

Bent Egberg Mikkelsen

**Participation, creativity and co-creation –
a synthesis of five iterations of methods for urban foodscape development**

Aalborg University, Denmark

Introduction

Changing food systems at the macro level in a healthier and more sustainable direction using approaches based on high politics and regulatory approaches has have little success and as a result there is a new interest in the power of “the local”. The scope and size of local food environments – the foodscapes that is embedded in local communities where people live, study or work - is much smaller and they seem to rest on less complex mechanisms and dynamics when it comes to the potential of local stakeholders to engage in and invoke change. Across the globe community based interventions, actions and programs that aim at creating more sustainable and liveable urban spaces that enable physical activity and healthier eating have spread. Traditionally such community interventions were driven by the mantra that they should be evidence and theory based and able to create measurable change in a short period of time under controlled research conditions. Additionally they seem to a high degree to be driven by a risk factor perspective aiming at changing the dietary, physical activity, alcohol or smoking behaviour in population groups – and to be able to measure the impact in quantitative terms. Increasingly program planners have realised that programming interventions in that way tends to compromise the sustainability of interventions (O’Loughlin et al.,1998) because citizens only to a limited extent live their lives according to risk factors. Traditional methods tend to be driven more by the researchers’ needs for consistent protocols rather than by end users’ needs. Development methods also need to take into account that local community decision makers tend to use a pragmatic approach in which solutions already developed tends to be attached to the problems that needs to be dealt with (Cohen, March & Olsen, 1972). Therefore researchers have increasingly been interested in new methods that can take the local context better into account and that can better bring elements of participation and co-creation into the design process and thereby create interventions and changes in the local food system that have a higher likelihood of surviving after programs has been implemented.

The aim of this paper is to present insights from iterations of new prototype methods for designing urban foodscape based on participation, creativity and co-creation. The paper outlines how the methods were developed and give details on how action possibilities in the local foodscapes can be identified, assessed and turned into concrete change in cooperation between researchers, graduate students, community leaders and citizens.

Methods

In this study we set out to develop, study and test methods that could balance the needs and expectations from local residents and community workers, the scientific evidence base and the respect for what communities in terms of how the food environment could be changed in meaningful ways. The empirical foundation is the SoL community program, the AAU campus’ n community program and assignments from the graduate study program at AAU Integrated Food Studies.

The **first iteration** was developed to identify possible interventions for the Gearing Up the Body (GUB) program targeted healthier behaviour among young men at vocational schools. This iteration used a Customer Journey Mapping approach and is reported in Heilman-Hansen (2014). Findings suggested that informant/interviewer “participatory walking” in the foodscape could be used to spatially identify “action possibilities” and “hot spots” where meaningful innovations could be introduced.

The **second iteration** was developed for the SoL local community program (Mikkelsen et al., 2016) as a way to select villages of the local community foodscape interventions aiming at promoting healthier and more sustainable food consumption. The findings from the program showed that it was a challenge to balance the need for precise and consistent protocols and well defined risk factor targeted intervention components against the different expectations that the citizens and the community leaders had to their future foodscapes.

In the **third iteration** a Local Community Foodscape Assessment Tool (LC-FAT) was developed to capture the needs and wishes of the local residents. The development of the tool was guided by the stakeholder salience model (Mitchell et al., 1997), a tool for systematic stakeholder analysis that help program managers to identify, understand and handle the needs of different stakeholders that will be affected or benefit from a program. The tool was then tested in the design work related to the development of the local community garden (Mikkelsen & Fjeldhammer, 2015).

In the **fourth iteration** the tool was combined with a tempo/spatial component based on the idea of co-creational foodscape walkabout between researchers and informant (Jørgensen & Bundgård).

In the last and **fifth iteration** (Pries et al. 2016) a visual and narrative component was added. The method combines traditional text based methods with visual, ICT assisted and narrative methods.

