SURVEY RESULTS

Weaving Food

Results of Surveyon

Food Poverty in The Hague

On behalf of the Hague Food Council, an initiative of the Ons Eten The Hague association

25 July 2023

Introduction

In 2022, Fonds 1818 and STEK (Stad en Kerk, City and Church) launched the Broad Hague Poverty Consultation, organising a series of network consultation to facilitate meetings between formal and informal organisations. The aim of these consultations was to help people who found themselves in difficulties due to sharp increases in the cost of food and energy. The consultations revealed that the extent of food poverty in The Hague was not fully known. In response, the Hague Food Council conducted a series of interviews to explore what food aid was available, and what was needed according to providers and initiators.

The present report is the outcome of this exploration and describes the local situation in The Hague. It does not pretend to be complete. In the course of the interviews, the understanding emerged that there are structural challenges around food poverty that are not currently being addressed. It also became apparent that there are ideas for addressing these challenges, but that these are not being systematically implemented.

The report was published in Dutch in August 2023. The content of the report was widely recognised, and the suggested approach of initiating a virtuous cycle at neighbourhood level was enthusiastically received, also outside The Hague. The first experiments to strengthen cooperation in neighbourhoods based on positive forces have since been set in motion, and involve collaboration between formal and informal organisations.

This document is the English translation of the report, commissioned by Feedback EU. We hope that it will contribute to the development of a working method to structurally organise input from grassroots movements in several places across Europe, and ultimately end poverty.

1. How big is the problem of food poverty in The Hague?

The series of interviews we conducted revealed that an estimated 5500 people in The Hague are directly dependent on food aid. This includes people who receive food parcels from the Hague Food Bank (2600). It also includes undocumented people – in many cases immigrant workers. If they find themselves in difficulties, they have no social safety net or social justice to fall back on (some 200 of these people now get food at Koekamp). Overall, we estimate that approximately 1600 people live in deep poverty. Then there are those who are entitled to food aid and can get help in emergency facilities (approximately 150 homeless people). And there is a group that is not entitled to food aid but needs it nevertheless because their income is just above the Food Bank norm (1000 people). It is estimated that approximately 20,000 people in The Hague are barely coping.

We conducted a dozen in-depth interviews with the following people:

Ben Lachhab – Participation Kitchen

Neo de Bono – Moerwijk Cooperation

Henk Baars – Food Bank Haaglanden

Bilal Sahin – Fathers' Centre Laak

Anne van Amerongen – Red Cross

Elise Kant – Haëlla Association

Marianne Edixhoven – City Oasis Spinozahof

Niels de Wit – Salvation Army

Suzanne Monnier – Groene Matties ZW

Dirck Slabbekoorn – Jumbo Schiedamseweg, Rotterdam

Stella de Swart – Expert by experience from Amsterdam

We would like to thank all interviewees for their time and inspiring input.

In the interviews, we asked: What is going well? What is going less well? What is your estimate of the number of people you are reaching and those you fail to reach, and where are they? What potential solutions do you see? Would stronger connections work, and how could these be realised at neighbourhood, district, or city level? What can the municipal council do? What can the Ons Eten association do?

We also attended meetings and visited networks of people with knowledge of food poverty. These included: the community of practice of the Netherlands Food Councils, the meetings of Fondsenbeheer Landbouw en Zorg on 'Healthy and sustainable food, in particular for people in vulnerable positions' in Ede, and the network day of Voedsel Anders, where a theme group was launched under the title 'Food for everyone, food as a public good'. We were also inspired by the FoodSavers initiative in Oostende. FoodSavers is a nationwide Flemish organisation that offers a complete chain of collection, sorting, allocation, processing, and distribution via social supermarkets and has created meeting places across Flanders.

