrition. When these markets don’t work well and people are excluded through various barriers from enjoying markets’ social, economic and health value, the ensuing impacts include increased vulnerability to income and job losses, poor quality and unsafe food, unaffordability of vital, nutritious foods like fresh fruits and vegetables as well as staples, and increased greenhouse gas emissions through excessive food loss and waste. Market vulnerability in the food system makes people and planet more vulnerable to shocks like the Covid-19 pandemic, floods, droughts and political and economic instability. WUWM member organisations have been innovatively overcoming these challenges for decades, and can work together with GAIN, governments and local market committees, in Africa and Asia, to co -develop better solutions that are locally owned yet also benefit from GAIN and WUWM’s expertise. We couldn’t be happier to start this adventure together!



In Good Practices:

Get to know Agoralim, the ambitious project that the French government asked Rungis wholesale Market to design in order to ensure a sustainable fresh food supply to Paris region in the forthcoming decades!

We wanted to share French Agoralim project with our readers as we think that this innovative project set excellent bases for new concrete multi-stakeholders territorial approaches and design of infrastructure than can ensure sustainable and resilient food ecosystems.

To meet the needs of an ever-growing population, it is important to initiate a new territorial dynamic and develop a local food ecosystem, where the population have access to affordable, healthy and sustainable food. In this context, the quality of the link between production and distribution of food products is more than ever a key factor in guaranteeing a sustainable food supply.

We are particularly excited for this initiative, given that it has the potential to respond to the three main challenges, that most of our members might be facing:

1. The Consumers expectations are changing: they increasingly favor the authenticity of products and their local roots, the simplicity of processing methods, the quality and traceability of food. Therefore, there is a call to promote and develop short chain circuits.
2. There is a rising demand for fresh products: feeding the growing population will require having additional distribution capacities that complement the existing ones, in order to ensure an efficient and sustainable food supply for the regions.
3. The environmental challenge linked to logistics: the congestion, or even saturation, of the main roads leads to longer transport times and therefore an increase in the carbon footprint of supply flows. Therefore, new transportation flows need to be planned and develop.

We have the chance to interview Benoit Juster, Strategic Director at Rungis wholesale market, to bring you more information about this project!



Can you explain in a few words the Agoralim project ?

Agoralim is a multi-site project that will be located in and around the eastern part of Paris (the Val d'Oise) and will cover the entire food value chain, from agricultural production to distribution and processing. It will include a site dedicated to agricultural production, based on the principles of agro-ecology and one or more distribution platforms located nearby. Agoralim is a territorial project that intends to accompany the demographic, social and environmental evolutions of the Île-de-France region (what comprises Paris region and its suburbs). In the coming years, we will have to feed the ever-growing population of the Paris region, while at the same time respond to the new aspirations of consumers in terms of food: more local production, more short circuits and therefore fewer intermediaries, more fresh and healthy products grown with greater respect for the environment. These are the challenges that Agoralim is responding to.

Who are the actors involved in this project?

For more than 50 years, Semmaris, the company managing Rungis wholesale market, has been entrusted by French State with a public interest mission to ensure the supply

"Agoralim is a territorial project that intends to accompany the demographic, social and environmental evolutions of the Paris region."

of fresh produce to 18 million inhabitants. This mission is carried out from the Rungis platform. To continue to carry out this mission under good conditions, it is necessary, due to the demographical development of the region, to have a second site in the north of Paris. The State has therefore asked Semmaris to study and develop this project called Agoralim. This project is being developed in consultation with the local authorities (Region, Department and municipalities).

Can you tell us how Agoralim is a very innovative project in terms of design and mobilization of a plurality of actors?

The project is developed in a spirit of co-construction with all stakeholders. It is really innovative in its method, since it is conducted in a bottom-up logic. A public "Call for Ideas" was launched in 2021 and was a great success with more than 230 contributions! A total of 234 contributions were submitted by local authorities, economic and institutional players, representatives of the agricultural world, associations and the general public. For three months, stakeholders were able to express themselves and submit their proposals on a dedicated website www.agoralim.fr, via a questionnaire on the 5 main themes of the project. Some 234 contributions were submitted: 70 concerned agriculture and agri-food, 67 logistics, 47 healthy food, 42 employment and training and 8 the sites for the future agro-ecological centre in the north of Ile-de-France.

Rungis market presented a project to the Prime Minister this week: could you summarize the main points/proposals expressed in this report?

