**Civil Food Resilience Information Sheet and Questionnaire**

**Food Resilience study by Tim Lang for the National Preparedness Commission**

**July 2023**

**Background**

*Governments and scientists are aware that the food system is under some degree of stress at global, national and local levels due to a combination of factors including ecosystems, economic and geopolitical threats and risks.[[1]](#footnote-1) Following its Integrated Review, a defence oriented process, the UK government and others committed to a ‘whole of society’ approach to resilience.[[2]](#footnote-2) How does this translate into people’s lives or food within that? What is civil society’s role in fostering food resilience?*

*The term ‘resilience’ is now commonly but also sometimes loosely used for food systems. It should mean the “capacity to maintain a desired state of food security when exposed to stresses and shocks the capacity to bounce back after shock, or to anticipate and reduce shock”.[[3]](#footnote-3)*

*For some time, it has become clear that insufficient attention is being given to the interests of ‘ordinary people’ and to the ‘civil society’ role in improving food resilience.*

*This study therefore concentrates on clarifying that public and civil society role. We are interested in people’s preparedness for possible shocks and changes in food supply in coming years, what pockets of good practice there are, and how to improve resilience for known and unknown risks and failings.*

*Like a number of academics, I have been working on such matters for some time,[[4]](#footnote-4) so when the National Preparedness Commission (NPC) asked me to report on how to improve UK preparedness for shocks, I agreed. As its name indicates, the NPC is a body interested in UK public engagement and awareness of risks and capacities. See more about it here:* [*https://nationalpreparednesscommission.uk/*](https://nationalpreparednesscommission.uk/)

*I am contacting you to ask if you would help me on this. We could interview you but, if possible, please write your thoughts into the Questionnaire attached here. I am keen to learn your assessment of the current state of food resilience and especially what you think might be done to ameliorate it.*

*I welcome all replies and proposals. Give as much detail as you are able or have the time to do.*

*If you prefer to be interviewed, this would conducted by myself or Dr Natalie Neumann.*

*Many thanks, in advance.*

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**Civil Food Resilience Questionnaire**

**The term ‘resilience’ is used here as the capacity and preparedness to bounce back from shock.**

**The questions ask about UK food resilience in general and how UK civil society might build food resilience. We are interested in your thoughts, experience and suggestions.**

**If you judge that some questions are not relevant to you or your organisation, please move on to other questions. Be as specific as you can.**

**Your Name:……………………………………….**

**Organisation:…………………………………….**

**Contact details:………………………………….**

1. What is your overall assessment of the state of food resilience in the UK?
2. What kinds of shock to the food system do you think likely or possible ahead (short / long term)?
3. What do you see as desirable society responsibilities for UK food resilience? And in in which parts of government/which institutions does the responsibility lie? Defense, health, agriculture, food?
4. Are you aware of any civil society organisational contribution to civil food resilience? Is it sufficient?
5. If you don’t know of any strategies, do you see signs of a movement or interest in this topic?
6. How do you think a civil food resilience strategy could be useful to your area?
7. In the recent Covid pandemic, what lessons did you learn about potential food system shocks?
8. During the pandemic, did you receive any support or engagement from government, business, consultants or the public?
9. Do you think at present you are realistically able to help prevent large-scale food crises?
10. What would improve your organisation’s capacity to improve food resilience to future shocks?
11. What changes would you like to see from policy, resources and infrastructure?
12. What would be required to scale up your contribution to food resilience?
13. Given current reliance on mainstream food supplies, can you envisage a world where more local or regional food networks could be considerably expanded? What would this require?
14. What would it take to feed large towns by more regional or local food supplies? Is this feasible?

Please give any final general comments:

**Many thanks for your time and thoughts.**

**Please return to Prof Tim Lang at** [**t.lang@city.ac.uk**](mailto:t.lang@city.ac.uk) **BY THE END OF AUGUST, PLEASE!**

1. House of Lords Select Committee on Risk Assessment and Risk Planning (2021), *Preparing for Extreme Risks: Building a Resilient Society*. London: House of Lords. HL Paper 110. 3 December. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld5802/ldselect/ldrisk/110/110.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. HM Government (2022). *UK Government Resilience Framework*. London: HMG December. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1131163/UKG_Resilience_Framework_FINAL_v2.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ingram J, M Zurek et al (2019). *Exploring the resilience of the UK food system in a global context* - policy briefing. Oxford: UK Research & Innovation GFS-FSR programme <file:///C:/Users/lang/Downloads/exploring-the-resilience-of-the-uk-food-system-in-a-global-context-2.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Lang T (2020). *Feeding Britain*. London: Pelican [↑](#footnote-ref-4)