



EDUCATIONAL MODULE

Developing Systems Thinking

“Where does your breakfast come from?”



In a nutshell

The aims of this short workshop are to introduce food system thinking, increase participants' awareness of important issues and trends within the food system and encourage reflection regarding individual roles and responsibilities.

Food 2030 focus



What for?

To explore and understand the food system
To train or educate people on food system transformation

For whom?

Facilitators, Educators, NGOs & CSOs can use this tool with university students, high school students and the general public

How long?

2 – 2.5 hours

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Something to share?

Leave us a comment about this tool on the [FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub](#).

You can also contact Diana Szakál at szakal.diana@essrg.hu

This tool was developed as part of the FIT4FOOD2030 project; find this tool and many more on the [FIT4FOOD2030 Knowledge Hub](#).

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How to cite?

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What will you gain from this?

As facilitator, you can use this module to introduce the concept of the food system in a participatory manner and to encourage shared reflection and systems thinking. Besides developing food systems thinking, this activity can support the development of various competencies, such as oral presentation, sense making, self-awareness, (transdisciplinary) collaboration, participatory ability, analytical and ethical thinking.

After a successful completion of this module participants are expected to be able to:

- Reflect on their own role and responsibility as a food system actor more clearly and consciously
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of the complexity and interwovenness of the food system
- Better understand how the journey of a specific food item can influence the natural environment, human health and certain communities
- Identify opportunities for behavioral change in their own life

This module was created by incorporating the results and insights derived from individual stakeholder consultations and workshops with the members of the Budapest Food City Lab. Special acknowledgement for Janka Horváth, Márta Fekete, the students of Semmelweis University, Valeriano Donzelli and the members of the Inspiral Club for their support and cooperation in the two-stage piloting process. The workshop also incorporates the trend cards developed by the FIT4FOOD2030 project.

DEVELOPING SYSTEMS THINKING

“WHERE DOES YOUR BREAKFAST COME FROM?”

This short workshop contains various reflective and co-creational exercises in order to increase self-awareness and generate discussion about the food system and the role and responsibility of each individual in it.

As the facilitator, you will guide participants through the creative process of developing shared conceptual maps of the food system. The learning journey of participants starts from establishing a relationship with the abstract concept of food systems via association and open discussion. Then they are guided through a process of self-reflection regarding where the food that they eat comes from and what journey it needs to take to land on their plate.

Your role in guiding the process of exploration with questions is essential. All this preparatory work enables participants to visualize their mental representations of the food system in small groups and develop various competences.



Co-creation of concept maps in small groups (STEP 5)

Suggested scenario for implementation

The activity has already been tested in a university setting and as an open workshop for the general public. In a university context, you can use it as an introductory lesson within a longer course on food systems or incorporate it into courses where gaining basic understanding of the complexity and the interconnectedness of food systems is desired. When you offer it as an open workshop, make sure that participants stay for the whole duration. In addition, you can also adapt the module to a secondary school context.

Thematic area

- Food systems
- Reflection on individual roles and responsibilities within the food system

Target audience

- University students
- General public

Age of participants

16+

Number of participants

12 - 25

Number of facilitators

One or two depending on group size

Prior knowledge required for participation

There are no prerequisites – it is possible to join from any disciplines and fields.

The quality of the workshop is enhanced by bringing together different perspectives.

GETTING PREPARED

Set the scene

Before the activity starts, print and cut out the food system pictures and trend cards (see Annex A & B), prepare all needed materials and organize the room.

If possible, the best is to have a flexible setting. You can start the workshop with the chairs in a circle to encourage sharing and dialogue and then create separate workspaces for each team, as well as a space for all additional material, such as, pictures and trend cards, etc. that they can use for concept map creation.



TIPS & TRICKS

It can help to schedule a bit of extra time before participants arrive, so that you can get centred, take a couple minutes to breath, and allow yourself to emotionally and mentally prepare for holding the space for the duration of the workshop.

