Milan Urban Food Policy Pact Monitoring Framework

Draft version, July 2018

Indicator 23: Presence of food-related policies and targets with a specific focus on socially vulnerably groups

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MUFPP framework of actions' category: Social and economic equity

The indicator allows for (self) assessment of the presence, and the level of implementation of food-related municipal policies and targets, that either directly target vulnerable groups or do so indirectly by supporting and enabling the grass-root activities of community-based networks to increase social inclusion and provide food to marginalised individuals.

Overview table

MUFFP Work stream	Social and economic equity
MUFFP action	**Promote networks and support grassroots activities** that create social inclusion and provide food to marginalized individuals.
What the indicator measures	The indicator allows for (self) assessment of the presence (yes/no), and the level of implementation of food-related municipal policies and targets (with help of a scoring sheet), that either directly target vulnerable groups or do so indirectly by supporting and enabling the grass-root activities of community-based networks to increase social inclusion and provide food to marginalised individuals. The focus is on policies with a specific focus on vulnerable groups. If desired, critical assessment of the actual policy/ies may be implemented in addition. Both exercises help define areas for improvement.
Which variables need to be measured / what data are needed	First, information is collected on any existing food-related policies or strategies and targets that fit these criteria. A broad look may be needed across a number of different municipal policies and strategies, as there may not be any one that has a specific food focus – which policies, strategies and targets are relevant? Second, the specific focus on socially vulnerable groups needs to be clarified – which groups? Third, both the link within the policy/strategy to food and socially vulnerable groups needs to be clarified – which aspects? In order to complete the assessment, the next step is to investigate what is actually happening - the level of implementation, budget allocation, targets and monitoring of impact – as a result of the municipal policies, strategies and targets.

Unit of measurement *(i.e. Percentages, averages, number, etc.)*	Yes/No. This indicator will be assessed in a qualitative way.
Unit(s) of Analysis *(i.e people under 5 years old, etc.)*	The policy or programme. This indicator will be assessed in a qualitative way.
Possible sources of information of such data	Policies, strategies and planning documents from the municipality. Specific reports on the work. Key staff in the municipality. Key civil society groups, networks and NGO's involved with food work that targets socially vulnerable groups.
Possible methods/tools for data-collection	-Self assessment -Desk top research of documents -Interviews with relevant staff in the municipality who are involved with the implementation of relevant policy, strategy and targets; interviews with key stakeholders -External evaluation
Expertise required	Research and interview skills; expertise in policy formulation/strategic planning
Resources required/ estimated costs	
Specific observations	Every city will have a different situation. Some will have very clear and specific food-related policies that address vulnerable groups while others will not. However there may be other policies and strategies that have an impact on food provision to vulnerable groups, or on food-related activities if not actual food provision. Many cities will have food safety and food hygiene policy required by law. These may or may not be included, as deemed appropriate.
Examples of application	Bristol City Council officers from several different departments took part in an externally facilitated food and planning development review (see tools below.)

Rationale/evidence

Local governments that have signed the Milan Urban Food Policy Pact have all acknowledged and (re)claimed jurisdictional responsibility for food systems activities that directly impact the health and well-being of their residents. One way assess level of commitment is to examine i) the presence (or absence) of food-related policy or strategy, and the expected targets/outcomes, and ii) the specific target groups of people that should benefit from such policies. Most cities are unlikely to have done such an audit.

The significance of local government food-related policy and targets
The existence or absence of local government food related policies and targets potentially have a significant impact. A local government or municipality may have very clear food-related policies and targets. Some if not all of these may focus on addressing the issues faced by socially vulnerable groups. For example, household food security policy or school feeding programmes or mother and baby/child nutrition programmes. Some municipalities may have just one or two specific food policies, for example school meal provision or food safety legislation and procedure. While the presence of such policies and targets are crucial for any type of food system regulation or development, they are still only as effective as their implementation and ongoing development.

