



Food growing and sustainable food systems: Linking everyday practices with macro-social change

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Food growing and food security at individual/household level



- Food growing has multiple benefits
- But can it contribute to food justice?



Why food poverty?

- Increasing concern with HH food security and food poverty in food secure countries
- Public and policy unease over foodbank use



Which local/community food growers?

- Non-commercial food growers
- On allotments and community gardens
- Rural and urban
- Scotland/UK
- 2017
- Semi-structured interviews with food growers about their motivations for growing (n=29)



Motivations & benefits of food growing

- Are closely related
- Multiple motivations
- Environment and health mentioned most often
- Social and economic reasons given less importance
- Family background important
- Access to fresh food & wider choice only mentioned by a few



Challenges and barriers



- Access to land, tools & water
- Rules and regulations
- Cultural norms that have developed around packaging and presentation of food
- Learning to manage pests and diseases



Engagement with others

- Mixed response
- Some growers were keen to engage with other community groups
- Many felt they lacked skills to do so
- Difficulty in getting groups to come to allotment - e.g. health and safety issues for schools and vulnerable adults



Enhancing HH food security?

- Yes – for those who are already growing
- Less evidence for link with addressing food poverty/accessing foodbanks
- Few policy mechanisms linking food growing with other social policy and welfare issues
- Community food hubs one way to include food growing in enhancing food security for those most at risk of dropping into food poverty



Conclusions

- Food growing is increasing
- There is increasing concern over food poverty and food safety/nutrition/healthy diets
- Food growing is not a suitable strategy for tackling food poverty due to high start up costs and time/space needed
- Food growing could contribute to a local food system to tackle food insecurity, through e.g. providing local outlets to sell produce

