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URBAN FOOD INNOVATION

## Gender in Urban Food Systems

With Dr Jess Halliday, Senior Associate RUAF Global  
Partnership on Sustainable Urban Agriculture and  
Food Systems - [www.ruaf.org](http://www.ruaf.org)

24th March 2022 | 09.00-10.30 CET

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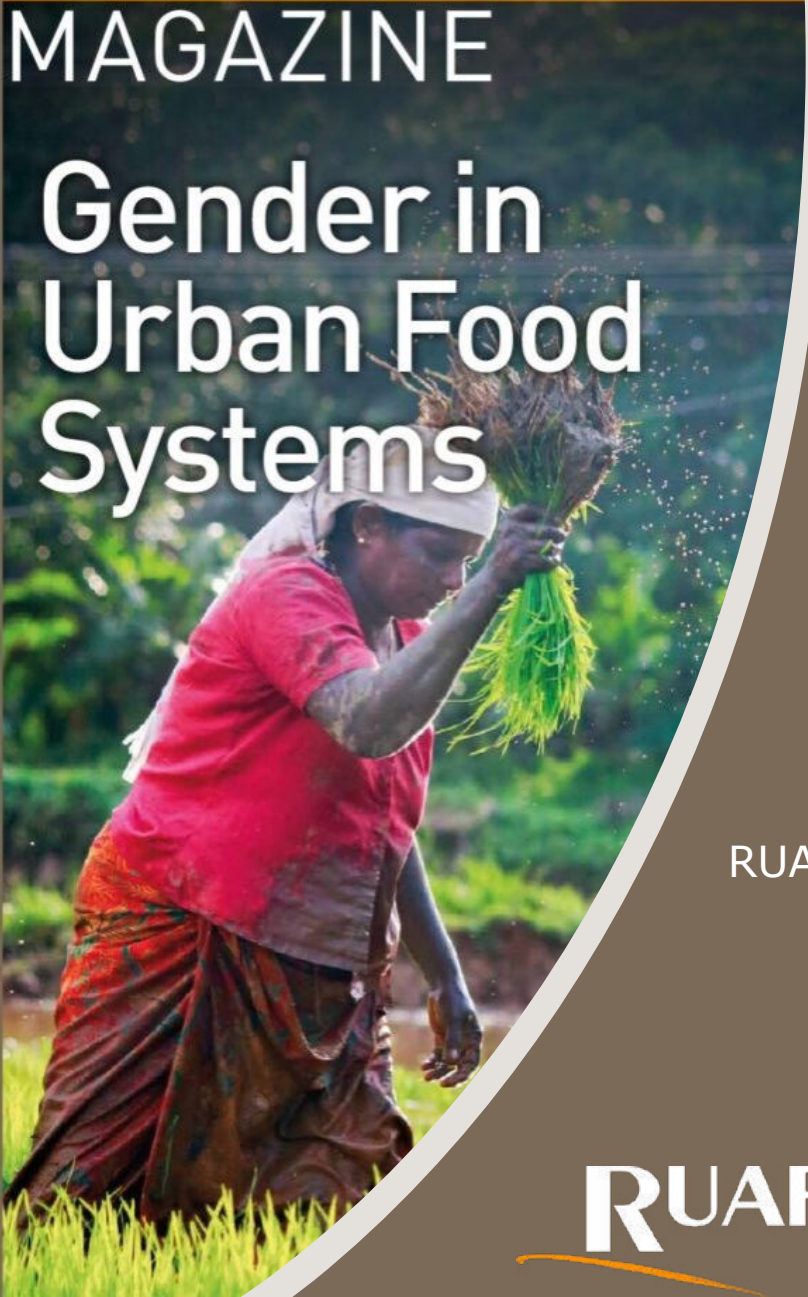
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# URBAN AGRICULTURE MAGAZINE