A comprehensive national survey on local governments' food-related activities was conducted in the US and found the following ways that local governments can address food systems.
- Policies supporting food access and production;
- Support of food-related projects or programs;
- Inclusion of food-related topics in official plans;
- Departments responsible for food issues;
- Coordination or collaboration with other stakeholders or communities on food system

activities; and

- Awareness and use of federal resources available to local governments for funding food system development.

The report also noted the following: 'Distinct from the distribution of emergency food, survey respondents reported far fewer activities more closely targeted toward systemically improving the health and security of vulnerable populations.'[1]

Glossary/concepts/definitions used

Definition of 'vulnerable populations': In general, 'vulnerability' is accepted to mean susceptibility to harm or suffering. 'Vulnerability' is a regularly used word that means different things in different contexts. In the context of public health, the World Health Organisation (WHO) states: 'Vulnerability is the degree to which a population, individual or organization is unable to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impacts of disasters. Children, pregnant women, elderly people, malnourished people, and people who are ill or immune-compromised, are particularly vulnerable when a disaster strikes, and take a relatively high share of the disease burden associated with emergencies. Poverty – and its common consequences such as malnutrition, homelessness, poor housing and destitution – is a major contributor to vulnerability.'[2]

The Comune di Milano uses the definition of relative poverty (compared to an average situation) and absolute poverty (a condition of extreme poverty, so a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs).

Socially vulnerable groups: (See also definition notes for Indicator 19 "Percentage of people supported by food and/or social assistance programmes"). Social vulnerability is the result of an interaction of different personal, environmental and social factors that affect a person's wellbeing or ability to cope with difficulties or disasters (as above). For example:
- Personal - age and health
- Environmental - availability of green space, quality of housing
- Social - levels of inequality and income, the strength of social networks, the cohesion of neighbourhoods.

Examples of different socially vulnerable groups could include:
- Very young children
- Older people
- People with poor mobility or access to adequate services
- People of various tenancy status and types of housing
- People who lack access to green space
- People experiencing social isolation
- People on low incomes.

While not all factors known to affect vulnerability can be easily measured, a number of them can be mapped using direct and proxy indicators such as those listed above.[3]

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[1] Local Government Support for food Systems: themes and opportunities from national data, Laura Goddeeris, 2013, Michigan State University Centre for Regional Food Systems
http://www.canr.msu.edu/foodsystems/uploads/files/local-govt-survey-brief.pdf

[2] Environmental health in emergencies and disasters: a practical guide,' WHO, 2002

[3] Socially vulnerable groups sensitive to climate impacts, 2014; Climate Just http://www.climatejust.org.uk/socially-vulnerable-groups-sensitive-climate-impacts

Types of food-related policies and targets that focus on socially vulnerable groups: Each city will have different policies and targets. The starting point may be either the policy or the target group. Some examples are set out below.

Health and food access/provision: The US survey mentioned above found that the area of community health and food security is the most obvious area that connects to socially vulnerable groups, e.g. zoning ordinances that enable the operation of farmers' markets to increase food access, direct support for farmers' market developments, support for organisations dealing with emergency food distribution programmes, improved siting of shops providing fresh food in under-served neighbourhoods, enabling food assistance recipients to use farmers markets.

Food production and infrastructure: Support for production and infrastructure activity is a second area that may in some cities directly support socially vulnerable groups, e.g. land and water provision for urban food production; land use tenancy agreements; permissions for composting, green roofs, bees, chickens, and other small livestock in non-traditional zones; use of buildings for food production or processing.[4]

Healthy eating: In some cities there may be policy or strategy (education and/or practical support for behaviour change) that relates to obesity, healthy weight or healthy eating, and which targets specific groups of people or geographic areas of the city.

Nutrition: There may be specific nutrition-based targets. The World Health Organisation has set six key global nutrition targets to improve maternal, infant and young child nutrition by 2025, each of which connects in some way to food: stunting in under 5yrs.; anaemia in women; low birth weight; childhood overweight; breastfeeding; wasting.[5]

Food storage & cooking facilities: There may be a requirement for a certain standard of kitchen or food preparation and storage spatial specifications in housing development policy. There may be specific programmes to support low-income households with improving food preparation and cooking facilities (including fuel costs or improved fuel types).

