Placing Food Ladders.

Welcome!
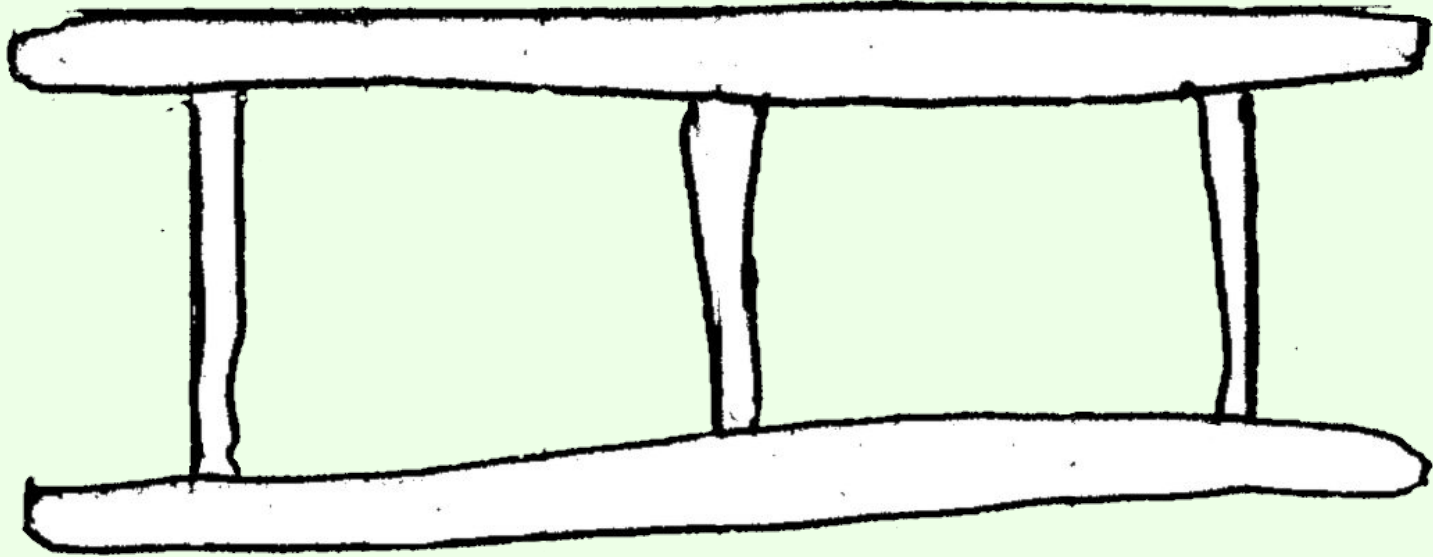
https://geofoodie.org/food-ladders-toolkit/

Today's Plan:

1) What is Food Ladders?
2) An example of Rung 2: Capacity building with The Bread and Butter Thing
3) The Food Ladders Toolkit
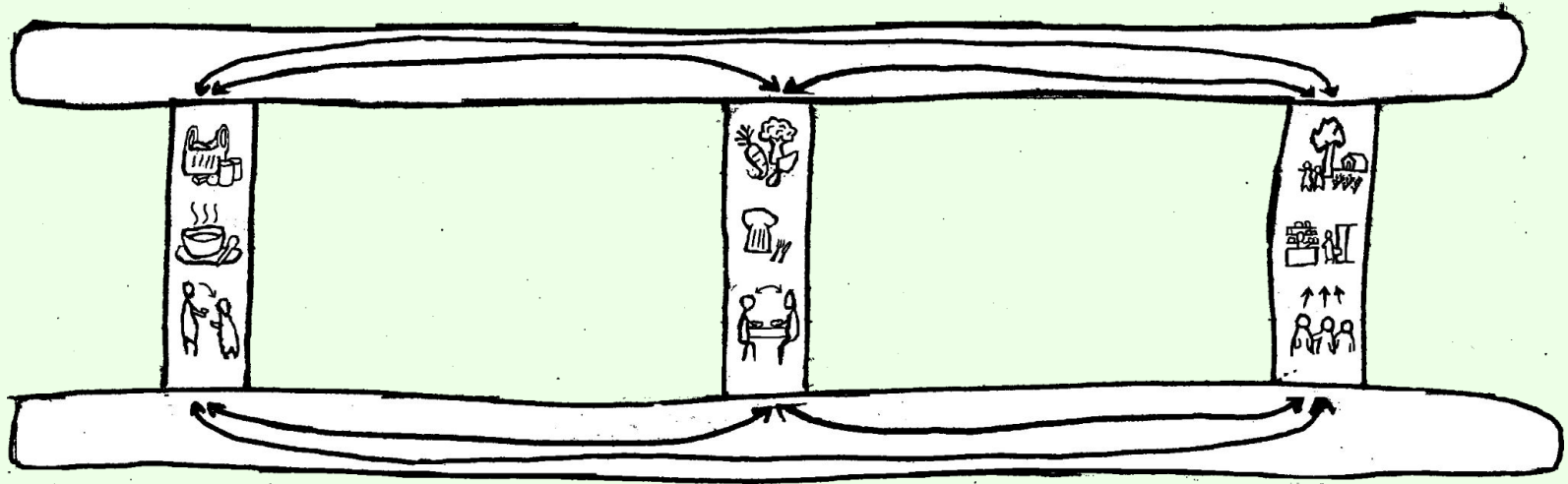
The Food Ladders Model.

