



Food Imbizo

Food Sensitive Planning and Urban Design

Tuesday 26 April 2022, 10.00-12.30, Zoom meeting

Record of the Meeting

You can access a recording of the meeting [here](#).

The Food Imbizo is a collaborative knowledge sharing network that aims to inform collective actions around food governance. Our membership is open to anyone who is interested in promoting and developing a more just and sustainable food system in South Africa. We have recently renamed the group to take into account its evolution from a smaller (Food Governance) Community of Practice into a larger more fluid network - the Food Imbizo. We have also developed a [website](#) that charts this transition and keeps together all the resources of the Community of Practice (including records of previous meetings).

Introduction- Florian Kroll (UWC)

Today's meeting on Food Sensitive Planning and Urban Design (FSPUD) builds on work by colleagues over several years that has led to a Centre of Excellence in Food Security [Working Paper](#) on the topic.

In South Africa we have seen rapid urban transformation and massive infrastructure constraints and inequality. This is the background to a rapid food system transformation, including the expansion of supermarkets, shopping malls and fast food outlets, the rise of ultra-processed foods and the neglect and marginalisation of street trade. There is also contestation about the use of land e.g. Philippi Horticultural Area. The conversation today is to explore how, if we adopt a food lens, we can design our urban areas to bring about better food systems outcomes (i.e. healthier diets) and more resilient food systems. FSPUD can include consideration of urban agricultural allotments but also transit nodes,

markets, street traders facilities, shopping mall development etc. The planning instruments that can be used to integrate food into planning decisions include, Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) as well as overarching strategies such as the City of Cape Town's Resilience Strategy and Spatial Development Frameworks.

Presentations

Dr Gareth Haysom (African Centre of Cities, University of Cape Town)

You can access Gareth's presentation [here](#).

We have a long-term systemic problem in that our food system is deeply inequitable and fails to deliver food that is affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate to the majority of our population. South Africa's food system was designed as an urban system and not a system to ensure the health and wellbeing of the majority. While initially there was a productive African peasantry, when gold and mines were discovered there was a series of disruptions which moved African people off the land to become labourers. Cheap food was required to feed the workers. An elite group of farmers was supported through legislation. Black people and people of colour were located on the periphery of cities being fed a narrow range of staples. The food systems also industrialised. It is important to consider how and why the current food system was designed before attempting to dismantle and redesign it as one design feeds off the previous design.

Food is a useful lens to understand cities. "More than with any other of our biological needs, the choices we make around food affect the shape, style, pulse, smell, look, feel, health, economy, street life and infrastructure of the city" (Roberts, 2001, 4). So why has food not been part of our planning for the last 50 years? Not considering food in how we design urban spaces is not neutral but has had many negative consequences, such as the rise in non-communicable diseases and the inequality in our food system. Access to water, energy, transport the nature of housing etc all play a far greater role in our food system and its outcomes in an urban world than the production system.

Design matters and we need to think of this at various scales (individual, household and community/ neighbourhood, city/ province/country) with different actors at each scale. We need to understand how to engage in each scale and also the interplay between these scales.

The FSPUD concept arose out of Australian cities that are vastly different to South African cities but which recognised that food is central to health, economies and also the form of cities. So how do we do FSPUD in a way that is applicable to South Africa? FSPUD has four elements: conceptual ('why should we care' which is what I am speaking about today); analytical (what is the problem); organisational (who is in charge); and design (how do we solve it). FSPUD needs to be reflexive and iterative. What do we do in an African city where we have formal and informal working hand in hand and where the formal is about planning, servicing, construction and occupancy but the informal is about occupancy seeking a legitimate planning position through these processes. The informal food sector is very important to low income households in Cape Town. Has the spaza become the stove and fridge etc?

FSPUD is about connecting food aspects across multiple domains and so involves a wide variety of stakeholders and sectors. We should try to combine actions in particular sites that have an impact on (for example) the food system and the social system to get double duty benefits. Do the current governance structures allow us to work across different sectors and governance domain and scales? The focus of FSPUD is not just about the state

but also about Civil Society and NGOs, ECDs and CANs etc. How do these groups come together? Do they speak to each other and who are the mediators that can connect these actors (and these actors with the authorising environment)? But given that this is a “wicked problem” the FSPUD needs to be able to “surf complexity” and connect to other processes. We see the work of the Food Forum and the Western Cape Government’s Nourish to Flourish pilot sites beginning to attempt to connect actors and work with this complexity.