Conceptual foundation

All of the iterations were founded conceptually on the insights from Foodscapes Studies (Mikkelsen, 2011; Adema, 2006). These studies rest on the assumption that creating change must rest firmly on a comprehensive insight in the needs of the citizens that inhabits these systems as well as on a deep understanding of the complex interplay between food, people and environments. In our approach to foodscapes we value both the physical appearance of the places investigated as they are, as well as the mental foodscapes – the way that foodscape could be. The foodscape metaphor is inspired by the idea of placemaking (Schneekloth & Shibley, 1995) - an approach to the spatial design of public spaces. Placemaking aims at creating spaces that are supportive to the health and well-being of residents and build on the idea that places and their identity can be developed in collaborative efforts of researchers and local residents

The study further builds on the assumption that understanding stakeholder needs is essential for the ability to develop meaningful interventions. The stakeholder salience model (Mitchell et al., 1997) has been widely used to understand how change agents in organizations and projects can identify, understand and handle different stakeholders that will be affected and/or benefit from an undertaking – in this case the local community project. The model uses the dimensions of each stakeholder’s power, legitimacy and urgency in its approach to involve

multiple stakeholders and we used it in this context to screen the stakeholders in order to better understand how we should relate to them.

To develop the spatial component and participatory component of the development process the iterations used insights from the Urban Songline Approach (Marling, 2012). This approach used in urban planning takes inspiration from aboriginal mythology in which it is assumed that the world is created by singing it alive (Marling, 2012). Each of the places where a new experience occurred represented a sacred place for the ancestors' descendants to revisit and use. According to aboriginal tradition adolescents would go walkabout to discover and explore the world beyond the local and would dwell at certain sacred places. These places would be identified by a song and the lines that can be drawn in between them, including the distance, represents a "song line" (Marling, 2003). The walkabout then becomes both a physical and an imagined path across the land and in aboriginal mythology individuals would go walkabouts and follow these songlines. This idea for data collection was adopted to create the foodscape walkabout as a way to discover and explore the action possibilities. In the foodscape walkabout it is assumed that in the same way as places and artefacts in the land can be considered sacred, places of importance in a foodscape context can be considered as potential hotspots or as action hotspots. Hotspots or touch points then become places with affordances and with action possibilities. These hotspots or touch points are a point of departure where meaningful interventions and initiatives in local communities can be developed.

The foodscape walkabout is inspired by Customer Journey Mapping (CJM) – what is often referred to as "service blueprinting". The CJM assumes a "walk" in time and space and aim at links physical perceptions with the imagined needs of consumer (Spraragen and Chan, 2008). The blueprint output represents a visualization that all stakeholders can then use in the collaborative efforts to create change.

Discussion

The findings suggest that knowing what kind of actions and activities that citizens and community leaders are already engaged in makes it much easier for researchers to design interventions components. Additionally a systematic insight and knowledge about the wishes and expectations of both community leaders and local residents were found to be important if local stakeholders should engage in community change processes.

The findings suggests that that the design of local community foodscapes can be seen as an example of place-making – the collaborative attempt to create meaningful food places with unique identities. Knowing about the spatial dimensions of the foodscape is therefore essential. In the latest iterations we used ICT technology in the geo-tagging of foodscape images that was co-created by researchers and foodscape users.

Findings suggest that participation seem to be an essential requirement for long term sustainability of any intervention. Change and innovation that will settle in the community needs to rest on the ownership of the citizens affected. Since people seems to live their "food lives" according to values rather than according to their risk perceptions and it can be assumed that citizens have dreams and aspirations in relation to food that goes far beyond the ones related to health. Therefore methods needs to be able to capture these.

The findings from the iterations also suggest that traditional worded and written methods have

their limits when it comes to identifying the action possibilities that residents and community people pinpointed. Adding the option of applying visuals and narratives added richness to the mappings.