Food Security means having the food you need to live your best life.

Food Ladders imagines the community food system as a ladder.

The ladder is made up of 3 connected rungs.

Each rung represents a different type of activity.

Rung 1 - 'Catching'.

This is emergency activity, done *to/for* people.

Examples might include:

- ○ Emergency food parcels
- ○ Soup kitchens
- ○ Basic signposting

Resources needed to be food secure

Financial resources—Market Engagement

Social resources—Reciprocity, collaboration, and mutual aid; Acceptability

Health—Mental and physical ability to get things done

Knowledge—Know-how, know-what

Time—Temporal engagement with an activity or set of interlinked activities

Place-based—physical infrastructures and materials where people can access them

Rung 2 - 'Capacity Building'.

This is supported activity, done *with* people.

Examples might include:
- Community gardening
- Cookery, food hygiene & nutrition training
- Pantries
- Cash-first and voucher schemes
- Social eating

Socially just food security

- Social justice—When legal, policy, and power relationships are not systematically disadvantaging certain groups from making decisions about and utilizing their resources to achieve food security

- Socially just food security enables all people in all places to have the food they need to live their best lives and does so without shame, stigma, and disproportionate stress.
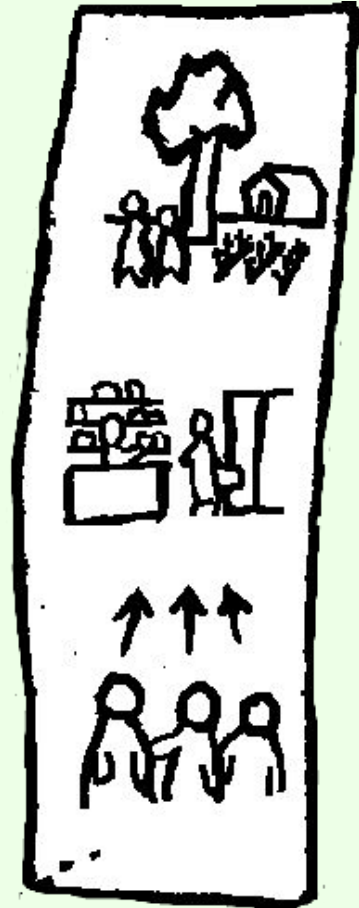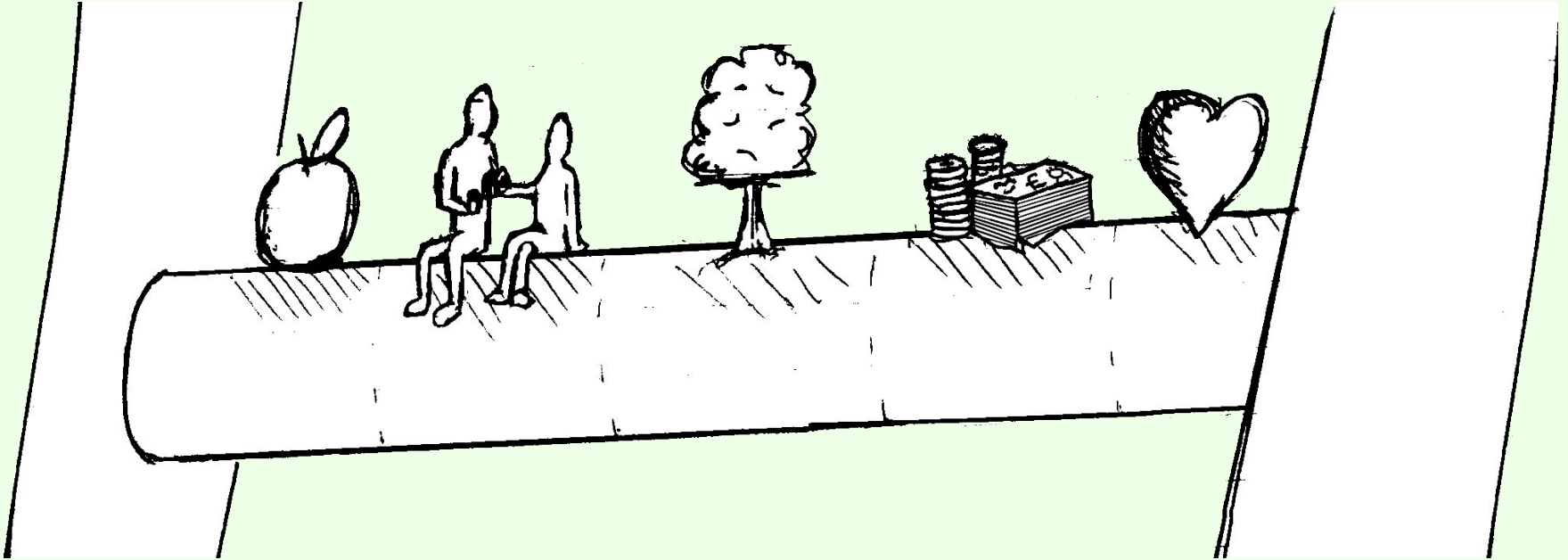
Rung 3 - 'Self-Organised Community Change'.

