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## CHAPTER 3

# Presenting the 10 cases

## 2. Presenting the seven cases selected at sub-national level



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At sub-national level in Europe and North America, many MSMs are linked to the development and implementation of a holistic sustainable food systems policy. These groups are generally known as food policy councils (FPCs), but they also go by other names.

In contrast, such MSMs are difficult to find in the Global South. There are some cities leading the way in Latin America, but they are still at an early stage. Examples include La Paz, Quito, Lima and Medellín.

Some SFS MSMs are currently being formed in Asia and Oceania, and some of them are already engaged in the assessment of food systems and the definition of priority topics and actions. Examples include Surabaya and Melbourne.

In the case of African cities and towns, several SFS MSMs are promoted and supported by various international organizations and cooperation projects (with technical and financial support from organizations such as FAO, Rikolto, Hivos, Biovision, RUAF, the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT). Levels of local ownership, government involvement and concrete achievements vary, depending on the mechanism.

The following section presents a summary of the seven SFS MSMs selected at sub-national level: London, Ghent, Los Angeles, Montreal, Quito, La Paz and Antananarivo. The most relevant features are compiled from a literature review and the results from both surveys.

## 2.4. Los Angeles (USA): Los Angeles Food Policy Council (LAFPC)



Image credit: Linus Shentu

### 2.4.1. About LAFPC

In September 2009, to mark the 30th anniversary of the first farmers' market in Los Angeles County and in response to growing agroecological impact and food insecurity in the city, the mayor, Antonio Villaraigosa, announced the creation of a Food Policy Task Force. At the time, over one million Los Angeles County residents faced food security challenges. The group was tasked with developing the Food Policy Agenda for Los Angeles, an endeavour that involved more than 200 people. The result was the Good Food for All Agenda, which recommended, in particular, the establishment of a food policy council to oversee and help advance the agenda's ambitions. As a result, the Los Angeles Food Policy Council was formally established in October 2010.

LAFPC is an independent, non-profit, non-registered SFS MSM with strong government support. Over the

course of four years, Paula Daniels<sup>123</sup> championed the initiative from the Mayor's Office with the support of the City of Los Angeles and since then, remained in a leadership role on its board. The FPC is under the fiscal sponsorship of an NGO called Community Partners.

The SFS MSM brings together diverse food players, leaders and experts from different sectors, geographic and socio-economic backgrounds to forge networks and partnerships across the region's food system. It provides expert consultation and citizen advice; stimulates collective action and new initiatives among its members; participates in advocacy and policy formulation; and generates new knowledge about the food system. Over time, it has been able to tackle a variety of food system challenges such as food insecurity and poverty, local food production, (peri-) urban agriculture and food justice, with a special focus on racial, economic and land justice.

<sup>123</sup>Paula Daniels is a lawyer and public policy leader in environmental food and water policy. She has extensive experience in developing and leading local, state and national environmental initiatives that include government, civil society and private sector partners. Her most notable work is in urban forestry, green infrastructure (for stormwater management) and food systems policy. She has also had key roles in other aspects of public policy and municipal infrastructure. She served as Senior Advisor on Food Policy to the mayor of Los Angeles, Antonio Villaraigosa, and as a Los Angeles Public Works Commissioner (a full-time executive position overseeing a large city department). <https://goodfoodpurchasing.org/about-the-center/>

LAFPC has a sub-national focus but also plays an advocacy role at many different levels: global, regional, national, sub-national, city-region, city and locality levels. To do so, it has established connections and engages in joint work with several networks and similar structures, such as the California Food Policy Council, the California Food and Farming Network and the Los Angeles-based Healthy, Equitable, Active Land Use Network. Also included in this list of networks is the Center for Good Food Purchasing, a national non-profit born from the LAFPC's staff team that led the development of the Good Food Purchasing Program through one of the FPC's working groups. To date, LAFPC's collaborative multi-level work has included conducting research, promoting coalitions, developing communication strategies and media relations, influencing decision-makers, funding some joint activities, and fostering capacity building among members. Its framework for action is based on the collective impact model.