37

## Gender in Urban Food Systems



www.ruaf.org

# RUAF

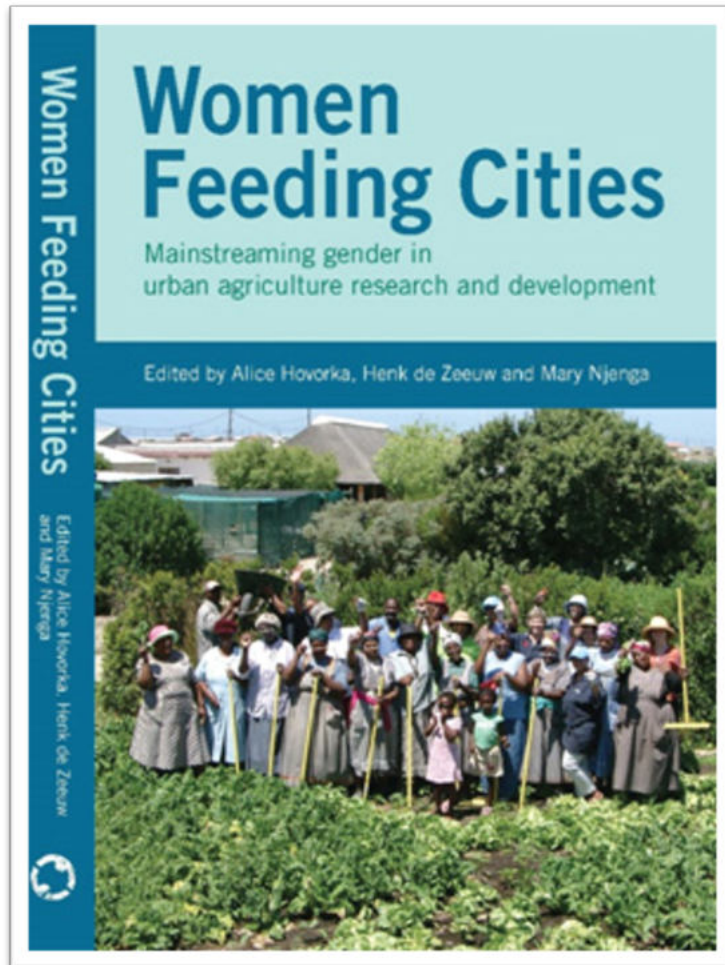
Applying an  
intersectional gender  
lens in urban food  
systems planning

EdiCitNet workshop & webinar  
24 March 2022

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Agriculture and Food Systems  
[www.ruaf.org](http://www.ruaf.org)



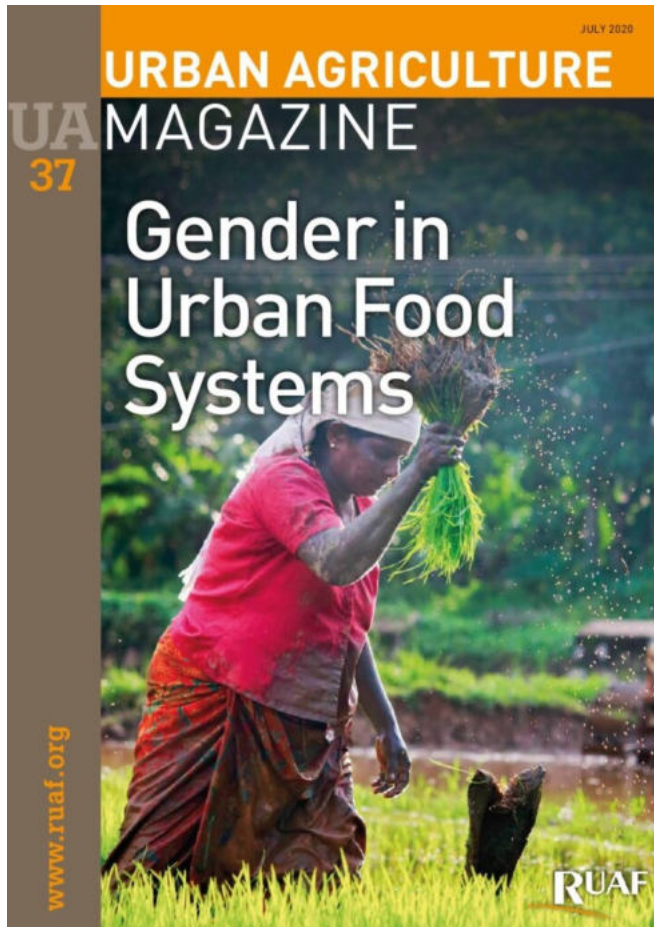
# Introducing Gender in Urban Food Systems



*'Women feeding cities: Mainstreaming gender in urban agriculture and food security', published in 2009, is essential reading for practitioners to ensure gender is a central consideration in urban agriculture projects. The book shares experiences that link gender with urban agriculture in its broad practice. It is designed to contribute to more gender-sensitive and responsive policies and projects on urban agriculture and food security; to cities that are better and more equitably fed; and to women who are better recognised and supported in this crucial role.*