Links to more information on FSPUD in South Africa:

[Feeding Nosipho](#) (film); [FSPUD Working Paper](#); [Food Sensitive Planning Podcast series](#); [FSPUD toolkit](#); [Tomatoes and Taxi Ranks](#) (photographic book)

Tamsin Faragher (Resilience Department, City of Cape Town)

You can access Tamsin’s presentation [here](#).

FSPUD is not new. The City of Cape Town was located and designed around food. With the industrial revolution we started to push food out to the periphery of the settlements and the focus shifted to transport and how to get things in and out of the city. Our planning and architectural philosophy lost its food lens. I am going to talk about City of Cape Town’s attempts at trying to reintegrate food lens into some of our planning and decision making.

We looked at how FSPUD had been researched and acted on in other countries. One example was a study in Southwark, London, which had researched how and why young people were using fast food restaurants in their neighbourhood. One of the reasons was that they provided safe social spaces near transport hubs that they frequented. One of the proposals from their study was to strengthen public space networks by connecting existing amenities through a youth friendly walking and cycling network. Improved streets will make it possible to move through their neighbourhoods safely while lessening exposure to fast food on the high street. i.e. if we design our cities better we could get better food environments. The city of Baltimore has made a ‘Baltimore Food Policy Initiative’ which was prepared by the Department of Planning but involving a number of departments. This policy has identified a number of ‘Healthy Food Priority Areas’. Although every food system is different the Baltimore strategy highlights quite a few of the same focus areas as the Cape Town Food Programme.

The City of Cape Town has over 40 different actions (functions and services) that relate to food (impact on food or are impacted by food). These range from health and nutrition through poverty alleviation and disaster relief to economic enablement. Since the approval of the Food System Programme we have been working to main stream a food systems lens across policies that intersect with these actions.

Part of our work is also trying to anticipate shocks (such as Covid, drought etc) and see how we can design the system to respond to these better. We have mapped spatial patterns of social vulnerability which show areas under stress from food insecurity, crime, unemployment etc making them more vulnerable to disruptions/shocks. This data set was strengthened through the Covid experience.

The Cape Town Resilience Strategy identified the need for a Food Systems Programme in the City (underpinned by work of Jane Battersby and colleagues at the African Centre for

Cities). The fourth theme of the Food Programme talks about Food Environments and includes: 4.1. Consider food as a lens in spatial planning; 4.2. Stimulate the local food economy across both the formal and informal systems. The Food Systems Programme was included in the new Integrated Development Plan (IDP), which will place pressure on delivery. The IDP is an important overarching statement of the City's intent re-planning and food is mentioned several times. This document sets the direction of many other plans and strategies within the city such as the spatial policy, district plans, infrastructure plans, integrated comprehensive transport plan etc. When we look at each policy or strategy etc we need to ask 'how does this policy improve access' to food?

We had an opportunity to work with Philippi when they developed their District Plan and we held a workshop to help us figure out how to apply FSPUD to these plans. We realised that we had more questions than answers. Is this the right scale to be intervening? It also gave us an opportunity to tease out other issues and this led to department of agriculture to start looking at food miles.

Lessons learnt: 1) There's a lot that we don't know; 2) We are relearning what it means to make places that are liveable – healthy city; 3) Economic and transport drives spatial planning but this is limiting (especially for using a food sensitive lens); 4) Policy, mapping – integrate with management for operationalisation; 5) Research not always easy to integrate – researchers don't know how government works!; 6) Scale, scale, scale – knowing where to intervene. Much of what we do know is at neighbourhood scale only.

Panelist

Catherine Stone (Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning , Government of the Western Cape)

We have a privately driven land economy in South Africa. Our cities and towns are built by the people and the state has a very disappointingly small role in shaping the form of urban growth. This has been deepened by the desperation for economic growth. There is less and less appetite to impose top down regulatory approach that mainstreams a particular issue or regulatory obligations and restrictions, especially on the private sector. On the other hand the government's ability to manage informal growth is limited. In the next ten years we are expecting another 800,000 people to move into Cape Town and most of these will be relatively poor. The resources are less and less and there is going to be less planning of new environments. So how do we manage our urban environments differently or retro-fit existing areas?

