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CHAPTER 3

Presenting the 10 cases

2. Presenting the seven cases selected at sub-national level



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At sub-national level in Europe and North America, many MSMs are linked to the development and implementation of a holistic sustainable food systems policy. These groups are generally known as food policy councils (FPCs), but they also go by other names.

In contrast, such MSMs are difficult to find in the Global South. There are some cities leading the way in Latin America, but they are still at an early stage. Examples include La Paz, Quito, Lima and Medellín.

Some SFS MSMs are currently being formed in Asia and Oceania, and some of them are already engaged in the assessment of food systems and the definition of priority topics and actions. Examples include Surabaya and Melbourne.

In the case of African cities and towns, several SFS MSMs are promoted and supported by various international organizations and cooperation projects (with technical and financial support from organizations such as FAO, Rikolto, Hivos, Biovision, RUAF, the Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT). Levels of local ownership, government involvement and concrete achievements vary, depending on the mechanism.

The following section presents a summary of the seven SFS MSMs selected at sub-national level: London, Ghent, Los Angeles, Montreal, Quito, La Paz and Antananarivo. The most relevant features are compiled from a literature review and the results from both surveys.

2.6. La Paz (Bolivia): Municipal Food Security Committee of La Paz (MFSC-LPZ)



Image credit: Fundación Alternativas

2.6.1. About the MFSC-LPZ

The MFSC-LPZ was born in 2013 against a backdrop of growing public concern about food insecurity in the city of La Paz. The problem was being exacerbated by sustained rural-urban migration. The initiative was spearheaded by the mayor of the municipality, Dr Luis Revilla Herrero and a local NGO, Fundación Alternativas. It aimed to create a public space for multi-stakeholder debate, analysis and formulation of municipal public policies to foster food security and a more sustainable, resilient and healthy local food system. It took less than a year to set up the Municipal Food Security Committee of La Paz (MFSC-LPZ), with the support of the Humanist Institute for Development

Cooperation (Hivos), the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the NGO Louvain Coopération.¹⁵⁴

The MFSC-LPZ is formally institutionalized by decree and recognized as an official entity since the approval of the Municipal Food Security Law of La Paz (No. 105).¹⁵⁵ Its work is guided by the integrated food systems approach (own definition)¹⁵⁶ and the food and nutrition security concept (FAO, 2009, 2014).¹⁵⁷ Fundación Alternativas occupies the leadership role and has provided guidance and support, facilitating and moderating meetings and roundtable discussions. The SFS MSM plays a strong role in knowledge management, policy formulation and advocacy in relation to food systems issues.

¹⁵⁴Louvain Coopération is a Belgian international NGO located in the university city of Louvain-la-Neuve. It is a member of the Federation of Development Cooperation NGOs.

¹⁵⁵https://base.socioeco.org/docs/ley_20municipal_20aut_c3_b3noma_20de_20seguridad_20alimentaria_20no._201052014.pdf

¹⁵⁶Integrated food systems are made up of all the elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, natural resources, infrastructure, institutions) and activities related to the production, processing, distribution, preparation, consumption and disposal of food. To ensure such systems work efficiently and over the long term, it is necessary to guarantee the sustainable use of resources, information and communication channels, territorial connections, marketing systems and strategies to promote responsible consumption. These systems are complex and involve a large number of actors and environmental, social, economic, political and cultural factors. It is therefore necessary to approach their design and development by contemplating different routes and encouraging active, multidisciplinary and multi-sectoral participation (Fundación Alternativas, 2020).

¹⁵⁷"Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO, 2009).

Since its creation, the work of the MFSC-LPZ has focused on promoting local and sustainable food systems that are capable of ensuring that all people have reliable access to fresh, healthy and nutritious food. Issues that have been prioritized so far include local food production, (peri-)urban agriculture, nutrition and health, sustainable and diversified diets, and food environments.

The MFSC-LPZ focuses its work at the city-region level, but it also establishes linkages with municipal food security committees in other cities to work on food systems integration,¹⁵⁸ healthy food environments, urban agriculture, nutritional food education and issues related to food safety.