First of all, the proposals concern the philosophy of the project: Agoralim must develop an ecosystem that favors local products and short circuits. Agoralim must also be a territorial project by creating an ecosystem around the food industry. The project presents operational proposals in terms of location, timetable, incentives to be created, financing, etc to build a sustainable and resilient food hub for Paris region.

The 6 proposals from the president of the Rungis market to the Prime Minister where:

Help in the transition of the agricultural and agri-food sectors

1. Set up a "territory for agricultural future", similar to the "high ambition innovation territory" program

2. Set up an agricultural landholding company, a new development tool to support the control of complex agricultural land

Support the economic and social development of Paris region

3. Establish public structures (research institutes, high-level training organisms for logistics, agri-food...) to multiply the benefits of Agoralim.

4. Create a rail-road freight platform to meet the need for combined transport and improve the environmental and operational performance of activities

Launch of prefiguration actions

5. Educate on eating well

6. Set up an e-commerce site

Could you summarize the current roadmap for agoralim?

The roadmap is to create facilities with first openings in 2025. They will host a variety of players to form this ecosystem: producers, processors, logisticians, training institutes, research centers, administrations, etc... This project will be key to create a sustainable food ecosystem, from the soil to the plate in Paris region. Today it is important to take advantage of the momentum created without waiting for these new facilities. Prefiguration actions will therefore be launched as early as 2022 in the areas of logistics, communication on healthy eating and training.

How will the project be financed?

The first part of the project will be financed by Semmaris, which has an investment capacity based on a proven economic model. The second part will be financed, depending on the diversity of the projects, by public funding (State and local authorities) and, on a case by case basis, with the support of private partners.





Innovation:

Can cities transform agri-food systems? Anja de Cunto, project coordinator & policy advisor for food and procurement at Eurocities, shares their work to improve food environments and food security.

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Transforming the food system is a global problem that requires a systemic approach and joint actions. Cities are at the core of this transformation.

We were pleased to interview Eurocities, the network of largest cities in Europe (that includes over 200 of Europe's major cities from 39 countries, which between them represent 130 million people) to learn about the work that they are doing in order to improve food environments, food security and a sustainable agri-food systems transformation.



Could you briefly introduce “Eurocities”?

Eurocities is the network of major European cities. We bring together more than 200 European cities that want to promote better quality of life for their citizens. We work on more than 40 areas of interest for cities. As Eurocities, we represent the interests of cities at the European Union and we also want to make sure cities can share and learn from each other, particularly in new areas of work such as urban food policy.



Could you briefly introduce the work that Eurocities is doing in what regards food policies?

It is only in the last five years that we started to work more strategically on food, especially thanks to the work of the city of Milan that launched the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact, recognising the central role cities can have in shaping food systems.

We bring together food officers from cities to exchange on how best to shape food system. We focus regularly on different aspects of food action in cities: for example, food waste recovery, food aid solutions (particularly during the pandemic) and urban food production.

We want to make sure the upcoming EU food legislation takes into consideration the role and added value of cities, but also their challenges for example when using procurement to support short supply chains and reconnecting the [urban and peri-urban areas](#).

Finally, we support cities to get involved in EU funded projects on food innovation, projects like [Food Trails](#). In its 11 partner cities, Food Trails will develop participatory Living Labs, innovative pilots and transformative and co-created food policies.

“Food environments are the recognition that food systems are not only about food production, but food consumption place a fundamental role in shaping them.”

You have recently published, within the EU food policy coalition a report called “Food environments & EU food policy discovering the role of food environments for sustainable food systems”. Could you please tell us a little bit more about these publications and the role of Eurocities on it?

Eurocities is one of the organisations involved in the [Food Coalition](#). The Coalition brings together civil society and organisations working towards refining and advocating for a shared vision of sustainable food systems at the EU level such as: NGOs from a broad spectrum working on food systems, grassroots social movements, farmers organisations, organisations of fishers, trade unions, think tanks, scientific and research groups.

Together we collaborate on joint areas of work part of the Farm to fork and related legislations: from the Common Agricultural Policy to international trade, to food procurement and food waste. Together we believe in the role of food environments as a fundamental area of action to shape food systems. As we are a wide variety of organisations, each of us take the lead and collaborate based on their main interest advocacy goals and areas of expertise. In particular, the collaboration on food environment is achieved also thanks to the great work of colleagues from the European Public Health Alliance, with whom we share many common advocacy points.

