



Sustainable Places
Research Institute

Sefydliad Ymchwil
Mannau Cynaliadwy



School of Geography
and Planning

Ysgol Daearyddiaeth
a Chynllunio

Food Power Evaluation

Review of Monitoring, Measuring and Evaluating

May 2018

Authors:

Dr. K. Knowles, Dr. H. Pitt & Dr. A. Moragues-Faus

Evaluation Team Contact:

Dr Hannah Pitt

Sustainable Places Research Institute, Cardiff University

Pitth2@cardiff.ac.uk T: +44 (0)29 20 879 632

Food Power Review of Monitoring, Measuring and Evaluating

1) Introduction

This Review is intended to assist *Food Power* with work to gather evidence and data on its work and impact. It shares approaches used by some local alliances, and other relevant tools including those used beyond the UK. It aims to scope tools, methods and approaches available or in use which may be appropriate for Food Power and its network to apply.

It is primarily based on a desk review of tools already in use, and is intended to provide an overview of approaches available. The Review has been prepared by the external evaluation team at Cardiff University, in discussion with the Food Power team. As Food Power supports organisations to trial tools and approaches a more detailed guide will be developed to include details of lessons learnt through piloting some of the tools.

This is not an exhaustive review of monitoring and evaluation tools, but those presented are commonly used in the UK, US or Canada, would be appropriate for use in the UK and could be applicable to the scale and type of monitoring carried out by Alliances.

See also Food Power's [guide to mapping and measuring](#) food poverty, and short guide to monitoring and evaluation.

2) Using the document

The majority of the document presents approaches and methods, organised according to the type of information collected. The [Summary of Tools](#) table helps identify particular tools relevant to knowledge needs and preferred approaches. It sets out which tools are appropriate to measure need or impact, which focus on individual, household, community, or population food insecurity, and the level and type of data collection required to use each tool.

Tools which could be useful for Food Power and partners are divided by the type of questions they help answer:

- **SECTION 1:** How can we assess/benchmark/present *need* in our area?
- **SECTION 2:** How can we assess the *impact* of our activities on local people and our community? (Including multiple activities with different outputs/outcomes).
- **SECTION 3:** How can we assess whether the alliance has made a difference for local people and our community by *working together* - cumulative impact.
- **SECTION 4:** How can we present *cost/benefit* and/or impact to decision-makers/funders? (Including local decision makers who want to see evidence of local benefit/impact not just evidence from elsewhere on the assumption it will have a positive impact in their area too).
- **SECTION 5:** What is the best way to *present and disseminate* data?

Annex 1 lists all resources and references identified through the literature search, including those judged not requiring full description here.

3) The Review

Many organisations and researchers have already been working to monitor, measure and evaluate action on food insecurity. Through a review of published literature and resources we identified numerous tools relevant to Food Power. The priority was those which have been applied or trialled within the last decade, in a developed world context. Those judged to be most relevant to the needs of Food Power and local alliances are reported here. It is important to note that the review is primarily based on a desk review rather than first-hand knowledge of using these tools. The team has used their expertise to focus on those judged most appropriate to Food Power, but is relying on secondary information and publicly available information.

As the programme progresses and the evaluation team works with local alliances to trial monitoring and evaluation tools, we will develop direct experience of more methods, and first-hand learning of their benefits and limitations. These insights will be shared in subsequent reports which will offer recommendations of tried and tested approaches.

4) Summary of Tools

The table below summarises all the tools shared here and should help find those of most interest according to your needs. It organises tools into key categories according to how you answer the following:

- What do you want to measure? - Are you interested in understanding *need*, (i.e. the level of problem you need to tackle), or the *impact* of an activity (i.e. the changes which result)?
- At what level or scale? – Are you interested in understanding individuals or households, a larger scale picture such as the whole community, or considering activity and impact of a particular partnership?
- How do you want to measure it? – Are you reliant on existing information (i.e. secondary data), or dedicated data collection through surveys, or mapping?

Once you have answered one or all of these questions you can screen for tools which match your responses. Go to the description of those tools for more detail on how they work, and some implications of using them.

Summary of Tools													
Tools	What is measured?		At what level or scale?						How is it measured?				
	Need	Impact	Individual	Household	Environment	Community	Population	Partnership/ Policy/ Programme	Surveys (people/places)	Community Involvement	Mapping	Secondary Data	Cost/benefit analysis
US Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM)	✓			✓					✓				
Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)	✓		✓	✓					✓				
Tool for identifying populations and areas at greatest risk of household food insecurity in England	✓			✓						✓	✓	✓	
Brighton & Hove Annual City Tracker Survey	✓		✓						✓				
Sustainable Food Cities	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
USDA Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit	✓					✓			✓	✓		✓	
Centre for a Liveable Future Community Food Assessment Tool	✓	✓				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	

IOM Framework for Assessing Effects of the Food System	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
School Holiday Food and Fun Evaluation		✓						✓	✓	✓			✓
Food Policy Council Self-Assessment Tool (FPC-SAT)		✓						✓	✓	✓			
Food Policy Audit Tool (University of Virginia)		✓						✓	✓	✓			
Food Policy Audit (Center for Resilient Cities)		✓						✓	✓	✓			

5) **SECTION 1: ASSESSING NEED: How can we assess/benchmark/present need in our area?**

This section focuses on measures of need at different scales, and measures of the distribution of need in different areas. Sections are as follows:

- National measures of need
- Sub-national or community measures of need
- Individual indicators of need
- Mapping of need and/or provision.

a) *National Measures of need*

There are two tools for measuring household food insecurity at the national level; the [U.S. Adult Food Security Survey Module](#), and the United Nations’ eight questions in the [Food Insecurity Experience Scale](#) (FIES). Either of these sets of survey questions can be used by local areas.