The SFS MSM has an annual budget of approximately EUR 10,000 to operate. Funds come from international cooperation (mainly from Hivos, Belgian Development Cooperation, Louvain Coopération and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation). This budget is used to cover costs related to meetings, publications and events. The MFSC-LPZ has dedicated staff who plan, organize and moderate meetings, conduct research on key issues, and organize advocacy events (Nogales, 2019).

2.6.2. Structure and governance

Structure

The committee is made up of municipal authorities and local stakeholders to ensure diversity of opinions and plurality in debates and proposals (for more details on MFSC-LPZ members, see Annex 1). The SFS MSM is made up of about 30 stakeholders selected by the city mayor and Fundación Alternativas based on a stakeholder mapping exercise that was carried out by municipal officials and independent professionals. With a view to further enriching the initiatives developed by the committee, the stakeholders participating in the meetings are invited to recommend new members on a regular basis.

The MFSC-LPZ is a highly participatory SFS MSM, with a broad and diverse representation of food system stakeholders. Figures 67, 68 and 69 show the composition of the mechanism in terms of types of organizations (constituencies), sectors and food systems activities represented.



Figure 67. Types of organizations (constituencies) represented in the MFSC-LPZ (in red)

¹⁵⁸The municipality of La Paz invested in and adopted an integrated metropolitan food system, which was designed based on the connection of actors and coordinated planning to ensure sufficient food production, the strengthening of production chains, the creation of adequate logistics systems and the diversification of marketing mechanisms based on sustainable development.

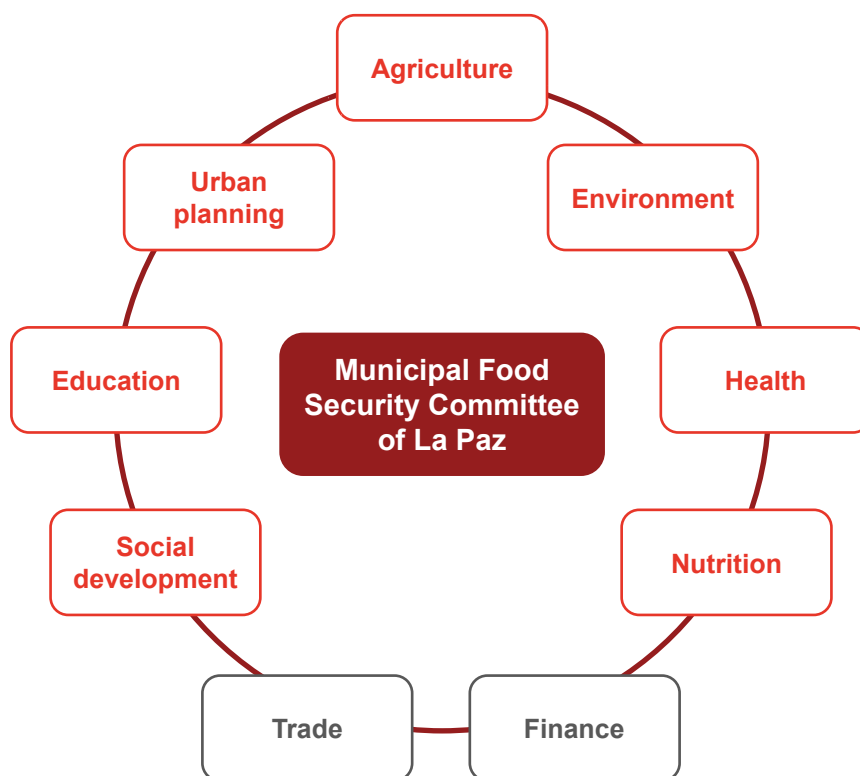


Figure 68. Sectors represented in the MFSC-LPZ (in red)

