Workshop synthesis

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The Sustainability Institute, Stellenbosch

Social media handles:
#foodforus #foodwaste #danieljardim
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Introduction

The UNE’s One Planet has pulled together substantial funds to work on issues around sustainable consumption, of which the Food for Us project, is a recipient of such funds – through the Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Trust Fund, and Government of Japan.

“At its core, Food for Us, is about learning, about the processes that took place. While something emerged from it, an app, the focus should not be on the launching of that app or positioning it in a competitive environment as ‘the solution’, but about starting a conversation and the learning that takes place from those conversations”, Dr Scott Drimie, The Southern Africa Sustainable Food Lab and workshop chair.

As such, the intention of the workshop was to share the Food for Us project research findings and learnings, and to build and move the food waste and surplus dialogue within South Africa on – by incorporating and drawing together the contextual framing within which such a project sits. This latter component was guided through a panel and open discussion in response to the presentations and discussions held during the day on how South Africa should approach the food surplus challenge – focusing on early childhood nutrition, and use of technology to aid surplus food distribution through communities of practice and social enterprise business models.

This document provides a synthesis of the discussions and outcomes generated from the workshop.
Setting the context and project findings

To start the day, two presentations setting the food surplus discussion in context were delivered by Solly Molepo – Deputy Director, Agri-processing, Department of Trade & Industry (DTI); and Niki Charalampopoulou – Co-founder, Feedback.

In response to these presentations, it was noted how from the on-set of the day the language of the discussion had shifted from food waste to food surplus, which therefore situates the discussion towards solutions in a positive space.

One of discussions arising in response to the presentations was around the use of food by-products. Goodwell Dingaan of the Directorate of Industry Development, Western Cape Government suggested this had significant potential. Niki Charalampopoulou agreed, especially in a country such as South Africa which has a large poultry industry. She noted that in the UK about 20% of food waste could be used to feed livestock, and that 65% of productions costs for pig and chicken farmers is feed, so using food by-products could also save them a lot of money.

The role of consumers in the food waste debate was also highlighted – how responsible are they for food waste? Niki Charalampopoulou noted consumers in principle are okay to eat food that isn’t always perfect. Responding from a Government perspective Solly Molepo noted that the DTI are working closely with the Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA) to investigate how to respond to the issue of a mindset change for consumers, and working with retailers and manufacturers to reduce food waste.
Food for Us project findings and learnings

A brief introduction to the Food for Us project was provided by Nicola Jenkin of Pinpoint Sustainability and Food for Us project manager. She acknowledged the financial and lead support offered by the UN's One Planet Sustainable Lifestyles and Education Trust Fund, and Rhodes University's Environmental Learning Research Centre (ELRC) respectively. The aim of the project was to develop and trial a mobile phone application in South Africa to divert on-farm surplus food to those predominantly in need; and using this as a mechanism for socio-technical transformative change through communities of practice. Following the introduction, the Food for Us team presented their research and project findings, which covered:

- **Learnings from the field**: Sarah Durr – a Masters student at Rhodes University, and Passmore Dongi - Raymond Mhlaba Economic Development Agency presented on their fieldwork in the Raymond Mhlaba Municipality in the Eastern Cape; and Stefanie Swanepoel of The Sustainability Institute on her fieldwork in Worcester, Western Cape. The trialling of the app as a socio-technical solution, particularly in areas of poverty and technical illiteracy were noted as significant challenges which required far more on-the-ground time to catalyse uptake than originally anticipated. Three key learnings and benefits were highlighted: 1) the ability of the app to aid access to market for produce; 2) the opportunity the app provides for connecting people within a community, and 3) the significant role intermediaries in the community play in catalysing uptake and use.

- **Food waste savings and potential**: Nic Palmer of Carbon Calculated provided insights into the data generated through app transactions and survey findings, and the challenges associated with data capture, yet potential to capture and calculate environmental and social savings should the potential of the app be realised. Of particular importance, was the generation of food waste nutritional conversions factors for this project, a likely first for South Africa.

- **The application platform**: Grant Trebble and Wayne Stead of LEAD Associates managed the development of the app, and engaged with the app developers. They shared the development process, app functionality and challenges of trialling an app that required functionality adjustments and testing during the trial. Most notably the impact instability had on introducing the app and use.

- **Proposed future business model**: A key element of this project was the future sustainability of Food for Us. Mike Ward of CSV and Thato Thansi – an MBA student at Rhodes University presented a proposed future business model. The key question for the model being “how do we do environmental and social good, yet be financially sustainable?”. It was on this basis that the Food for Us future model was developed. The key immediate activities going forward being to build and formalise partnerships, to better understand how data gathered via the app can be best be stored and used correctly, and 3) to seek funding to maintain momentum.
Surplus food lunch

One of the highlights of the workshop was the delegate lunch prepared and presented by chef Daniel Jardim of Honest to Goodness, who explained what a wonderful experience it was cooking the meal. He was amazed at the variety and quantity of surplus food kindly donated by local retailers.

