Community food initiatives

Enhancing social cohesion through food

Figure 1: RCKa 2021, *Nourish Hub Entrance, accessed 03 May 2023*, accessed 05 January 2023 <https://rcka.co.uk/nourish-hub/>

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Architectural Design Crossovers

London 2022/2023

Figure 2: Space & Matter 2021, Urban Food Hubs can be built in every neighbourhood, even on the water, accessed 05 January 2023
<https://www.spaceandmatter.nl/work/urban-food-hub>

00 Table of Contents

Content

Abstract

This study explores the role of community food initiatives in addressing social cohesion and structural issues in London and other cities outside of the United Kingdom. The study examines the relationship between food and social cohesion, current community food initiatives, and how thoroughly they align with the concept proposed by Levkoe and Wakefield to enhance social cohesion. Understanding the impact of food on social cohesion, analysing current community food initiatives, and examining their alignment with the concept of enhancing social cohesion comprise the three sections of the research. Through case studies and analysis, the study aims to establish a position and concept for a community food hub that can serve as a foundation for the design process. The findings emphasise the significance of community involvement, cooperation, and the design of physical spaces in promoting social cohesion and sustainable food practises. Community food initiatives can play a crucial role in enhancing social cohesion and addressing the underlying structural issues in urban areas by addressing social challenges and utilising food as a tool for interaction and participation.

01 Introduction

London is highly diversified, noticeable through the many spoken languages on the street, entertainment, arts, sports, food, culture, and the economy. Moreover, London has significant disparities between the wealthy and the poor. Due to the city's high land values and the growing wealth of the privileged, the standard of living continues to rise, ensuring that people at risk remain highly vulnerable.

Current events such as covid-19, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and the high inflation adversely affect these individuals, making survival even more challenging. Consequently, these previously mentioned challenges result in social problems such as the inability to pay rent, living in poverty, experiencing food insecurity, social exclusion, social isolation, or loneliness (Barry, 2002; Jehoel et al., 2009; Kenyon, 2013; Sullivan & Picarsic, 2012). For this reason, social cohesion becomes significant among vulnerable populations and should be enhanced. (Brisson, 2012; Denney et al., 2016; Samson et al., 2002). Rook (1984) describes in his article that the most obvious way of overcoming loneliness is to establish or improve social relationships.

According to Levkoe and Wakefield (2011), confronting these challenges requires dynamic, multilevel, and multi-sectoral strategies that integrate antipoverty efforts, ecological sustainability, food, wellness, and community building throughout the food system. The concept they further describe is a neighbourhood-based, physical space that uses food as an entry point to promote individuals' and communities' physical and emotional health and to develop community-based and state-level strategies to address challenges within the food system.

The problem in London is that various alternative food initiatives try to address these structural problems, such as community and soup kitchens, food banks, and redistribution initiatives. However, these solutions are usually temporary or seen as 'emergency' solutions in which the underlying issues remain (Berner et al., 2008; Holmes et al., 2018; Lambie-Mumford, 2012; Martin, 2021).

The initiatives based on the principle proposed by Levkoe and Wakefield are scarce in London. However, they could be more effective than the current short-term solutions, making food banks obsolete in the future. These interventions will focus on the long term and aid individual development and neighbourhood revitalization efforts. This research examines community food initiatives in London and other cities worldwide through casestudies, to determine how they address social cohesion and social structural challenges to develop a position and definition for a community food hub, which serves as a starting point for the design process. This is accomplished through a research question: In which way are community food initiatives designed to enhance social cohesion? Three sub questions will support this question: How does food relate to social cohesion? How are current community food initiatives designed? How do these food projects relate to the concept described by Levkoe and Wakefield to improve social cohesion?

These questions divide the research into three segments. Firstly, the relationship between food and social cohesion will be investigated to see whether food positively affects social engagement. Moreover, it will become evident whether food, for instance, encourages participation and interaction and whether it increases the number of social activities.

Secondly, this study will present how several current case studies in London function and respond to food initiatives in countries outside the United Kingdom. This method addresses the research question more effectively and provides more solid support for the design process. In addition, the limited presence of community food initiatives in London forced the investigation of case studies from outside the United Kingdom as an additional method of inquiry. Because with various case studies also outside the UK, an expanded comprehension of community food initiatives is conceivable.

For example, it clarifies how community members interact, what and where social activities occur, how the spatial programme is configured and desired effects, how it responds to the context, and what the hub means for the neighbourhood. Furthermore, using a large variety of case studies provide a better understanding of the community food initiatives that are currently available and serve as a sort of collection, a source of inspiration, and aids in defining an architectural position and concept of a community food hub to create a variable tool setup for the design process with the chosen site in London.

Lastly, it examines how they reflect on the concept described by Levkoe & Wakefield and whether this promotes social cohesion or other aspects are also involved.

Thus, a position and definition of a community food hub are defined to answer the main question and how architecture plays a role in this.

02 The relationship of food, social cohesion and community food initiatives

Social cohesion

The framework of social cohesion, illustrated in figure 1, is based on the approach of Fonseca et al. (2018), illustrated in figure 4, to support a resilient city like London. The framework shows that social cohesion is defined by three levels that emerged from previous research conducted by many others who attempted to approach the concept from a theoretical, empirical, experimental, and analytic perspective. The three levels, individual, community and institutional, must all be considered because social cohesion occurs at the intersection of these perspectives.

Hence, social cohesion is defined by Fonseca et al. as the ongoing process of developing the well-being, sense of belonging, and voluntary social participation of the members of society, while simultaneously developing communities that tolerate and promote a multiplicity of values and cultures and granting equal rights and opportunities within society. Social cohesion is severely hampered when there is an issue with one of the perspectives.

For example, a community food hub could be hindered by financial issues because not all communities can get enough support through private or public partnerships involving a collaboration between government agencies and private-sector companies that can be used to finance, build, and operate their projects. Formal structures could also be a hindrance if they do not support action plans or implement other policies preventing a community food hub from taking particular actions that would promote social cohesion.

On the other hand, social cohesion can also be inhibited if a community's environment or program does not allow it or if its aims or ideals are not clearly defined. In addition, significant events such as covid could ensure that many communities in London collapse. Consequently, it becomes more difficult for an individual with the motivation to join a community.

Figure 4 shows a correlation between social interaction, participation, and social activities. These are assets to measure social cohesion and can also be thoroughly examined in a community hub. Little et al. (2016) define social interaction as the process of mutual influence that individuals exert on one another during social encounters. This term refers to the personal physical interactions between individuals within groups. Furthermore, social interaction can be distinguished at the micro, meso, macro, and global levels of analysis.

Social activity is another term closely related to this, which can be defined as events facilitating interaction between various community members in spaces of encounter. For example, community centres organise events such as bingo nights, cycling activities or reading programmes for community members to bond. In principle, they function as an intermediary organisation that stimulates people with their programme and social activities to participate and subsequently interact with other community members. When a person's involvement in social activities leads to interactions with others within a community, it is defined as social participation (Levasseur et al., 2017). Wilcox (1994) explains that the first steps must be taken since participation does not occur automatically but must be initiated by someone, which is a community food hub in this case.

The three levels of Fonseca et al. (2018) emerge, in which formal structures and private-public partnerships ensure that communities can function, which individuals use to look for community engagement or social cohesion.

Relation to food

Increasing diversity in London indicates that language, culture, race, and income may be barriers (Kleit, 2005), making interaction or communication difficulties. The book by Anderson (2005) examines how food brings people together and is consumed by everyone. According to him, food is a form of communication that helps determine a person's identity and social position. Moreover, eating is practically always a social activity that brings people together. Food communicates status, ethnicity, lifestyle, and other affiliations. Furthermore, he thinks that food is the second most important social communication system after language. When language is a barrier, food may serve as the initial point of contact to overcome it.

Food is essential for survival, but according to Harlow & Harlow (1969), it only serves a small fraction of our life functions. For instance, several researchers assert that food regulates emotions (Gregersen & Gillath, 2020; Hamburg et al., 2014; Markus et al., 1998). In addition, food functions as a catalyst for social bonds and collaboration across groups (Hill, 2002), within groups such as family members (Ziker & Schnegg, 2005), and the maintenance of relationships (Fiske, 1993; Miller et al., 1998)

Anderson explains how food can be a component of an individual's identity by detailing how rice, for example, is an integral aspect of Japanese culture and society. This information can be shared, allowing conversation and participation, and ensuring social engagement. 'One main message of food everywhere is solidarity. Eating together means participation and sharing' (Anderson, 2005). In the past, throughout many cultures, families gathered around the table when a meal was served. This tradition is essential in most of the world, as it is during this time that families bond, by sharing stories or playing games.

He emphasises further that sharing food is a characteristic of human nature and social creatures, as we developed to value others' company through the sharing of food, and we continue to see a strong correlation between eating together and building friendships. The term "company" is derived from the word "companion," which means "bread sharer" (Latin cum panis). Our strong correlation between eating together and building friendships has led to the significance of public eating facilities such as cafés, coffee shops, coffee houses, cafeterias, bars, and neighbourhood restaurants. These facilities, which might be characterised as places for activities, are the sites of engagement and participation.