This is community-led activity, done *by* people.

Examples might include:

○   Community owned growing spaces

○   Local food co-operatives and businesses

○   Community-led campaigns on local interests

○   Resilient communities

Rung activities can affect a range of different areas of people's lives.

Areas might include food, social life, the environment, economy, and physical or mental health.

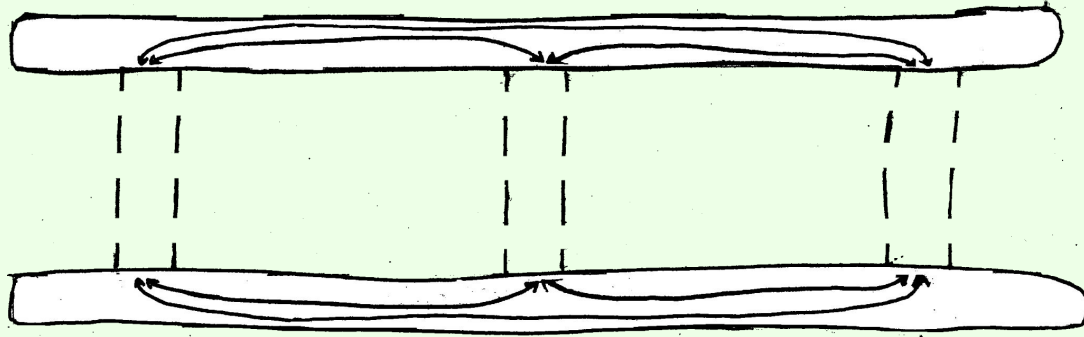No rung is more important than any others.
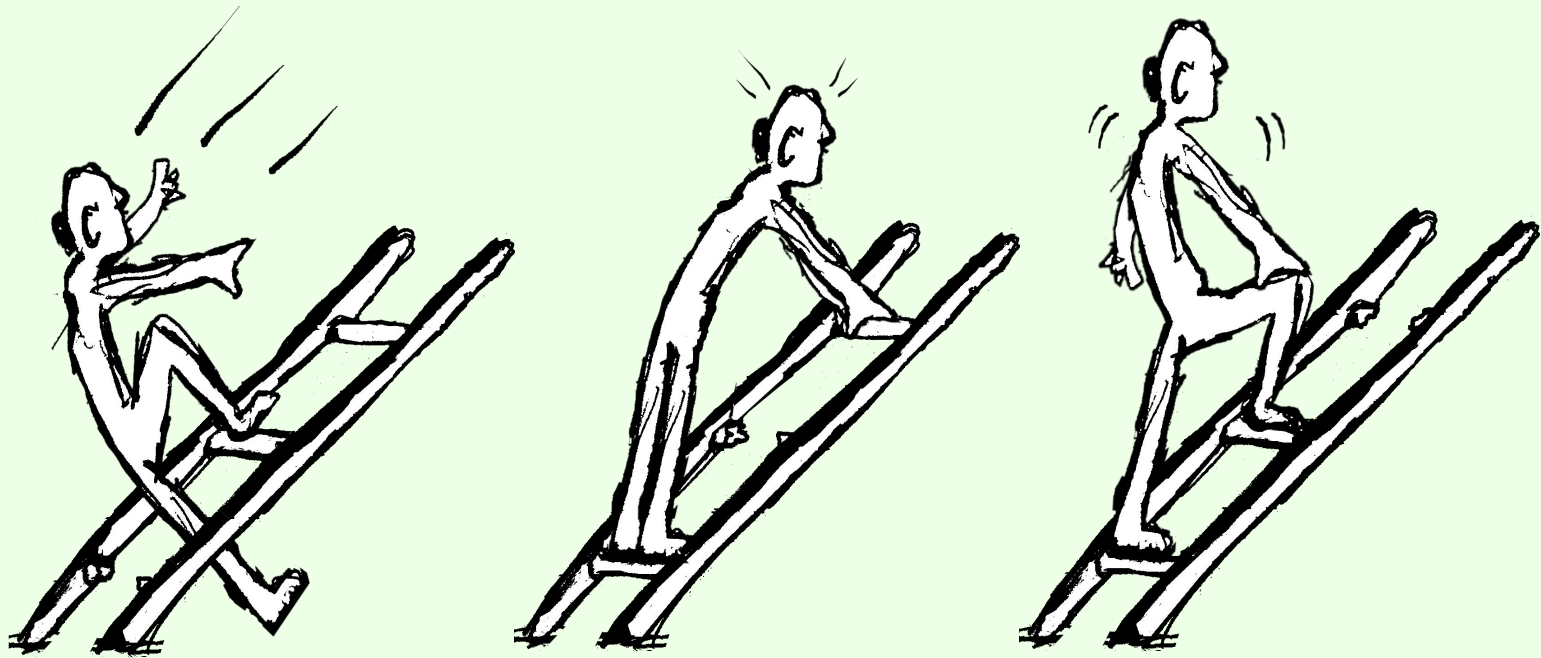
A ladder only works if *all* the rungs are there!