With an annual budget of approximately USD 1,000,000 (EUR 844,250) made available by many foundations, agencies and individual donors, LAFPC covers salary costs, meeting-related expenses, learning exchanges, new project start-ups, consultancies and studies, communication materials, as well as grants to local partner organizations and small businesses to amplify its work, which reflects the community's interests.

## 2.4.2. Structure and governance

### Structure

Through the collective impact model, LAFPC acts as the umbrella organization for a network of more than 400 organizations and agencies working for healthy, sustainable and fair food. The Leadership Circle<sup>124</sup> is composed of leaders from every sector in the food system; it provides strategic oversight, guidance and support to LAFPC. The Executive Board oversees the governance, and their fiscal sponsor provides fiduciary guidance in the SFS MSM.

The majority of partnering organizations have been identified by the SFS MSM focal point based on a mapping of stakeholders involved in other pre-existing food- and health-related stakeholder platforms. These include government- and community-led platforms where discussions on matching needs to available resources can be conducted. Organizations can also join if driven by self-motivation or by referral ("word of mouth").

The representatives of participating organizations can be appointed by the focal point, by direct selection or by a voting system in their organization, and by self-motivation.

Figures 59, 60 and 61 illustrate the representativeness and inclusiveness of LAFPC, showing the diversity of participating stakeholders in terms of types of organizations (constituencies), sectors and food systems activities represented.



Figure 59. Types of organizations (constituencies) represented in LAFPC (in red)

<sup>124</sup><https://www.goodfoodla.org/staff-and-board>



Figure 60. Sectors represented in LAFPC (in red)

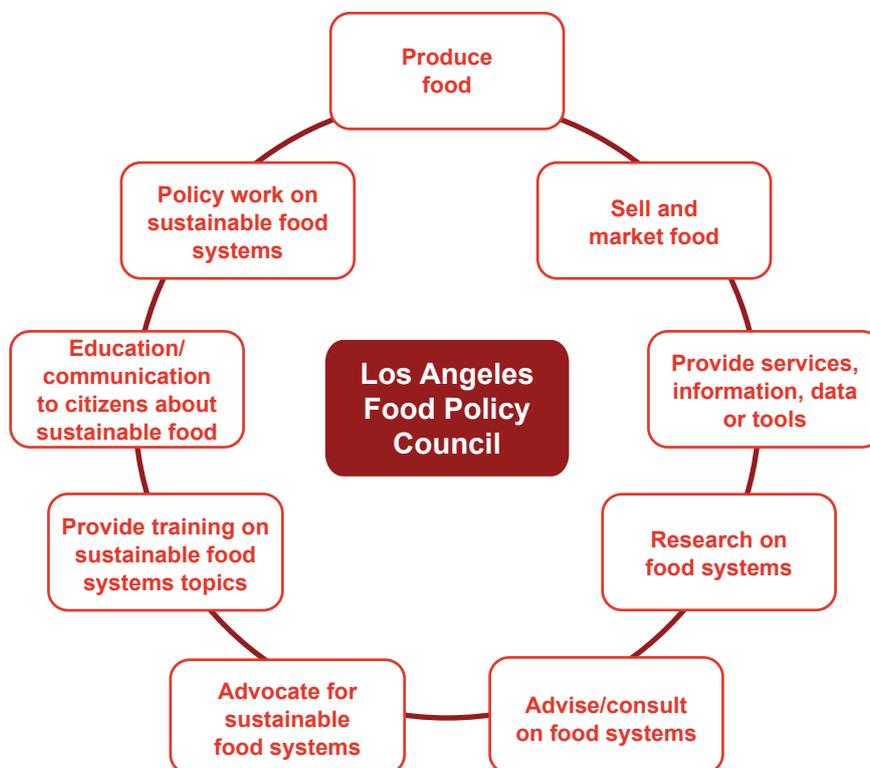


Figure 61. Activities represented in LAFPC (in red)

**Governance**

LAFPC has a written strategic guidance document that defines the principles of good governance (shown in Figure 62) that have been agreed upon by all parties. This document can be consulted by stakeholders when required.