Overview of Food Poverty in The Hague

Numbers: Survival level:
5500 + 20.000 just above poverty line

How does food poverty arise?
- Scarcity in food supply
  No structural supply
- Imbalanced composition
  One-sided supply, no food plan (based on donations)
- Social poverty
- Systemic failure

Where does food aid come from?
- Donations from companies, supermarkets, and growers
- Surpluses, to prevent food waste

2. How is food aid organised now?

Food aid currently focuses on emergency aid. It is carried out by charities, often church or former church institutions, new neighbourhood initiatives, and generous 'doers' who cannot stand seeing people suffer and start some kind of initiative. There are big differences in the degree of institutionalisation of these aid organisations/providers. Examples of such initiatives include: Food Parcels (informal, and formal from the Food Bank), Breakfast Bags, Soup Bus, the Food Bank Shop, Grocery Card, and Aanschuifmaaltijden (drop-in meals).

Based on the results, we created an overview of the situation in The Hague, and collected proposed solutions for improvement.
In the process, it became clear that

Food banks, but also initiatives such as the Participation Kitchen, struggle with scarcity in supply, or, on the contrary, surpluses that they cannot manage. This could partly be resolved by focusing more on processing surpluses and structural supply from producers. Relying on food waste as a channel for food parcels means there is no structural supply.

Especially for homeless and addicted people, there is too much imbalance in nutritional composition. There are no food plans aimed at the specific nutrition required by these groups and, overall, food aid tends to be imbalanced. There is also no food security for this group, due to a lack of alignment with the various resources at Koekamp.

There are many more initiatives in the city that focus on helping poor people by providing food. These include Fresh & Free (small refrigerators with meals), local initiatives and neighbourhood centres that offer meals, such as Lichtpuntjes Mariahoeve, the Fathers' Centre in Laak, Welzijnswerk in various neighbourhoods and churches, for example Wereldhuis and Bij Betje. We did not make a complete inventory of these initiatives because a general picture was already emerging from the group we did interview, and people tended to say the same things about possible structural solutions.


MON:
TUE:
THU:
FRI:
Don't
call me
Sweet

3. Further explanation of some forms of food aid

3.1 Breakfast Bags

Breakfast Bags are organised in various forms for families that need them; the photograph below shows the Red Cross.

The approach taken by the various breakfast initiatives differs:

- In Moerwijk, the bags are sponsored by the local Jumbo supermarket, and people have no control over the contents.
- At the Red Cross, the bags can be purchased for €10 and people can choose the contents themselves.
- Sometimes families are offered 'breakfast lessons' in addition to a breakfast bag. These are activities for children and parents around health and nutrition, and how to organise breakfast at home. Some children do not get breakfast because their parents struggle with getting organised. This sometimes plays a bigger role than immediate lack of money.

The breakfast bags target families with children, as otherwise some children would end up going to school without breakfast and/or lunch. There are also calls to provide school breakfasts and lunches. Opinions differ on this matter. It is generally felt that breakfast should be eaten at home, and that offering breakfast at school would further increase the pressure on teachers, at the expense of class time.

School lunches also lead to more pressure for teachers, but people are more positive about them: they represent an opportunity to provide healthy food for all children, are easier to organise because most children are at school at lunchtime anyway, and there have been positive experiences with school lunches elsewhere in the country.

Existing initiatives (non-exhaustive)
Giveaway kiosk at the Participation Kitchen
Community cooking
Aanschuiftafels (drop-in free meals)
Aanschuiftafel at home
Food Bank Shop: Two extra days selling food to people who are not entitled to Food Bank parcels
Fresh & Free refrigerators with meals

3.2 Soup Bus

Several days a week, the Malieveld is home to the Soup Bus for the homeless. There are many separate initiatives of this kind, but no real synergy yet: for example, at some moments (e.g. 7 p.m. on weekdays), there is a lot on offer at Koekamp, while at others (Sundays), there is nothing anywhere yet.

- On Fridays, the city monastery/street pastorate distributes food.
- Two churches in Katwijk bring food to Koekamp.
- The Soup Bus, which also distributes bread for the next morning
- Other: the Indian community

People on the streets eat an imbalanced diet. Despite being given food, they are still malnourished and lose weight. This is partly due to addictions to alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs. These addictions result in the body having different needs and/or loss of feelings of hunger. With marijuana and speed, the body needs more sugars/carbohydrates. The strong painkiller Methadone also demands a lot from the body, which leads to different nutritional needs. This group would benefit from eating more and differently, with a focus on medication and drug use.