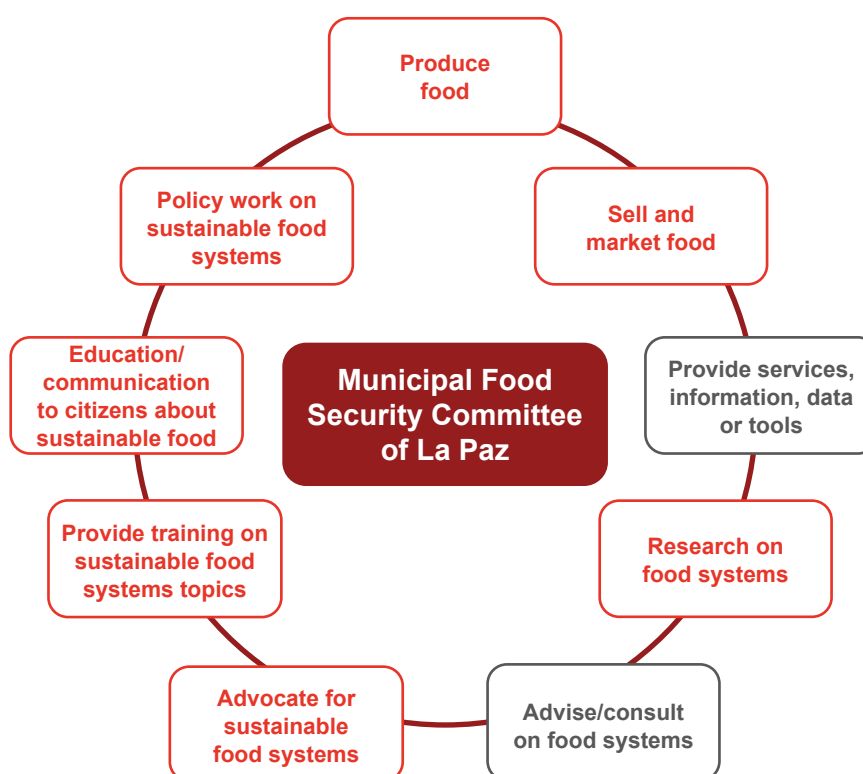


Figure 69. Types of activities represented in the MFSC-LPZ (in red)

While the MFSC-LPZ does not have a strategic guidance document, there are implicitly agreed principles of good governance (shown in Figure 70), which are acknowledged by all the parties that participate in the SFS MSM.

These principles are put into practice through specific established processes. For instance, there are mechanisms in place to capture the voices of all stakeholders when deemed necessary, including those who are not part of the committee. The SFS MSM also uses consensus building and collaborative learning strategies to reach agreements and develop the capacities of its members.

Since its establishment, the MFSC-LPZ has agreed to meet on a monthly basis, following a predefined annual calendar. In the stakeholder survey, 71 per cent of respondents indicated that they attend all these meetings; 71 per cent of them dedicate 1 to 4 hours a month to the work of the SFS MSM, while the other 29 per cent dedicate more than 8 hours. Some 43 per cent of stakeholders indicated that they finance their participation from their own personal budget, while 29 per cent are sponsored by the organizations they represent. Additionally, stakeholders convene more frequently in subgroups to discuss different topics of common interest.

The agenda for meetings is defined collaboratively and agreed by consensus. Consequently, the participants know in advance what issues will be addressed. A facilitator is appointed to guide the discussions and ensure that they are inclusive and constructive. Additionally, a note-taker is appointed to keep a record of what is discussed, and the minutes are then distributed to all stakeholders, including those who did not attend the meeting. In addition to the regular meetings, stakeholders communicate frequently through dialogue and by sharing resources and working documents with each other.

2.6.3. Policy formulation and implementation

SFS policy formulation

As a starting point, the MFSC-LPZ conducted a diagnosis of La Paz's food system, using a participatory approach that brought together a diversity of stakeholders. The analysis took a systemic approach, taking into account the interconnections between the different food systems elements and the underlying trends and challenges. Moreover, the diagnosis included a mapping of food-related actors and policies, and a special focus was placed on socially disadvantaged groups. All these efforts resulted in a