Tool	US Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM)
Where is it?	https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/survey-tools/#household Developed by United States Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service.
What is it?	Survey tool used by Government in US and Canada as part of national census. Also adapted by researchers for use with specific communities and in other parts of the world.
What will it tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calculates household summary measures of food security: food security scale scores and food security status. • Incorporates the psychological and social acceptability components of food insecurity. • Provides ‘<i>a standard, consistent benchmark series of national and state-level food-security and hunger data, along with data on use of food and nutrition assistance programs, food expenditures, and use of emergency food resources, for use by researchers and analysts</i>’.
How to use it:	The tool is a three-stage survey. Most households in a general population survey are asked only three questions. These questions can be included as part of other surveys. The Household version includes child-focused questions.
What happens to the results?	The Guide sets out how to code and analyse the data. This can be done in more or less intensive ways.
Watch out for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less precise and somewhat less reliable than 18-item measure. • Does not measure the most severe levels of food insecurity. • Does not ask about conditions of children in the household. • Sensitivity of asking households about these issues.
See also:	
Sample questions:	The survey consists of 4 household (HH) questions for all households, 5 adult (AD) questions, and 7 child (CL) questions for households with children. Sample questions (see link above for full list): HH1. Which of these statements best describes the food eaten in your household in the last 12 months: —enough of the kinds of food (I/we) want to eat; —

	<p>enough, but not always the kinds of food (I/we) want; —sometimes not enough to eat; or, —often not enough to eat?</p> <p>AD1. In the last 12 months, since last (name of current month), did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food? AD1a. How often?</p> <p>CH1. “(I/we) relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed (my/our) child/the children) because (I was/we were) running out of money to buy food.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?</p>
Resources needed:	Variable. Requires primary data collection.
Particular skills:	Coding and data analysis.
Led by:	UN, Government agencies, researchers.
Useful as:	A set of standardised questions to understand and compare levels of food insecurity.

Tool	Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES)
Where is it?	http://www.fao.org/in-action/voices-of-the-hungry/fies/en/
What is it?	The tool is an 8-item survey module. It is used by the UN FAO to collect information from individual respondents and to compute country-level estimates of the prevalence of food insecurity at different levels of severity that are valid, reliable and comparable across countries.
What will it tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiences of the individual respondent or of the respondent’s household as a whole. • Focuses on self-reported food-related behaviours and experiences associated with increasing difficulties in accessing food due to resource constraints. • Differs from traditional approaches that assess food insecurity indirectly or rely on measuring determinants of food security (e.g. food availability, income) and potential outcomes (e.g. nutritional status).
How to use it:	Can be used as a standalone survey or incorporated into larger assessments. Currently included in the Gallup World Poll® (GWP) and used in over 140 countries worldwide.
What happens to the results?	The FIES can also be used in conjunction with other measures and has the potential to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the causes and consequences of food insecurity and to inform more effective policies and interventions. Comparability across countries is achieved through the use of statistical techniques borrowed from the toolkit of Item Response Theory (IRT) models, commonly used in the educational and psychological testing fields.
Watch out for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FIES is a statistical which works like those designed to measure intelligence or personality. • Responses to the questions must always be analyzed together as a scale, not as separate items.
See also:	
Survey questions:	During the last 12 months, was there a time when, because of lack of money or other resources:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You were worried you would not have enough food to eat? 2. You were unable to eat healthy and nutritious food? 3. You ate only a few kinds of foods? 4. You had to skip a meal? 5. You ate less than you thought you should? 6. Your household ran out of food? 7. You were hungry but did not eat? 8. You went without eating for a whole day?
Resources needed:	Variable, requires primary data collection.
Particular skills:	Skills in coding and data analysis, and of scale based approaches.
Led by:	UN; Government agencies; researchers.
Useful for:	A set of standardised questions to understand and compare levels of food insecurity.

b) Using Sub-national or community tools to assess need

Need can be assessed for areas or communities using secondary data, as in the methodology below proposed for England by Diana Smith. It can also be assessed by gathering new data for a specific community using the *Community Food Assessment* approach, which is common in the US.

Tool	Tool for identifying populations and areas at greatest risk of household food insecurity in England (Diana Smith).
Where is it?	https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0143622817301340
What is it?	A proposed approach to estimate population-level risk of household food insecurity in England, using secondary data and GIS mapping.
What will it tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated geographic distribution of factors contributing to household food insecurity. • Customisable to local pressures and settings outside England.
How to use it:	The tool could be adapted by local councils or charitable groups.
What happens to the results?	It could be used to assist in establishing a national measure of risk of household food insecurity.
Watch out for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tool is still in development.
See also:	
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Household type (Household composition; Occupation of Household Reference Person; Population age 0–64 years; Population aged 65+ years); • Benefit profile (Count of people claiming JSA, ESA, PC benefits by LSOA, MOSA (age 16–64, 65+); Count of JSA or ESA benefit sanctions by MSOA). • Validated using locations of franchised food banks (Trussell Trust), the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation score, and the prevalence of childhood obesity measured using the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP).