[https://ruaf.org/assets/2019/11/Women\\_feeding\\_cities.pdf](https://ruaf.org/assets/2019/11/Women_feeding_cities.pdf)

# Introducing Gender in Urban Food Systems



<https://ruaf.org/document/urban-agriculture-magazine-no-37-gender-in-urban-food-systems/>

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## A call to action

This issue of Urban Agriculture Magazine is a call to action to cities and the international urban food policy community to raise our game on gender and inclusivity.

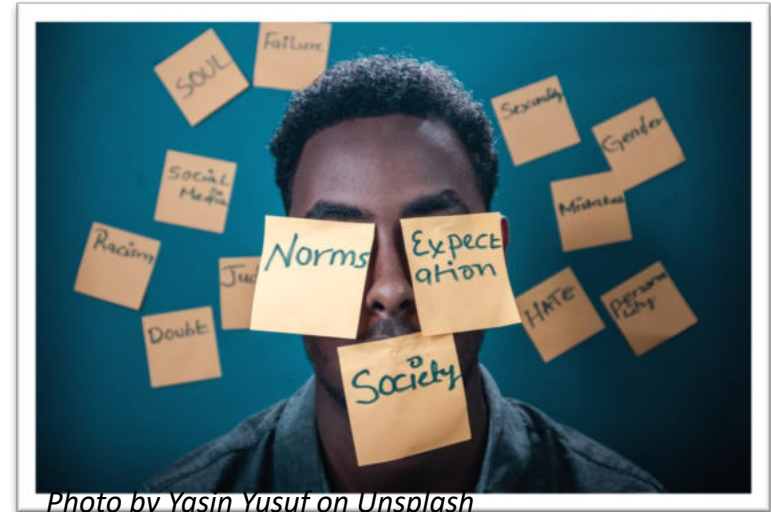
There is an urgent need for many more cities and city regions to work on issues surrounding all genders in urban food systems. It is crucial that responses do not just involve application of technocratic frameworks and that they move beyond gender awareness to enable the reversal of pervasive and systemic intersectional inequalities.

Adding a gender perspective does NOT always need to constitute new work on top of what you're doing.

Mainstream gender lens into plans you are already making.

# What is gender?

- Women and girls, men and boys, and transgender, intersex, and non-binary people
- A question of identity



*Photo by Yasin Yusuf on Unsplash*

- A social and culture construct



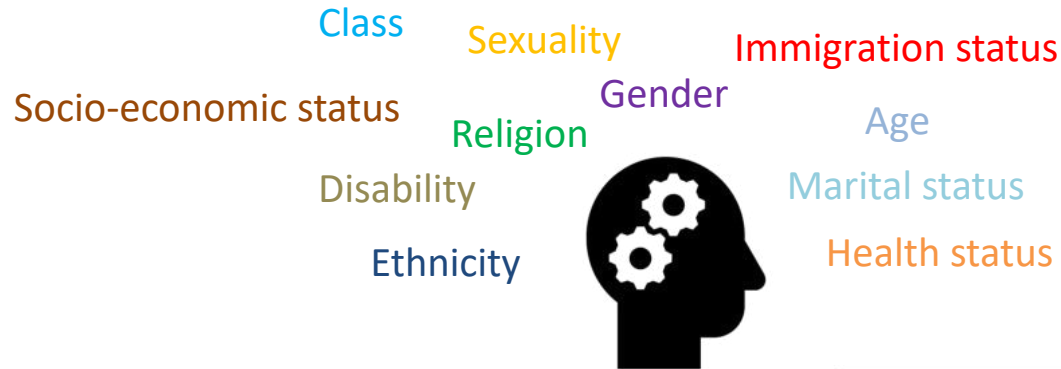
Expectations of characteristics, aptitudes, behaviours



Roles and responsibilities that vary between cultural contexts and  
Change over time

# Intersectionality

Identity is made up of intersecting categories, e.g:



Discrimination and assumptions about people of different genders is not homogenous