Delegates enjoying the surplus ‘cherished’ food lunch

The chef, Daniel Jardim
www.honest-to-goodness.co.za
Panel and open discussion

Food for Us recognises that systemic transformations within South Africa's food system will require that individuals and organisations from government, research institutions, civil society and business work together to bring about significant change in the current food system. For this reason, Food for Us always seeks to engage with a wide range of role-players and to share insights from the project as it develops. To this end, a panel representing members of the South African sustainable food system community provided a rich and open discussion in response to the morning’s presentations. The panel, chaired by Dr Scott Drimie of the Southern Africa Food Lab, included Niki Charalamopoulou (Feedback); Passmore Dongi (Raymond Mhlaba Economic Development Agency); Prof. Heila Lotz-Sisitka (Environmental Learning Research Centre, Rhodes University); Tristan Görgens (Dept. of Premier, Western Cape Government); Solly Molepo (Dept. of Trade & Industry), Pam Picken (Do More) and Tatjana von Bormann (WWF-South Africa).

Themes covered in the discussion included:

- How can we in South Africa can better understand the potential and opportunities for diverting food waste to animals?
- The importance of the conversations and communities of practice that are enabled around the use of a socio-technical innovation, such as an app. We need to find ways to unlock the creativity in communities not through technical solutions, but through community agency and the creation of spaces of trust.
- The issue of language in the food waste debate – how can the terminology we use encourage inclusivity and collaboration throughout the food value chain?
- The importance of valuing and cherishing food and ensuring that where feasible opportunities are provided to distribute this food to those in need, in particular to mitigate the serious issue of stunting in children under 5 years of age. We need a caring economy – a shift in thinking from the current discourse of a green economy.
- Food waste needs to be part of a wider interdisciplinary dialogue – one that encapsulates nutrition, food security and sustainable food systems. We also need to be brave, and step out of our silos, including government coming to these kind of forums. This should aid in ensuring joined up thinking and acknowledging feedback loops that could happen e.g. the introduction of stringent legislation could increase food waste, as food surplus can no longer be sold in the informal economy.
- The issue of food waste occurs within a multi-level system – from local farmers to ECD centres to provincial and national government. We need to be aware of how big this system is. We need to therefore think about how to leverage points across the food system to catalyse change and mitigate food waste.
Next steps

Food for Us is just beginning its journey. Drawing on the learnings and findings from the UN-funded Phase 1, our intention is to engage with interested stakeholders to work with us to future-proof and adopt an inclusive business model which will see:

- A strengthening and more refined mobile application; and increased uptake.
- Scaling the trial and uptake more broadly across South Africa.
- Further explore the development of a ‘franchise-type’ model.
- Explore the use of the app as a transformative social learning activity in other sectors for trading other by-products.

Join our community of practice

If you are interested in becoming involved in the future of Food for Us, or wish to follow its developments, please contact:

Thato Thansi, Rhodes University
email t.tantsi@ru.ac.za
List of attendees

Over 50 people attended the workshop, representing international food waste organisations, national and provincial government, academics, national and local community-based organisations and NGOs, and municipal economic development professionals.

Ryan Fortune African Climate & Development Initiative, UCT
Daniel Jardin Chef – Honest to Goodness
Noel Johannessen City of Cape Town
Alison Davison City of Cape Town
Leonard Arendse Dept. Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries
Rishal Sookal Dept. Environmental Affairs
Katlego Mabatle Dept. Environmental Affairs
Goodwell Dingaan Directorate of Industry Development, Western Cape Government
Pam Picken Do More
Solly Molepo Dept. Trade & Industry
Nobesuthu Mdinqi Dept. Trade & Industry
Niki Charalampopoulos Feedback
Liesl Koen Feeding in Action
Passmore Dongi FFU team/Raymond Mhlaba Economic Development Agency
Heila Lotz-Sisitka FFU team/Rhodes University
Stefanie Swanepoel FFU team/Sustainability Institute
Nici Palmer FFU/Carbon Calculated
Robyn Ferrar FFU/Carbon Calculated
Mike Ward FFU/CSV
Wayne Stead FFU/Lead Associates
Grant Trebble FFU/Lead Associates
Sarah Durr FFU/Rhodes University
Titch Pesnayi FFU/Rhodes University
Thato Tantsi FFU/Rhodes University
Blake Robinson FFU/Sustainability Institute
Candice Goldsmith FFU/Sustainability Institute
Andy du Plessis Food Forward SA
Wayne du Plessis Food Forward SA
Cathy Pineo GreenCape
Kate Rivett-Carnac Independent
Millicent February Integrated Nutrition Programme, Western Cape Government
Lucinda Fairhurst Neighbourhood Farm
Eugenie Tancred Neighbourhood Farm
Sheryl Oizinsky Oranjezicht City Farm
Karín du Preez Oranjezicht City Farm
Amelia Koeries Peninsula School Feeding Association
Petrina Pakoe Peninsula School Feeding Association
Thomas Swana Philippi Economic Development Initiative
Christopher D’Auto Philippi Economic Development Initiative
Nicola Jenkin Pinpoint Sustainability
Tristan Gorgens Premier’s Office, Western Cape Government
Wendy Van Rensburg Shoprite Checkers
Scott Drimie Southern Africa Food Lab
Carolyn Cramer Southern Africa Food Lab
Gareth Haysom UCT/African Centre for Cities
Tsele Nthane UCT/Environment & Geographical Science
Evodia Boonzaier Waste Management, DEADP, WCape Gov.
Belinda Langenhoven Waste Management, DEADP, WCape Gov.
Alicia le Roux Waste Management, DEADP, WCape Gov.
Robyn Britten Waste Management, DEADP, WCape Gov.
Tatjana Von Bormann WWF-SA

Thank you for your participation!