Food hygiene and food safety for vulnerable groups: (In many countries this is required by law.) National public health or food safety agencies, local government environmental health or public health departments may have food safety policy or strategy or guidance in place to help protect specific vulnerable groups whose immune systems may be weakened, and thus most at risk of infections caused by food-related bacteria. For example L. monocytogenes (listeriosis), which can be a problem with chilled ready-to-eat foods, if food is not stored at the correct temperatures or if hygienic procedures are not adhered to. The groups of people most at risk include cancer patients, patients undergoing immunosuppressive or cytotoxic treatment, unborn and newly delivered infants, pregnant women, people with diabetes, alcoholics (including those with alcoholic liver disease) and a variety of other conditions. Elderly people are also included in this higher risk group.[6]

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[4] Local Government Support for food Systems: themes and opportunities from national data, Laura Goddeeris, 2013, Michigan State University Centre for Regional Food Systems
http://www.canr.msu.edu/foodsystems/uploads/files/local-govt-survey-brief.pdf

[5] WHO Global nutrition targets 2025 http://www.who.int/nutrition/global-target-2025/en/

[6] Reducing the risk of vulnerable groups contracting listeriosis; guidance for healthcare and social care organisations; UK Food Standards Agency https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/listeria-guidance-june2016.pdf

Specific vulnerable groups: It may be more relevant to start with specific categories of vulnerable groups and investigate which specific policies or strategies target support at them, or have outcome targets that relate to addressing the needs of these groups. These could include, for example, policy or strategy to support homeless young people, or street children, or drug users, or people living in a particularly vulnerable neighbourhood. The focus should be on the extent to which any such policies or strategies relate to food issues.

Funding for community-based work on food issues: A local government may choose to make funding available to other community based organisations to carry out work that relates to all of the above issues. In this case the policy (in this case one related to funding, but likely to be linked to specific objectives) may be indirectly targeted at specific vulnerable groups.

Preparations

This indicator could be kept as simple as possible with the research team only doing a review of policy documents, or more in-depth data could be collected to fill in any gaps and get a sense of policy impacts on socially vulnerable groups.

The team responsible for monitoring this indicator should agree on:
1. Clear criteria for selecting which policies or strategies are relevant to this indicator
2. An approach for how to gather information on the relevant existing local government policies, strategies and targets
3. Clear criteria for defining 'socially vulnerable groups', as appropriate for the city
4. A clear methodology for analysing and recording the links between food-related policy and socially vulnerable groups, in order to identify the relevant policies (e.g. review of policy documents, local government officer roundtable discussion – see below)
5. Any information gaps that need follow up and further clarification.
6. How to identify the key stakeholders – the most relevant people to interview for further information. This may be people who create policy or oversee its implementation. It could also include representatives of the groups that are the focus of the policies.
7. If key stakeholder interviews or surveys are to be used, questions have to be designed. Training of interviewers may be needed.
8. If roundtables are needed, the process will need to be designed and run by experienced facilitator who can draw out the information that is needed from the participants.

In case rather than self-assessment/audit other evaluations methods are selected (external evaluation, key informant interviews) respective preparations should be taken.

Sampling

The need for sampling will depend on the required breadth and depth of understanding in relation to this indicator. For example, interviews with key people within the municipality will provide data about the policies themselves but not whether the policy has any actual impact on socially vulnerable people.

For local government officers: A roundtable or series of interviews with all food-related policy makers or implementers could be used to help clarify which policies and targets exist and to what extent they focus on socially vulnerable groups.

If more information is needed on the impact of these policies on socially vulnerable groups, data may be gathered using interviews with representatives from key target groups of the policies.

For a wider assessment: A randomly sampled number of external stakeholders could be asked in a survey if they are aware of the existence, content and results of a food-related municipal policies and targets, that, directly or indirectly focus on socially vulnerable groups. (Such questions could also be included in a broader urban food-related survey.)

An in-depth assessment: A smaller group of randomly sampled external stakeholders could be invited to participate in a structured roundtable discussion to collect their views and experiences of food-related policy that is specifically aimed at socially vulnerable groups.