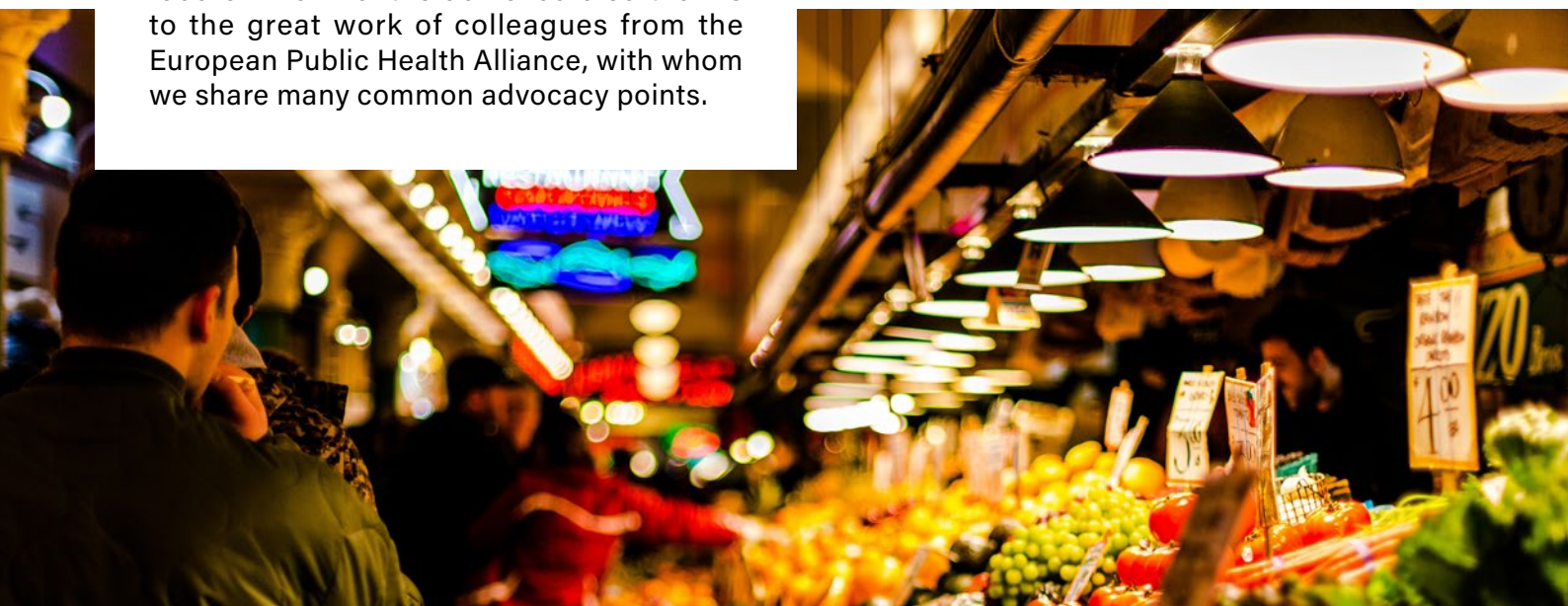
Could you explain what are food environments, what is their role of cities to foster them, and what would mean for a city to integrate “a food environment approach” in terms of policies?

Food environments are the recognition that food systems are not only about food production, but food consumption place a fundamental role in shaping them. Therefore, we want to support citizens in making healthy and sustainable food choices that will also impact how food is produced. However, relying exclusively on education, information and labelling are not the only way forward, as food choices are often not the results of these, but rather more complex factors, such as price, food availability and cultural choices.

This is where the concept of food environments comes in, especially in cities that host almost 80% of European population: creating and enabling food environment is about making sustainable and healthy choices the easily accessible and affordable option for all citizens.

Cities make changes to public food procurement, introduce marketing restrictions for unhealthy food and beverages, and taking concrete steps to improve urban food environments, for example around schools and areas where healthy food is not easily accessible and affordable (food deserts) or there is a high percentage of fast food (food swamps) such is the case in many city centres.

Urban planning is a central tool here together with a good understanding of food flows in the city and citizens consumption patterns and status for of their health. Unfortunately, most of these data are often not available at city/neighbourhood level.



What is the link between “EU food policy”, food environments and cities? Is the actual EU food policy taking into account enough the role of cities? What could be done to foster/improve it?