People often use multiple rungs at the same time.

People move up and down the ladder depending on their circumstances.

All the rungs need to be connected to one another.
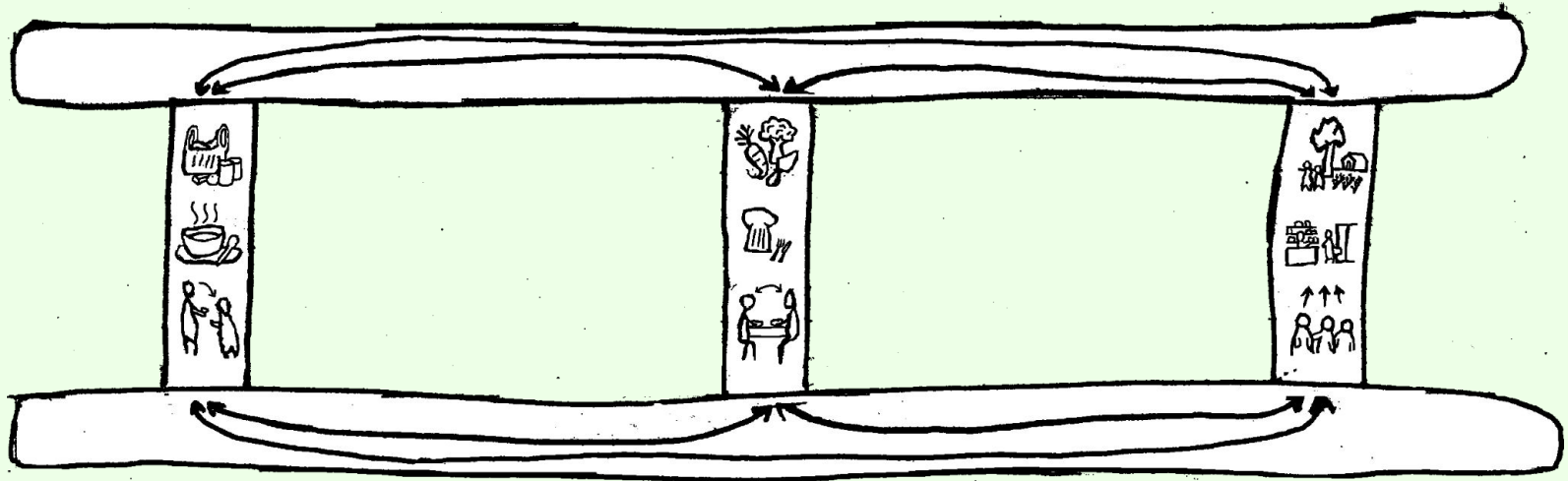

Examples might include:

○ Local or area-wide food partnerships

○ Collaboration between organisations

○ Sharing resources and information

○ Signposting and referrals systems

○ Community anchor organisations

The complete ladder gives people a range of opportunities and support, to achieve resilient food security.

Introducing Mark Game and @TBBT

Placing Food Ladders.

