

Health Creation & Food Commons

The journey of food from land to fork – breaking the silos

**Food as a commons rather than a commodity
Initiating a healthy food approach in healthcare**



One has to think about food systemically rather than just from a nutritional aspect using a reductionist lens of single nutrients. The challenge is that the food industries are so powerful that 12 transnational actors control the whole food system. It seems almost impossible to create sustainable. The economic system keeps chewing the smaller ones up. What's needed: Transitioning from food systems that create nutrient poverty and excess toxicity to systems of health creation & enlivenment.

There are many roots to health: Exercise, meditation, preventing pollution, healthy eating, herbs, massage, living in balance, Using the fragmented mechanistic worldview of classical science for dealing with the crisis in our health and socialcare systems keeps the different areas that create health apart rather than recognising them as a complex web of relationships.

This event's focus is on food systems and the power of communities in addressing the current imbalance in this area of health creation. We will address access to land and other resources by communities to grow food, growing healthy food, the role of food as medicine, food and mental health and the distribution of food. We will also look at models of organising that encourage participation and enable people and communities to feel empowered.

Bring your experience, passion, knowledge and wisdom to help highlight how health is all about relationships, working in service a shared goal and living in balance. By growing our collective intelligence and wisdom in this field we can learn to create the conditions for the emergence of a more enlivening and health creating culture. What can we practically start doing in our own communities?

- Food like soil, air, water and our atmosphere is a shared resource on which life on this planet depends. Food is more than nutrition and includes the web of relationships
- In a more healthy, sustainable and prosperous future we need to produce, access, secure and consume good and healthy food. We need people and their communities to become active in health creation.
- How can we provide a better match of local needs with local resources?
 - communities and individuals interested and active in health creation and
 - the commons. Examples of health commons, food commons,

Food has become commodified into the idea of a packet of nutrition, leaving out many other attributes and in turn allowing marketers to make us believe we can eat cheap cereals that are, for example, heart healthy. The food commons is about how we “take back” the food system from farm to fork, and build a model of community ownership. It will be impossible to achieve well-being, without a viable alternative to the industrial food model.

What models are already working? How can we amplify them, connect them and create more?
How do we move forward? What principles do we need to move forward?
Where does education need to start and how can we influence that?

How do we create a health service that works for the community?
What would such a service look like?
Who would be involved?
What do individuals and communities want and need?
How would such a service operate?

Important elements:

- relationship
- food access
- sense of ownership
- ability to affect change
- secure relationships
- safe relationships
- safe neighbourhoods, etc. etc...

If these elements were addressed what would change in organisational culture, in culture, in schools, in the GP waiting room?

Examples: blood pressure measurements would be a secondary measure,
Drugs would be considered as a last resort, less repeat GP visits,

It would also bring employment, investment and improved healthy food access to the community.
Shifting from industrialised food production to commons

The challenge is that the food industry is so powerful and almost impossible to compete with. In reality 12 transnational actors control the whole food system which makes it seem almost impossible to create sustainable food systems. At the moment we have 12 big corporations that are extracting wealth and polluting our shared commons. We have forgotten the ownership piece. We tend to ignore the role of justice, the labor in the food system.

To prevent the big corporations from chewing up small growers we need to build one whole vertically integrated system. To create sustainable food systems with enough economic capacity to become viable – we need to create an alternative. This must include to treat labour well and pay fair wages.

Example: Mondragon model as a viable model

Communities as a commons/subset of people understand local food - Holistic understanding of benefits .

There needs to be a community ownership held in trust to stabilise farm prices.

Public ownership in perpetuity. Corporations buy up land which prevents small companies to compete

Flow of the day:

Morning 10-13:00 - Presentations & Panel conversation Q & As & burning questions with focus on actions

Jamie Harvie: Institute for a Sustainable Future, The Food Commons, Commons Health Network - Jamie employs a systems approach to build relationships and facilitate improved human, community and ecological resilience, and will share from his lived experience, what works and what doesn't - he also coordinated the national phase out of mercury medical devices in the US.

Helen Cooke: Nutrition Lead for the Portland Centre for Integrative Medicine "Kitchen on Prescription" project: What is a good diet?

Organic Lea: A workers' cooperative growing food on London's edge in the Lea Valley - access to land, growing organic food and linking with Mental Health Services

Alex Laird: Living Medicine: People and Plants for Health

Anna Betz: NHS Brainfood: Using lifestyle and nutrition to address cognitive decline & dementia

Dan Hopewell: Director of Knowledge and Innovation, Bromley by Bow Centre: BBBC works with over 2,000 people each month, supports people to overcome chronic illness and unhealthy lifestyles and enables people to learn new skills and to find work

Landworkers Alliance: campaigning for food growers and work on land
To represent labor and food systems in this event?

Peoples supermarket: Arthur Potts

Foraging: Robin Harford

The field/brewery – Brighton

Lambeth GP Food Co-op: patients growing food – Ed Rosen, Miranda Rule

Food wastage & redirecting food: Pippa

Global Generation near Kings Cross • Medact?

Education: Food growing in schools

Growing, sourcing, buying food & distribution networks • Guerrilla gardening??

Afternoon: 2:00 – 4:30pm

Worldcafe Conversations around burning questions which came out of the morning session, were clustered, ranked and chosen as the 4 or 5 most highly ranked ones.

Harvest

Plenary – Action points

Book: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/health-creation-food-commons-tickets-35661548652>