The current food policies of the EU and national member states are still very much focused on addressing food production, especially with legislation. What we are hoping with the next EU food policy expected by 2023 is rather a systemic approach to food system with a level of actions that goes accordingly, which will empower all food system actors particularly citizens.

Together with other experts, we have promoted these concepts also in our work with the [JRC Joint Research Center ‘Concepts for a sustainable EU food system’](#)

We are also advocating for mandatory national food legislation which are co-created and discussed across levels of governments, particularly cities and citizens, for example through the creation of food councils and local food policies.

Do you think the “food environment approach” can be a game changer for cities facilitate the transition into local sustainable food systems? If yes, in which ways?

Cities are highly obesogenic environments. For example, research conducted by the city of Amsterdam found that 84% of food-offerings in the city-center can be labelled as ‘unhealthy’, of which 25% can be considered ‘extremely unhealthy’. This includes supermarkets, snack-bars, night-shops, candy shops, etc.

By addressing food environments cities can complement their policies for healthier lifestyle and strategic use of food procurement for healthier and more sustainable meals in public canteens.

In addition, cities can reach out to neighbouring rural districts to develop joint plans that allow both urban consumers and rural producers to benefit, for example by giving the space for local producers and local food markets that sells seasonal and local fresh fruits and vegetables in cities.

What is the role of wholesale markets in food environments? And in your opinion, what kind of collaborations could wholesale markets foster with cities to enhance sustainable food environments?

Both when the wholesale markets are city owned, but also in the case these are privately owned, local authorities can create partnership with them and enhance collaboration to improve the food environments in cities. Wholesale markets are major actors to ensure constant supply of fresh food in cities. Wholesale market can also support cities in better collecting data and understand consumption patterns, especially for food coming from outside of the regional borders. Wholesale markets can partner up with cities also to tackle food waste either as reducing it or to find best ways to redistribute food safely to those in need.

In this context, Eurocities and WUWM are planning to collaborate to share successful wholesale market and public authorities collaborations. We can also work on joint advocacy actions, for example around labelling and to recognise the role of cities for the upcoming EU food legislation.

“By addressing food environments cities can complement their policies for healthier lifestyle and strategic use of food procurement for healthier and more sustainable meals in public canteens.”

In Events:

WUWM Board of Directors met in Paris and celebrated their first meeting of the year!

On February 25, 2022, the WUWM Board of Directors held a hybrid meeting (Paris and online) to discuss the achievements of 2021 and the action plan for 2022. WUWM's chairman, Stephane Layani, opened the ceremony highlighting that the transition to sustainable food systems should be among the top priorities of our sector for the coming years, and that wholesale markets can play a key role in the success of this transition.

To do it so, Mr. Layani argued that we need a stronger engagement of all the actors of the agri-food chain, and to work together with a systemic approach. The Board members stated that WUWM will look forwards to strengthen collaborations and build coalitions with all the actors aiming to ensure the transition to sustainability of food systems, fostering the consumptions of healthy diets, based in fresh food and aiming to achieve a carbon-neutral food sector.

Modern wholesale markets are essential infrastructures to ensure food security, reduce ecological food print of the food sector and promote better and healthier diets.

In this context, the Board called WUWM members to continue to participate and increase their engagement following the different programs, campaigns and webinars that WUWM has launched at global level at regional level.

2022 Action plan will be focused in launching in a concrete way and at regional and local level the programs that we have launched in 2021 at global level. Regional directors will play a bigger role and engage in concrete ways regional members to achieve this goal.

The rest of the meeting was devoted to the operational and financial plans for this year. As well as the future of the campaigns and projects that WUWM will undertake this year. We will be communicating more of these developments soon! . For now, the Annual Report 2021 is available on our website in 4 languages (English, French, Spanish and German).

In WUWM's World

February 2nd — meeting with Eurocities and with Paris school of Economics

February 3rd — Meeting with European Food Banks Federation

February 10th — WUWM Retail Group/"Love your local market" meeting

February 10th — Meeting with Latin American wholesale markets and MIT and Meeting with GAIN Mozambique

February 17th — 12th Meeting on EU platform on food losses and food waste

February 24th — Closing Ceremony of the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables

February 25th — WUWM Board meeting in Paris

February 26th — WUWM Board meeting of directors

"Board members stated that WUWM will look forwards to strengthen collaborations and build coalitions with all the actors aiming to ensure the transition to sustainability of food systems."