What We Did:

22 initial interviews:
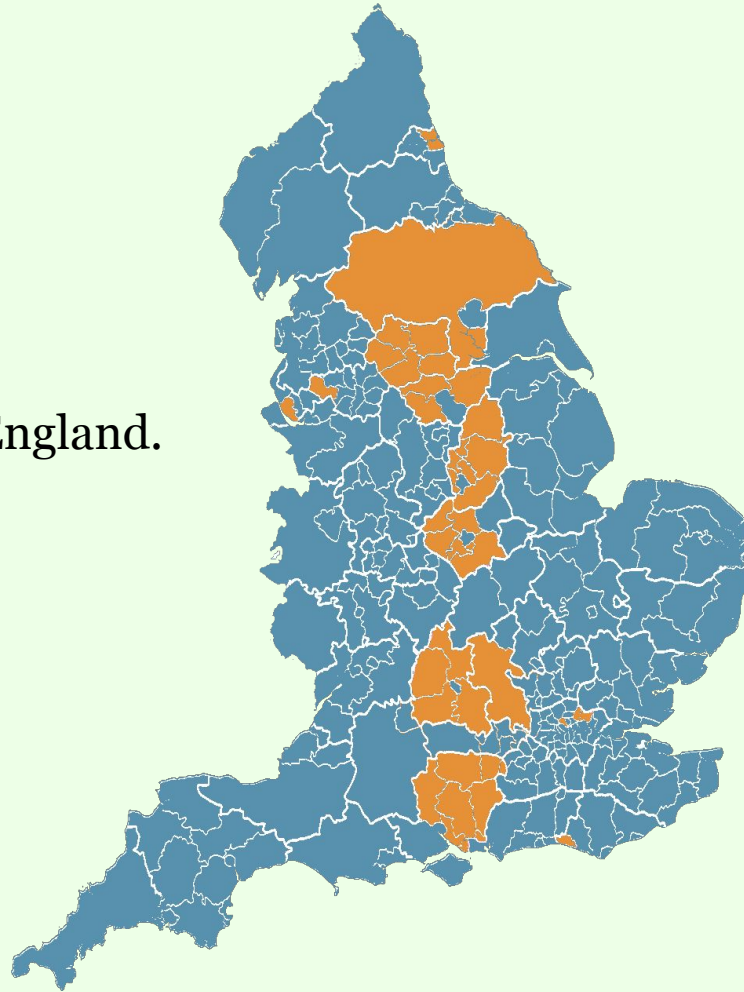
- 34 interviewees.

- 21 council areas in England.

4 follow-up interviews:

- 6 interviewees.

- 4 council areas.

- Barnsley
- Bradford
- Brighton & Hove
- Buckinghamshire
- Camden
- Doncaster
- Hampshire
- Hull
- Kirklees
- Leeds
- Leicestershire
- Liverpool
- N. Tyneside
- N. Yorkshire
- Nottinghamshire
- Oxfordshire
- Redbridge
- Sheffield
- Waltham Forest
- Wigan
- W. Yorkshire

What We Did:

Interviewees worked for:

- Combined or Local Authorities

- VCS Food Organisations

- Funding Organisations
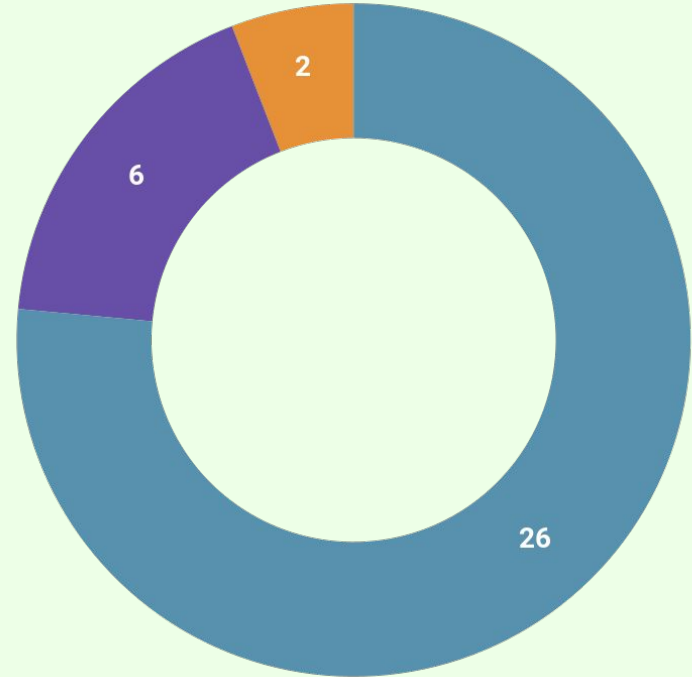
What We Found: Councils and Food.