Among the homeless are relatively many labour immigrants. When they fall ill, they sometimes have no prospects: they often cannot get back to work, and they lack the money and social network to return to their families.

Proposed solutions:

- An experiment has shown that such people are sometimes helped by simply paying for and arranging their return trip. This allows them to return to their home social circle.
- This group would benefit from structural feeding throughout the day, for example in the form of a Breakfast Bus. If they are properly fed, they can regain strength and possibly return to work as labour immigrants.
- In addition, a morning contact moment might help refer them in time to the homeless aid counter, which closes at 1 p.m.

3.3 Food Bank Shop

To allow people to choose for themselves what products they would like to receive, a Food Bank Shop has been set up in a growing number of locations. As with Food Bank food parcels, people with a very low standard income can collect food here. The food comes from surpluses from farms and/or shops/distribution centres and donations, or is purchased by the Food Bank.

3.4 Grocery Card

For the past two years, a programme for issuing grocery cards has been running in The Hague. The grocery cards are handed out weekly, and can be spent at Albert Heijn. This supports approximately 150 people who are not eligible for or unable to go to the Food Bank, or who have not yet found their way there for any number of reasons. The advantage is that people can buy groceries of their own choice without appearing to be different from other people.

Conversations with supermarkets have revealed that there is an inherent risk in the current set-up of the Food Bank and related charity initiatives: The supermarkets are using smart pricing to reduce food waste. They indicate that they can reduce food waste to 0% within a few years. At the same time, several supermarkets are experimenting with their own grocery cards. They are discussing possibilities for financing this via various routes with the municipal council.
The grocery cards are a great initiative because they are less stigmatising; people buy food in a regular shop like everyone else. This does, however, raise questions about the 'lofty intentions' of the supermarkets. Of course, it is wonderful that less food is wasted. At the same time, this does yield extra profits for the supermarkets. Considering their already substantial profits, this extra money could also be put on the grocery cards without additional public funding.
Moreover, questions can also be raised concerning the management of the data from these loyalty cards, which provide the supermarkets with information about people in highly vulnerable positions.

3.5 Processing kitchens

The Food Bank and private food banks or food processors such as the Participation Kitchen report that they have too little perspective on food surplus, and struggle to find transport to distribute the surpluses over the various cities or districts. There is also too little processing capacity.

Rotterdam and Amsterdam, for example, have large kitchens where food is processed before being taken to shelters.
The Hague could/should do the same – the question is which location could be designed to accommodate this.

Some cities also have City Hubs where surpluses can be stored (in refrigerators) and redistributed. In Oostende (Flanders), FoodSavers has developed an ingenious model, in partnership with the municipal council and supermarkets, to redistribute food and cook using left-overs.

Proposed solutions:

- City Hubs, similar to the FoodSavers model in Oostende, can collect large quantities of food and distribute it to the rest of the city.
- The leftovers that cannot be distributed could be converted into food for people who need it, for example in processing kitchens.
- A social entrepreneur or the municipality could, for example, structurally produce food for food banks in their own pasta factory.
- Ask growers to produce extra food for the Food Bank, for example by establishing better cooperation with Westland market gardens, where a lot of vegetables are destroyed in the 'pre-development' phase. These vegetables are not available for sale, but they are perfectly edible. The Food Bank could if needed pay for them.

4. Food poverty is a systemic issue

Food poverty is not an isolated issue. It is part of a vicious cycle that some of our fellow human beings have fallen prey to. This is not a matter of personal failure, but an accumulation of factors, including sheer bad luck. Experts by experience talk about how degrading the shame and stigmatisation can be; no one wants to queue up at the Food Bank. It is also clear that the paperwork and organisation required to get your life back on track is often more than people can handle in a situation that is already extremely high in psychological stress. Well-intentioned charity turns people into victims and makes them dependent, further eroding their already compromised self-esteem.