Resources needed:	Unknown – in development.
Particular Skills:	Research and GIS.
Led by:	Researchers. But could be adapted by local councils or charitable groups.
Useful for:	Highlighting secondary data sources providing proxy indicators for food insecurity risk.

Tool	USDA Community Food Security Assessment Toolkit
Where is it?	http://www.hungerfreecommunities.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/USDAefan02013.pdf
What is it?	A toolkit of standardized measurement tools for assessing various aspects of community food security. Can be used by community-based non-profit organizations and business groups, local government officials, private citizens, and community planners.
What will it tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes a general guide to community assessment and materials for examining six basic components related to community food security. • Includes guides for profiling community characteristics and food resources, materials for assessing household food security, food resource accessibility, food availability and affordability, and community food production resources.
How to use it:	<p>It is designed for use by community-based non-profit organizations and business groups, local government officials, private citizens, and community planners.</p> <p>A diverse team of 8-12 people is ideal for planning and implementing a comprehensive community food security assessment. Ideally, the team should consist of professionals and others in the community who have a common interest in community food security and who have different areas of expertise. The team also should include community residents who have direct experience with food security issues.</p> <p>Examples of people to recruit for the assessment team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local government representatives • Representatives from community-based organizations (religious organizations, emergency food providers, social/neighborhood groups) • Health, education, and nutrition providers • Food retailers and manufacturers • Community residents • Farmers. <p>Data collection tools include secondary data sources, focus group guides, and a food store survey instrument.</p>
What happens to the results?	Compiled into reports for use by various actors.
Watch out for:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse representation in the planning process is key to a successful outcome.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The involvement of individuals from different parts of the community may increase access to data; for example, a representative from the local food pantry may have unique knowledge of and access to data on emergency food use in the community.
See also:	
Indicators:	There are six basic assessment components, each with their own purpose, analysis and indicators.
Resources needed:	Variable; can be done with minimal funding.
Particular skills:	Ideally, the team should consist of professionals and others in the community who have a common interest in community food security and who have different areas of expertise. Some research skills needed to collect primary data.
Led by:	Community-based non-profit organizations and business groups, local government officials, private citizens, and community planners.
Useful for:	A participatory process which brings stakeholders together to share experiences and insight.

Tool	CLF Community Food Assessment Tool
Where is it?	https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/projects/CFA/ Created by Centre for a Liveable Future (CLF), John Hopkins University.
What is it?	Community food assessments (CFA) offer a one-time snapshot of the food landscape in a given community, and are not intended to be generalised beyond the specific case. They are adapted to the specific needs of the community considered, and aim to improve a community's food system via increased access to healthy food.
What will it tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFA gathers information about residents' perceptions of the food environment and their food shopping behaviors. Information is used to direct the efforts of community organizations and policymakers that want to improve healthy food access. Provides a tool for raising awareness of food system deficits and opportunities, and give evidence of the community's needs that residents can use to advocate for effective policy and programs.
How to use it:	Most CFAs used some form of interviews, surveys, focus groups, questionnaires, or observation and secondary data.
What happens to the results?	The results are used by local community partners in their efforts to address identified areas of concern; to inform policymakers in the city government; and to build the evidence-base of assets and areas of concern in the local food environment.
Watch out for:	
See also:	Case Studies (adaptations and use of the tool): Understanding and Addressing Food Security in SouthWest Baltimore: https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-a-livable-future/pdf/research/clf_reports/OROSWreport2009-1-1.pdf

	<p>From Our Own Soil: a Community Food Assessment of Benton County, Oregon, 2006. https://assets.jhsph.edu/clf/mod_clfResource/doc/CorvallisFoodAssessmentReport.pdf</p> <p>Community Food Access Assessment: Montgomery County, Maryland 2013-2015. https://assets.jhsph.edu/clf/mod_clfResource/doc/MoCo-Food-Access-Report-2015.pdf</p> <p>What's Cooking in Your Food System? A guide to Community Food Assessment. https://assets.jhsph.edu/clf/mod_clfResource/doc/What's%20Cooking%20in%20Your%20Food%20System1.pdf</p> <p>Food Turn up Report: a Community Food Assessment Report for Lowndes, Macon and Montgomery Counties in River Region of Alabama. https://issuu.com/thefoodturnup/docs/thefoodturnup-online-ver2</p>
Indicators:	Various, see case studies for more information.
Resources needed:	Variable; can be done with minimal finance. Can attract funding and support from community members, interns and students.
Particular skills:	Some research skills needed for conducting interviews, surveys, focus groups, questionnaires, or observation and analysing secondary data.
Led by:	Community-based non-profit organizations and business groups, local government officials, private citizens, and community planners.

c) *Using Individual Indicators to assess need*

There are a number of data sources which can be used as indicators for household food insecurity. These can be used to estimate the extent of food poverty and can provide a concrete way to try to represent the local situation in the absence of an official measure. An individual indicator can be incorporated into an existing survey to give an indication of need at population level. For example, Brighton & Hove Council ask people about their ability to meet basic living costs in their [annual City Tracker Survey](#) (see p.37). Responses over the last four years indicate that food poverty is an ongoing pressing issue.