- Food is a fragmented issue, with responsibility split across many teams within authorities.
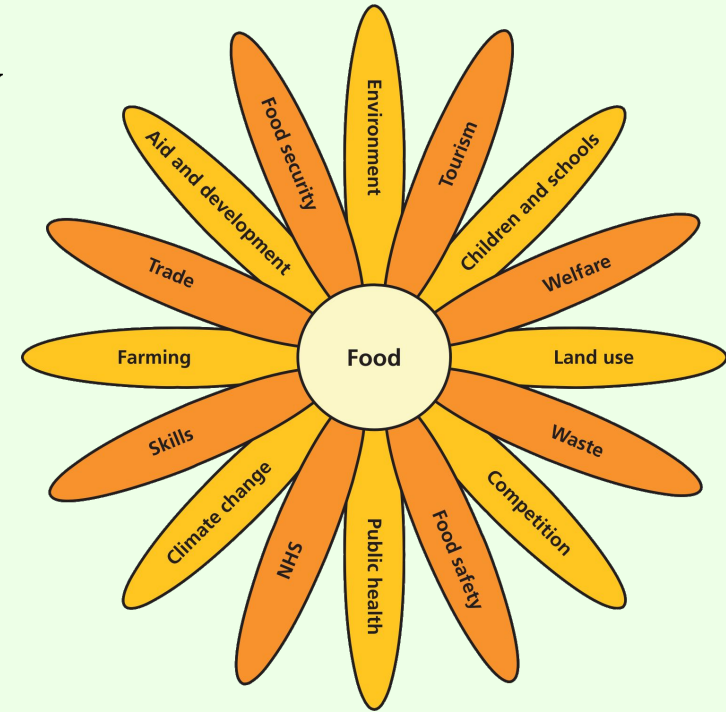
The Food Policy Flower, from 'Food Matters: Towards a Strategy for the 21st Century' (2008), The Strategy Unit.

What We Found: Councils and Food.

- The majority of interviewees worked within Public Health teams.

- Although food was a multi-departmental issue for all councils we spoke to, very few had a formal cross-council food group.

Public Health   Social Care   Communities and Inclusion   Strategy

Finance, Business, Professional Services
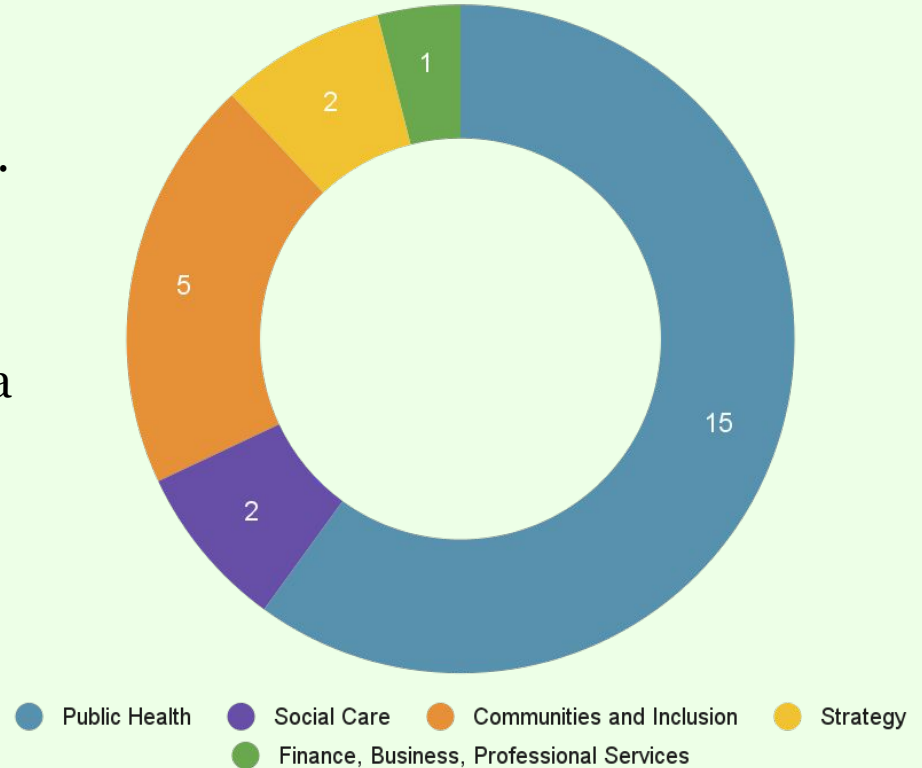
What We Found: Using Food Ladders.

- Many interviewees said that Food Ladders directly influenced their thought around their food work:

  - 33 of 34 interviewees said that Food Ladders gave them a new perspective on their food work.

  - 1 interviewee said it reinforced their existing perspective.

  - 7 local authority areas are using Food Ladders as an explicit part of their food strategies/plans.

What We Found: Using Food Ladders.

- Some areas are using Food Ladders with practical results on the ground:

  - 9 areas had organisations explicitly using the framework to inform their practice.

  - 8 said that Food Ladders enabled the achievement of practical outcomes they wouldn't have otherwise.

- All 34 interviewees said that they would recommend the use of Food Ladders to others working in VCS organisations and other councils.

North Glasgow Community Food Initiative, 2023.

What We Found: Food Ladders' Impact.