Materials

- Sticky notes (minimum 4 per participant + additional ones to allow participants to use them during concept map creation if they wish to)
- Coloured pens and pencils (approx. 15 - minimum 3 per group)
- Flipchart paper (3-5 - 1 per group)
- Pictures of the food system printed out. The more varied the better, including various parts, relationships and challenges/opportunities of the system. Prepare at least 30 different ones. You can find a prepared picture set in Annex A, but feel free to customize and adapt this.
- Trends cards printed out. The whole series (if the group is around 25, two series). You can find the link to the set developed in Annex B.
- Board or flipchart

FLOW

STEP 0: Setting the scene

STEP 1: Bridge-in (5-6 minutes)

STEP 2: Setting expectations (25-30 minutes) - Optional

STEP 3: Creating shared understanding (15 - 20 minutes)

STEP 4: "The journey of my breakfast" (20 -25 minutes)

If you include STEP 2, also include a 10-minute break here

STEP 5: Co-creating concept maps (35 minutes)

STEP 6: Presenting concept maps (20-25 minutes)

STEP 7: Closing circle (10 minutes)

FACILITATOR TIPS

During collaborative processes, such as this module, you as a facilitator have an important role to play in guiding the process and continuously encouraging participants to engage in self-reflection by using the adequate guiding questions.

As a facilitator you need several skills and competences, such as verbal and non-verbal skills, negotiating skills, flexibility, and leadership. You will need to create an environment in which all participants feel secure, are able to speak up and give their perspective on issues being discussed. This means that you may have to stimulate some participants to speak more often, while you may have to prevent other participants to speak too often or too long. It also means that you will need to avoid discussions on issues that are not directly relevant.

A brief guide with facilitation tips are provided in this address:

<https://knowledgehub.fit4food2030.eu/facilitatorstips>

Besides facilitation skills and group management, you will also need to have at least a general knowledge of the main dynamics, challenges and opportunities of the food system to be able to ask the adequate guiding questions for this module.



Clustering associations (STEP 3). Searching for food system concept map components (STEP 5), Deliberation (STEP 5); Identifying own roles (STEP 5), Presenting concept maps (STEP 5).

STEP 1 - BRIDGE-IN

5-6 minutes

Briefly introduce yourself and the aim of the session.

STEP 2 – SETTING EXPECTATIONS (*OPTIONAL*)

25 - 30 minutes

This is an optional part of the workshop that is recommended when the participants are not familiar with each other, such as when you are working with a general audience, outside of a formal institutional context.

Invite participants to take a seat in the circle, then ask them to share their answers to either or both of the following questions:

- Why did you choose to attend the workshop?
- What is your connection to the topic of the workshop?

If there are more than 12 participants, choose only one of the questions to stay in the timeframe.

STEP 3 – CREATING SHARED UNDERSTANDING

15 - 20 minutes

Give 3 post-its to each participant (you can place them at each seat before the workshop to facilitate easy access). Then ask them to write down one association per post-it that they have when they hear the phrase “food system”. Emphasize that there is no wrong answer. After giving participants about 5 minutes for doing this, invite them to share their associations. After each sharing, put up the post its on the board/flipchart. While doing this, you can already start clustering them around the emerging themes. You can find some examples here for potential ways to group based on the incoming answers: various actors, elements of the system, creating a visual of the processes & making up the value chain, values, etc.



TIPS & TRICKS

If you feel that the group is shy, you can encourage them to share by asking whether anybody has the same or a similar idea that was mentioned before/or something completely novel.



STEP 4 - “THE JOURNEY OF MY BREAKFAST”

20 -25 minutes

Distribute pens and papers (you can also prepare them beforehand) and share that participants can prepare to work individually during the next exercise. First ask attendees to write down what they ate for their most recent meal (e.g.: breakfast), detailing the components. Then ask them to choose one component of their meal. This can be a relatively simple ingredient, such as, lettuce, milk, an egg, an apple, etc. However, it can become more complex in the case of processed foods (e.g.: fish sticks, candy bar...). After you confirmed that each person has made their choice, ask them to track back the steps that the food item needed to go through from its source until it arrives on their plate. Allow about 10 minutes for this first, individual part of the exercise.