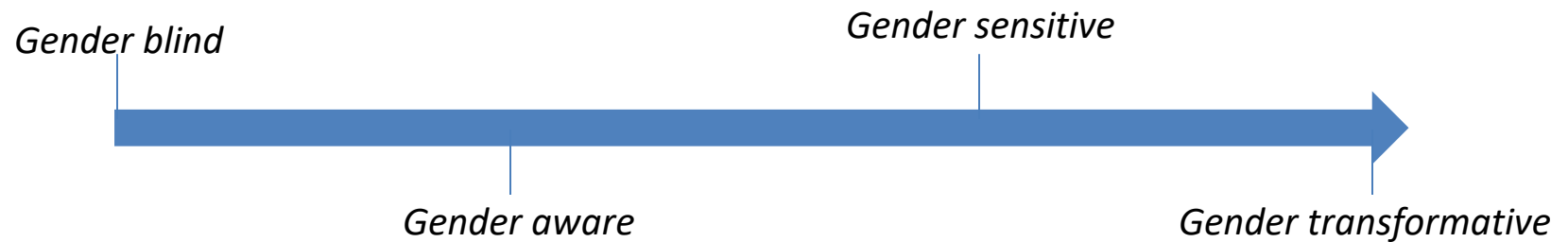
An **intersectional gender lens**:

- shows where certain inequities are present within a city;
- considers how to improve the situation for all urban residents.



Photo: CONQUITO

## Applying a gender lens by degrees



### **Gender blind**

- X Does not account for gender as significant factor in interactions
- X No gender disaggregation of data
- X No human or financial resources for gender equality

### **Gender aware**

- ✓ Acknowledges gender-related differences and inequalities
- X Gender is not part of programme design
- X Does not address differences/inequalities
- X No resources are allocated



## Applying a gender lens by degrees

### Gender sensitive

- ✓ Acknowledges gender-related differences and inequalities as part of situational analysis
- ✓ Recognises need to address differences and inequalities
- ✓ Human and financial resources are allocated
- ✓ Data disaggregated by gender
- ? May be gender-relevant indicators

### Gender transformative



- ✓ Challenges inequitable practices, norms, and policies that underpin inequalities, to improve gender and social equity.
- ✓ Gender issues are a key focus and integrated throughout the programme
- ✓ Data are disaggregated
- ✓ There are dedicated resources to addressing the root causes of inequalities
- ✓ There are specific indicators

**Gender is mainstreamed within programme proposal and design**

# Inclusion, self-determination, and lived experience

Effect of gender and other intersectional factors on equality and social inclusion are context specific



Need to do situational analysis



*Photo: DRAEP Analamanga*

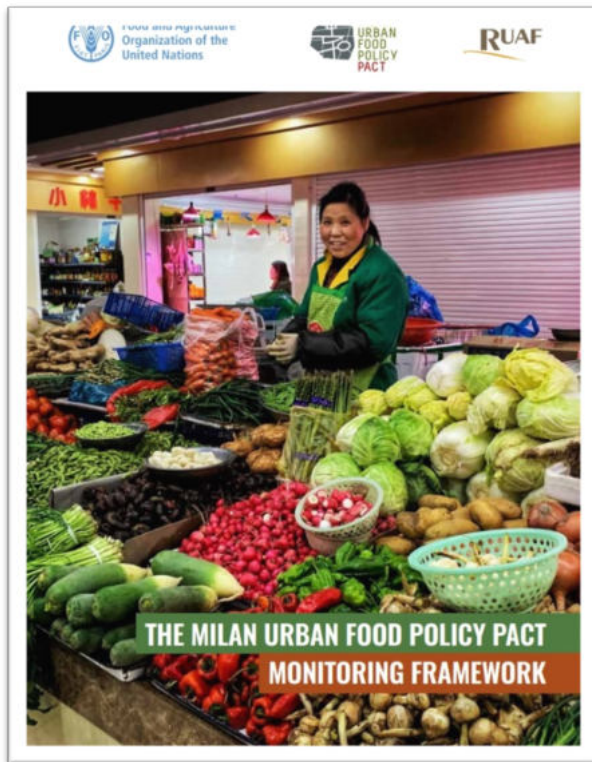
Make no assumptions!