Several of the interviewees cited 'social poverty' as greater than financial poverty. If you end up alone with your poverty and shame about it, you gradually become just a 'number'. People often see their 'ability to act' decrease, and they can no longer figure out what to do on their own. To get out, you need human contact from people around you who not only help you, but also see you as a full-fledged fellow human being, and who give you the confidence to believe that you are able to act to improve your circumstances. People who provide you with a social context and a genuine embrace, and help you regain your strength. Who give you things to do and invite you to experience things so that you can have fun and regain your self-esteem, because you know you can do something, and you know you belong. Having said that, Tim S'Jongers (Director of the Wiarda Beckman association) has made it abundantly clear that poverty is a systemic issue, and not just a question of individual help and empowerment. He points out, for example, that debt is a revenue model (more is spent on debt collection than the amount of the debt itself). The paperwork and procedures associated with ordinary civil rights for our subsistence security are so deeply based on suspicion and control that it can make one quite despondent, as the Child Benefits Scandal has shown.

Looking deeper into the system, we see that the economy we have created is an economy of scarcity: even people who have enough money to live a full life often feel short-changed. The excesses of the very rich and our collective worship of them as successful heroes in life feed a desire for more-more-more. The financial mechanisms that act on our society make it so that those at the bottom of the pyramid drop further and further down into scarcity and poverty. For more information on this, have a look at this video:

The mechanism of scarcity gnaws at our society, undermining togetherness and collective will, and our ability to share the benefits of our prosperity. The focus on consumption also makes us poor when we are actually rich: there is never enough, because due to the endless need that has been created. We compare ourselves to others based on scarcity and external circumstances. Dirck Slabbekoorn (Branch Manager of the Jumbo in Rotterdam) told us that his employees also sometimes experience financial stress, even though they are well above the poverty line. That is why he now offers budgeting lessons at his branch. Part of the solution may be to teach people to become aware of their income and their expenses, and think about what they really want to spend their money on.

Eliminating poverty and food poverty therefore requires a short-term pro-active approach, combined with a long-term vision and an approach that reinforces this vision.