There are competing objectives to be mainstreamed and it's a *realpolitik* as to what gets attention. Real change is most successfully effected at an incremental level and through demonstration (interventions in actual projects) and this often happens through informal relationships from a government perspective.

Planners need to understand the system logic so that they know how to organise the environment. But food systems are complex, dispersed and with a lot more role players. So what principles can we help planners with so that when they assess a set of plans they know what they are looking for in regards to mainstreaming food? We need to distil the knowledge on FSPUD into simple practical things that help answer the question 'what do I do' for planners.

The other aspect is data and mapping. Yes we have maps of the areas where food is being sold etc but we would like to know if there is data coming from clinics that will help us map relative areas of food insecurity so that we know which areas to target. Because we need to know 'what can I do now' 'where can I focus'? The vulnerability mapping of Tamsin is a similar example of this.

Sometimes we are not sure who within government we should speak to about certain public spaces and if we change how we use certain public spaces who will manage these spaces because the state has not done very well. We may see that citizens have to have an increasing role in managing public spaces. So how do we best support them? This leads to a bigger question of who is building the city and who must we talk to when thinking about FSPUD? Although the state can paint a glossy picture of what it should be doing, planning is likely to become much more bottom up and we need to take this into account when thinking through FSPUD.

Discussion

Tamsin Faragher- During covid we recognised the important role that the informal sector plays in Cape Town's food access and a lot of this activity happens in the public realm. So the City can potentially play a big role in improving this environment.

Pam Picken (Do More Foundation) - Young children are still get lost in this complexity We need to think about the children first, especially very young children.

Gareth Haysom – Food needs to be integrated into planning training but also other areas of training such as development studies. We need to move away from disciplinary silos and adopt a more interdisciplinary approach.

Fenji Materechera – How do we include agricultural participants and the various role players in this topic of FSPUD?

Tamsin Faragher – The spatial planning process is regulated and plans are released for comment and there are processes around that, even if these processes are not satisfactory. But there are other ways of intervening (outside of the planning sphere) and we should explore those as these may be more nimble. But often you need to capacitate before people can participate well.

Gareth Haysom – 1) One of the reasons there is so much contestation around the Philippi Horticultural Area (PHA) is that it wasn't seen as part of the urban area. Land that was culturally important was seen to be more valuable than land that was valuable for food security. 2) We need to differentiate between food (specific) planning and food sensitive planning (brining food into a wider set of actions and processes). 3) A community led research initiative tells us of problems of the 'legal-ease' of the policy documents which don't necessarily easily translate into local languages. There is a discursive dissonance between the intention of a policy and how it is translated So we need to think about how we think about some of these challenges as we engage with bottom up planning processes.

Robert Kriger- I miss history and politics in these discussions. In Cape Town policy is decided by neoliberal economics and not in the interest of people. So the concepts that we are using are limited because we do not consider the politics involved. For example, resilience is not a brand new system through 'sustainability' but for the poor and the marginalised resilience has been the core of survival for centuries.

How do we have a participatory democracy when the hierarchy of the system is a class structure, which plays a much bigger role than the needs of the poor?

Solohina Nekesa – Intermediary organisations or spaces in connecting the top down authorising environment and the bottom up mobilising environment are important. There is often a disconnect between the different levels of decision making and having a neutral and capacitating space is important.

Catherine Stone – Is the Food Forum the basis for civil society mobilisation on food issues? With the PHA the biggest battles for the planners was that we felt very alone as there was very little support from civil society. So much relies on the weight of the public voice and what they value.

Gareth Haysom – Its essential that we have these different groupings to have these conversations. But these new modes of governance are not letting the state off the hook. Sometimes these groups can represent specific interests and not the public good. The Food Forum is one space, but the Food Agency is another and there are others. Of interest is how these groups get involved and intersect. Lets have a caution when certain groups rise up and start speaking for others. This is what makes me critique the concept of Food Policy Councils etc.

Robert Kriger – What we have now is a system of neoliberal capitalism which has created multiple sites of struggle. These have spread the struggle so widely that people struggle to identify who or what the enemy is. We also know that the majority of the people in this country are poorly educated and are concerned about what they will put on the table that night. We need to find new methods of engagement with all sectors of society.

Bruno Losch – We have focused on urban design and how FSPUD can help the poor access nutritious food but we need to also move the lens to also consider the role of smaller towns and municipalities.