- **Include** intended beneficiaries
- Hear their **lived experiences**
- Ensure **self-determination** of solutions



*Photo by [Paul Green](#) on [Unsplash](#)*

# Monitoring challenges: city level



- Governance
- Sustainable diets and nutrition
- Social and economic equity
- Food production
- Food supply and distribution
- Food waste

**THE INDICATORS**

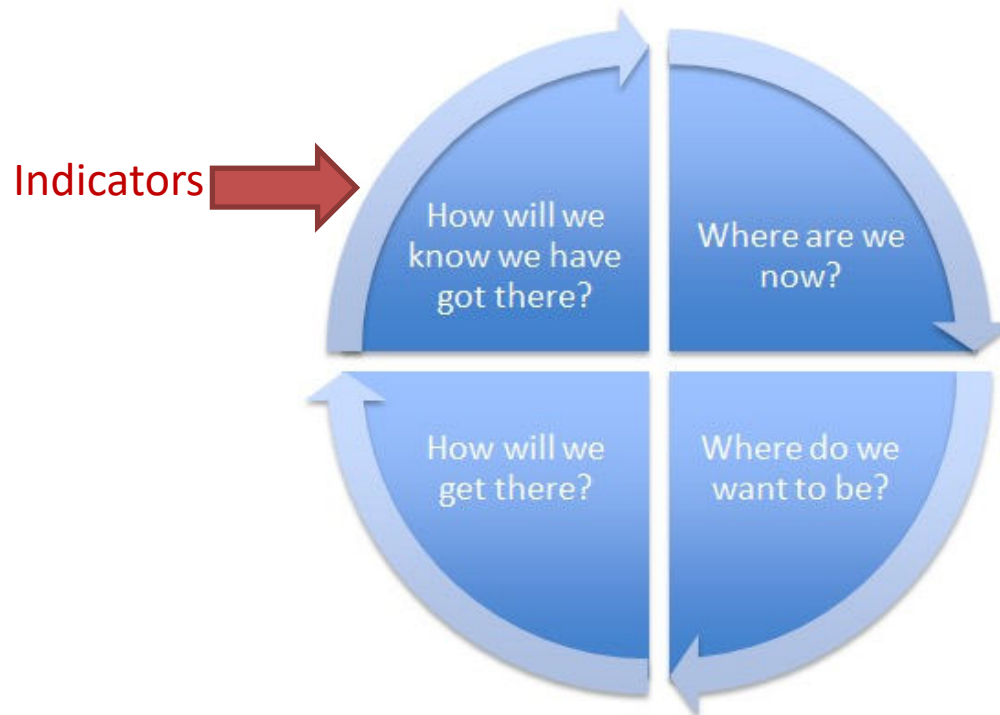
Workstream	Action	Indicator	Potential Gender Data Disaggregation
<b>Ensuring an enabling environment for effective action (governance)</b>	1. Facilitate collaboration across city agencies and departments and seek alignment of policies and programmes that impact the food system across multiple sectors and administrative levels.	1 - Presence of an active municipal interdepartmental government body of advisory and decision making of food policies and programs	<i>Disaggregate by % of each gender within municipal government body participants</i>
	2. Enhance stakeholder participation at the city level through political dialogue, as well as through education and awareness raising.	2 - Presence of active multi-stakeholder food policy and planning structure	<i>Disaggregate by % of each gender within stakeholders</i>
	3. Develop or revise urban food policies and plans	3 - Presence of a municipal urban food policy or action plan	<i>Determine whether urban food policy includes gender sensitive policies within</i>
	4. Identify, map and evaluate local initiatives	4 - Presence of an inventory of local food initiatives and practices to guide development and expansion of municipal urban food policy and programmes	<i>Disaggregate by % of each gender of who leads these initiatives and practices</i>
	5. Develop or improve multisectoral information systems for policy	5 - Presence of a monitoring/evaluation mechanism for assembling and analyzing urban food	N/A

<https://ruaf.org/document/gender-and-the-milan-urban-food-policy-pact-monitoring-framework-indicator>

## Monitoring challenges: programmatic level

What priority are you seeking to address?