To put these good governance principles into practice, LAFPC has mechanisms in place to manage conflicts of interest, capture and take into account all voices (including those of parties outside the council for specific processes), address power imbalances, achieve consensus, communicate effectively, and foster collaborative learning and capacity building.

Based on its collective impact framework, its governance ecosystem comprises several working groups (see Annex 1) with different meeting frequencies. For example, the Executive Board convenes monthly, the (advisory) Leadership Circle meets quarterly, and most of the working groups come together on a monthly basis. On average, 58 per cent of the stakeholders surveyed indicated that they attend all meetings; 53 per cent dedicate 1 to 4 hours a month to the work of the SFS MSM, while 30 per cent dedicate less than 1 hour, and 14 per cent dedicate more than 4

hours a month. In 72 per cent of the cases, members' participation is sponsored by the organizations they represent.

The reasons for and frequencies of meetings vary greatly. They range from scheduled annual meetings to meetings convened by the lead organization. In addition, meetings may be held at the request of one or more stakeholders, when a government representative is convening, or when there is a food-related problem or emergency that needs to be discussed. The agenda is usually defined by the leader, but it can also be decided by consensus, in a collaborative manner, by taking turns or based on emergency situations that may be affecting the food system.

The theme and purpose of the sessions are usually agreed upon in advance, and the interested parties are informed beforehand. A designated facilitator ensures constructive and inclusive dialogue, and a note-taker and rapporteur are usually designated to draft a report. The report is prepared collaboratively and distributed to all participants, including those who do not attend. The meetings are also recorded.

In addition to these meetings, participants interact via emails, calls and other methods of communication.



Figure 62. Good governance principles practised by LAFPC (in red)



Image credit: Los Angeles Food Policy Council

### 2.4.3. Policy formulation and implementation

#### SFS policy formulation

As a first step, the Los Angeles Food Policy Task Force and then the LAFPC conducted a diagnosis of the Los Angeles food system. This provided an overview of the entry points that needed to be addressed in order to achieve greater collective action and policy advocacy. It was produced using participatory methodologies that included engaging in discussions with all stakeholders. It took into account current trends and challenges in the food system, going beyond an analysis of sectoral issues to include a systemic view of the problems. It also included an analysis of actors and policies related to the food system.

The Good Food for All Agenda, created in 2010 and updated in 2017, is the official policy document and a roadmap for the future of food in the region. The document was developed in a highly participatory manner, involving all stakeholders, including local food advocates, farmers, gardeners, entrepreneurs, distributors, retailers, scientists, policymakers and residents from across Los Angeles County.

The term “Good Food” in the policy document refers to food that is healthy, affordable, fair and sustainable. It

is a holistic, multi-level policy that reflects key priorities identified in the food systems diagnosis. The policy focuses on six areas of action:

- Promoting a Good Food economy;
- Building a market for Good Food;
- Eliminating hunger in Los Angeles;
- Ensuring equal access to Good Food in underserved communities;
- Growing Good Food in LA neighbourhoods;
- Inspiring and mobilizing Good Food champions.

Its priorities are to:

- Develop a regional food hub;
- Address food chain labour issues;
- Issue policy recommendations to increase the availability of healthy street food;
- Advocate for food purchasing guidelines to be adopted by cities and institutions;
- Promote the CalFresh<sup>125</sup> and WIC<sup>126</sup> programmes through outreach at farmers’ markets;
- Develop healthy food retail;
- Promote urban agriculture;

<sup>125</sup>The CalFresh programme (California’s name for food stamps, also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)), helps low-income households to increase their food-buying power to meet their household’s nutritional needs. CalFresh benefits issued through electronic benefit transfer (an EBT card), can be used in grocery stores and participating farmers’ markets. Homeless, elderly or disabled people may purchase prepared meals from participating restaurants with their EBT card.

<sup>126</sup>WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) is a national programme that targets low-income pregnant women, new mothers, infants and children up to their fifth birthday. WIC helps families by providing cheques for healthy supplemental foods, individual counselling, group nutrition and health education, breastfeeding support and referrals to healthcare and other community services. See <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/DWICSN/Pages/Program-Landing1.aspx>

- Support school food and gardens.

In addition to the Good Food for All Agenda, LAFPC contributed to the development of many other food-related tools, plans and programmes, some of which are outlined below.