Marovelli (2019) investigates also how food brings people together and how food initiatives go beyond the food by addressing the material and affective components of cooking and dining together and by cultivating collective spaces of encounter. Consequently, these communal spaces are essential in these metropolitan settings, and social isolation and loneliness emerge as the primary motivators for participation in food sharing efforts.

As a result, eating is a social activity in which individuals engage and participate because it brings people together, which ensures social engagement and occur in a specific space of encounter such as a bar, coffeehouse, restaurant food hall or other food initiatives. It is remarkable how food may impact a person's involvement and experience. Food is a unique aspect that fosters social involvement, whether it makes people happy, gives them a feeling of purpose, or nourishes the hungry. For this reason, social cohesion is considered an essential key characteristic for addressing the previously mentioned social challenges (Arapoglou, 2012; Cassiers & Kesteloot, 2012; Coburn, 2000; Qadeer & Qumar, 2006).

Community food initiatives as intermediaries

Food and social cohesion are closely linked since food bring people together. However, how does someone take the first step to eat with someone else or to share food if they have recently moved to an area, do not speak the language of the natives, or if interactions and participation create a barrier because they feel excluded or experience loneliness?

Food is a tool that brings people together, but this does not mean that it always automatically happens naturally for everyone. For this reason, community food initiatives are the critical link to serve as a sort of intermediary to ensure that it will eventually occur. As Marovelli and Hasanov et al. (2019) elaborate in their research, specific community structures, such as community food initiatives, have been established for these reasons. According to Hoekstra and Pinkster (2017), neighbourhood organisations are perceived as spaces of encounter that generate a sense of engagement. Hence, they have become integral to urban policies regarding community identity and social cohesion. Besides, they participate in developing the urban fabric (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011).

Nevertheless, these food community projects offer more than simply bringing individuals together through the previously mentioned issues as a preliminary step toward engagement or participation in social activities. For instance, they are frequently involved in contributing to sustainable urban food systems (Hennchen & Pregernig, 2020) or other critical themes related to sustainability or justice (Moragues-Faus & Morgan, 2015), resilience in food systems (Hasanov et al.), and improving access to healthy food and food safety (Kantor, 2001; Silver et al., 2017).

In short, food has a significant association with encouraging social cohesion, but it does not always occur on its own. Therefore, community food initiatives have been developed that function as intermediaries and use food as a tool to enhance interaction and participation through social activities.

Figure 3: Food activities such as a cooking workshop bring people together, accessed 06 January 2023 <https://uia-initiative.eu/en/news/foodrelated-activities-leverage-against-urban-poverty>
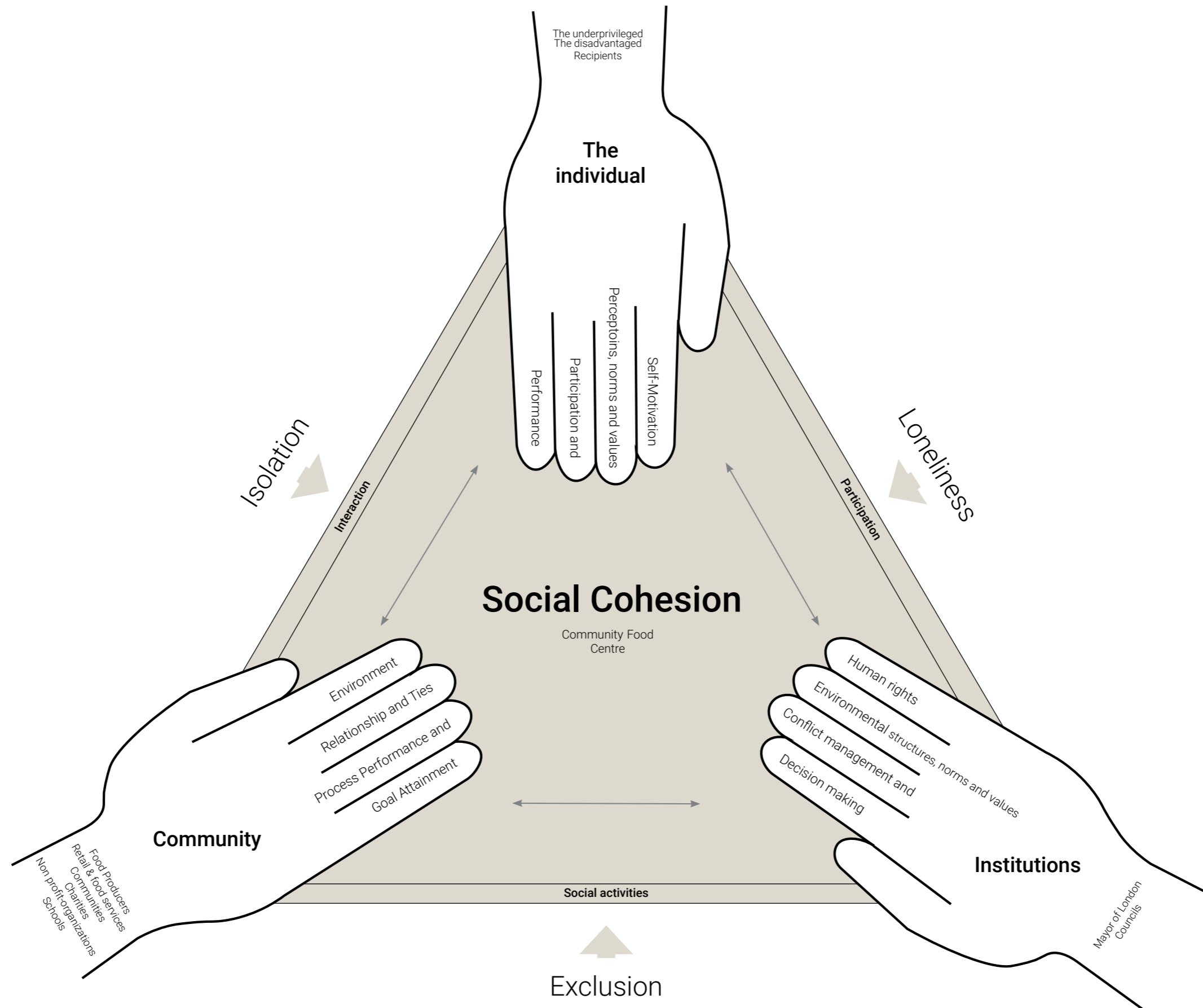
The underprivileged
The disadvantaged
Recipients

The individual

Performance

Participation and

Perceptoins, norms and values

Self-Motivation

Isolation

Loneliness

Interaction

Participation

Social Cohesion

Community Food Centre

Community

Environment

Relationship and Ties

Process Performance and

Goal Attainment

Food Producers
Retail & food services
Communities
Charities
Non profit-organizations
Schools

Institutions

Human rights

Environmental structures, norms and values

Conflict management and

Decision making

Mayor of London
Councils

Social activities

Exclusion

Figure 4: Theoretical literature

03 Community food initiatives in London and outside the UK

In the following chapter, case studies will present in further detail how these initiatives function, what their objectives or goals are, what problems they solve, how they arose, and where these community food initiatives are located. Although the appellations of these initiatives are similar, there are notable discrepancies in their implementations.
The case studies can be distinguished in London-based food initiatives and non-UK-based food initiatives such as Canada, the Netherlands, Japan, and the United States of America. Subsequently the appellations could therefore be categorised as followed: Community centres, community food centres, community cafes, community food hubs, community food redistributions, community food halls, and urban food hubs. The case studies will be examined through some criteria's and will describe gaps, similarities, and distinctions between them.

London-based food initiatives

The Noursh Hub
Hornbeam Community Café & Environment Centre
Living Under One Sun Community café and hub
Mildmay Community Centre
Community Food Enterprise

non-UK-based food initiatives

Urban Food Tower/Hub (space & matter)
UDC Urban Food Hub (Van Ness)
The Depot Community Food Centre
Community Food Hall Osaka Nipponbashi

Community centres/ hubs

Figure 5: https://www.facebook.com/mildmaycommunity-centre/photos

Communty food centres

Figure 6: https://cfccanada.ca/en/What-We-Do/Communi-ty-Food-Centres

Community cafes

Figure 7: https://www.flickr.com/photos/kake_pugh/9576910271

Community food hall

Figure 9: https://www.flickr.com/photos/kake_pugh/9576910271 https://osaka.style/news/6527/1-492/

Community food hubs

Figure 11: https://www.flickr.com/photos/kake_pugh/9576910271 https://osaka.style/news/6527/1-492/

Community food redistribution

Figure 8:https://www.newhamheritagemonth.org/records/community-food-enterprise/

Urban food hub

Figure 10: https://www.flickr.com/photos/kake_pugh/9576910271 https://www.spaceandmatter.nl/work/urban-food-hub

The Nourish Hub

Location: London, Hammersmith and Fulham

Category: Community food hub

Opening hours: Monday – Friday (12am-3pm)

Size/ scale: Small

Concept: Grow, cook, learn, eat and share

Context: Quiet residential neighbourhood

Appearance: Plinth of social housing complex, very open glass façade.