*Specific issue/inequality/vulnerability affecting a specific group of people, due to gender and intersecting factors*



## Key points

- There's an urgent need to address gender intersecting factors behind inequalities in urban food systems
- Interventions should be least gender sensitive; ideally gender transformative to enable reversal of pervasive and systemic intersectional inequalities
- Context is everything; base interventions on situational analysis
- Be led by self-determination and lived experience
- Design monitoring framework/indicators at the same time as actions

## Discussions in Break-out groups

we go into 6 small groups / breakout rooms for 45 min

- a) Optimizing Living Lab Co-Creation
- b) Optimizing ECS Master Planning
- c) Optimizing City Team Work
- d) Optimizing Business Consultancy
- e) Effective Networking and Alliance Building
- f) ECS Education



1. discuss **current realities** in the field **through the gender & intersectionality lens.**

2. agree on which **concrete case/issue** should be worked on further

3. **Short Feedback** from group discussions

**Follow up with next steps in the coming months**

# Example: Healthy Start take-up in Birmingham, UK

Health Start food vouchers for young pregnant women and children in low-income families

Strategic plan to identify hot-spots of low uptake:

- work with agencies to increase awareness
- work with retailers to expand voucher acceptance across outlets

From 70 – 75% take up by eligible families in a year

**FOOD ACTION CITIES**

**BIRMINGHAM, UK:  
INCREASING HEALTHY START UPTAKE**

[www.foodactioncities.org](http://www.foodactioncities.org)


#foodvouchers #fruit #vegetables #lowincomegroups #europe

**THE ACTION AND ITS AIMS:** Birmingham developed a strategic plan to increase the uptake of food vouchers under the national Healthy Start scheme for young pregnant women and children in low-income families. The plan involved identifying 'hot-spots' with low rates of under-claim of vouchers, and working with key agencies that women and children encounter (from the start of pregnancy until the child's fourth birthday) and their networks to ensure adequate information is given to those who are eligible. Additionally, the plan involved liaising with retailers to increase acceptance of vouchers, which can be exchanged for vegetables, fruit, and milk, by a wide variety of outlets.

**WHEN IT WAS INTRODUCED:** The strategic plan was implemented from 2018.

**WHY IT WAS NEEDED:** The plan was considered necessary because only 70% of around 17,000 eligible women and families were registered to receive Healthy Start vouchers. As a result, between GBP1.4m-GBP1.6m worth of vouchers that would benefit children and families and boost the local economy were unclaimed each year.

**WHO INITIATED IT, WHO IS INVOLVED:** The plan was a pledge developed for the national Peas Please campaign to increase vegetable consumption, run by NGO The Food Foundation. It was drawn up by the charity Services For Education, Birmingham City Council Public Health, Birmingham University School of Health Economics and Harborne Food School.



*Buying vegetables in city supermarket, Shutterstock/Pcruciotti*

**IMPACTS TO DATE:** During the course of 2018, uptake of Healthy Start vouchers for food increased by 5%, from 70-75% in Birmingham. The same increase is anticipated in 2019 and 2020, bringing total uptake to 85% of eligible women and

<https://foodactioncities.org/case-studies/increasing-healthy-start-uptake/>

# Example: Community Food Works for Newcomer Settlement. Toronto, Canada

Opportunities for social inclusion and engagement, to facilitate resettlement and integration into Canadian life

Existing Community Food Works programme addresses:

- Accessing food handler training
- Nutrition information
- Employment support among low-income residents

Adaptations:

- cultural tailoring and translation of food safety and food skills training;
- peer-to-peer implementation and interpretation;
- strengthening employment component

**Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

**EFTA Economía e Sostenibilitat**

**MILAN URBAN POLICY PACT**

**TORONTO CANADA**

**Key of Practice**  
**TORONTO: FOOD AS A TOOL FOR JOB CREATION AND INTEGRATION**

**Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Category**  
**SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EQUITY**

**Nominatory Award 2017**

**Key impacts on other SUFFP categories**

**Context**

Toronto, along with cities all over the world, faces numerous health, social and environmental problems related to food. Over the last half century there has been a global surge in the consumption of meat and processed foods rich in saturated fats, sugars and salts. Meanwhile there has been an increase of international migrations combined with the difficulty of guaranteeing jobs to the newcomers. As the federal government started to open the door to more immigrants to drive economic growth, some who were already in the country were also struggling to find jobs, despite being highly educated and qualified. The employment system both for Canadians and migrants became more insecure. For this reason, addressing food systems safety along with job system security became a key priority for Toronto municipal strategy and issues that requires innovative and strategic solutions.

**Overview of the food practice**

**Community Food Works (CFW)** is a program for low income residents that integrates food handler training and certifications, nutrition education, and employment support through a **learner-centred approach** to food and employment skills development. Since 2014, Toronto Public Health (TPH) has delivered CFW in partnership with a wide range of community agencies and City Divisions in low-income neighbourhoods across Toronto. It is offered at no cost and supports people who experience barriers to employment and other economic hardships. The program builds the skills, knowledge and confidence for residents hoping to work in the food sector and/or start their own business, such as catering, and it also **reduces social isolation**.