- Food Ladders has changed councils' approaches to food in their areas:

    - *'Food ladders helped us to see that [people engaged with different parts of the food system] were on the same page, and that was a crucial moment'*

- When applied in policy, the framework has positive, practical outcomes in communities:

    - *'The feedback so far has been very positive [...] organisations who were initially hesitant spoke positively about the impacts and the reception from their community.'*

Articulate Cultural Trust, 2023.

What We Found: Positives of the Framework.

➢ The simplicity of the model.

   'It is really quite simple to get, and so it helps us with [convincing] elected members.'

➢ Having a clear way of understanding forms of community food provision.

   'Easily demonstrates the other things that need to be sat alongside that crisis support.'

➢ The positive focus of the model.

   'I've had numerous people [...] say "we can't solve food poverty", and you go "Well actually, you can! Look! Here you go". You know you can do stuff, you know you can make a difference.'

What We Found: Positives of the Framework.

➢ The sense of progression.

'Useful, accessible way for me to conceptualize […] the food insecurity journey.'

➢ It recognises the bigger picture.

'The strength is that understanding that you need a plurality of approaches to cope with the plurality of need. That it's not a competition - if you choose to sit somewhere on that spectrum, that's okay, you don't have to do it all.'

➢ The nonlinearity of the framework, recognising people's changing circumstances.

'It's helped me reframe the conversation around food security […] to articulate those differences to people at a time when it was just all about food banks.'

What We Found: Barriers to Use.

➤ Communicating the framework to a range of stakeholders.

'How do you get new individuals or organisations into the network? And then subsequently, how do you keep people engaged in the network?'

➤ Having examples of different types of activity.

'To get people on side, we need to show what is already happening but [also] what [and] where the gaps are.'

➤ Coordinating on food strategies internally and externally.

'[One of the biggest barriers is] council ways of thinking.'

What We Found: Barriers to Use.

➢ Some of the potentially hierarchical language used e.g. 'climbing', 'top rung'.

'There's a slight risk in terms of interpretation there sometimes that people see […] you're like a "rung 2-er" or whatever.'

➢ Implementing the framework in practice.

'I do think it needs facilitation […] it needs to be cognizant of all the other frameworks that are going on in communities as well.'

➢ Finding time, capacity, and resources to put the framework into action.

'It's a lot of work and I think sometimes we need […] a whole team of people.'

What We Found: Key Themes.

💷Resourcing.

🤝Organising.

💬Communicating

🔧Implementing.

🥕Motivating.

🔮Visioning.

📊Integrating.

💷 Resourcing.

How do we resource this work?

- Most council areas are reliant on non-recurrent, or short-term, national funding.

- Food plans/strategies tend not to have dedicated core funding.

- Funding tends to focus on emergency, rather than capacity building, activity.

🤝 Organising.

Who should be involved and how do we organise?

- Often not a cross-council effort, so lacks clear lead/coordination.

- Food work across an area not centrally coordinated/standardised.

- Unclear who responsibility does (or *should*) lie with.

💬 Communicating.

How do we explain the framework to a range of stakeholders?

- Requires different language/angle to communicate with council, funders, VCS, and residents.

- Lack of resources to communicate ideas broadly.

🔧 Implementing.

How do we put these ideas into practice?

- ○ Unclear what 'doing' Food Ladders means in practice.

- ○ Lack of clarity around coordination makes implementation difficult to approach.

🥕 Motivating.

How do we keep people engaged?

- ○ Mid- and Long-term focus of the framework requires stamina.

- ○ Need to maintain buy-in once created.

🔮 Visioning.

What is the future we want to create?

- Interviewees lacked time or awareness of the need for reflection or visioning.

- Need for horizon scanning and creation of a shared vision.

📊 Integrating.

How does Food Ladders fit with other models and metrics?

○ How do you monitor impact/output?

○ How does this fit with existing (often national) targets and metrics?