Focus/goal/vision: Focus is rescuing food, teaching about nutritious eating choices and cookery skills. Sustainability and healthy eating and access to food are the core of the hub.

Overall programme: Café (eating area), workshop area, kitchen, meeting room and office, food growing pillars

Social cohesion through spatial encounters: Café, kitchen, workshop area and other activities such as breakfast clubs, cookery courses, monthly dining event.

Financial concept: Pay as you dine

Key stakeholders:

Figure 12: Francisco Ibanez Hantke 2022, Nourish Hub Street Frontage, accessed 03 May 2023, <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/shaping-local-spaces/nourish-hub-lb-hammersmith-fulham>

This case study examines a small community food hub emphasising food and social engagement while addressing environmental issues. The hub is an intermediary, promoting individual interaction and sustainable food practices. In addition, the study identifies opportunities for expanding the hub's farming or growing facilities by collaborating with nearby food initiatives, such as urban gardens.

The community food hub operates in a small space beneath a social housing complex. Its primary objective is to promote social interaction and participation through food-related activities. Although the farming or growing facility associated with the hub is small, there is potential for expansion to improve interaction further and raise awareness of healthy food, nutrition, and food management. Collaboration with nearby urban gardens could provide an opportunity to enhance the current facilities.

The physical constraints imposed by the hub's location within the social housing complex present challenges for development. The limited available space restricts the expansion of the hub's facilities. Despite these limitations, the hub emphasises innovative social engagement and environmental sustainability strategies to maximise its impact within the available space.

The community food hub primarily opens its doors for lunch, granting visitors easy access without requiring registration in advance. This scheduling decision may be affected by the participation of volunteers and the hub's participation in multiple activities throughout the day. The hub fosters inclusivity by maintaining an open-door policy and provides a space for diverse individuals to connect and share meals.

UKharvest, a food rescue and redistribution organisation, facilitates the community food hub's operations. UKharvest plays a crucial role in rescuing edible food from farms, supermarkets, and wholesalers, thereby preventing food waste. Through this partnership, the community food hub will have access to various food

resources, enabling it to fulfil its mission of providing nutritious meals and combating food insecurity.

The design of the community food hub encompasses various programmatic elements, distinguishing between high-intensity and low-intensity social cohesion activities.

The main dining space, characterized by an open floor plan, serves as the central hub, closely connected to the teaching kitchen. A transparent glass facade facilitates visual interaction with the outdoor space, accessible through both a main entrance and an events entrance. Engagement predominantly occurs within the main dining hall, engaging both customers and staff. The main kitchen primarily fosters staff collaboration, with key points of interaction occurring at the serving hatches with community hub staff. The office space, integral to the community food hub, is rented out to diverse parties, generating income to support its operations. Essential areas such as dry and cold storage, a wet room, and plant storage are incorporated to accommodate the storage of food, primarily supplied by the redistribution organization UKharvest, a key stakeholder with its own office within the building.

The staff of the community food hub primarily comprises dedicated volunteers, and while the hub is open to all individuals, it primarily caters to local residents seeking to adopt healthier lifestyles, promote sustainability, address food security concerns, and alleviate food poverty. Situated on the plinth of a social housing complex, the community food hub is part of a diverse neighbourhood encompassing various socio-economic segments, ranging from lower to upper class.

This facility exemplifies a commendable instance of a community initiative that cultivates robust social engagement through localized dining practices.
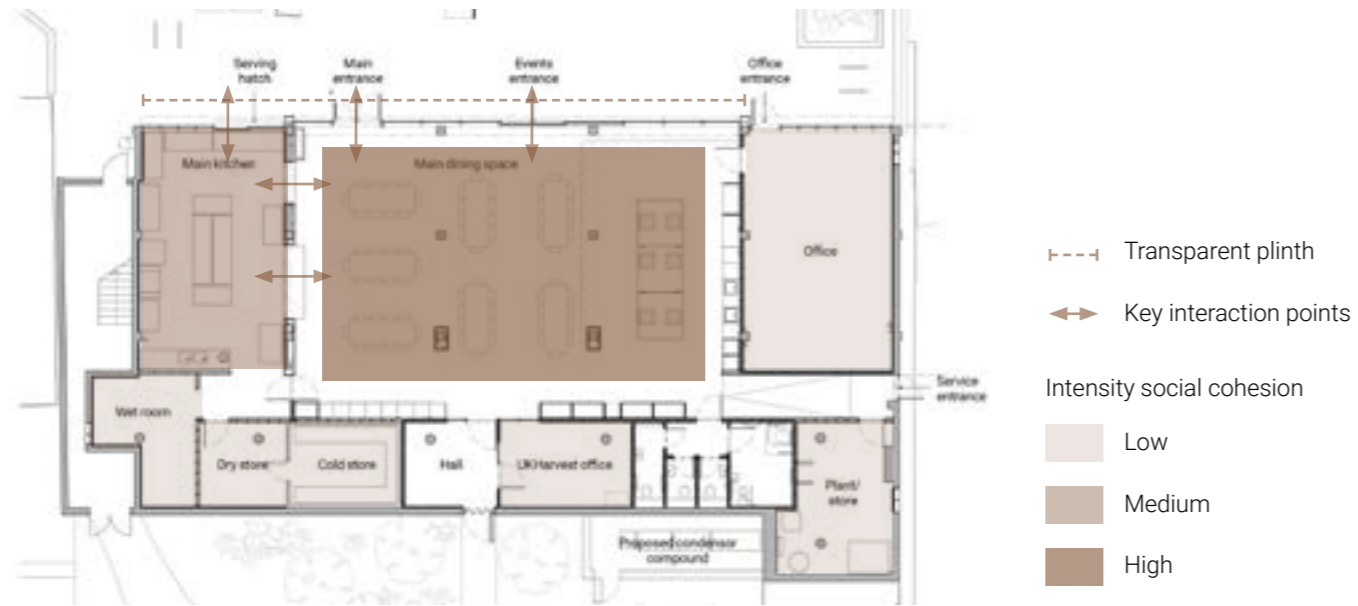
Figure 13: AJ contributor 2022, Floorplan Nourish Hub, accessed 03 May 2023, < https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/specification/case-study-the-nourish-hub-by-rcka-architects>

Transparent plinth

Key interaction points

Intensity social cohesion

Low

Medium

High

Figure 15: AJ contributor 2022, Serving hatch from the inside, accessed 03 May 2023, < https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/specification/case-study-the-nourish-hub-by-rcka-architects>
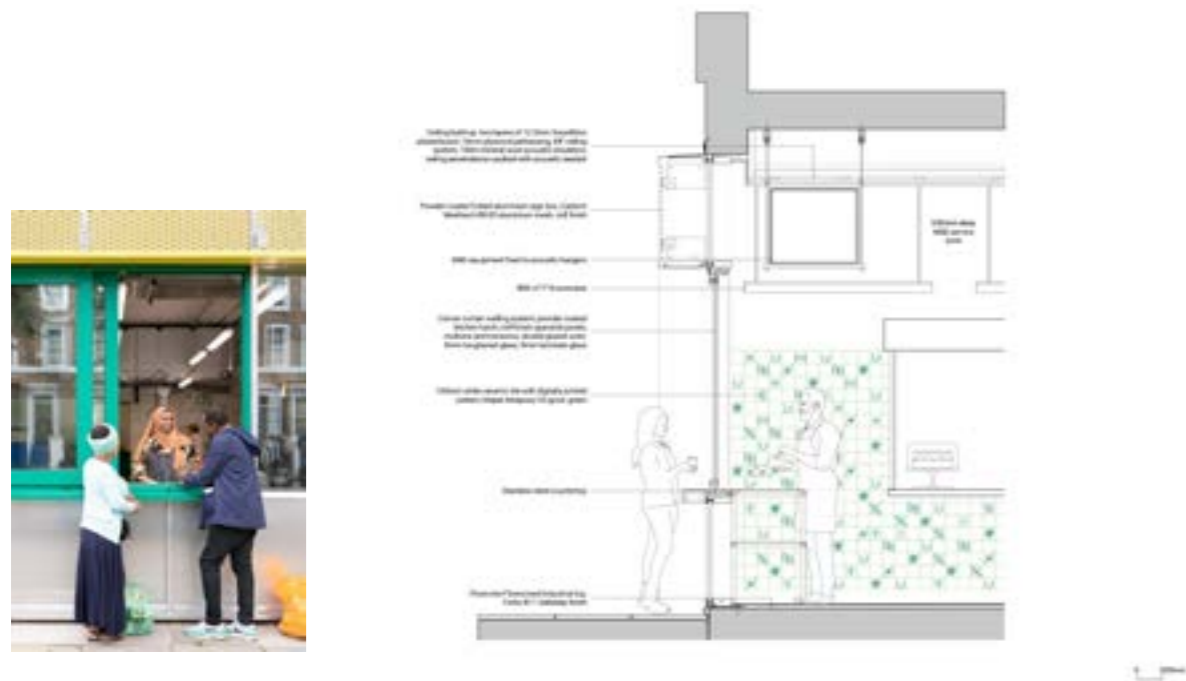