Between November 2015 and January 2017, Toronto welcomed 8,199 Syrian refugees. As is the case for all newcomers, but particularly for refugees who have faced personal trauma, finding stable employment while adjusting to a new culture is extremely difficult. The influx of Arabic speaking newcomers prompted TPH through the Toronto Food Strategy to create **Community Food Works for Newcomer Settlement (CFWN)**. CFWN adapts the curriculum and training process to **meet the unique needs of refugees and other newcomers to Canada**. This includes culture of labelling of the food safety and food skills curriculum, translation, and the introduction of a peer-to-peer model of program implementation and interpretation. CFWN is currently being delivered in partnership with Toronto-based North York Transit Food Bank, Farmington Community Health Centre and Working Women Community Centre with funding support from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

**Contact**  
**DWYN MARTY**  
 Food Policy Manager

**Results and lessons learned**

A preliminary evaluation for the first three pilot groups in 2016/2017 showed that of the 52 participants trained, 90 percent obtained their food handler certificates, 82 percent reported **increased knowledge in food skills and nutrition**, and 23 percent obtained employment after graduating, along with volunteer experience in the community. This included work placements in cafeterias, restaurants, community health centres, schools and in catering. The peer leaders bring organizational and leadership skills that enable them to support the participants according to their **cultural and linguistic needs**. In addition, this opportunity provides the peers with Canadian work experience and references, while helping to build their English language skills. Out of the six peer leaders who were initially trained, four found long term employment. Over the next year, CFWN will continue to expand, working with new peer leaders and fostering new partnerships in areas of the City where newcomers are settling.

Community Food Works for Newcomer Settlement is an innovative approach to delivering core public health services through an integrated model. Using **food as a vehicle for refugee and immigrant settlement** and adaptation can support newcomers. Using food to bring people together in a supported environment can also break down social isolation, promote health, **build employment and incubate entrepreneurial potential**.

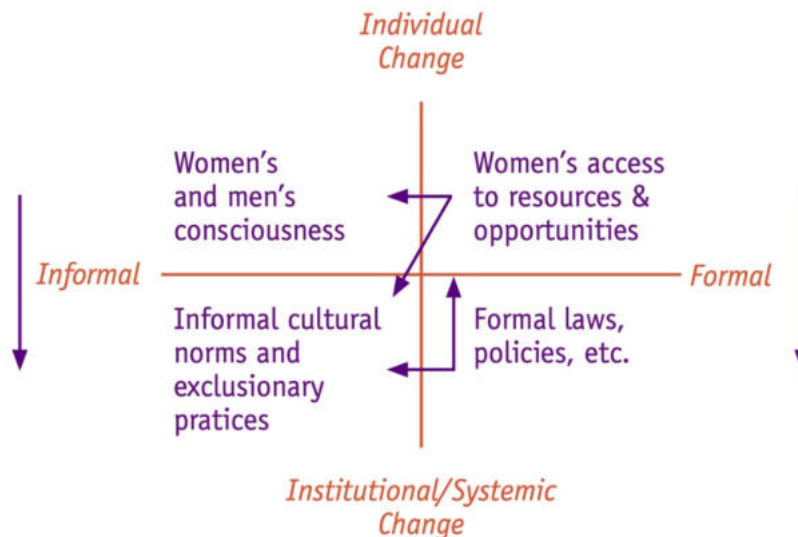
**www.toronto.ca**  
**https://bit.ly/2JMa3t3**  
**www.tfpac.to**

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 This publication has been initially drafted by the city government in the framework of



# Top tips to be truly transformational

## What Are We Trying To Change?



Hillenbrand, E., Karim, N., Mohanraj, P. and Wu, D. (2015). *Measuring gender-transformative change: A review of literature and promising practices, working paper, CARE USA.*

- In a situational analysis, keep asking **why**
- Engage and work with **multiple agencies, departments**
- Bring along **all genders**. Focusing on women rarely changes deep-rooted social behaviours and practices
- Throw away preconceptions and assumptions. Be **led by the people** in the context
- Avoid prescriptive toolkits. There's **no quick fix** or one-size fits all
- Be in it for the long-haul. Transforming entrenched gender-power relations requires **interventions over extended periods of time**