Poverty and food poverty are

A vicious cycle

Social stress

Self-esteem

Charity & victim role

Loneliness

Shame & stigmatisation

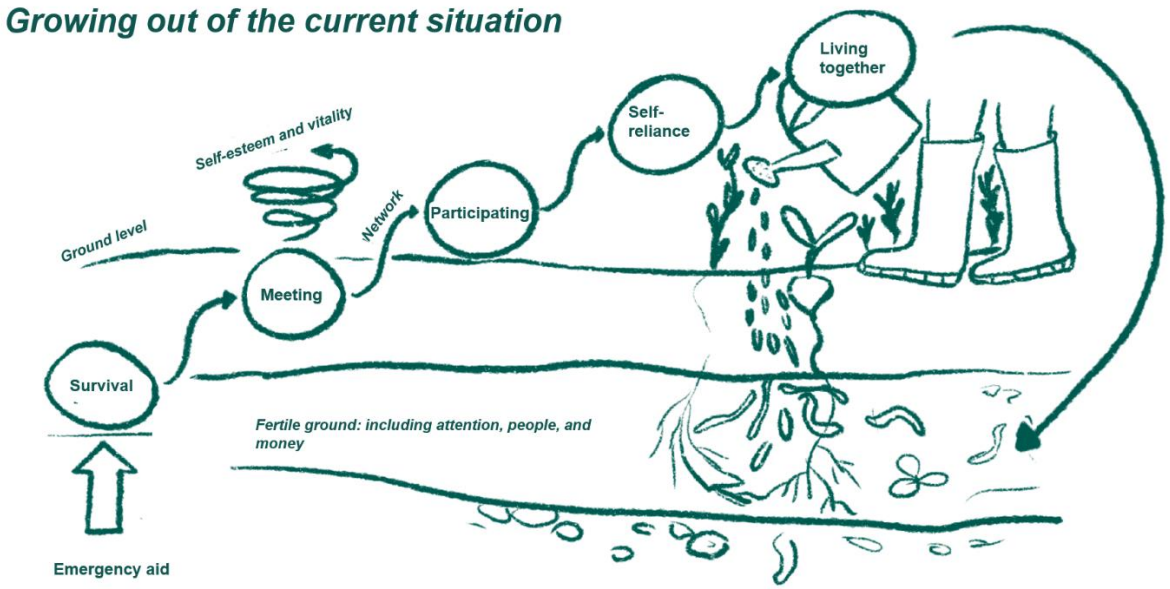
Social poverty vs. financial poverty

Food high in sugar, fat & salt is cheap

Environment with large supply of fast food

5. Proposed solutions for the longer term: work together to create a virtuous cycle

The interviewees agreed on the need to focus on more than emergency aid alone. That is where the focus now goes: towards what people need to survive. However... Although we should keep focusing on this, we must also work together on longer-term solutions: ways to bring people back above ground level. Together, the interviews yielded the following model for improvement. On 25 May and in other meetings, this model was tested, and it was widely endorsed by the interviewees, experts by experience, the national SFYN network, Voedsel Anders, and FoodSavers Oostende.



5.1 From survival to meeting

If we were to use the moments when emergency aid is given as moments for genuine human contact, the food aid that is available now would not only be an end, but also a means.

There are already many examples of such places in The Hague: the more informal food aid locations offer something along these lines, including the Fathers' Centre Laak, the Participation Kitchen, the Lichtpuntjes family centre, the Living-Room in Moerwijk, etc. These are all places where people are welcome and treated as humans in their own right.

Food can be used to facilitate meeting in various ways:

- The Food Bank and other food parcels and bags
- A meal that anyone can join in for free
- A vegetable garden/community garden where you can meet others without obstacles or obligations

Conditions to make this possible:

- It is important that locations are open, accessible, low-threshold, and non-stigmatising. They should feel inviting and people should not feel ashamed of being there; these should be places you go to for your pleasure, like the local café. Make sure you create a welcoming place for anyone, with little luxury (since this has a deterring effect).
- Food or whatever else is being giving away should be used as an occasion for a hug, or a chat. This should be a place where people are met as full human beings in their own right, and there is time for a chat that can lead to a real encounter: a conversation from human to human. So not one-off contact, or ever-changing staff, but longer term contact that allows for trust to develop. When people gradually get to know each other, they know who their children are and where they live, real connection is created.
- In addition, it pays off to offer a broad programme – activities that suit those who come: language and conversation lessons, gardening, a give-away shop, a bicycle repair workshop, or a course on how to cook on a small budget. You can use these courses to address the social poverty problem; by joining in, people become activated, their self-esteem improves, and they develop their own network.

5.2 From meeting to participating

From this established contact, you can build further, until you know someone and you invite them to participate. For example, Ben invites people who come and eat at the Aanschuiftafel to help cook. Bilal invites people to courses and activities that suit them, and so on. Participating helps people to step out of their difficult situation for a moment. It creates a virtuous cycle that helps people regain vitality and self-esteem. This is reminiscent of the old story about the fishing rod. Rather than giving people fish, or even a fishing rod, teach them instead how to make one themselves.

There are many places and moments where emergency aid is provided, but without this leading to personal contact or participation. This is where opinions among our interviewees were divided. The informal initiatives and the Fathers' Centre believe that mainstream welfare workers and charities maintain too much professional distance. On the other hand, welfare organisations and aid agencies may have a greater need for contact than the informal initiatives believe. The Red Cross, for example, would like to support informal food points to help people further, for example by being present at breakfast bag distribution points.