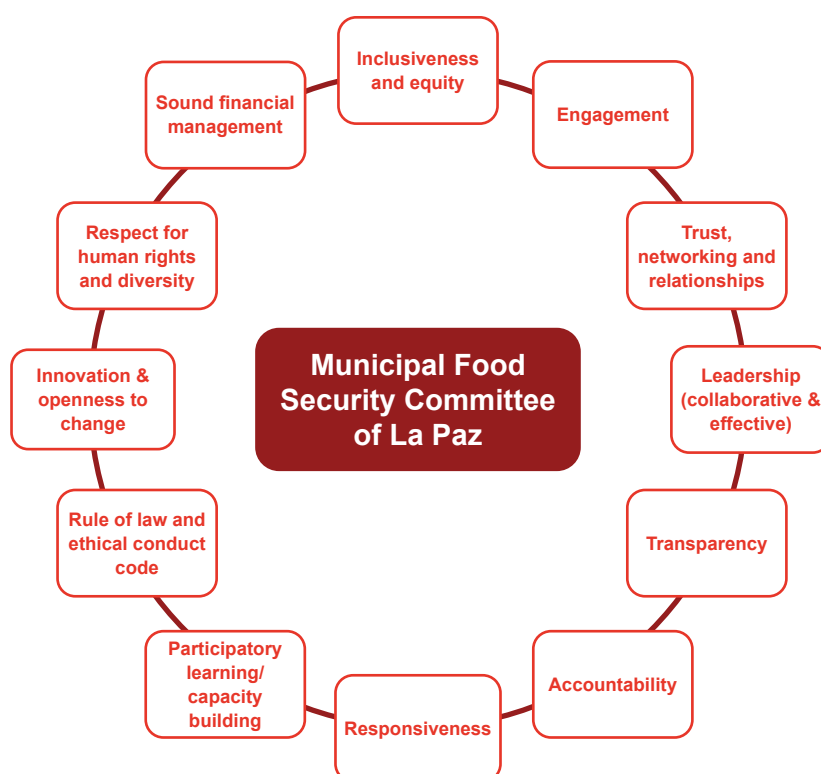


Figure 70. Good governance principles practised by the MFSC-LPZ (in red)

comprehensive assessment that includes an overview of actionable entry points for enhanced collective action.

Consistent with the participatory approach used for the diagnosis, the policy formulation process also involved a wide range of food-related actors, in addition to the MFSC-LPZ stakeholders, in several consultation events.¹⁵⁹ This process led to the development of the Municipal Food Security Law of La Paz (No. 105), which was adopted by the municipal autonomous government in 2014, making the MFSC-LPZ official.

The SFS MSM formulated the Municipal Law for the Promotion of Urban Gardens (No. 321).¹⁶⁰ It has also developed the following policy proposals: Food Security for the Metropolitan Region of La Paz (2015),¹⁶¹ Food Distribution Centres (2016),¹⁶² Urban Agenda for Food Security (2017),¹⁶³ Urban and Peri-urban Agriculture for the Cities of Tomorrow (2018),¹⁶⁴ Strengthening and Integration of the Food Systems of the Metropolitan Region of La Paz (2019),¹⁶⁵ and An Integrated Food System for the Metropolitan Region of La Paz (2020).¹⁶⁶ All the policy proposals and MFSC-LPZ's contributions to policy formulation processes have been informed by the preliminary food systems diagnosis, while also taking into account the government's priorities.

In 2020, the SFS MSM developed a food policy proposal entitled "An Integrated Food System for the Metropolitan Region of La Paz". This policy addresses food issues from a holistic, systemic and multi-level perspective. In particular, it takes into account the environmental sustainability angle, it includes all key priorities jointly identified by all stakeholders, and it is aligned with other pre-existing food-related policies and initiatives. During the formulation process, the presence of the competent authorities, the leadership and the established mechanisms were instrumental in reaching agreements, managing trade-offs, and ensuring that the voices of the different sectors were heard and not made invisible.

The proposal puts forward three intervention strategies to support the transformation of the local food system by connecting the various territories and making local economies more dynamic:

- Food chain (e.g. production, marketing, transformation);
- Integrated food systems (e.g. sustainable use of natural resources, fair trade and responsible consumption; the concept is crystallized in a planning tool that sets out short-, medium- and long-term actions that are to be implemented by all citizens);
- Food security (ensuring that all people have access to sufficient and nutritious food at all times).

The MFSC-LPZ has also played an important role in bringing the issue of food to broader policy scenarios by providing input to and collaborating in the approval of initiatives such as the Comprehensive Development Strategy of the Metropolitan Region of La Paz (2018)¹⁶⁷, the National Policy for Cities (2020)¹⁶⁸ enacted by the Autonomous Departmental Government of La Paz and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, and Plan 2040: The City we Want.¹⁶⁹ The latter is focused on consolidating the urban transformation of the municipality by focusing on six areas.

One of them is sustainability and eco-efficiency, and stipulates that the city must guarantee a safe environment to ensure food security (Knapke and Thellaeche, 2015).