Figure 14: AJ contributor 2022,Detail Section through serving hatch, accessed 03 May 2023, < https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/specification/case-study-the-nourish-hub-by-rcka-architects>

Figure 16: AJ contributor 2022, Social engagement in the main dining space, accessed 03 May 2023, < https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/specification/case-study-the-nourish-hub-by-rcka-architects>

Hornbeam Community Café & Environment Centre

Location: London, Waltham Forest

Category: Community cafe

Opening hours: Thursday- Friday breakfast (10am-12pm) lunch (12am-3pm), Saturday brunch (11 am-3 pm)

Size/ scale: Small-medium

Context: Street with high activities

Appearance: Open colourful café

Focus/goal/vision: This community initiative aims to establish an inclusive and diverse eating space that promotes social, economic, and ecological sustainability, encouraging a connected and sustainable community. It addresses food insecurity by redistributing surplus food and empowers communities for mutual aid. Residents of Waltham Forest are empowered to adopt sustainably practises through local projects emphasising healthy, affordable, and sustainable food, waste reduction, and resource conservation, which contributes to the resilience of the local food system. Access to green spaces and peer support networks promotes health.

Overall programme: The Hornbeam centre (Café space, meeting room, professional kitchen), Learning Lodge (Main space, Desk space).

Social cohesion through spatial encounters: Café, meeting room, learning lodge

Social cohesion through social activities: Food redistribution network, People's kitchen, Food co-ops, Waltham forst food-partnership, ready healthy eat, wellbeing walks, good deeds on bikes, Leyton Wellbeing & Food project

Food suppliers: The Felix Project and City Harvest, food rescue and redistribution operation. They rescue edible surplus food from organisations such as farms, supermarkets, and wholesalers.

This case study explores a small to medium-sized food initiative that strongly emphasises social engagement and the intersection of food-related activities. The initiative primarily focuses on food surplus redistribution and promoting healthy eating through organised walks and biking tours to acquire surplus food from retail organisations. The initiative operates across two facilities, providing spaces for people to interact and engage socially. The community cafe, accommodating up to 20 people, suggests that the initiative serves relatively modestly. The community cafe's meeting areas offer opportunities for interaction; however, the restricted physical space of the community limits the capacity to accommodate large groups.

Consequently, the focus remains on smaller groups within the cafe premises, which poses a challenge in fully fostering social contact among a larger amount of community members. Notably, the community compensates for this limitation by organising social activities such as well-being walks, which serve as alternative platforms for social engagement outside the cafe setting. These activities provide an exciting observation as they facilitate meaningful social interactions and enhance community cohesion beyond the cafe's limited space constraints.

The cafe and centre are accessible to community members, creating a sense of exclusivity and a closer-knit community environment. However, this excludes non-members, which could act as a barrier, potentially generating a sense of exclusion and limiting the perceived level of hospitality for individuals seeking engagement. Moreover, while the initiative actively distributes surplus food and receives substantial food donations, more is needed to address the root causes of food waste and insecurity.

To tackle these challenges effectively, integrating food management and systems education into the initiative's programs could be addressed. By teaching community members about their food sources, the potential for growing food in small urban areas, and how to cook and prepare nutritious meals, the initiative can empower individuals to address issues related to food waste, insecurity, and other social concerns. This educational approach has the potential to serve as an eye-opener for community members, fostering a deeper understanding of the broader implications of their food choices and promoting sustainable and socially responsible practices within the community.

For this reason, the promotion of social engagement within the community cafe can be enhanced by incorporating scheduled lectures on designated days or by expanding their programming to include another location within the community.

Figure 18: Food Redistribution Network, accessed 03 May 2023, <https://www.hornbeam.org.uk/projects>

Figure 19: Food co-op membership, accessed 03 May 2023, <https://www.hornbeam.org.uk/projects>

Figure 20: Ready Healthy Eat, accessed 03 May 2023, <https://www.hornbeam.org.uk/projects>

Figure 21: Good Deeds on Bikes, accessed 03 May 2023, <https://www.hornbeam.org.uk/projects>

Figure 22: People's kitchen, accessed 03 May 2023, <https://www.hornbeam.org.uk/projects>

Figure 23: Leyton Wellbeing %=& Food Project, accessed 03 May 2023, <https://www.hornbeam.org.uk/projects>

Figure 17: Exterior and interior appearance of the cafe, accessed 03 May 2023, < https://restaurantguru.com/Hornbeam-London >

Living Under One Sun Community Café and Hub

Location:	London, Haringey
Category:	Community Hub
Opening hours:	Monday (9:30am-5:30pm), Wednesday-Saturday (9am-6pm)
Size/ scale:	Medium
Context:	Residential neighbourhood with low- and high-rise buildings, surrounded by a park and sport facilities.
Appearance:	It is situated in its own building.
Focus/goal/vision:	The initiative encourages physical, mental, social, and economic well-being through various healthy living activities, including organic horticulture, food growing, herbal medicine, beekeeping, healthy cooking, sewing, cycling, and walking. It also aims to promote common interests, equality, harmony, and social inclusion by reducing social isolation, celebrating diversity, and advancing the public good. In addition to combating unemployment, the initiative provides work experience, training, and employment assistance. Furthermore, it alleviates poverty in the designated area while emphasising the exchange of ideas, skills, and knowledge related to organic and sustainable food production, including providing visitors access to locally sourced, healthy, and fresh food.
Overall programme:	Café, Garden, performance stage, greenhouse, meeting room, community allotment, outdoor space (cooking area, tents, seating gaming and play area)
Social cohesion through spatial encounters:	Indoor and outdoor facilities, café, garden, community allotment, greenhouse, outdoor space, community allotment which is in lee valley park close the community hub.

Community allotment
Organic food growing, volunteering opportunities, corporate volunteering, bee keeping, educational visits, green family days,

herbal medicine.

Community hub
-        Dancing, wellbeing, arts & craft, sports, poverty course, digital inclusion, people's needs parks project, school holiday activities, yoga, running, cycling, sewing course, gardening and food growing.

The community uses food as a means for individuals to connect with nature, engage in social interactions, and acquire knowledge; food is not its primary focus. Their participation in allotments in Lee Valley Park provides educational resources and hands-on experiences centred on cultivating healthy and sustainable food. Through diverse projects, activities, and events, the organisation develops a sense of community by providing opportunities for social interaction and participation, thus resembling a community centre.

Approximately 15 minutes walking distance from the community hub, an allotment is established to cultivate food. This allotment shares its location with the hub, situated in a tranquil residential neighbourhood along the Lea River. Notably, the community hub appears to be part of a larger complex with a park, sports facilities, and a playground. There are two prominent residential buildings adjacent to the hub. By providing various activities within the facility, the community strives to make it accessible to all the residents in the neighbourhood. Moreover, the community hub's entire program shows a strong image of social engagement.

Identifying the precise stakeholders in this community initiative was challenging to determine. Nevertheless, "Way of Life," an organisation that promotes housing opportunities, emerges as a significant stakeholder supporting the community hub. In addition, redistribution initiatives, the Haringey Council, and multiple other investors will likely play crucial roles in the community to operate.

The image on the following page depicts the building's front facade, which exhibits a strong sense of enclosure with few openings. This design choice may be related to the building's former use as a bowling alley. The emphasis was likely placed on directing attention and focus to the programmatic interior and rear outdoor spaces where various activities are conducted.

Figure 24: A very closed facade focused on the indoor program accessed 03 May 2023, <https://www.facebook.com/luoscafe/photos/pb.100067003991900.-2207520000./1223084504854587/?type=3>

Figure 26: Leyla, one of the founders, volunteers and other contributors manage the community initiative, accessed 03 May 2023, <https://www.wayof-life.com/journal/community/community-life-living-under-one-sun>

Figure 25: Openness and high activities in the backyard, accessed 03 May 2023, <https://www.facebook.com/luoscafe/photos/pb.100007003991900.-2207520000./1223084504854587/?type=3>

Figure 27: Outdoor wooden glass facility in the backyard for various activities, accessed 03 May 2023, <https://www.wayoflife.com/journal/community/community-life-living-under-one-sun>

Community Food Enterprise

Location: London, Newham

Category: Community food redistribution

Opening hours: Monday – Sunday (6am-6pm)

Size/ scale: Medium

Context: Highly industrial area

Appearance: Warehouse, dilapidated building, not very welcoming.

Focus/goal/vision: Delivery and redistribution (in seven London boroughs), employment opportunities, trainings, and teaching people to have their own food business. Procure food that is surplus to requirement and redistribute it exclusively to charities/ community organisations. Fighting food poverty, develop a viable and sustainable food business that will provide training, capacity building, and employment opportunities for residents of East London.

Overall programme: Storage, distribution, transport

     Café, meeting room, learning lodge

Social cohesion through spatial encounters: Workplace, contact with charities and community organisations.