- The Food System Dashboard<sup>127</sup> is a tool that provides a framework and food-oriented data to understand food inequities in the Los Angeles food system.
- RecycLA is a unique waste franchising programme in the City of Los Angeles.
- The Food Leaders Lab programme trains community residents as food advocates and activists.
- The Healthy Neighborhood Market Network aims to provide all the city's residents with access to healthy food within half a mile of their homes.
- The Plan for a Healthy Los Angeles<sup>128</sup> was published by the City of Los Angeles.
- OurCounty<sup>129</sup> is the county sustainability plan; this was published by the County of Los Angeles.

LAFPC has also contributed to several policies enacted by the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Unified School District, including:

- The Good Food Purchasing Policy,<sup>130</sup> which led to the creation of the national non-profit called the Center for Good Food Purchasing;
- The Edible Parkways ordinance;<sup>131</sup>
- The compulsory requirement for all farmers' markets to accept electronic benefit transfer.
- The Good Food Zone Policy<sup>132</sup> initiative aims to increase access to healthy, fresh food by creating economic incentives for businesses that offer healthy options. Its objective is to transform fast food-dominated convenience stores into community-based healthy food markets. Store owners receive technical, financial and community assistance to transform their businesses.
- The Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone Policy<sup>133</sup> incentivizes urban agriculture in urbanized areas

of California by offering a reduction in property tax assessments in exchange for the conversion of vacant or unimproved property to agricultural use.

### SFS policy implementation

Policy implementation is carried out by different entities, depending on the nature of the project. What is common to all initiatives is that the processes are constantly reviewed in collaboration with stakeholders, so that information and lessons learned are shared and corrections are made collaboratively and in a timely fashion.

LAFPC's role in the implementation of the Good Food for All Agenda involves the mobilization and administration of funds, the coordination and execution of activities, communication, the promotion of stakeholder participation and project management, and monitoring and evaluation.

### 2.4.4. Reported achievements and challenges

#### Achievements

The two perceived key achievements of LAFPC are the creation of networks among stakeholders, such as the Healthy Neighborhood Market Network, and the formulation of food policies. In terms of policy development, participants consider that the initiatives developed by the FPC have correctly addressed inequalities in access to fresh food and the needs of the most vulnerable. Among them they highlight the Good Food For All Agenda, the Good Food Purchasing Program and the Good Food Zone initiative. The Good Food Purchasing Program is recognized as the most comprehensive metrics-based food purchasing policy in the country. LAFPC worked with the Los Angeles Unified School District, the country's second largest school district that teaches over 600,000 students. Together, they worked to increase its local fruit and vegetable purchases from 9 to close to 60 per cent and to pilot breakfast in the classroom. Due to the broad backing of local government, the district adopted the purchasing policy in 2012.

Another two determining factors in the unquestionable success of this SFS MSM are the fact that it provided an avenue for discussion for different actors in the food system and a way to strengthen new multi-level

<sup>127</sup><https://www.goodfoodla.org/foodsystemdashboard>

<sup>128</sup><https://planning.lacity.org/plan-healthy-los-angeles>

<sup>129</sup><https://ourcountyla.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/OurCounty-Final-Plan.pdf>

<sup>130</sup><https://goodfoodpurchasing.org/program-overview/>

<sup>131</sup><https://www.kcet.org/home-garden/l-a-city-council-approves-the-planting-of-urban-edible-parkway-gardens>

<sup>132</sup><https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5bc50618ab1a624d324ecd81/t/5f5dc013908fab211f3d2cc65/1608253791973/Good+Food+Zone+Booklet+2020.pdf>

<sup>133</sup>[https://planning.lacity.org/ordinances/docs/UrbanAgriculture/adopted/FAQ\\_Aug2018.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/ordinances/docs/UrbanAgriculture/adopted/FAQ_Aug2018.pdf)

collaboration by establishing connections and networks at different levels. One outstanding example is the way in which community food safety advocates used the FPC's connections to partner with the Los Angeles Community Redevelopment Agency on a successful corner market conversion programme that ultimately became the acclaimed Healthy Neighborhood Market Network. This network serves 12-15 small businesses a year, supporting the purchase and storage of fresh food and marketing to communities with little or no access to supermarkets. Another example worth mentioning is the LAFPC food waste working group, which strategically invited key officials from the Bureau of Sanitation to its meetings. As a result, the working group was invited to develop the food donation component of the new waste recycling programme.