○ How does FL complement other frameworks and tools? E.g. Priority Places, SFP.
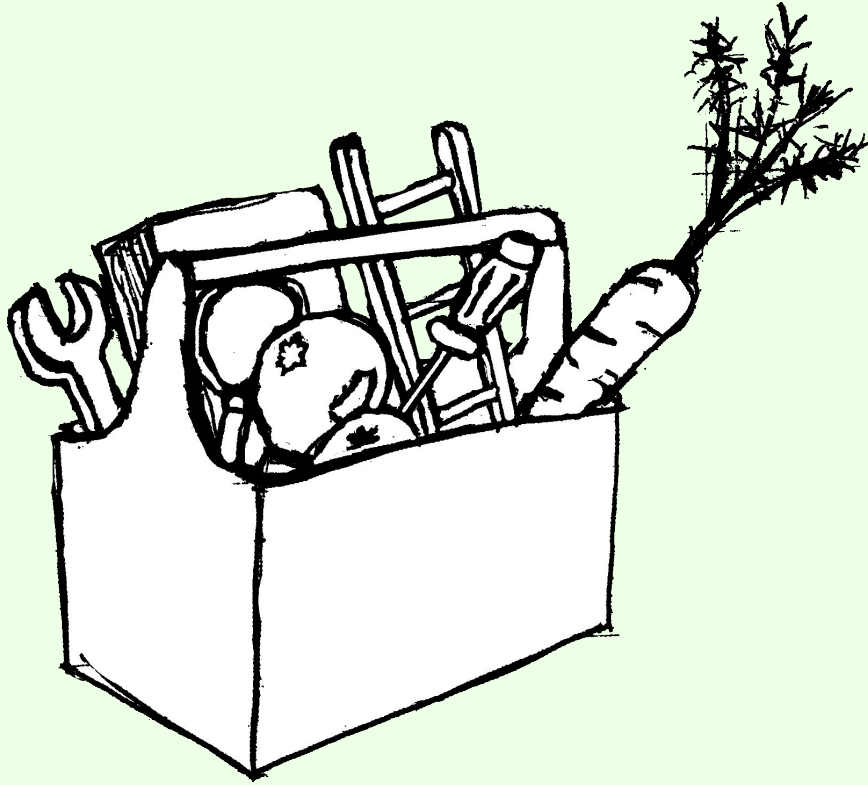
1. Conceptualising
2.1 Framing
2.2 Understanding
2.3 Partnership Building
2.4 Visioning
2.5 Planning
2.6 Constructing
3.1 Resourcing
3.2 Organising
3.3 Integrating
3.4 Communicating

The Food Ladders Tool Kit.
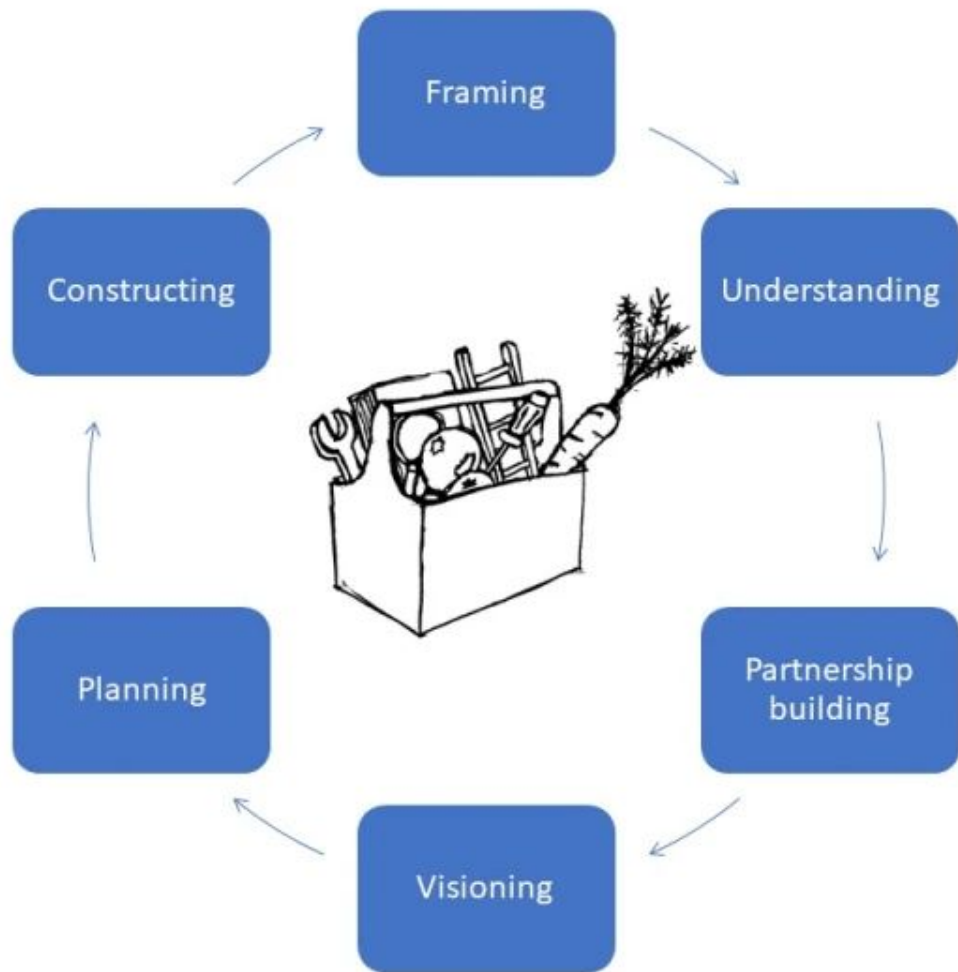
Thank you!

Stay in touch with us:

m.blake@sheffield.ac.uk

https://geofoodie.org/food-ladders-toolkit/