



Joining Forces: Takeaways from the Designing Your Menu of Food Policy Solutions for Sustainable Diets Policy Lab at EAT Stockholm Food Forum



This brief is a detailed account of some of the discussions that took place during the 'Designing your menu of food policy solutions for sustainable diets policy lab' at the EAT Stockholm Food Forum in 2018. Continue reading to understand how 'stubborn optimists' are creating tangible solutions to complex global challenges.

The 2030 due date for reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is just 12 years away. Food policy plays a major role in determining whether we will make or break this deadline. But where should we start, how can we broaden our policy repertoire and how can we scale up the ambition level together?

The experience of Nordic food policy partnerships for nutrition has shown that it's possible to advance health and sustainability by employing a diverse set of tools and by combining bottom-up and top-down approaches. This is partly because partnerships have been designed with clear frameworks in mind.

We are all aware of the need for devising practical solutions that can facilitate the shift to healthier and more sustainable diets. During the EAT Stockholm Food Forum in June 2018, the Nordic Food Policy Lab held a policy lab to harvest fresh ideas about how soft food policies (i.e. non-invasive policies that enjoy support from a range of actors) can help transform the way that nations eat.

Sissel Lybech from the Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services kicked it all off with the concrete case of a successful cross-sectoral partnership on nutrition called the Norwegian Intent Agreement on Healthier Food. This example of an existing policy laid the foundation for conversations about the potential of partnerships to sustain positive public health results over time. It also provided useful insight into how to build robust models of collaboration and how to overcome the challenges of cross-sectoral cooperation. To learn more about this policy, please see page 50-52 of the *Solutions Menu: A Nordic Guide to Sustainable Food Policy*.

Visionaries, dreamers and catalysts partaking in this policy lab in this policy lab included a broad array of actors representing the kind of partnerships that are commonly developed in the Nordic region. These stakeholders included national governments, policy think tanks, civil society, academia, the private sector and UN agencies. The takeaways laid out in this brief offer a quick overview of the exchange of ideas that took place during the policy lab; their relevance for policy development and partnership-building within the food policy domain; and some of the specific initiatives mentioned during the discussions.

**#nordicsolutions
to global challenges**

Co-creating solutions

Nordic Food Policy Lab played the role of match-maker during this policy lab, bringing solutions owners together with those in search of new angles from which to address the creation of healthier and more sustainable food consumption habits. Here are some of the challenges and corresponding solutions that were discussed:

CHALLENGE #1

A lack of data on procurement and the nutrition-health-sustainability nexus prevents us from developing the evidence base required to support decision making for sustainable food policy

SOLUTION

- Develop and support interdisciplinary open calls for research that helps to fill the data gap
- Encourage the development of metrics that measure the sustainable procurement of food

CHALLENGE #2

Child obesity is on the rise globally

SOLUTION

- Integrate a holistic perspective of food into school curricula
- Use schools as sites for everyday health interventions
- Create competitions for the provision of sustainable school meals at the municipal level (or equivalent)
- Encourage public-private partnerships to maximise the impact of policy by ensuring that all sectors align their efforts to promote healthier diets

CHALLENGE #3

Plastics are suffocating our planet and food packaging is partially to blame

SOLUTION

- Create policy incentives to minimise single-use plastics used in food retail
- Encourage and fund smarter design and innovation in sustainable packaging
- Tackle single-use plastics with similar policy measures as public smoking

CHALLENGE #4

Current actions to create healthier and more sustainable food systems are often fragmented

SOLUTION

- Support the full integration of all actors in the value chain to reach the same targets, including public-private partnerships
- Get inspired by the multiple examples of successful partnerships laid out in the *Solutions Menu: A Nordic Guide to Sustainable Food Policy*

CHALLENGE #5

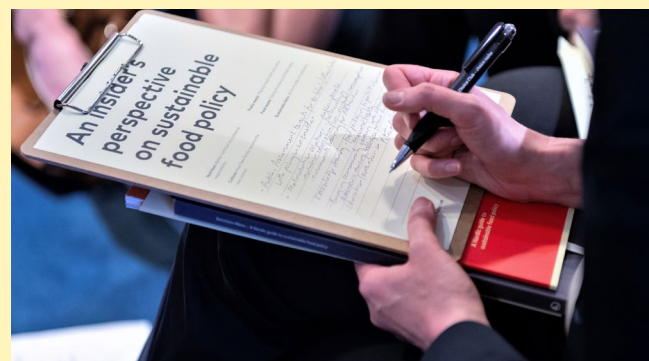
There is often a lack of transparency in food value chains and in our food systems in general

SOLUTION

- Establish cooperation agreements between the food industry, civil society, consumer organizations and the government that emphasise open dialogues about the challenges for industry and small businesses; that promotes knowledge sharing; and that enforces regular reporting and monitoring

What if...