Sustain recommend that indicators are included in [Food Poverty Action Plans](#), and suggest various sources to help assess the extent of poverty and food insecurity (p.3). For an example see [Brighton & Hove Food Partnership](#) indicators for measuring progress towards a healthy food system. The [Trussell Trust's experimental data visualisation tool](#) explores local demand and specific drivers for food bank use. The [Mapping Hunger](#) report presents background to developing this tool.

In terms of academic work, the study by [Leroy¹](#) provides a review of indicators that can be used to measure the food access dimension of food security. They aim to bring clarity to the assessment of

¹ Jef L. Leroy et. al. (2015) Measuring the Food Access Dimension of Food Security: A Critical Review and Mapping of Indicators, *Food and Nutrition Bulletin*. Vol 36, Issue 2, pp. 167 – 195.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26121701>

the food access dimension of food security at the household and individual level by reviewing the most commonly used indicator, considering their original purpose, construction, at what levels (household or individual) they were designed to be used, what components (quality, quantity, safety, and cultural acceptability) they were intended to reflect, and whether or not they have been tested for validity and comparability across contexts. The study recommends the use of experience-based indicators (e.g. HDDS, FCS) to assess household access to diet quality and individual dietary diversity scores for women or children to assess individual access to diet quality.

It is important to note reasons for not using certain food insecurity indicators in isolation. As explained by Smith et al.² (2018), the presence of food banks can be taken as a proxy for measuring levels of food insecurity. However, their prevalence does not necessarily mean high levels of need in an area, as food banks are often set up based on community resources and local social networks, rather than as a response to need. They suggest that the presence of known risk factors provides clearer information about food insecurity.

This [webinar](#) with US-based food policy practitioners discusses strategies food policy councils use to try to improve representation across races, classes, occupations, genders, and ages, to try to ensure that they prioritize the food systems issues and solutions most appropriate to their communities.

Tool	Developing Food Poverty Action Plans - Sustain
Where is it?	https://www.sustainweb.org/publications/developing_food_poverty_action_plans/
What is it?	Guide offers advice on drafting and delivering local food poverty action plans, including suggested data analysis or research. Collecting local evidence is stated as important to identify local needs.
What will it tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlines data sources for small geographical areas, such as wards or output areas. • In the absence of governmental data on food insecurity, suggests proxy measures to indicate the scale of food poverty or insecurity in a given area.
How to use it:	<p>Key data sources and measures include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uptake of specific entitlements or services, such as Healthy Start Vouchers, universal or free school meals, meals on wheels/ community meals; • Poverty or child poverty, benefit claims, application for crisis support; • Indices of multiple deprivation. • Local primary research and analysis can also help to build a local picture.
What happens to the results?	<p>The local picture could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping and cross-referencing of food aid services, food retailers and takeaway outlets with areas of deprivation and benefit claims data; • Conducting surveys, interviews or focus groups of individuals experiencing food poverty and/ or professionals from food aid providers, advice or referral agencies, and statutory and third sector organisations;

² Smith, D. et. al. (2018) Identifying populations and areas at greatest risk of household food insecurity in England. Applied Geography, Volume 91, pp 21-31.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gathering data collected by the local authority, including the public health department, which may also be included in the local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA); Collating data collected by local third sector organisations.
Watch out for:	
See also:	Brighton & Hove Food Poverty Action Plan .

Indicator	Money available to meet basic living costs, including food
Tool	Brighton Annual City Tracker Survey
Where is it?	https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/brighton-hove.gov.uk/files/City%20Tracker%202017%20report%20-%20V2%2005%2012%2017%20vFinal.pdf
What is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A telephone survey to 1002 residents, covering various aspects of resident profile and satisfaction with Council services and local environment. Covers the adult population (18+) usually resident in Brighton & Hove. Includes questions to gather data on individuals' ability to meet basic living costs.
What will it tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indications of the extent to which different genders, age groups, ethnicities, and people with disabilities struggle to meet basic living costs, including food.
How to use it:	Brighton & Hove commissioned a company to deliver the annual survey. Full survey takes about 6 weeks. The indicator question could be incorporated into other tools or surveys, to gather the necessary data then compare different areas.
What happens to the results?	Responses presented as percentage of total, and analysed by gender, age, ethnicity and disability. Results published in an annual report and publicly available.
Watch out for:	Requires selection of representative samples of residents to ensure results are not biased towards certain groups or areas. Could be considered a sensitive question which some will not feel comfortable to ask or answer. Is asking people about more than just food poverty.
See also:	
Indicator question:	<p>"Thinking about the next year, how much do you agree or disagree that you will have enough money, after housing costs, to meet basic living costs? By this I mean to pay for food, water and heating?"</p> <p>Responses: Don't know – strongly disagree – tend to disagree – neither – tend to agree – strongly agree.</p>
Resources needed:	A full survey across a town or community would require significant time to phone residents. In the case of Brighton and Hove a specialist company took 6 weeks to survey 1000 people. Also requires access to contact information.