Some participants highlighted as a key achievement the role that the SFS MSM has played in supporting food systems actors who are often overlooked by the government, in particular street food vendors. Through community-led meetings, stakeholders organized to elevate the challenges of street vendors to the city council and the Department of Public Health. Street food reflects the culturally diverse communities of Los Angeles. At the time, however, street food vending was illegal. LAFPC supported an early task force that is now called the "LA Street Vendor Campaign." Together, they drafted a proposal to legalize street vending and incentivize compliance with nutritional and food safety guidelines for street vendors. The decriminalization of sidewalk vending<sup>134</sup> efforts has occurred at Los Angeles city and county levels, resulting in the approval of:

- A USD 1 million (EUR 850,375) pilot programme<sup>135</sup> to promote public safety while expanding economic opportunities for sidewalk vendors;
- A USD 6 million (EUR 5,102,309) budget to support street vendors with permits and equipment.<sup>136</sup>

Finally, building the capacity of its members, in particular through the Food Leaders Lab and Food Ambassador programmes for community residents, is also acknowledged as a major success for LAFPC. Respondents note that, by being part of LAFPC, they have also benefited from knowledge sharing and a greater understanding of food systems. This has allowed them to visualize problems from a systemic perspective, encouraging them to pursue interdisciplinary objectives. The capacity building offered to community members has equipped them with tools allowing them to be agents of impact in their

work spaces, and has encouraged reflection on their individual role within the region's food system.

### Challenges

One of the main challenges identified by 61 per cent of the stakeholder survey respondents relates to the lack of sufficient funding to finance an ambitious agenda and to involve more stakeholders. This situation is aggravated by the large number of projects LAFPC is involved in.

Some respondents also see a need to get more local government involvement and to innovate in the way they collaborate and implement actions. Additionally, some of them feel that progress is slow at meetings owing to the fact that the working groups are very large. Finally, they indicate that the lack of meetings in 2020/2021 due to COVID-19-related restrictions has scaled and pivoted the work of the SFS MSM.

Another challenge noted in the stakeholder survey relates to the ability of LAFPC's leadership to resolve disagreements, manage conflicts of interest



Image credit: Markus Spiske by Unsplash

<sup>134</sup><https://la.curbed.com/2018/11/28/18116698/street-vending-los-angeles-legalization-vote>

<sup>135</sup><http://file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/148845.pdf>

<sup>136</sup><https://la.eater.com/2020/9/24/21454524/los-angeles-city-council-grants-street-vendors-permits-equipment>

and manage power relations. Less than half of the respondents consider that the leadership provided is effective in these areas (36 per cent, 33 per cent and 47 per cent, respectively).

In relation to the SFS MSM's food-related COVID-19 response, only 44 per cent of the participants consider it to be adequate. The variation in responses may reflect the very diverse sectors represented by stakeholders. LAFPC has supported the community in the face of the pandemic by compiling resources on available assistance, such as free meals, food delivery services, farmers' markets and food banks. It has also provided information on available loans, cash, tax returns, grants and other financial aid, as well as COVID-19-related guides and other information resources.<sup>137</sup> In addition, LAFPC has helped small businesses to comply with public health guidelines and has provided personal protective equipment; it has also supported the distribution of free produce to the public. LAFPC helps to provide analyses of the challenges faced by small businesses and the communities they serve.<sup>138 139</sup>

#### 2.4.5. Conclusion: Drivers of success for LAFPC

LAFPC is considered a role model for the over 300 FPCs<sup>140</sup> currently active across the USA. Through the successful establishment of an extensive network of food system stakeholders, LAFPC has had a profound impact on the food landscape of the city and beyond its boundaries, by enriching, influencing and contributing to a range of policies and programmes.