Food suppliers: Large partners, local supermarkets (Lidl, Sainsbury's and corporate companies, farms (September-march), food donation points at local Sainsbury's and Lidl's in Newham.

In this case study, this organisation primarily operates as a redistribution entity, functioning to create job opportunities and address food surplus by actively collecting and distributing food to frontline organisations or communities, including community centres or cafes. The underlying motivation behind this initiative stems from the recognition that many of these establishments need more resources, staffing, and infrastructure to collect and verify the suitability of food donations independently.

While the primary focus is not on fostering social interaction and encouraging active participation in activities, the core objectives revolve around enhancing individuals' health and well-being and preventing food waste. By redirecting surplus food, the organisation strives to positively impact the nutritional status of community members and the overall sustainability of the food system.

Due to the facility's primary function as a redistribution centre, it is relatively closed and isolated, resulting in limited social interaction with the surrounding community. While the organisation focuses on advancing societal well-being, seeking a community initiative that encourages solid social engagement is this facility a less favourable exemplar. The lack of interactive and participatory elements within the centre reduces its potential as a platform for fostering community cohesion and encouraging active community engagement.

Figure 28: Dilapidated building that looks abandoned, accessed 05 May 2023, <Google maps>

Figure 30: Food surplus that will be redistributed, accessed 05 May 2023, <https://www.c-f-e.org.uk>

Figure 29: The community initiative is situated on an industrial area, accessed 05 May 2023, <Google maps>

Figure 31: Uninviting entrance for loading and unloading food, accessed 05 May 2023, <https://www.c-f-e.org.uk>

Urban Food Tower/Hub (space & matter)

Location: Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Category: Urban Food Hub

Size/ scale: Large

Concept: Fully robotized zero-waste vertical farm

Context: No location yet, but they say it can fit in any
                                   urban city

Appearance: It is situated in its own building, very wel-
                                   coming and modern look.
                                   Storage, distribution, transport

Focus/goal/vision: Focus on preventing food waste, address-
                                   ing transforming local food waste into the
                                   water and energy required to power the
                                   vertical farm cells and nourish it crops
                                   Their goal is to establish a global network
                                   of Food hubs so that they can bring fresh
                                   and healthy food to all those who want it.

Overall programme: Vertical farm, farm shop and exhibition,
                                   restaurant, greenhouse, research & devel-
                                   opment centre, community centre, recy-
                                   cling and powerplant

Social cohesion through spatial encoun-   Growy neighbourhood point (Juice bar, sal-
ters: ad bar, shop, health centre)

This urban food hub is committed to closing local resource loops and fostering circular food production. Its primary objective is to educate individuals on the value of circular food production, emphasising low-cost, energy-efficient, and resource-conserving practices. In addition to hosting innovative vertical farms that provide food for the surrounding community, the Urban Food Hub is a gathering place where individuals can learn about and experience sustainable food production.

Utilising biobased and circular materials, the Urban Food Hub features a modular design that provides inspiration and a model for others. It provides a platform for community members to learn what constitutes healthy food and how it can be produced responsibly, both now and in the future. Although the hub primarily focuses on food production and sustainability, it also seeks to facilitate social connections and educational opportunities concerning sustainable food growth. This is demonstrated by the integration of a zero-waste vertical farm concept into the framework of the hub.

One of the concepts primarily focuses on local resource loops and circular food production, which will constitute one-third of its programme. The concept's inherent independence suggests its future applicability in various urban environments. While some programme components, such as the biodigester, biogas generator, and bio dropoff, may initially have limited social involvement, communities, visitors, and residents interact through the production of food in the vertical farms, greenhouse, seasonal gardens, and points of sale for fresh produce and processed food. In addition, through these spatial encounters, interaction and participation in various educational activities are likely to occur.

However, the concept can also vary, as depicted in Figure 32, where, for instance, a supermarket has been incorporated on the ground floor to sell, among other items, self-produced food.

The renderings of the urban food hub present a visually appealing representation of the building's programme from the exterior to the interior. This display is intended to provide insight into the activities within and encourage participation among locals and visitors. By ensuring that the building remains open and accessible, a sense of inclusivity is fostered, allowing those inside and outside the hub to participate in the programme. For example, more distance is created when a building is completely enclosed and only shares the program's experience with the people inside. In this instance, the urban food hub is a single building component.

Regarding stakeholders, it was difficult to determine since these projects still need to be built. However, Local community members, farmers and food producers, local businesses and entrepreneurs, non-profit organisations and community crops, government agencies, educational institutions, health and social service organisations, environmental and sustainability groups, and investors are likely to participate in these urban food hubs.

This initiative serves as a model for how urban food hubs can foster social engagement on a more extensive scale, including the spatial programme configuration and the thoughtful design of the building facades corresponding to the context. Furthermore, it creates an inclusive and inviting space that encourages community members to actively participate and connect by considering both the functional and aesthetic aspects of the building. The design elements, including spatial organisation, circulation patterns, and open and inviting areas, are meticulously orchestrated to facilitate social interaction and foster a sense of belonging. This holistic approach acknowledges that the physical environment plays a significant role in shaping social dynamics and emphasises the need to consider both programmatic and architectural elements when designing urban food hubs that foster meaningful social engagement.

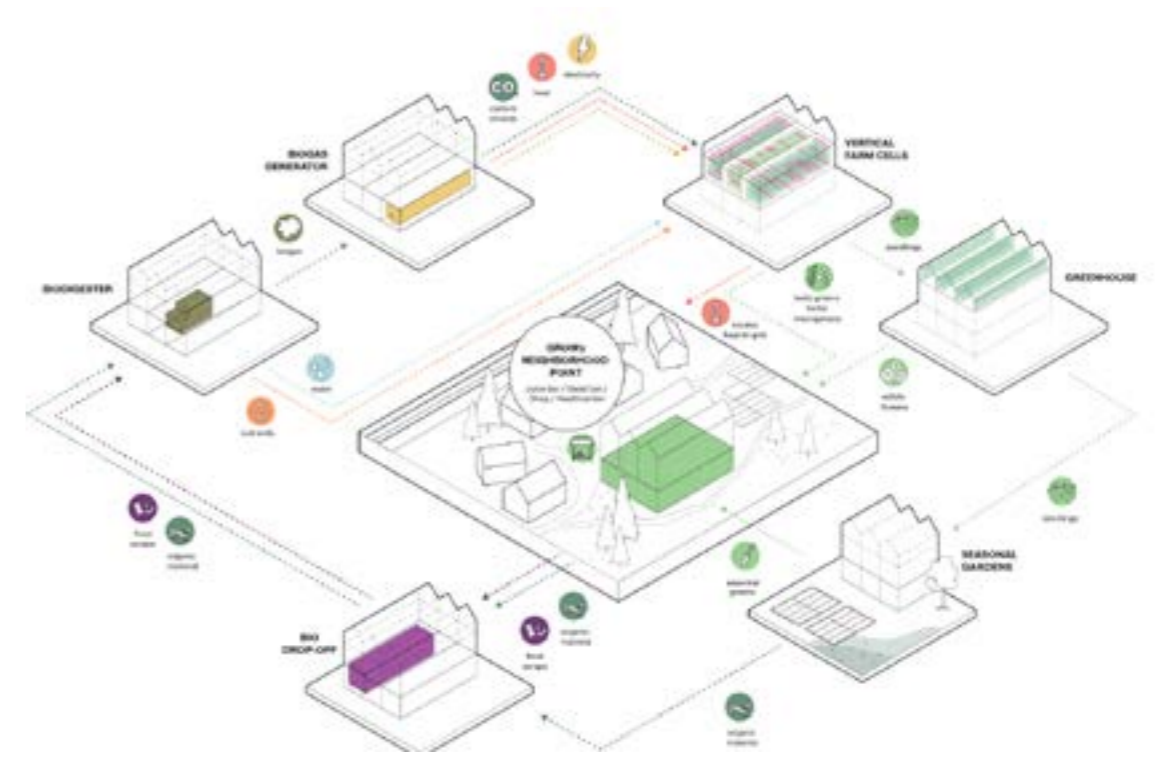Figure 32: Space & Matter 2021, Urban food tower with supermarket on the ground floor, accessed 03 May 2023. <https://www.spaceandmatter.nl/work/urban-food-hub>

Figure 33: Space & Matter 2021, The Urban Hub resource loops in the neighbourhood by converting foodwaste into water and energy, 05 January 2023 <https://www.spaceandmatter.nl/work/urban-food-hub>

Figure 34: Space & Matter 2021, Urban Food Hubs can be built in every neighbourhood, even on the water, accessed 05 January 2023 <https://www.spaceandmatter.nl/work/urban-food-hub>

UDC Urban Food Hub (Van Ness)

Location:	Washington, USA
Category:	Urban Food Hub
Size/ scale:	Large
Concept:	Food production, preparation, distribution, waste & water recovery
Context:	Campus site, green area
Focus/goal/vision:	Education about how to cook with fresh and unprocessed food, food management, learn about urban agriculture, food safety. Access to fresh food, create jobs, improve public health, mitigate water management problems, create urban resilience
Overall programme:	Commercial kitchen, urban farms, community gardens, farmers market, waste & water recovery, distribution space, classrooms.
Social cohesion through spatial encounters:	Commercial kitchen, urban farms, community gardens, farmers market, waste & water recovery, distribution space, classrooms.