Data collection and data disaggregation

Data collection for this indicator is qualitative and takes an audit approach. There are several steps to work through. The order may not be as set out below:

- Identify existing food-related policies or strategies and targets that fit the agreed criteria for this indicator. A broad look may be needed across a number of different municipal policies and strategies, as there may not be any one that has a specific food focus – which policies, strategies and targets are relevant?
- Identify which socially vulnerable groups are most relevant. This could be done from the perspective of existing policy that has already identified such groups. Alternatively, interviews with key stakeholders could help to develop the criteria and at the same time build interest and buy-in for the work.
- Analyse the policies/strategies and targets to identify which, if any, specifically focus on socially vulnerable groups and on which aspects of food.
- If this is a priority area for the city, further investigation could assess what is actually happening - the level of implementation, budget allocation, targets and monitoring of impact – as a result of the municipal policies, strategies and targets. This could be done through further interviews or roundtable meetings with key stakeholders.

Scoring sheet

Characteristics	Scoring			Total score	Disaggregation of information	Observations/ Recommendations
Presence of relevant policies/strategies/targets that fit agreed criteria for this indicator	**Yes= 1 point**	**No= 0 points**			-Number and type of policies and strategies -Specific targets set -Type of socially vulnerable groups addressed	
Level of implementation: is the policy/strategy actually implemented or enforced?	**Yes, completely= 2 points**	**Partially= 1 point**	**No= 0 points**		-Discuss for each of the policies or strategies. -Indicate reasons for partial or non-implementation/enforcement	
Socially vulnerable groups: The policy/strategy/targets specifically address socially vulnerable groups	**Yes, completely= 2 points**	**Partially= 1 point**	**No= 0 points**		-Distinguish for each of the policies or strategies or targets. -Note: Specific vulnerable groups may be identified depending on local context and policy priorities. The scoring sheet could monitor	

				targeting of each defined vulnerable groups by giving each of them for a score of 1 (this specific group is targeted) or 0 (this groups is not targeted).	
Information and communication: Are policies and regulations widely shared within city government and to potential beneficiaries	**Yes, completely= 2 points**	**Partially= 1 point**	**No= 0 points**		-Number and type of information and communication mechanisms and target groups	
Total score:						

Data analysis/calculation of the indicator

Based on the scoring and further information provided, participants in the monitoring/review process may identify gaps or areas for strengthening or improvement:

- How can existing policies and programmes be better implemented and communicated?
- How can better targets be set?
- What new or revised policies and programmes could be proposed?
- What process should be followed to implement these changes? Steps to be taken? Stakeholders to be involved? Critical time-lines? Resources required?

Note: If existing, it may be relevant to further critically assess the specific policies or programmes themselves in order to highlight areas for improvement. The critical policy analysis proposed for Food Governance Indicator 3 (*Presence of a municipal urban food policy or strategy and/or action plans*) may be used and adapted for this purpose. This approach could be adapted along the lines below.

Type of food-related policy/targets	Focus of the policy - type of vulnerable group(s)	Objective of focus on socially vulnerable groups	Actual impact on socially vulnerable groups

Ultimately, the purpose is to find out the extent to which food-related policies and targets are focussed at socially vulnerable groups. The analysis should identify which ones do that and in what way, or at least in which ways they attempt to do that. Assessing actual impact may be beyond the scope of this work, unless it is feasible to do stakeholder interviews or roundtable discussions.

References and links to reports/tools

City Council Food and planning developmental review: A report based on interviews with Bristol City Council staff about their work on food. A peer review team from the University of the West of England visited Bristol City Council on 17 March 2014 and interviewed 14 staff and one elected member about their roles in improving the health, sustainability and resilience of the food system that serves Bristol.

Although this particular review did not focus on any specific policy, this rapid appraisal approach could be adapted for the purposes of this indicator, and also provide other very useful data.

http://bristolfoodpolicycouncil.org/food-and-planning-developmental-review-a-report-based-on-interviews-with-bristol-city-council-staff-about-their-work-on-food/