Particular skills:	Survey skills, data analysis, understanding how to select representative population samples.
Led by:	Local authority.
Useful for:	An easy to understand and compare indicator of household poverty.

d) *Using mapping to assess need and/or provision*

There are various examples of mapping key indicators to demonstrate the distribution of relevant amenities or provision. For example, the [Food Environment Assessment Tool](#) (FEAT) focuses on food retail outlets, allowing comparison of neighbourhoods and changes since 2014. Oxford's [Food Access Radar Toolkit](#) and [Good Food in Greenwich/ RLB Greenwich's Food Poverty Needs Assessment](#) combine this information with other indicators of food insecurity. These tools require mapping software and expertise. Other indicators which can be usefully mapped include pedestrian access to food shops e.g. [Mapping the Availability of Healthy Food in Sandwell](#). The [Independent Food Aid Network](#) maps independent food banks across the UK, whilst other groups map all food related projects e.g. [Feeding Lancashire Together](#).

Maps can also be used to prompt action to address food poverty. London Food Link produces an annual *Beyond the Food Bank* [report](#) and [online profile](#) to assess London councils' actions across ten measures. This comparison has prompted some councils to be more aware of their response to food poverty and address gaps in local responses.

For an academic review and analysis of food mapping, see the study by [Sweeney](#)³ which analyses the nature of geographic information systems mapping in scholarly research and web-based food mapping since 2008. [Shaw](#)⁴ proposes categorising food maps based on 'access' and its three contributory factors ('ability', 'assets', 'attitude') to avoid mapping based on physical or economic access alone.

The concept of 'food deserts' has become a common way for studies to explore the geographic distribution of food insecurity. For a systematic review of literature on food deserts in the US, see [Walker](#)⁵. Food deserts are often studied in urban settings; for a study of rural settings see [Lebel et al.](#)⁶ study of rural food deserts in Canada. Discussing the contentiousness of the term 'food deserts', [McEntree](#)'s⁷ study concludes that food 'access' makes for a more useful focus.

³ Sweeney, G. et al 2015 'The State of Food Mapping: Academic Literature Since 2008 and Review of Online GIS-based Food Mapping Resources', *Journal of Planning Literature* 31: 2 p123 – 219.

⁴ Shaw, H. 2006 'Food Deserts: Towards the Development of a Classification', *Geografiska Annaler B* 88: 2, p231.

⁵ Walker, R. et al 2010 'Disparities and access to healthy food in the United States: A review of food deserts literature', *Health & Place* 16: 5 p876.

⁶ Lebel, A. et al 2016 'Identifying rural food deserts: Methodological considerations for food environment interventions' *Canadian Journal of Public Health* 107

⁷ McEntree, J. 2009 'Highlighting food inadequacies: does the food desert metaphor help this cause?' *British Food Journal* 111: 4 p349

SECTION 2: ASSESSING IMPACT: How can we assess the impact of our activities on local people and our community?

In order to assess the impact of a specific activity or programme on local people it is necessary to develop a logic framework for how that impact is achieved. Logic frameworks or models can take different forms. For example, some describe different factors conditioning changes in particular places: i) pressures or/and driving forces affecting the context of intervention, ii) characteristics of a specific place, iii) impacts of specific interventions and iv) responses of the overall system to those changes. These Pressure-State-Impact-Response frameworks (DPSIR) try to develop a picture of cause and effect. Impact assessments are more simplified versions using theme-based frameworks which cluster impacts around something like the four dimensions of sustainability (environment, economy, society, and governance). By and large, frameworks aiming for a holistic perspective include social, health and wellbeing, economic, environmental and governance dimensions (see (Prosperi et al.⁸ 2015 for a recent review). Alternatively, goal- oriented approaches define an overall project goal, desired outcomes and indicators to measure impact.

Table 2: Example of a goal oriented framework

Term	Definition	Example
Goal	An overarching aim	Improve cooking skills of the population
Outcome	A state or position which is reached in order that the goal is achieved	More people know how to cook five different dishes from scratch
Indicator	A measure of progress towards delivery of an outcome, that is, an increase/ improvement/ change in /movement in a relevant and measurable parameter	100 people are trained to cook five different healthy and affordable dishes

Some of the tools presented in Section 1 Assessing Need, can then become tools for monitoring and evaluation if need is measured repeatedly across time, and compared at points across the life of specific programmes (e.g. pre and post-delivery). This is particularly true of community food assessments as evaluations of specific interventions can be built into the process.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in the US created a [Framework for Assessing Effects of the Food System](#) which could help groups think through the consequences and potential unintended consequences of programmes and policies.

On a more local level, the [Evaluation Report of the Food and Fun School Holiday Enrichment Programme 2016](#) is an example of how to evaluate the impact a specific programme, and includes a section about how the cost of the programme compares to standard childcare.