In this case study, food is sourced from self-produced urban food farms. In contrast, the farmers' markets is situated elsewhere in the city, and the farms are somewhere else. However, one of the farmers' market is situated on a square next to the College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences of the UDC. Farmers' markets facilitate collaboration and interaction between local farmers. Access to fresh, unprocessed food is limited in some urban areas, making local food initiatives such as the food hub essential for providing access and educating communities on how to improve their health and the health of their families through sustainable food practices.

The food hub includes a commercial kitchen that serves as a teaching and demonstration kitchen for district students and residents. In addition, it promotes innovative farming practices, such as growing food in nutrient-rich water without soil.

These food hub partner organisations include the United States Department of Agriculture, district agencies such as energy and environment departments, the private sector, and supermarket chain donations.

The city-wide initiatives of the food hub include creating projects such as the bridge garden, which combines production sites with recreational spaces such as play areas, lawns, a café, a hammock garden, a picnic garden, and environmental education facilities.

This comprehensive strategy aims to increase awareness of the significance of food and its promotion. In addition, the food hub plays a vital role in fostering social integration, facilitating interactions, and addressing numerous social issues within the community.

Concept-wise, the urban food hub appears to be fragmented across several facilities in Washington, but where the most significant part of the hub is located and seems to be part of the UDC campus, which is located on the roof of Building 44, see Figure X. It is therefore mainly managed and operated from the UDC (Jones, 2016).

Regarding social engagement, this initiative is a commendable example on a larger scale, encompassing not only the immediate neighbourhood or individuals with socioeconomic difficulties. Notably, the kitchens serve as a platform for education, promoting active participation and meaningful interaction. Community gardens and urban farms take a similar approach to foster knowledge exchange and community engagement.
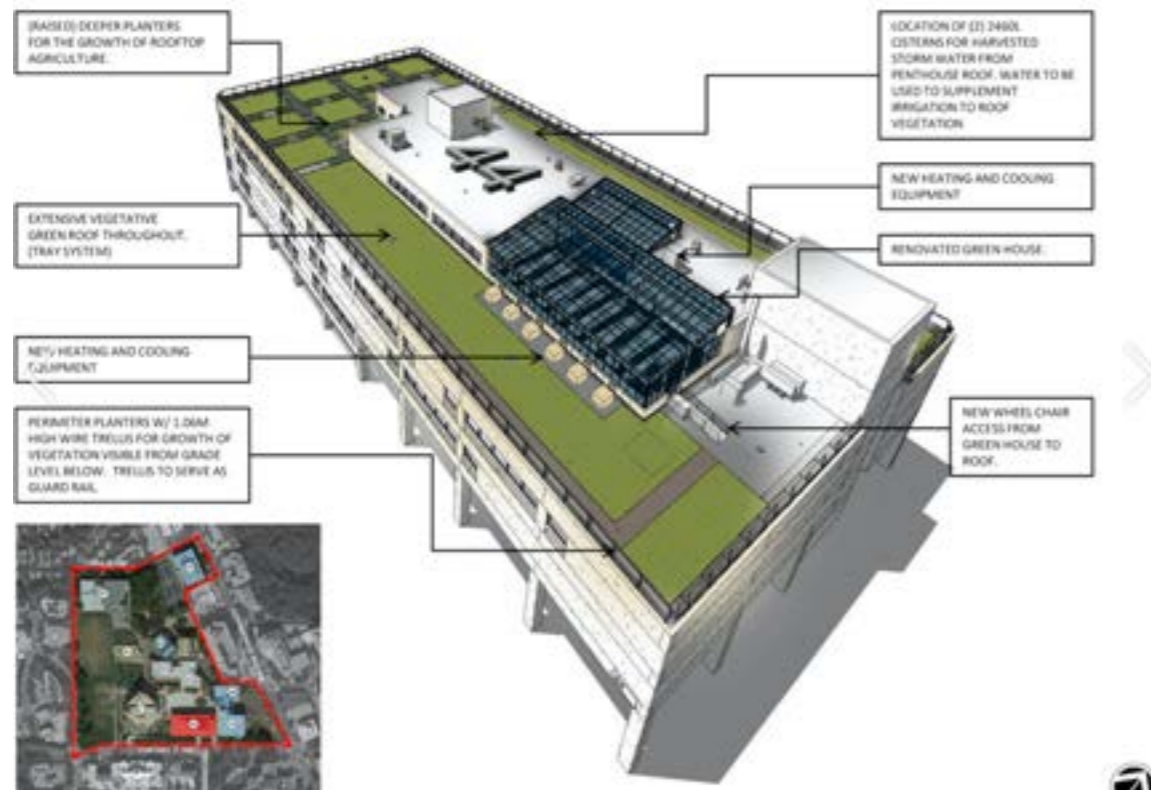
Figure 35: Rooftop farming on building 44 at the campus of UDC. <https://architizer.com/projects/udc-agriculture-roof/>

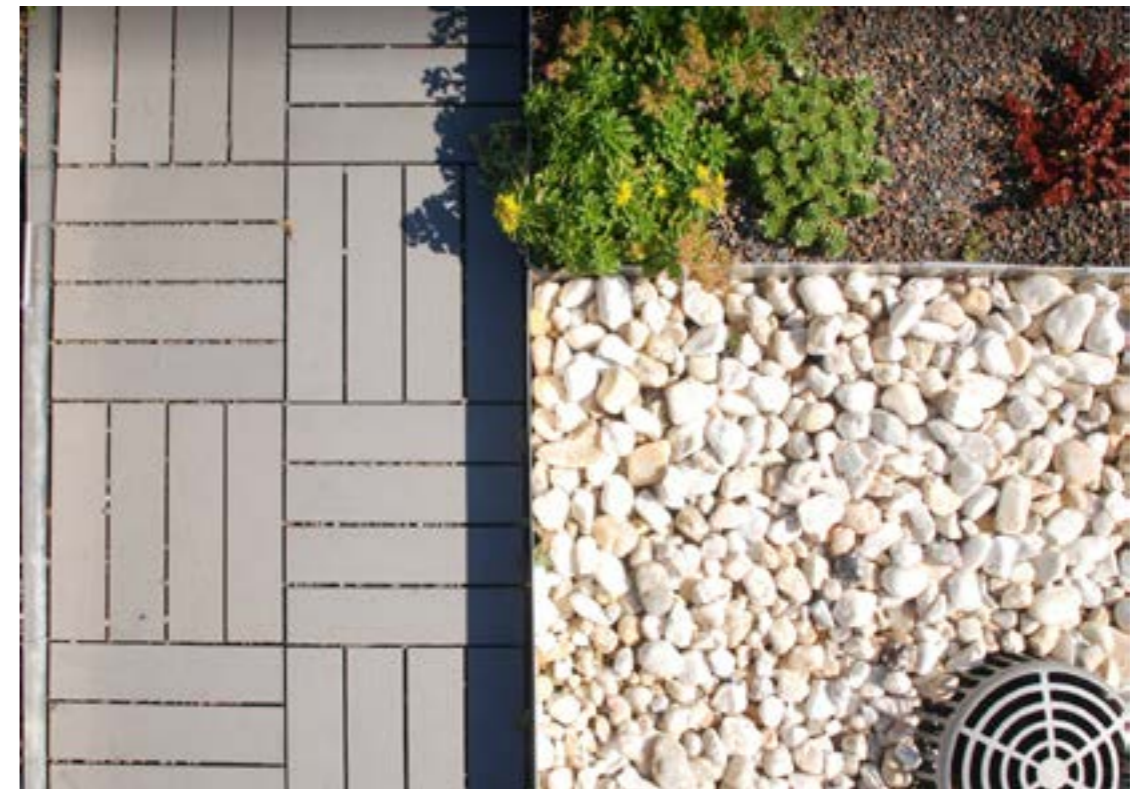Figure 37: Vegetation on the roof <https://architizer.com/projects/udc-agriculture-roof/>

Figure 36: Rooftop greenhouse. <https://architizer.com/projects/udc-agriculture-roof/>

Figure 38: Materialisation on the roof <https://architizer.com/projects/udc-agriculture-roof/>

The Depot Community Food Centre

Location: Quebec, Canada

Category: Community food centre

Opening hours: Monday-Friday (9:30am-5:30pm)

Size/ scale: Large

Concept   A welcoming space where people come together to grow, cook, share and advocate for good food for all. Healthy food systems

Context: Quiet Residential neighbourhood

Appearance: Plinth of a building complex

Focus/goal/vision: The community Food centre's objectives are to address food security, improve access to healthy food for low-income community members, reduce social isolation, strengthen food-related skills and knowledge, promote personal growth and community engagement, and create opportunities for effective action on poverty, social justice, and food systems issues.