SFS policy implementation

The local government takes the lead in implementing the Municipal Food Security Law of La Paz (No. 105), taking into account pre-existing plans, programmes and related activities for improved efficiency and effectiveness. The unit enjoys a close relationship with all stakeholders and influential institutions, maintaining a permanent and lively dialogue on food systems issues and challenges.

The MFSC-LPZ engages in the policy implementation phase by coordinating and implementing initiatives; conducting project management, communication and monitoring and evaluation activities; and providing inputs to support the mobilization of funds.

¹⁵⁹Municipal Food Security Committees are multidisciplinary teams made up of members of municipal autonomous governments, sectoral representatives, universities, local organizations and independent professionals, who are dedicated to generating strategies to guarantee the right to food in their municipality.

¹⁶⁰http://wsservicios.lapaz.bo/normativa_externa/ConsultaExternaDocumento.aspx?archivo=2018/LM_7602_2018_00321.pdf

¹⁶¹https://alternativascc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Propuesta-Metropolitana_Version-FINAL.pdf

¹⁶²<https://alternativascc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Propuesta-Metropolitana-Centros-de-Acopia-2016.pdf>

¹⁶³<https://alternativascc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Agenda-Urbana.pdf>

¹⁶⁴https://www.louvaincooperation.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/176_Agriculturapercent20Urbanapercent20ypercent20Periurbanapercent20parapercent20laspercent20Ciudadespercent20delpercent20Manana.pdf

¹⁶⁵https://alternativascc.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Propuesta-CMSA-IntegracionMetro_FINAL.pdf

¹⁶⁶https://alternativascc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Propuesta-Metro-2020_FINAL.pdf

¹⁶⁷<http://autonomias.gobernacionlapaz.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/pdf/diagnostico-edi-metropolitana.pdf>

¹⁶⁸https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/2020/10/cities_policy_onu-habitat_bolivia_10082020.pdf

¹⁶⁹<https://www.bivica.org/files/plan-integral-La-Paz.pdf>

2.6.4. Reported achievements and challenges

Achievements

According to 71 per cent of respondents to the stakeholder survey, the MFSC-LPZ's main achievement has been the formulation of food policies; this is followed by the creation of food stakeholder networks (indicated by 57 per cent of respondents). Other important results raised in the survey are the participation of a variety of actors in public discussions and political advocacy to influence and participate in the drafting of all the municipal law proposals¹⁷⁰ adopted by the local government, in particular the inclusion of the topics of food security and food systems in the National Urban Agenda and the Comprehensive Development Strategy of the Metropolitan Region of La Paz.

The SFS MSM has also managed to encourage the Departamental Government of La Paz to include in its work the integrated food system model proposed and designed by the MFSC-LPZ in conjunction with Fundación Alternativas, positioning sustainable food as part of the agenda.

Furthermore, some stakeholders consider that they have benefited from changing their work methodology from an isolated approach to a collaborative one,

by generating networks and identifying adequate mechanisms for coordinating and complementing actions. In addition, they have found the MFSC-LPZ to be a rich space to learn and share ideas. This has been very useful in developing food-related concepts and advocacy agendas, allowing them to broaden their vision and knowledge of food systems.

Challenges

According to the stakeholder survey, the MFSC-LPZ's shortcomings mainly relate to a lack of budget, a lack of time for stakeholders to participate in additional initiatives and a perceived lack of political support. In addition, respondents indicated that there is a need for more strategic monitoring of the implementation of the policies adopted, especially if these are linked to the work agenda of the SFS MSM. Respondents also pointed out that it is important to broaden the range of priority areas, so that they are not solely governed by institutional interests aimed at responding to funders.

Another aspect highlighted by the survey is the fact that there is a high turnover of stakeholders participating on the committee. Respondents contend that this hinders real commitment in terms of contribution, participation and follow-up, making it difficult to advance MFSC-LPZ's objectives.