When you see that the group is ready, initiate plenary discussion by asking some of the participants to share their journey. This step of the workshop is really important for establishing links and thus, it is important for you to guide the exploration.

You can encourage participants to start making connections by, for instance, inviting them to explain how each step of the journey of their breakfast might have impacted the environment, local communities, etc.

You can also ask in plenary how many steps each person has in their journey. (*E.g. Who has more than 10? Who has less than 3? etc.*)

Here you can introduce the concept of short supply chains and reflect together with participants on how short chains might impact: communities, human health, environment. *E.g: What can be the benefit of buying food from local sources?*



TIPS & TRICKS

Telling the group when half of the time has gone by, and then also notifying them 1-2 minutes before the planned ending of any given exercise can help to avoid running over the proposed timeframe.

STEP 5 – CO-CREATING CONCEPT MAPS

35 minutes

- Divide participants into small groups of 3 – 5 people.
- Explain that they are going to participate in a collaborative exercise and at the end they will need to present to the whole group what their small team came up with.
- Ask participants to draw/create a representation of the food system on the flipchart before them. Tell them that they are free to draw, write, use the post-its, trend cards and pictures and any additional material that they would like.
- Share with them how much time they have and invite them to choose a time keeper in each group.
- During the exercise, go around among the teams. When you see that participants are getting close to finishing their maps, present them with the following two tasks (Besides verbally telling each group, also write them out on the flipchart/board):



TIPS & TRICKS

It is possible to make the co-creation of conceptual maps into an even more open and artistic process by introducing other materials, such as, clay, paint and material that they can use to create a collage.

- What do you think is the most important to be changed in the system in order to make it healthier and more sustainable? (*crucial leverage point for positive change*). Each participant writes this down individually. Then each group needs to agree on what they think is the most important. They will need to share this during the presentation.
- Ask them to draw themselves (individually) on the map after thinking about their own role within the system.

STEP 6 - PRESENTING CONCEPT MAPS

20 -25 minutes

- After the concept maps are ready ask each team to present their maps to the whole group. In our experience, it works well to ask participants to come and gather around the table of the presenting group – movement increases attention and facilitates discussion if participants are not so confident in speaking up.
- After the presentation ask participants from other groups to pose their questions, comments.
- Pose questions to the group that presented. While they are presenting their *concept maps, most important aspect to change* and *individual role and place within the system* think about guiding questions that can support participants in discovering new relationships and system dynamics, as well as increase the depth of their reflection.
- Go to the next group and repeat.



TIPS & TRICKS

Depending on your participants, the open, sharing-based parts can run much shorter or longer than the proposed time. Trust your intuition when choosing when to intervene and when to allow a discussion to run longer. Sometimes, it is worth to adjust the plan on the go, allowing a fruitful discussion, even if it means cutting some other parts of the workshop. While considering this, always keep in mind the main purpose and objectives of your activity.

STEP 7 – CLOSING CIRCLE

10 minutes

If possible, bring back participants into a circle. Ask them to:

- Share what they learnt and what they are bringing with them from the workshop
- Name one action that they would like to do differently based on the workshop

(If time is running out, you restrict the lengths of the answers by asking them to share one sentence or one word, etc. as a response.)



"organic & local"



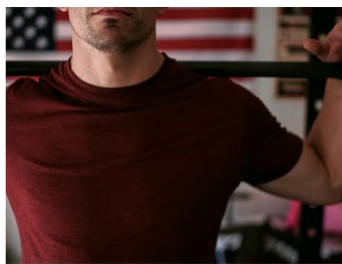
"organic & local"