Overall programme: The programme encompasses growing (collective gardens, community gardens, production gardens, incubator garden, and green workshop), cooking (intergenerational meals, cultural cooking, collaborative creations, summer picnics, My Healthy Family, community nutrition, after-school programme, and recipes), sharing (emergency food baskets, community meal programme, good food markets, and healthy snack programme), and mobilising and support (Black History Monday, individual support and referrals, and recipes).

Social cohesion through spatial encounters: See overall programme

Social cohesion through social activities: See overall programme

In this case study, community Food Centres (CFCs) prioritise food security and aim to increase access to nutritious food for low-income individuals while reducing social isolation and promoting community engagement (Levkoe & Wakefield, 2011). Their focus extends to fostering individuals' skills, personal development, and knowledge.

CFCs primarily serve local community members by ensuring they have access to high-quality food without compromising their dignity. CFCs serve as forums where community members can voice their concerns and find support, ultimately fostering friendship and social connections. These centres facilitate the development of cooking and gardening skills and encourage participants to share their knowledge. In addition, children are encouraged to broaden their culinary preferences and actively engage in kitchen and garden activities, promoting healthier foods.

These organisations, part of Community Food Canada's more extensive network of 13 community food centres, use food as a catalyst to strengthen communities, improve health, and empower individuals. They contribute to community health while establishing a solid foundation for the neighbourhood.

Community food centres provide a variety of programmes inhospitable environments, such as nutritious meals, inexpensive produce markets, cooking and gardening classes, youth education programmes, peer advocacy support, and civic engagement initiatives. The shared experiences and common challenges faced by community members contribute to the success of these centres by fostering a solid desire for participation.

These centres serve as community hubs where individuals can meet friends, eat nutritious meals, and gain knowledge. In contrast to conventional food banks, CFCs prioritise meeting immediate food needs and providing opportunities for individuals and families to learn how to prepare nutritious meals.

Various web pages and online magazines, such as 'The City', describe The Depot as a unique Community Food Centre that goes beyond the traditional food bank model. As Quebec's first Community Food Centre, it is part of a network of Canadian non-profit organizations dedicated to addressing the underlying factors contributing to food insecurity in communities nationwide.

While community Food Centre's website features various programs and social activities, it presents a challenge to locate visual images that accurately depict the range of facilities. The available images predominantly showcase an indoor space that resembles a traditional food bank, with occasional glimpses of organized markets or an event/dining hall. It remains unclear whether these facilities are dispersed across multiple areas or consolidated within a single building.

Regarding social engagement, the CFC focuses primarily on engaging participants in various social activities in their spatial programmes, such as community gardens, teaching kitchens, and food markets. Even though these activities are somewhat dispersed, they provide opportunities for community members to participate and interact actively.

Despite the challenge in identifying the specific stakeholders of this Community Food Centre, various significant stakeholders can be suggested. These include members of the local community, non-profit organisations, government agencies, community partners, food producers and suppliers, volunteers, donors and funders, and advocacy and policy groups.

Figure 39: Erika Morris 2020, Frontage of the Depot community food centre, accessed 04 May 2023. <http://thecitymag.concordia.ca/a-new-approach-to-food-security/>

Figure 41: Jimmy Chicaiza 2019, Volunteers at The Depot Community Food Centre serve a selection of healthy foods to community members., accessed 04 May 2023. <https://depotmtl.org/en/our-history/>

Figure 40: Garden of the Depot, accessed 04 May 2023. < https://depotmtl.org/en/gardens/>

Figure 42: Possible dining hall or event space of The Depot, accessed 04 May 2023. <https://depotmtl.org/en/our-history/>

Community Food Hall Osaka Nipponbashi

Location:	Osaka, Japan
Category:	Community food hall
Opening hours:	Monday – Sunday (10am-10pm)
Access:	10 min from station
Size/ scale:	Large
Concept:	Eat, fascinate, meet, participate, and connect
Context:	Highly activity area
Appearance:	In public plinth part of museum and archive
Focus/goal/vision:	Bringing people together, not only focussing on local people but also on tourists. Interaction with people around the world Overcoming language barriers. Sharing food and food cultures
Overall programme:	Cafes, restaurant, bars, eating areas, event spaces.
Social cohesion through spatial encounters:	Cafes, restaurant, bars, eating areas, event spaces

Figure 43: Outdoor experience of die open and closedness of the community food hall situated in the plinth of an archive <https://pantip.com/topic/41612045>

The community food and beverage establishment serve as a venue for intercultural exchange, focusing on Japanese cuisine and food culture. It provides a one-of-a-kind environment where individuals can interact with people from various countries, fostering communication and overcoming language barriers. The facility aims to contribute to the evolution of food and food culture by promoting cultural enrichment and facilitating exchanges. Through these initiatives, the establishment hopes to shape the future of global gastronomy and culinary practices. According to their website it is a commercial food and beverage establishment that serves as a venue for intercultural exchange, focusing on Japanese cuisine and food culture. So if the concept is commercially driven, what makes it a community food hall as the name says?

The possible factors to act as a community food hall experience in the food hall could be related to, for example, a community experience or feeling. Furthermore, the space layout could facilitate communal interactions and social engagement by incorporating entertainment options such as magic shows or music events. Additionally, the association with a hotel could further enhance the community aspect, as hotels also serve as gathering places that entail communities and, in this case, are integrated into the food hall concept. Moreover, the core concept of the food hall, characterized by keywords like 'eat, fascinate, meet, participate, connect,' could aim to foster a sense of community by cultivating new communities centred around food culture.

It provides a unique environment where individuals can interact with people from various countries, fostering communication and overcoming language barriers. The facility aims to contribute to the evolution of food and food culture by promoting cultural enrichment and facilitating exchanges. Through these initiatives, the establishment hopes to shape the future of global gastronomy and culinary practices.

Alongside the Citadines Namba Osaka hotel, the community food hall is situated in the basement of an archive building. Notable is its location on the outskirts of downtown Osaka, surrounded by multiple shopping facilities, hotels and along a busy five-lane road. The food hall's primary user base could consist of tourists who seek to indulge in Japanese culinary traditions, not only from the Citadines Hotel but also from other neighbouring hotels.

Regarding accessibility, the community food hall benefits from its eight-minute walking distance from Namba station, one of Osaka's major terminal stations. In addition, there are parking options nearby, including a parking lot within three minutes walking distance.

The precise stakeholder concept behind the community food hall's offerings could not be determined. However, examining the food businesses operating within the food hall indicates that most are private businesses or chains with multiple locations in Osaka and elsewhere in Japan. These organisations probably lease space within the food court; however, the extent of their participation in furnishing and financing is unknown, as it is unclear whether they independently assume these responsibilities or rely on an umbrella organisation or lessor.

The layout of the community food hall features a concentration of dining facilities surrounding the main dining area, which accommodates events with features such as a stage. This arrangement resembles the typical layout of food courts, in which eateries are situated in the centre. Notably, the hall has a sense of enclosure, with larger openings along the front facade reserved for dining areas. This enclosed design could be attributed to the previous function of the building, indicating its adaptation to the current purpose.
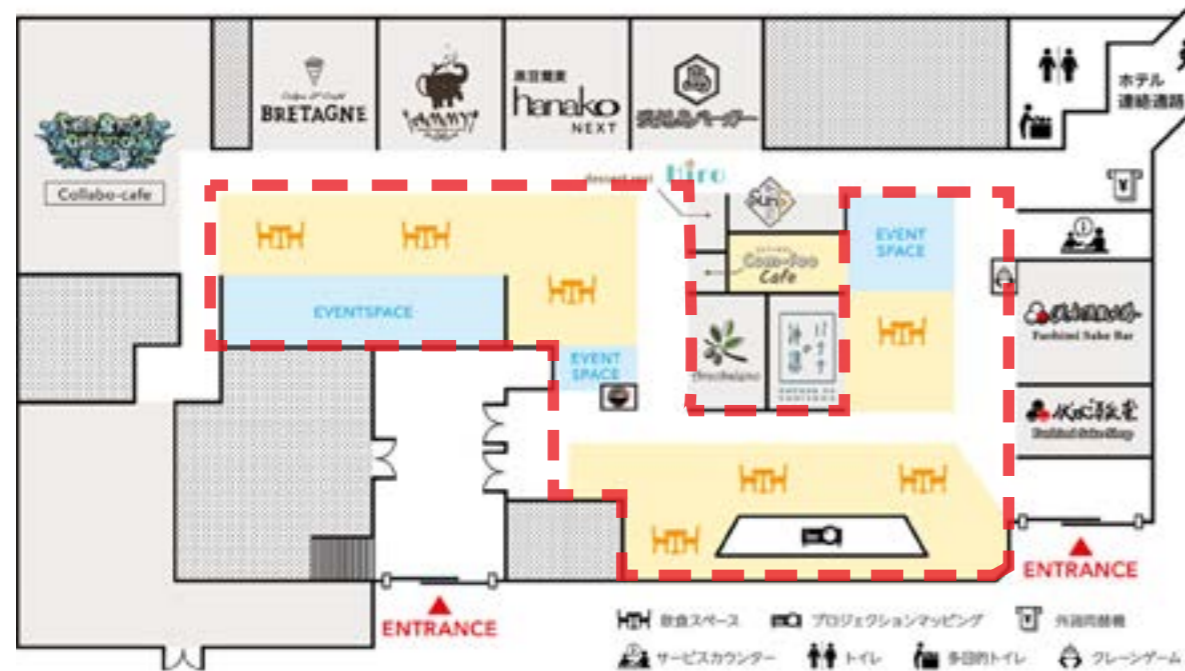
Figure 44: Floor guide, red dotted line shows area of interaction and participation because of surrounding bars, cafés and food shops <https://communityfoodhall.jp/en/floor>

