

Future Food Youth Movement Kickstarter Summary

Date: 25.05.2024

Location: Grounded Fort

Introduction

The Kickstarter began with a personal reflection exercise and a delicious local lunch with inspiring practitioners working on alternative food systems. We heard from local farmers, a group of students who have initiated a [biomieler](#) on campus, and Grounded and Amped, our partners, who are leading the way in engaging young people in local food systems in the Netherlands. After these inspiring talks, we dove straight into a workshop to get input from the participants on what they would like to see happen regarding a youth food movement on campus, and what would be needed for that. You can read these below.

The enthusiasm for food on campus was clear as were the possibilities to create something that builds on the energy and ideas of the young people at the Utrecht Science Park and UU. As Simone Pekelsma, the director of Future Food Utrecht said: *'This is an exciting moment. All the pieces to create this youth movement are here. We have the support of living labs, farmers and organizations such as Grounded who will make their expertise and resources available, and a unique link between HU, HKU, and UU. What we need now is for young people to get organized to create this movement!'*

With that in mind, we set out the following steps:

1) Establish a Young Future Food board with a formal representative on the board of Future Food Utrecht

To create momentum for these and other ideas, we feel young people must be facilitated in getting organized and creating the institutional support for that. Therefore, we want to find 3-6 young people to form the Young Future Food Board. You will be the points of contact for young people who wish to get involved in activities around food. You can use this platform to raise awareness for issues around food in the university, bring people together, and get things off the ground. It's up to you! As Future Food we will help by giving you visibility on our website, newsletter, symposium, etc. One member of the Young Future Food Board can also join the [formal board of Future Food Utrecht](#), and in this way provide a much-needed voice for young people on the board.

If you are interested in joining the Future Food Youth Board, then **please submit your details in the signup sheet** before July 4th. Simone Pekelsma will get in touch with all interested people on July 5th to discuss further steps.

2) Create project champions

We are looking for champions who want to engage on the following (or other topics) to help develop the ideas further into funding proposals for internal funds such as [Pathways to Sustainability funding](#) or the [Living Labs](#) Fund

1. Educational Offers
2. Dealing with Food Waste on Campus
3. Diverse Food Options on Campus
4. Getting People Back to the Land

Does one of these projects make your heart beat faster, and do you feel like this is something that you want to help realize during your time with Utrecht University? If so, **please indicate which project has your interest by filling out the signup sheet before** July 4th. Simone Pekelsma will get in touch with all interested people on July 5th to discuss further steps.

After the summer, we aim to set up writing groups to develop these ideas. You will be supported by senior members of Future Food Utrecht.

Youth Proposals for Sustainable Food System on Campus

This document outlines the key ideas and visions gathered during the Youth Future Food Movement workshop held at the Grounded Fort. The workshop aimed to involve university students, researchers, and Ph.D. candidates in shaping a sustainable food system on campus. The main areas of interest include educational offerings, dealing with food waste, diversifying food options, and connecting people back to the land through direct action.

Area of Interest 1: Educational Offers

Vision:

- Enhance educational opportunities in a broad range of topics, including for example agrifood law, economics and alternative forms of agriculture.
- Foster interdisciplinary formats and connections between organizations and the university.
- Promote experiential knowledge and a two-way relationship between education and practice, integrating the heart, head, and hands approach.

Action Plan:

1. Identify Current Barriers:

- Disciplinary disengagement and strict requirements prevent interdisciplinarity.
- Faculty setups hinder cross-departmental collaboration.

2. Assess Needs:

- Create an overview of existing university connections and their needs.
- Develop a future food track/elective that integrates various disciplines (e.g., science and humanities).
- Provide an overview of relevant courses and organize engaging lectures for students.

3. Implementation Steps:

- Design and build an interdisciplinary curriculum connecting different fields.
- Offer practical courses such as hobby courses/excursions (e.g., 2.5 ECTS from biology association UBV).
- Facilitate lectures and workshops that connect educational content with practical applications in the food system.

Area of Interest 2: Dealing with Food Waste on Campus

Vision:

- Address the issue of food waste being undervalued and underutilized.
- Implement systems for the separate collection and reuse of food waste.
- Promote sustainable and ethical food sources.

Action Plan:

1. Identify Current Barriers:

- Lack of separate bins for food leftovers.
- No system for distributing unsold but still edible food (e.g., Too Good To Go).
- Regulatory restrictions on the disposal of edible but expired food.

2. Assess Needs:

- Establish common procedures for distributing and upcycling food waste.
- Develop systems for disposing of organic waste from private and company sources daily (e.g., energy composting).

3. Implementation Steps:

- Collaborate with campus food vendors to manage their waste streams effectively.
- Initiate research projects with food producers/companies to predict food consumption and recycle waste.
- Provide space and support for students and staff to experiment with different models for reusing food waste.

Area of Interest 3: Diverse Food Options on Campus

Vision:

- Introduce sustainable, plant-based, and creative food options.
- Increase the diversity of food suppliers and offerings.
- Challenge the current monopoly of catering services (e.g., EUREST).
- Co-owned food system on campus: cooperative restaurants, supermarkets, and maybe even farms. Community shares sold to students, teachers, the institution and farmers.

Action Plan:

1. **Identify Current Barriers:**

- Single caterer with no competition.
- Existing contract with caterer until 2028.
- Perception that plant-based options are not profitable.

2. **Assess Needs:**

- University to step in as a caterer focusing on community building rather than profit.
- Increase interaction with food through cooking and sharing experiences.
- Establish a student-run cooperative for food services.
- Reduce the need for catering with more self-service facilities like water boilers and microwaves.

3. **Implementation Steps:**

- Set up a Living Lab with circulating start-ups using a food truck.
- Create a food/catering cooperative with necessary facilities and courses on food safety.
- Involve local farmers, groentetas, and culinary schools in the cooperative's board.
- Implement health food walls/vending machines and true cost pricing for food supply.

Area of Interest 4: Getting People Back to the Land

(Direct Action)

Vision:

- Promote hands-on learning experiences and alternative concept development.
- Foster student creativity and engagement with local farmers and landscapes.
- Integrate real-world questions from entrepreneurs into student theses.

Action Plan:

1. **Identify Current Barriers:**

- Need to gather concrete questions from local entrepreneurs (e.g., about nature-friendly banks).
- Limited integration of living labs/future food topics into the curriculum.

2. Assess Needs:

- Link these initiatives to university research projects.

3. Implementation Steps:

- Secure funding for relevant projects.
- Mobilize student involvement in agroforestry and other sustainable practices.
- Collaborate with local farmers to create practical thesis opportunities for students.

Conclusion

By addressing educational offerings, food waste management, diverse food options, and direct engagement with the land, we aim to foster a holistic and sustainable food environment. We seek funding and support from the university board and pathways for sustainability to implement these initiatives and create lasting positive impacts on our campus community.