Traditional methods tend to be driven more by researchers needs for consistent protocols rather than by the needs of the end-users (Dupont et al., 2014; Haukopiuro et al., 2014). The conclusion from the iterations studied is that change and innovation programs in the field of food, sustainability and nutrition cannot be built upon the insight and knowledge of professionals only, neither can it build alone on evidence and knowledge about what works elsewhere. The insights from the iterations suggest that instead of using a Risk Factor Perspective focusing on diet, physical activity, alcohol and smoking, program planners should use an Everyday life Perspective where the values of citizens are taken into account. Such values can be assumed to relate to issues such as sustainable eating, local foods, world cuisine, plant-based, lactose-free etc.

References

- Adema, P. (2006). *Festive Foodscapes: Iconizing Food and the Shaping of Identity and Place*. [pdf] Texas: The University of Texas at Austin. Available at: <http://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/2453/ademap68672.pdf?sequence=2> [Accessed 28 April 2015].
- Cohen, MD; March, JG & Olsen JP. A Garbage Can Model of Organizational Choice *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Mar., 1972), pp. 1-25
- Bloch, P., Toft, U., Reinbach, H.C., Clausen, L.T., Mikkelsen, B.E., Poulsen, K., Jensen, B.B. (2014). Revitalizing the setting approach – supersettings for sustainable impact in community health promotion. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*, 11(118), pp. 1-15.
- Dupont, L., Morel, L., Hubert, J., Guidat, C. (2014) Study case: Living Lab Mode for urban project design. Emergence of an ad hoc methodology through collaborative innovation. in *IEEE International Technology Management Conference & 20th ICE Conference*, Bergamo : Italy
- Haukipuro, L., Väinämö, S., Arhippainen, L. (2014) Citizen and employee involvement in public service development through user-driven methods in *IEEE International Technology Management Conference & 20th ICE Conference*, Bergamo : Italy
- Heilman-Hansen; T (2014) *Design of a Nudging intervention - Use of interdisciplinary approach*. Master's thesis, Aalborg University, Copenhagen, Integrated Food Studies. Available at: http://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/203745497/Design_of_a_nudging_intervention_interdisciplinary_approach_IFS.pdf
- Jørgensen, N.K., Bundgård L.M.I.,(2015) *Assessing Action & Intervention Possibilities in Local Communities - the Local Community Foodscape Assessment Tool (LC-FAT)*. Master's thesis, Aalborg University, Copenhagen, Integrated Food Studies. Available at: http://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/213566986/ExtendedMaster_20131216_20131223.pdf

Marling, G. (2012). Urban Songlines – the City Experienced by Ordinary People. In: Andrade, V., ed. 2012. *Musings: An urban design anthology*. Aalborg: Aalborg Universitetsforlag. pp. 142-153.

Mikkelsen, B.E., Hansen, J.A., Bloch, P., Jensen, B.B., Reinbach, H.C., Buch-Andersen, T., Lawaetz Winkler, L.; Toft U. & Glümer, C. (2016). The SoL programme – a community-based, multi component multi-level health promotion intervention among families with young children in two Danish municipalities. Part 2: Research design. Submitted to *Preventive Medicine*

Mikkelsen, B.E. & Fjeldhammer, S. (2015) Gardening during the life course – a Scandinavian approach. Proceedings from Agriculture in Urbanizing Society, Rome, September 2015, WG 11 Grass-root initiatives and community gardens

Mitchell, RK, Agle, B.R., Wood, D.J. (1997) Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and salience: Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts. *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (Oct., 1997), pp. 853-886

O'Loughlin, J; Renaud, L; Richard, L; Gomez, LS; Paradis, G (1998) *Preventive Medicine*, Volume 27, Issue 5, September, Pages 702–712

Pries, A., Pettersson, S.S.L., van Empel, M.C.M. (2016) *Foodscape Data Collection Method as a Tool for Community Foodscape Development*. Aalborg University, Copenhagen, Integrated Food Studies.

Schneekloth, LH & Shibley, RG (1995). *Placemaking: The Art and Practice of Building Communities*.