There are opportunities and conflicting demands here: the money that now goes to institutionalised welfare organisations is being questioned by the more informal, freer, and sometimes more creative initiative professionals. They do not have access to these welfare funds, and yet they feel that they are nevertheless doing a better job than the professionals. Some even suggested that welfare services should be offered in a more competitive set-up based on results achieved. The question is how much cooperation there is between these organisations. Perhaps the municipality could take a different course here by working with the formal and informal organisations in the neighbourhood based on a shared vision, and recognising the unique contribution of the different types of organisations. It may well be that more can be achieved with the same funds if they are distributed differently. It may also be that so much has broken down in the city's social cohesion over the past 30 years that we need both the institutional welfare organisations and the new citizen initiatives, and that extra investments are needed to avoid costs further down the poverty chain. Note here: welfare and poverty really are a revenue model (see Tim S'Jongers). Gardening in the community garden, as well cooking or processing food together in the processing kitchen, is a good recipe to move from meeting to participating and to strengthen co-reliance.

5.3 Working on structural self-reliance & living together

People who drop below ground level must not be allowed to sink further; that is why we need emergency aid such as the Food Bank. However, to get these people above ground level again, you need a social network in the neighbourhood. This goes further than a single point or moment of contact, but focuses instead on building community, with a place for everyone. A community in which people participate as a matter of course. Not because a professional asks you to, or because you are obliged to volunteer, but because you enjoy participating with your peers and you get to contribute in your own way.

To move from participating to self-reliance requires a neighbourhood approach:

- Participating and taking further steps together from meeting and participation locations helps to further build community.

  Food is a great tool for this: gardening together, eating together, processing food together, or buying and growing food as a food community, these are all connecting aspects of food.

- The various meeting places, organisations and food initiatives can strengthen each other by working together at neighbourhood level: developing a shared vision of how the neighbourhood could be fed, and who could play what role in this process. Food thus becomes both a goal and a means: putting healthy and affordable food on everyone's plate is the goal, but the means also contributes to social cohesion/participation, combatting loneliness, climate adaptation, health, increasing biodiversity, etc.

- Turn all courtyard gardens into vegetable gardens/community gardens/city oases.

- Plant edible plants and trees in the city so that people can harvest for free, and children can see how food grows.

- See food as a social right, and as a basic provision for healthy residents.

Fertile ground for society

Creating a fertile ground for the community and strengthening the network in neighbourhoods requires money, attention, and people to facilitate cooperation. On the one hand, this is about the locations and initiatives that are already there now, and that need recognition and support for their projects. What could still be added in this context is cooperation at neighbourhood level. Food can also act as a link between initiatives. Cooperation can be initiated by starting a conversation around food and co-reliance in the neighbourhood. An experiment in Mariahoeve showed that a conversation about the shared vision on the neighbourhood's food supply is experienced as meaningful and leads to more cooperation. Such conversations could be held in all neighbourhoods; this could be part of the further development of the municipality's Food Strategy.

What this requires:

- A sense that the city belongs to the people and is there for the people (ownership of your own neighbourhood; 'our city') and opportunities to strengthen this further. For instance by using green facades, flowerbeds, and courtyard gardens, and removing some pavement stones: these places could be open for free harvesting, and the greenery would encourage more meeting, participation, etc.

- More City Oases that can act as 'Food Connection Locations'. These are public green spaces where you can just walk in any time: a nourishing space without thresholds. The Spinozahof is the most mature example of this, and it can contribute to satellites elsewhere in the city. Such places can also be used to create even more cooperation with organisations in the neighbourhood.

A City Oasis or Food Connection Location can perform a number of functions around food:

- Food to grow and harvest, and this is part of meeting and self-reliance.
- Focus on what is possible and on having fun; you grow food while engaging in cooperation and networking.
- People are invited to regularly eat together in the form of a drop-in meal.
- Option of buying cheap food together as a community.
- Other activities, such as language classes, help with filling forms, helping each other directly, etc.

In addition to City Oases/Food Connection Locations in The Hague, there are other examples where food is both a means and an end, such as growing food for the Food Bank. In The Hague, we do not have any large urban agriculture locations that grow food for the Food Bank, as opposed to other cities in the Netherlands, which have a city plot or food garden.