⁸ Prosperi P, Allen T, Padilla M, Peri I, Cogill B. Sustainability and food and nutrition security: a vulnerability assessment framework for the mediterranean region. Sage Open. 2014;4:1–15. doi: 10.1177/2158244014539169

A review of the [benefits and limitations of urban agriculture](#) from the Center for a Liveable Future explores how groups struggle to frame the benefits and potential problems with a range of urban growing initiatives. It provides a useful overview of the documented sociocultural, health, environmental, and economic development outcomes of urban agriculture.

Tool	IOM Framework for Assessing Effects of the Food System
Where is it?	http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/Reports/2015/Food-System.aspx
What is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A framework to serve as a tool for decision makers, researchers, and other stakeholders to examine the breadth of possible outcomes.
What will it tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can help identify unintended effects; promote transparency among stakeholders; improve communication and understanding of differing values and perspectives among scientists, policy makers, and other stakeholders. • Decreases the likelihood that results of a policy analysis might be misinterpreted.
How to use it:	<p>The framework directs decision makers through the following process of assessment of environmental, economic and social domains:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify the problem - Define the scope - Identify the scenarios - Conduct the analysis - Synthesise the results - Report the findings.
What happens to the results?	Depends on how the framework is used. Results should help to direct decision-makers and influence policies and programmes.
Watch out for:	Data and methodologies for assessing the food system come from both public and private initiatives. Both are critically important, but lack of public access to data collected by industry can be a major challenge. The committee concludes that engaging a wide variety of stakeholders throughout the assessment can promote the sharing of data and best practices, avoid conflicts of interest, ensure equitable participation, and address public concerns about transparency.
See also:	
Indicators:	See full report.
Resources needed:	Variable, relatively low.
Particular skills:	
Led by:	Researchers and stakeholders.
Useful for:	A process oriented towards decision makers.
Tool	School Holiday Food and Fun Evaluation

Where is it?	<p>Welsh Local Government Association</p> <p>http://www.wlga.wales/SharedFiles/Download.aspx?pageid=62&mid=665&fileid=718</p>
What is it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the <i>Food and Fun School Holiday Enrichment Programme 2016</i>.
What will it tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of evaluation methods and findings. • The study covers: reach and engagement; the characteristics and needs of the families engaged; the costs and impact of this model on children and parents' health and wellbeing; and the experiences and views of children, parents and staff. • Indicates impact of the programme on children and families.
How to use it:	<p>In this case the study involved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onsite researchers completed a club observation record during week 1 and week 3 or 4 of the project; • Child activity monitors (accelerometers) were used to monitor when a child is running around or sitting still. Data were analysed using ActiLife software; • Children attending the club were given the opportunity to complete a brief paper-based survey. Parents attending on family days also completed a paper-based survey exploring their experiences of the school summer holidays; • Children participated in focus groups to voice their opinions of the Food and Fun club. Parents participated in focus group discussions exploring the challenges to providing food and fun/entertainment for their families during the summer holidays; • A range of club staff and volunteers were interviewed about their experiences at the Food and Fun club.
What happens to the results?	<p>Survey data were managed and analysed to report global figures across all 10 clubs. For analyses of physical activity data, statistical models were used to examine the proportion of children meeting recommended physical activity guidelines on club days, non-club days and weekends. Discussion during focus groups and interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and analysed using typical qualitative analysis techniques.</p>
Watch out for:	
See also:	<p>Includes a section about costs (Section 6) that assesses the cost of this programme compared to the national average price for holiday childcare.</p>
Resources needed:	<p>Not revealed, but given the intensity of the research activity (funded by the local authority) it is likely to be relatively resource intensive.</p>
Particular skills:	<p>Qualitative and quantitative research skills.</p>
Useful for:	<p>As an example of evaluating the impact of a programme.</p>

6) **SECTION 3: ASSESSING CUMULATIVE IMPACT** How can we assess whether the alliance has made a difference for local people and our community by working together?

This section explores tools that groups have used to measure the impact of partnership activities, or ways they have assessed the cumulative impact of different organisations working together for the benefit of the local community in relation to food.

The main tools are survey-based audits with community involvement, that aim to systematically collect and disseminate information. They can be undertaken by partnerships working together or by community leaders and agencies. They aim to:

- Assess the policy environment;
- Translate the vision of the group doing the audit;
- Identify strengths and gaps in the policy environment to achieve that vision;
- Create a scan of the environment, likened to a score card.

Assessing collective is noted to be challenging, but an increasing number of tools assess the functioning of food partnerships such as food policy councils. However, it is much more difficult to measure their impact on goals such as reducing food poverty in a specific place.

There are two ways that these broader challenge is being addressed. Firstly, collective impact assessments consider “the *long-term commitment* of a group of *important actors* from *different sectors* to a *common agenda* for solving a *specific social problem*.” (Kania and Kramer p39⁹). This might apply to food poverty and other food partnerships. Successful collective impact assessments require: i) a common agenda shared by participants; ii) shared measurement systems that allow showing cumulative effects; iii) development of mutually reinforcing activities; iv) continuous communication; and iv) backbone support organizations. See [here](#) for examples.