Image credit: Mauricio Panzo / Hivos

¹⁷⁰<https://alternativascc.org/propuestas/>



Image credit: Fundación Alternativas

Finally, respondents believe that the SFS MSM's response to the COVID-19 food-related emergency has fallen short of expectations: almost half of the respondents (43 per cent) consider that the SFS MSM has not been very effective in supporting decisions and interventions in this context. Nevertheless, the MFSC-LPZ developed the city's first Municipal Food Contingency Plan in 2020 and this was presented to the new local authorities in 2021. The document is intended to serve as a planning tool that can help mitigate food shortages and interruptions to local food systems in emergency situations, including pandemics, social conflict and natural disasters.

2.6.5. Conclusion: Drivers of success for the MFSC-LPZ

The MFSC-LPZ is an MSM that has the full support of the mayor of La Paz. The continued support from Fundación Alternativas has been vital to its durability and achievements. Since the creation of the committee in 2013, the foundation has made staff available to organize monthly meetings, plan activities and prepare reports on food security and food policies. In particular, thanks to the foundation's support, the MFSC-LPZ was able to collaboratively draft a great variety of policy proposals, which were submitted to the mayor. These proposals successfully addressed issues such as the prevention of malnutrition, the strengthening of the

food system and the challenge of food security in the metropolitan region.

One of the cornerstones of the MFSC-LPZ's success is its inclusive nature, as it has been designed to bring together both municipal authorities and local food actors to guarantee the diversity of opinions and the plurality of the proposals formulated. This is reflected in the results of the stakeholder survey, where all participants agreed that the SFS MSM adequately reflects the diversity of stakeholders in the food system of La Paz, and that one of the strongest drivers of collaboration is the balanced representation of all stakeholders (according to 71 per cent of respondents).

All respondents concur that the general level of engagement of the parties in the SFS MSM is medium to very high, a factor that has undoubtedly contributed to the wide variety of policy proposals that the committee has been able to formulate. It is worth noting that all participants perceive the public sector to be highly engaged; a high number (86 per cent) consider civil society and farmers to be similarly highly engaged, while only 57 per cent consider the private sector's engagement to be high. The main motivations for participation are networking (86 per cent) and learning (71 per cent).

The majority of stakeholders surveyed believe that the MFSC-LPZ has a very good level of government endorsement and representation, including support

from high-level officials. This is reflected in the fact that 86 per cent of respondents reported strong political commitment and participation.

According to all respondents, another fundamental driver of success is that the governance principles implicitly agreed upon by the parties are respected. Similarly, all the participants believe that the mechanism's meetings are well organized, that communication is transparent, clear and effective, and that the participatory learning processes generated by the committee allow for equal representation and participation of all its members. Likewise, a large proportion of respondents (86 per cent) acknowledge that most of the formal members actively participate in the agreed work and that, in general, the platform's structure and processes are conducive to addressing food systems commitments and agreements in a consensual and collaborative manner.

The MFSC-LPZ's strong leadership has undoubtedly contributed to the progress achieved to date. The survey shows that all stakeholders believe that the leadership is receptive to new ideas and actively participates in welcoming new members. Some 86 per cent of respondents think that the leadership adequately reflects the stakeholders' input in the products and proposals that are developed; shares power with the members in decision-making; encourages members to participate; has good mechanisms for resolving disagreements, managing conflicts of interest and power relations; and provides opportunities for actors to build leadership skills within the SFS MSM.

Stakeholders also emphasized that the committee's strategic framework is understood by all stakeholders and that it accurately reflects policy priorities.

Accordingly, 71 per cent of respondents consider that the SFS MSM has good knowledge of its policy domain, that it understands the general policy environment related to its priorities, that it has well-defined policy priorities as part of an overall strategy, and that it identifies and articulates its vision, mission and goals among its members. In addition, most respondents (86 per cent) believe that the food systems approach used for policy formulation and implementation is understood by most of the stakeholders involved.

Regarding the perceived effectiveness of the SFS MSM, respondents note that the MFSC-LPZ has been able to successfully include the food systems approach (according to 86 per cent of participants) and the environmental sustainability component (according to all respondents) in its work. Some 86 per cent of participants also consider that the SFS MSM properly addresses the health and nutrition needs of the most vulnerable; fosters inclusive and constructive dialogue; and promotes collaborative and coordinated action among all stakeholders in the food system.

Concerning sustainable food systems issues that should be prioritized in the future, 86 per cent of respondents believe it should be consumer awareness and education, and 71 per cent believe it ought to be urban agriculture and short supply chains.



Image credit: Fundación Alternativas