The case of Los Angeles is an outstanding example of how food systems can be transformed through unity and inclusivity; by putting in place participatory processes with a view to influencing public policy; by assigning value to the work that each individual undertakes in their organization; and by building trust, collaboration and networks with others.

LAFPC is also a leader in terms of mainstreaming environmental sustainability and climate change in food-related policy work. Notably, the current city's Mayor, Eric Garcetti, took on the role of chairperson of the C40 Cities and signed the C40 Good Food Cities Declaration in October 2019<sup>141</sup>.

Through the collective impact model, LAFPC has built an extensive network of stakeholders representing

different constituencies and sectors in the food system, which has been a key enabler for good participation, legitimacy and results. Consequently, 81 per cent of the stakeholders surveyed agree that the range of actors that make up the FPC is diverse, and that one of the strongest drivers of collaboration is the balanced representation of stakeholders (cited by 67 per cent of respondents), as well as the trust built up over many years of networking and cooperation (according to 64 per cent of participants).

Additionally, LAFPC relies on a high level of stakeholder involvement, which ranges from medium to very high according to 92 per cent of respondents. Farmers seem to show the highest level of engagement (81 per cent), followed by the public sector (75 per cent), civil society (69 per cent) and the private sector (56 per cent). The main motivations identified for participating in the FPC are: being informed about food issues in the city (81 per cent), learning (75 per cent) and networking (72 per cent).

The level of government buy-in and support from high-level representatives, perceived as medium to very high by 81 per cent of respondents, are also fundamental in explaining LAFPC's success.

Clear good governance principles agreed and respected by all stakeholders have been central to LAFPC. In fact, 86 per cent of respondents believe that LAFPC's stakeholders respect the code of conduct, the rule of law and the agreed principles of good governance. Similarly, the vast majority (86 per cent) consider that the FPC's meetings are well organized and communication is transparent, clear and effective. Furthermore, 83 per cent think that the structure and processes have led to equitable representation and participation among all members with strong public sector engagement and participation (81 per cent) and the active participation of most formal members (75 per cent). Overall, the participatory learning processes generated by the platform have been conducive to the capacity building of its members (indicated by 81 per cent of respondents).

Undoubtedly, good leadership has been instrumental in LAFPC's wide range of achievements to date. Nearly all respondents (92 per cent) think that the leadership is receptive to new ideas and actively welcomes new members; a high percentage (89 per cent) believes that the leadership encourages all members to participate, shares power with other FPC members in decision-

<sup>137</sup><https://www.goodfoodla.org/covid19>

<sup>138</sup><https://www.latimes.com/california/grfhyjkohe-123>

<sup>139</sup><https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-09-23/westlake-mercadito-struggles-stay-in-business>

<sup>140</sup><http://www.foodpolicynetworks.org/councils/directory/online/index.html>

<sup>141</sup>[https://www.c40.org/press\\_releases/good-food-cities](https://www.c40.org/press_releases/good-food-cities)

making, and reflects member input in the products generated by the SFS MSM. In addition, 81 per cent of respondents concur that the mechanism provides opportunities for participants to build leadership skills within the FPC.

LAFPC has a clear strategic framework that is known to all stakeholders. The vast majority (94 per cent) of the stakeholders surveyed agree that the mechanism has basic knowledge of its policy subject matter, which has been key to establishing priorities and to identifying and articulating its vision, mission and goals among its members. Some 89 per cent of participants also stated that LAFPC understands the overall policy environment related to its agenda and that the food systems approach to policy formulation and implementation is understood by the majority of its stakeholders (according to 81 per cent of respondents).

The stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of LAFPC to range from high to very high. The FPC has been successful in including the food systems approach in its work (according to 94 per cent of respondents), in fostering inclusive and constructive dialogue among all food system stakeholders (86 per cent), in promoting collaborative and coordinated action among all actors (86 per cent), and in including the environmental sustainability component in its work (83 per cent).

Looking ahead, respondents indicated that the following should be addressed as priorities: urban agriculture and short supply chains (selected by 64 per cent of respondents) and local markets and food environments (61 per cent); 56 per cent believe that LAFPC should prioritize COVID-19's impact on food systems, climate mitigation/adaptation and sustainable food production.