- food was more integrated into school curricula?
- we fostered the development of more political champions for food?
- we planned our cities with healthy and sustainable food consumption in mind?
- civil society was more involved decision-making processes about the future of our food systems?



Stubborn Optimists: Around the World in Six Inspiring Initiatives

Here is a sample of some of the exciting initiatives that were mentioned during the workshop. No matter where you come from, these projects can be adapted to local contexts. One of the goals of the Nordic Food Policy Lab is to be a match maker – so, if you are interested in learning more about a particular solution below, make sure to contact us and we will put you in touch with the right solutionist.

1. DENMARK

Taste for Life (Smag på Livet) – An innovative four-year research dissemination project with the main objective of getting children and adults to use their taste buds in a more conscious way. Taste of Life is about taste experiences, knowledge about taste, learning about taste and the development of taste in food. With unique degree of interdisciplinarity, Taste for Life has set out to make taste central to how we eat and how we learn. The project works with the kitchen professionals that children and young people encounter in schools, and inspires them to see new opportunities and approaches to taste and meals.

2. PERU

Cooking with a Cause (Cocina con Causa) – One of the most innovative approaches to tackling malnutrition and anaemia in Peru has been a reality TV show—backed by the government and the World Food Programme—where professional

chefs travel around the country, meeting families and communities and helping them prepare tasty nutritious meals from Peru's rich array of indigenous foods. The show, *Cooking with a Cause*, brings these new ways of eating to the public across Peru in the regular TV show.

3. INTERNATIONAL

Sustainable Gastronomy Day – At the United Nations General Assembly in 2016, Peru and 37 other Member states co-authored a resolution designating the 18th of June as International Sustainable Gastronomy Day. The decision acknowledges that gastronomy and cultural expression can emphasize the natural and cultural diversity of the world. It also provides a platform to promote the Sustainable Development Goals by raising awareness about agricultural development, food security, nutrition, sustainable food production, and conservation of biodiversity.

'Stubborn Optimist' – A term coined by Christiana Figueres, former Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC – is based on the simple but powerful idea that impossible is not a fact, it's an attitude, and we should not let anything get in the way of creating a better future for everyone.



4. INDIA

Eat Like Your Grandmother campaign – Starting in 2017, this cooking contest – held at the Tasting India Symposium – gathered 10 teams of children and their grandparents to cook creative dosas (a type of thin pancake made from fermented lentils and rice). Each team could also add a secret ingredient that has been passed down through the generations in their family. The campaign showcased how sustainable food culture begins at home and how we can return to the food traditions of our grandparents by eating locally, traditionally and seasonally.

5. SWEDEN

Sustainable Food Chain – Together with 14 of the leading Swedish food companies, the super-market chain, Coop, stands behind a unique initiative called the Sustainable Food Chain. It is based on dialogue and the development of clear tools to achieve sustainable food production and consumption in Sweden before 2030. The World Wildlife Fund participates as a process leader, coordinator and inspector of the initiative. Under the initiative, a Roadmap for 2030 is being developed, investigating how to reduce food waste and define how each product category can become more sustainable.

6. UNITED KINGDOM

Food for Life – This programme aims at making good food the easy choice for everyone by making healthy, tasty and sustainable meals the norm for all to enjoy. Food for Life focuses on reconnecting people with where their food comes from, teaching them how it's grown and cooked, and championing the importance of well-sourced ingredients. To achieve this, the initiative works with schools, nurseries, hospitals and care homes, helping them build knowledge and skills through a 'whole setting approach'. This engages children and parents, staff,

patients and visitors, caterers, carers and the wider community to create a powerful voice for long-term change.

You can be a stubborn optimist too! Share your food policy solutions with us on Twitter:

@NordicFoodPol

#Solutionsmenu #Nordicsolutions

And why not subscribe to our newsletter while you're at it? <http://www.norden.org/foodpolicynews>

ABOUT NORDIC FOOD POLICY LAB

Nordic Food Policy Lab is one of six flagship projects under the Nordic Solutions to Global Challenges initiative launched by the five prime ministers of the Nordic countries. Through global partnerships, the Nordic Food Policy Lab disseminates and curates examples of Nordic food policy for health and sustainability, with the aim of highlighting solutions that can help achieve the UN Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

<https://www.norden.org/en/nordic-food-policy-lab>

SOLUTIONS MENU

Interested in learning more about Nordic food policy? Get inspired by 24 innovative policy solutions. Download your free copy of the *Solutions Menu: A Nordic Guide to Sustainable Food Policy* here: www.norden.org/en/solutionsmenu

This brief was prepared by Afton Halloran, External Consultant to the Nordic Food Policy Lab & Marie Persson, Project Officer of the Nordic Food Policy Lab.