Secondly, initiatives such as the Sustainable Food Cities Network provide tools to develop a collective understanding of what is happening in a specific place in terms of sustainable food, e.g. levels of food poverty, activities and policies being implemented. Others identify gaps and guide effective city-wide action. The Sustainable Food Cities Toolkit sets out a systems and place-based approach to measure progress towards three main goals related to health, environment and economy. It encourages partnerships to work together to understand the strengths and challenges their area faces, identify activities to be developed to have a positive impact on specific targets and develop further connections between key stakeholders to reinforce collective action around common concerns.

The ‘[State of the Research: an annotated bibliography on existing, emerging, and needed research on food policy groups](#)’ presents a number of other studies and examples of evaluation from North America, Europe, and other continents. This includes studies that evaluate the impacts of individual Food Policy Groups (FPG)s, compare multiple FPGs, and how FPGs connect with one another. It also identifies gaps in the research about individual, multiple, and connections between, FPGs.

⁹ Kania, J. and Kramer, M. 2011 Collective Impact, *Stanford Social Review*
http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.lano.org/resource/dynamic/blogs/20131007_093137_25993.pdf

Additionally, two papers by [Clark¹⁰](#) present the case of Franklin County, Ohio to illustrate how a civically-oriented group transitioned into an advocacy coalition. A food policy audit was used as a tool to develop technical knowledge that translated the Food Council’s mission and objectives to political asks, resulting in a policy agenda. Through the audit process, the council identified and secured additional coalition members and increased the local governance capacity to create a healthy food policy environment. This approach provides evidence-based framework to evaluate the policy readiness of an FPC.

[Clayton¹¹](#) et. al. investigate the role of partnerships in food systems policy change. The study describes a range of partners (e.g. stakeholders from government, business, and education) and credits FPCs with advancing their policy goals by increasing their visibility and credibility, focusing their policy agenda, connecting to key policy inputs, and obtaining stakeholder buy-in. Partnerships were also described as barriers to policy progress when partners were less engaged or had either disproportionate or little influence in a given food sector. The article contains a useful policy expert interview guide.

a) Tools for assessing the impact of food policy councils and alliances

These were developed in the US and would need minor adaptations for UK use (e.g. adjusting currencies, aligning with the UK benefits system).

Tool	The Food Policy Council Self-Assessment Tool (FPC-SAT)
Where is it?	http://fpcsat.web.unc.edu/
What is it?	The Food Policy Council Self-Assessment Tool (FPC-SAT) is an online self-assessment survey. It aims to help Food Policy Councils measure leadership; active membership; council climate; council structure; social capital; synergy; impact; challenges; technical assistance needs.
What will it tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can measure changes in food councils over time. • Identifies strengths and areas for improvement. • Measures the impact of technical assistance. P • Provides evaluation data to funders.
How to use it:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed by members of a food council every 1-2 years.
What happens to the results?	Results are summarized by assessors and returned to the food council coordinator. The tool is designed and hosted by the University of North Carolina.

¹⁰ CLARK, J. K., C. MARQUIS, & S. RAJA. 2017 ‘The Local Food Policy Audit: Spanning the Civic-Political Agrifood Divide’, *Nourishing Communities* p131-146

Clark, J. 2018 ‘From civic group to advocacy coalition: Using a food policy audit as a tool for change’ *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 8: 21 p28

¹¹ Clayton, M. et al 2015 ‘The Role of Partnerships in U.S. Food Policy Council Policy Activities’ *PLoS ONE* 10:4

Watch out for:	
See also:	
Resources needed:	Minimal, is an online survey.
Particular skills:	None.
Led by:	Original is hosted by university researchers.
Useful for:	An example of assessing partnerships parallel to local food poverty alliances.

Tool	Food Policy Audit Toolkit (Center for Resilient Cities)
Where is it?	https://fyi.uwex.edu/foodsystemstoolkit/food-policy-audit/ for the introduction, and https://fyi.uwex.edu/foodsystemstoolkit/files/2015/11/MKE-Local-Food-Policy-Audit-Template.xlsx for the audit scorecard.
What is it?	The Food Policy Audit consists of 129 questions, presented in spreadsheet form, across four categories: equitable food access; land use and zoning; economic development; and public health.
What will it tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps local governments and other groups identify existing food policy infrastructure.
How to use it:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access the scorecard and information online, then complete the questions.
What happens to the results?	
Watch out for:	
See also:	This Food Policy Audit Toolkit was adapted from versions by the Ohio State University and the University of Virginia.
Resources needed:	Minimal.
Particular skills:	None.
Led by:	Hosted by university researchers.
Useful for:	Could be used by food alliances to track progress towards particular goals across a range of domains.

Tool	Food Policy Audit Tool (University of Virginia)
Where is it?	https://foodsystemsjournal.org/index.php/fsj/article/view/118 The tool was developed by the University of Virginia and piloted through the graduate school.