Several care farms grow food specifically for the Food Bank in 'food gardens'. This not only provides healthy food for people with little money, but participants also experience it as particularly meaningful work. Basically, it offers double added value. In addition to care farms, there are many other types of food gardens, run by volunteers. Several garden allotment associations grow food on special plots dedicated to the Food Bank. Federatie Landbouwen Zorg, Stichting Doen, Fondsenbeheer Landbouw en Zorg joined forces for a two-year project to explore the success and failure factors for food gardens, and what is needed to develop them sustainably.
A food garden also combines two functions, similarly to a Food Connection Location, but with more focus on food production.

Special forms of cooking together or food parcels with home support are also interesting options that could be developed further. In Rotterdam, a Mealprep Café recently opened at the Volkskantine Rotterdam. In a 12-week programme, Rotterdam parents can learn to cook under professional guidance. Additional benefits include awareness of affordable healthy food, social networking, and learning to cook with fresh ingredients.

Moervers is an initiative in Moerwijk, a Hello Fresh-like package that you order for a price based on your postal code: people in rich neighbourhoods pay much more than people in poor neighbourhoods, thus redistributing resources within the city.

A test in Almere showed that a **Volkskantine** is a good way to get poor people to eat healthy food without stigma and patronising. A snack bar concept, but with healthy food (without communicating this) proved to be a good way to entice people to have a healthy meal for the same money as a snack bar meal.

Lekkernassûh is a community of people who buy their own food from neighbourhood farmers. Within the community, people can exchange their time for a weekly vegetable parcel. Many more food communities could be developed based on this model. Existing communities can also join in and open their own takeaway point, so that every neighbourhood has access to affordable healthy food.

Other cities and municipalities are also experimenting with building food communities, like **De Voedselwerkplaats** in Deventer: people order food together directly from farmers and wholesalers, thus gaining control over what they eat and at what price.

Edible greenery – food sovereignty

It seems so normal to buy food in the supermarket, but when you think about it, there are other options: after all, food can grow in lots of places. Planting and managing edible greenery is not only a great way to involve people in their neighbourhood and facilitate encounters, it also frees people from the rat race. For people who live in poverty, the very act of picking their own food can create room to know that their basic needs are being met.

In a growing number of places, voices are rising that invite us to look at food systems very differently. They question the idea of food as a commodity, and eaters as consumers. The major transitions we face as a society are all related to food, and they are not separate from the issue of poverty. Food sovereignty means self-determination and control over your food. Since food is the source of our existence, and a healthy and happy life is considered to be a universal human right, one could argue that governments at local, regional, national and international level have a duty to provide the people in their areas with healthy and sustainable food. Edible greenery in our cities is a small step towards this self-determination, and towards seeing food as a 'common good'.

6. Weaving further together to create a fertile ground

Key conclusions are

Emergency aid is insufficient to address food poverty in The Hague, and it is degrading.

We need to work more systematically on food for the longer term.

Food is a human right – we should therefore make food the goal and the means of making the city healthier and more prosperous (broad prosperity as compass).

Strengthen the fertile ground one neighbourhood at a time: meeting, food connection locations, food communities, and cooking together.

Make supermarkets and other food suppliers more social and involve them in the neighbourhood approach. Cooperation at city and district level is a key factor for various themes. Organise food processing city-wide.

Make the public space into something that belongs to us all, and use it to grow food.

Important proposed solutions to further develop this long-term approach:

1. Address food waste/ processing at systemic level

- **Set up a broad project together with existing parties** (participation table, food banks, neighbourhood initiatives) to tackle food waste and surplus processing more systematically, following the example of FoodSavers in Flanders.

2. Improve approach to the homeless and labour immigrants

- Start cooperation to **improve conditions at Koekamp** and make joint agreements about this target group and their food supply. Face reality as a municipality and make sure things are well organised. Learn from the approach in Moerwijk to get migrant workers back on their feet.