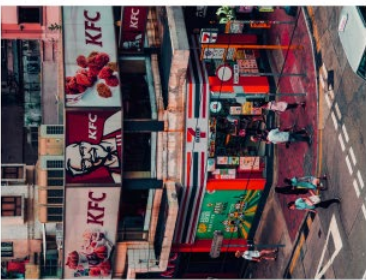


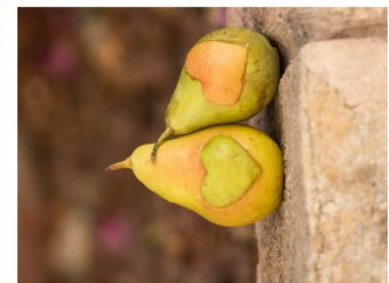
"technology in the forefront"

APPENDIX A – PICTURE CARDS

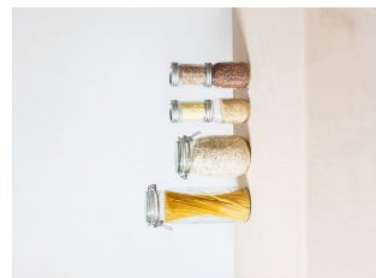
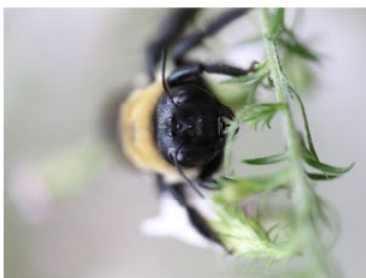
The pictures in 'Appendix A' were sourced from <https://unsplash.com/> and <https://pixabay.com/>.

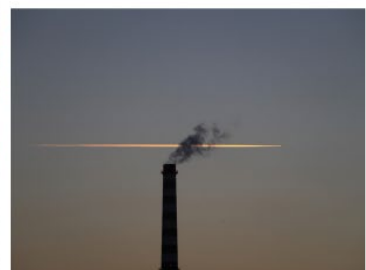
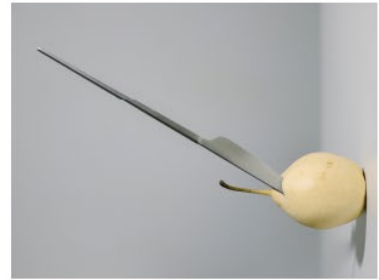


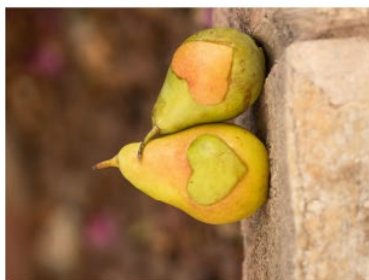
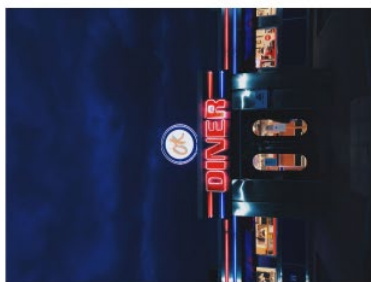




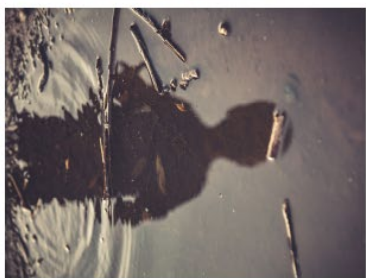
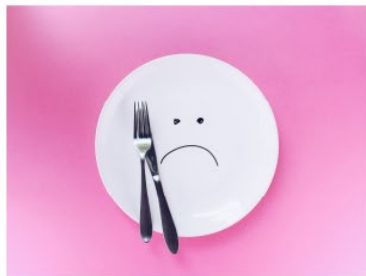












APPENDIX B – TREND CARDS

You can access and download the trend cards developed by the members of the Fit4Food2030 project in the [FIT4FOOD2030 KNOWLEDGE HUB](https://knowledgehub.fit4food2030.eu/), or copying the following link into your browser:
<https://knowledgehub.fit4food2030.eu/resource/trends-in-the-food-system/>.



Coordinated by:



Partners



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