What is it?	It consists of two phases. The first is 113 yes-or-no research questions regarding the existence of food-based policy relating to public health, economic development, environmental impacts, social equity, and land conservation. Phase two confirms the validity of the results through a series of stakeholder meetings.
What will it tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 reveals the existence of food-based policies and programmes. • Phase 2 meetings provide insight into the success of policies and initiatives currently in place, community attitudes and perceptions, and community priorities for moving forward.
How to use it:	The Food Policy Audit Tool can be used online by graduate students, citizen volunteers, planners, and members of food policy councils.
What happens to the results?	Compiled into a scorecard and report that can be used to monitor progress over time and to guide action.
Watch out for:	
See also:	The article explaining the development of the Food Policy Audit Tool, which contains the 113 audit questions, which can also be found at the link above.
Indicators:	
Resources needed:	Minimal
Particular skills:	None
Led by:	Researchers / University.
Useful for:	Indicating relevant policy areas.

Tool	Sustainable Food Cities Toolkit
Where is it?	http://sustainablefoodcities.org/Portals/4/Documents/SFC%20indicators%20final%20draft%20for%20website.pdf
What is it?	A 'systems approach to healthy and sustainable food' that seeks to measure progress towards three main goals related to health, environment and economy. For health these are: improving physical and mental health and wellbeing by reducing food poverty; improving access to affordable healthy food; promoting healthy weight and healthy diets; and increasing participation in food related physical and social activity'. The Sustainable Food Cities model involves developing cross-sector partnerships of local public agencies, businesses, academics and NGOs committed to working together to make healthy and sustainable food a defining characteristic of where they live.
What will it tell us?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether progress has been made towards the identified goals of healthy and sustainable food. • The toolbox specifically identifies partnership working as a lever for change.

How to use it:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The toolbox aims to measure integrated, holistic change across a range of interlinked dimensions.
What happens to the results?	Results are used to guide ongoing partnership working.
Watch out for:	<p>An essential characteristic of the model is that none of the dimensions should be considered in isolation. Each is intimately interlinked and, since actions in one dimension often lead to positive outcomes in another, they should be considered part of an integrated and holistic whole that can deliver more than the sum of its parts in achieving long lasting change. It requires a coordinated approach and corresponding budget.</p> <p>The toolbox is a draft currently under consultation.</p>
See also:	The toolkit provides references to research and advisory documents as well as case studies that attest to the validity of the actions suggested for each outcome. Over 97 UK case studies are listed, and over 60 publications.
Indicators:	<p>There are three main goals and a number of outcomes ('meta-indicators'), grouped under 'health', 'environment' and 'economy'. Each has a corresponding potential measurement and data collection method. These are mostly quantitative measures. Examples of measures most relevant to food poverty (with existing and potential data sources in brackets) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decrease the number of people requiring emergency food aid (Food bank records on numbers of referrals; quality of life surveys by local authority); Decrease the number of people overweight or obese (National Child Measurement Programme; GP records; referrals to weight management programmes); Decrease in the number of people malnourished (Hospital admissions and extension of stay data; uptake of free school meals). <p>Examples of proxy indicators identified as levers for change include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a multi-agency partnership is established to strategically address the full range of issues that contribute to food poverty and inequality; a cross-sector sustainable food procurement group has been established to bring together procurement officers, caterers, suppliers and others to promote uptake of healthy, sustainable, local and ethical catering accreditation in all settings; the Council adopts a city-wide Sustainable Food Procurement policy, incorporating commitments to sourcing more healthy, sustainable, ethical and local ingredients.
Resources needed:	Requires a coordinated approach and relies on partnership working.
Particular skills:	Coordination; some research and data analysis.
Led by:	Researchers / University.
Useful for:	A comprehensive overview of food related data and indicators relevant to the UK.

CASE STUDY

The Franklin County Food Policy Audit. Franklin County Local Food Council, Columbus, OH. 2012.

The Franklin County Local Food Council (FCLFC) voted to conduct an audit to gauge its performance in four broad policy categories: Promoting Local Food, Sustainability, and Community Food Security; Strengthening Zoning and Land Use; Addressing Public Health and Food Access; and Fostering Social Equity.

The audit involved gathering input from 15 different stakeholders representing 13 institutions that play a crucial role in the Franklin County Food System. These included the Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department; the Franklin County Purchasing Department; the Soil and Water Conservation District; the Ohio State University Extension, Franklin County; the Economic and Community Development Institute; the Franklin County Emergency Management and Homeland Security; the Mid-Ohio Foodbank; local Matters; the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency; the Central District, Franklin County; the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency; the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission; the Franklin County Office of Management and Budget; and Columbus Public Health.

As the Franklin County Food Policy Audit was the first of its kind, there is no standard of comparison for its score. However, the audit highlights where there is still opportunity for both the council and the county to take action toward fostering a local, healthy, and sustainable food system that meets social, economic, and ecological needs.

The full report is available at:

7) SECTION 4: ASSESSING COST/BENEFIT: How can we present cost/benefit and/or impact to decision-makers/funders? (Including local decision makers who want to see evidence of local benefit/impact not just evidence from elsewhere on the assumption it will have a positive impact in their area too).

An example of cost benefit analysis can be found in the [Food and Fun School Holiday Enrichment Programme Evaluation](#). This report compares the cost of running the club to the national average for standard holiday childcare without food and enrichment activities.

8) SECTION 5: Presenting data

It is vital that evaluation documents and findings do not 'sit on a shelf, there are a number of ways to present evaluation to reach and engage a wide audience.