3. Create a fertile ground one neighbourhood at a time

- **Make sure that food has an important place on the neighbourhood agenda** and include food as a basic right and an aspect of broad prosperity and health in the Environmental Vision. For the process, focus on cooperation at neighbourhood level.
- **Work on a healthy food base for each neighbourhood.**
- **Meetings with residents, initiatives, and entrepreneurs** to hear what kind of food system a neighbourhood would like.
- **Food connectors** who, like community managers and energy coaches, disseminate information and make connections around food in the neighbourhood, neighbourhood dialogues, neighbourhood agenda, and Environmental Vision.
- Create **enough City Oases**, Food Connection Locations, food communities, 'volkskantines', Mealprep Cafés, and where possible, city farms where food is grown, and support these kinds of citizen initiatives.
- **Help find and open spaces where people can cook and eat together;** many community centres and professional kitchens of institutions (schools, community centres or the Salvation Army) are currently underused.
  These kitchens could be made available to Mealprep Cafés and 'aanschuiftafels', and be used as processing locations.
- **Organise the conversation with experimenting supermarkets and franchisees on developing social supermarkets.**
  In this context, draw inspiration from the social supermarkets in Flanders, the cooperative supermarkets in the Netherlands and France, including the Nieuwe Graanschuur. It is important to create supermarkets where everyone can do their shopping, but where the municipality and residents also have control over what is sold and how much is earned from vulnerable groups. Pay attention to how we are steered with marketing. Hold entrepreneurs accountable for contributing to prosperity in their neighbourhood, their function as a meeting point, and the right to good food for everyone.

4. Appeal to people's responsibility

- **Municipality:** Take up your role around poverty more broadly, make the link between emergency aid and the structural building of society/broader prosperity, and leverage the role of food in this process.
  Finance coordination of processing centres, managers of meetings places, and community builders around food in neighbourhoods. Make space for ownership in the city. Include food as an important link/means of achieving the goals of the Environmental Vision (healthy, sustainable, social).
- **Fonds 1818:** Invest in the start-up costs of the above projects and cooperations, at city and at neighbourhood level. Make process funding available for these cooperations so that meetings, communication, and time spent on cooperation are also reimbursed.
- **Initiatives/entrepreneurs:** Have the courage and invest time in uniting, instead of each trying to become the only/largest/most important initiative. Do this at neighbourhood and at city level.
  Create partnerships to realise the above-mentioned projects, and put forward a joint proposal to the municipal council and Fonds 1818.
- **Ons Eten Association –** As an association, we would like to be the place where this collaboration emerges and knowledge is made available to others. We do not want to pull all these projects, but we would like to make sure that cooperation emerges and be a fertile ground that strengthens further cooperation.
- **Food Council** – We want to adequately represent the different voices in the city, and are committed to bringing together expertise from the city in various theme groups, and promote representation from neighbourhoods/different communities.

Established by the Hague Food Council

Contact person:

Liane Lankreijer | email: liane.lankreijer@gmail.com | telephone: +31 6 23 42 70 57

The Hague Food Council is an initiative of the Ons Eten Den Haag association, and was created as an independent representative of residents, initiatives, and entrepreneurs from The Hague around healthy, fair and sustainable food. The core of the Food Council is formed by approximately 25 experts in the field of food, food systems, nature, sustainable economy, education, healthcare and urban development. All of these experts are deeply rooted in the city and use their knowledge of various aspects of the food system to provide the municipal council with solicited and unsolicited advice on how to create a healthy and sustainable food policy.

In this way, the council acts as a guide for the municipal council in strategy and policy in the transition to a healthy and sustainable food system.

This survey on Food Poverty in The Hague was carried out by the Hague Food Council, and forms a deepening of the 'Participation and Democracy: the Social Function of Food' theme. This is one of the four themes mentioned in the discussion paper 'First Draft of Integral Food Vision for The Hague', drawn up by the Hague Food Council on 15 March 2023.

This survey was made possible by a commission of Fonds 1818