

A food systems approach to tackling food poverty

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A rights-based approach to food security

- Food as key component in health and nutrition
- Food security as a human right
- Food security broadly defined:
 - all people, at all times, have physical, economic and social access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life
 - In industrialised countries implies that people have money to purchase food they prefer, and the food system can provide sufficient affordable healthy food



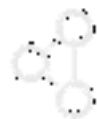
- A rights-based approach highlights food poverty as part of a **system** which fails to ensure:
 - Individuals and households have adequate income to purchase food for their needs and health
 - Available food is appropriate for health

In other words, it connects consumption of affordable, healthy food, with production and supply across the food chain



Food poverty

- **The scale of the problem**
 - 8.4 million people in the UK in food poverty, i.e. unable to afford or access food for a healthy diet (SUSTAIN)
 - In 2017-18 Trussell Trust provided 1.3 million emergency food packages, up 13% on previous year



Emergency food aid and food poverty

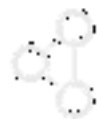
- Puts the emphasis on the individual rather than on changing the food system
- Only a small % of those experiencing food poverty are accessing emergency food aid
- Not about nutrition or social aspects of food and feeding
- Can we find more dignified ways to tackle food poverty, instead of merely addressing it?



Alternatives to the food bank

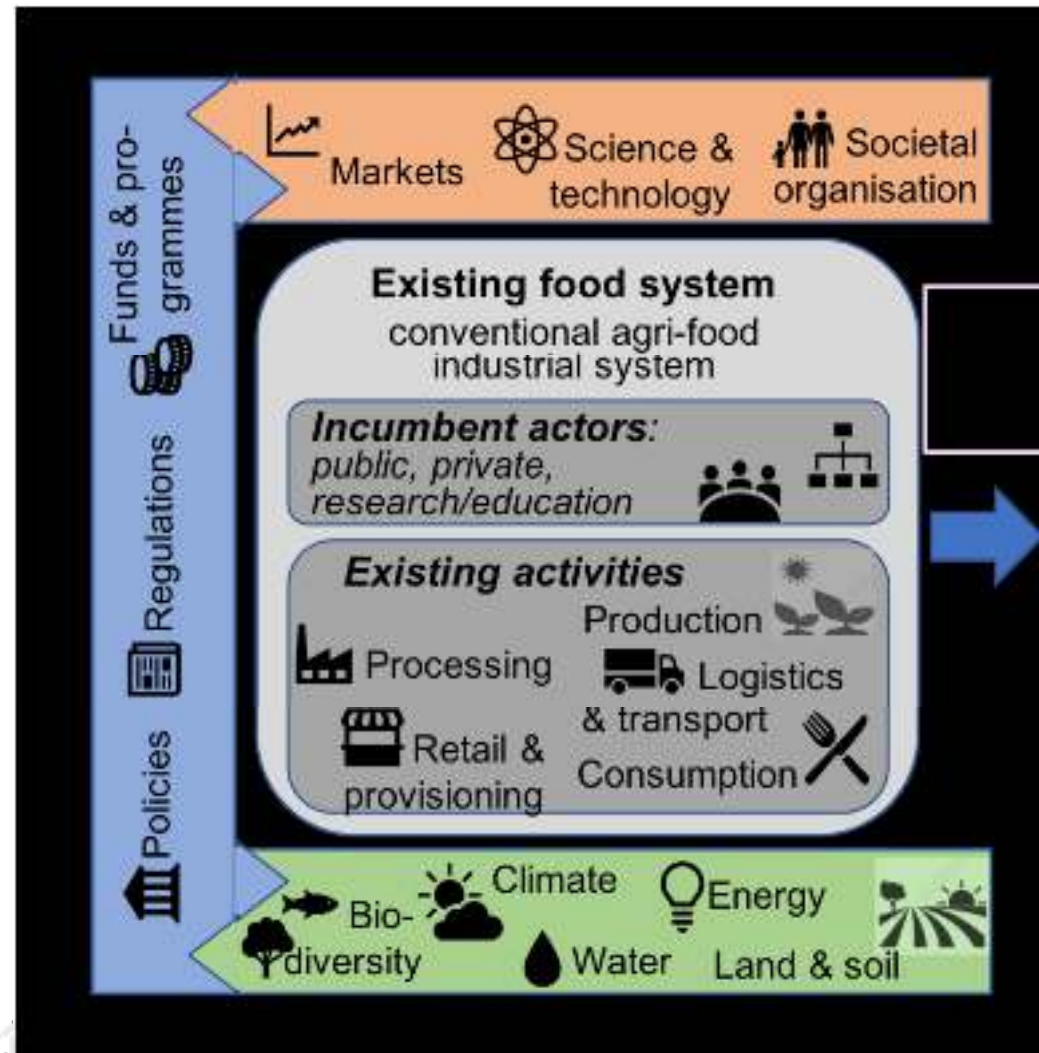
- Community food initiatives
 - Include social aspects of food and feeding
 - Can tackle wider social issues of poverty, deprivation, social isolation
 - Offer health and education skills
- Food co-ops, food growing, bulk purchasing
- Social enterprise

- All still rely on individual/household change, and address the problem rather than the issue through tackling systemic change



The food system

- Food systems include:
 - Actors
 - Activities
 - Socio-economic, governance and environmental frameworks
- Combinations of actors perform activities which comprise usually sequential steps in the food system value chain such as
 - Producing
 - Processing
 - Retailing
 - Preparation
 - Transportation
 - Consumption
 - Disposal/waste
- Food systems are complex!



Food systems delivering food security?

- Innovation
- Creating local and urban food systems



Innovation

- **Social innovation** – CSAs, social enterprise, urban farming
- **Technical innovation** – vertical farms, new products



SOCIO-TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS



Local/urban food systems

- Make land available in urban areas/find new places to grow
 - Link growing to social-environmental benefits
 - Create market garden supply chains
 - Create job opportunities and build skills
 - Have a local food policy
 - Use public procurement to encourage local food
 - Create behaviour change around local food diets
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- But can this replace/challenge dominant agri-food systems?
Can it decarbonize the food system? What are realistic expectations of a more localized food system?



Wrapping up

- Current food system does not deliver nutritious food, at an affordable price, for a significant number of people in a society that is food secure
- Food security should be seen as a human right
- Current emergency food aid focuses on individual responses rather than a systems approach
- The complexity of the **food system** makes change difficult
- Socio-technical innovation and more localized food system approaches could deliver/enhance food security
- But more research is needed into how such approaches can be implemented, and their impacts not only on food security but on other factors such as environment, carbon emissions and productivity