Figure 46: Spatial appearance showing the dining area <https://pantip.com/topic/41612045>

Figure 45: The appearance of the food businesses <https://au.trip.com/travel-guide/shops/osaka/community-food-hall-osa-ka-nipponbashi-102644702/>

Figure 47: Spatial appearance showing the dining area and event spaces <https://communityfoodhall.jp/en/concept>

04   Reflection of the case studies on social cohesion

The case studies on social cohesion in community food initiatives provide valuable insight into their strategies for promoting social engagement and addressing food-related issues. These case studies illustrate the significance of community involvement, stakeholder collaboration, and the design of physical spaces in fostering social cohesion and sustainable food practices. This chapter will explain how the case studies correspond and how social cohesion is addressed or enhanced, thereby elucidating any distinctions, flaws, or similarities. They will then consider Levkoe and Wakefield's explanation of a community food centre.

The case study on social cohesion in community food initiatives provides valuable insight into their strategies for promoting social engagement and addressing food-related issues. These case studies illustrate the significance of community involvement, stakeholder collaboration, and the design of physical spaces in fostering social cohesion and sustainable food practices. This chapter will explain how the case studies correspond and how social cohesion is addressed or enhanced, thereby elucidating any distinctions, flaws, or similarities. They will then consider Levkoe and Wakefield's description of a community food centre.

Similarly, the community cafe encourages social engagement and healthy eating by redistributing surplus food. The initiative compensates for the limited physical space by organising alternative social activities, such as well-being walks. In alignment with Levkoe and Wakefield's emphasis on education and community-based strategies, teaching in the sense

of cooking classes or lectures can further empower community members to address food waste and insecurity.

The community centres or hubs employ food to connect people with nature, facilitate social interactions, and promote acquiring knowledge. While food is not their primary focus, it may serve as a point of entry. These initiatives provide opportunities for social interaction and participation, similar to the concept of community-based strategies proposed by Levkoe and Wakefield. Integrating allotments and various projects fosters community and provides educational resources about food cultivation and sustainability. Contributing to the success of these initiatives is the participation of stakeholders such as the housing organisation and Haringey Council.

The community food redistribution organisation primarily focuses on preventing food waste and enhancing individuals' health and well-being through food redistribution. Through food redistribution, the community food redistribution organisation focuses mainly on preventing food waste and improving the health and well-being of individuals. Although it may have limited social involvement within its facility and neighbourhood, the core objectives align with Levkoe and Wakefield's objectives of reducing food waste and enhancing nutrition. The organisation contributes to the overall sustainability of the food system by supporting frontline organisations and communities.

The urban food hubs described in the case studies showcase comprehensive approaches to social engagement and sustainable food production. These hubs educate individuals on circular food

production, offer spaces for learning and experiencing sustainable food practices, and promote social connections more extensively in the urban fabric than most of the other case studies. These hubs' design elements and programmatic considerations reflect Levkoe and Wakefield's concept of creating inclusive and inviting spaces that foster meaningful social engagement and facilitate community participation.

The concept of a community food centre aligns closely with the description provided by Levkoe and Wakefield. Within the food system, these centres prioritise food security, access to nutritious food, ecological sustainability, the reduction of social isolation, and community building. They provide meals, cooking and gardening classes, youth education programmes, and advocacy support, among other programmes and services. Emphasis is placed on fostering skills, personal growth, and community empowerment. The CFCs serve as forums where community members can voice their concerns, find support, and form friendships, fostering meaningful social connections and engagement.

On the other hand, the community food hIn contrast, the community food hall fosters intercultural communication and exchange. It emphasises Japanese cuisine and food culture explicitly to foster intercultural connections. The food hall aims to contribute to the evolution of global gastronomy and culinary practices by facilitating cultural enrichment and exchanges. Its location in a bustling area, surrounded by shopping centres and hotels, makes it easily accessible to tourists and locals. However, the community food hall's stakeholders must be clarified, although it will likely include private businesses, chains, and an umbrella organisation. The food court-like layout of the food hall consists of a concentration of dining facilities and a central dining area. While the community food hall may foster a sense of community through communal interactions and cultural experiences, its commercial nature and focus on particular cuisine distinguish it from the broader concept of the community food centre.

Overall, while each case study has its unique characteristics and limitations, they demonstrate varying degrees of compliance with the Levkoe and Wakefield-described concepts and principles. Some initiatives closely resemble the comprehensive and holistic approach of a community food centre, while others have a narrower focus on particular aspects, such as food redistribution or urban farming. The emphasis on social cohesion, community engagement, sustainable practices, and addressing food insecurity is evident in these initiatives, illustrating the significance of integrating multiple sectors and strategies throughout the food system to improve social cohesion.

Design aspects of creating community initiatives

This subchapter focuses on the design aspect of community food initiatives and how they can be adapted to enhance social cohesion. It examines current community food initiatives in London and other cities worldwide to gain insights into their design principles, spatial configuration, and desired effects. Understanding these initiatives makes it possible to define an architectural position and concept for a community food hub that can serve as a starting point for the design process.

Design is crucial in shaping community food initiatives to promote social cohesion. A well-designed space can facilitate social interaction, participation, and the development of social activities. It can encourage individuals to come together, share experiences, and build connections. Additionally, design considerations should address the specific needs and challenges of vulnerable community populations.

The spatial arrangement of community food initiatives should be carefully considered to promote social engagement. Various zones within the centre can be designated for cooking, dining, gardening, and socialising activities. In addition, the spatial programme should be responsive to the community's context and provide a

variety of spaces that accommodate various social activities. The design's flexibility permits the adaptation of spaces to the diverse needs and preferences of the community. For instance, communal dining areas can accommodate large group gatherings and more intimate encounters. Open kitchens can facilitate cooking classes where individuals can acquire and share culinary expertise. Outdoor areas could be incorporated to encourage gardening and provide additional socialising space.

Community food initiatives should be designed with a deep understanding of the local context, which includes considering the cultural, social, economic, and environmental factors that influence the community. By acknowledging and respecting the diversity within the community, the design can create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all individuals.

Furthermore, the design should address the specific challenges faced by the community. For instance, design elements such as visual cues or multilingual signage can facilitate communication and interaction if language barriers exist. Accessibility should also be prioritised to ensure that the space is inclusive for individuals with disabilities.

The design of community food initiatives should be driven by desired effects and outcomes that contribute to social cohesion. These effects can include increased social interaction, improved sense of belonging, enhanced community pride, and the development of social networks. By defining these desired effects, the design can be adapted to maximise their achievement.

For example, if the desired effect is to increase social interaction, the design should incorporate spaces that promote face-to-face communication and collaboration. If the goal is to foster a sense of belonging, the design can focus on creating a warm and inviting atmosphere that encourages individuals to connect with others. The design process should be guided by these desired effects and continuously evaluated to ensure their successful realisation.

The research on community food initiatives has yielded valuable examples and inspiration for informing design strategies and solutions during the design process. For food initiatives, it is evident that establishing a solid relationship with the surrounding urban context is essential. This can be accomplished through visual connections, such as incorporating spatial openings into the façade to create transparency and interaction with the environment. Visual solid connections encourage participation and curiosity among visitors, neighbours, and pedestrians, as they can observe the activities occurring inside.

Notable is that many case studies lack a strong visual connection to the context, frequently because they are housed in reused existing buildings, such as old bowling alleys. Openness and visual integration are emphasised when adequate funding is available, as exemplified by the Nourish Hub situated at the plinth of a social housing complex.

Furthermore, it is remarkable that community food initiatives frequently encompass multiple programs or spaces dedicated to social activities beyond food preparation and consumption. In one of the case studies, the community food hall is not solely a food market with food stands, but there is also space for relaxation and entertainment. Frequently, they offer spaces for events such as magic shows, dance performances, and music concerts. The Nourish Hub, for instance, provides cooking classes and office space for rent.

Community food initiatives are effectively utilised, with diverse programs tailored to meet the community's needs. For designing a food initiative, it is essential to consider a programme that addresses the particular needs of the urban environment, taking into account the users and stakeholders involved.

In conclusion, the case studies illustrate how community food initiatives provide valuable insights that can significantly influence the design process.

05 Conclusion

This study examined the role of community food initiatives in London and outside the UK in enhancing social cohesion. The findings emphasise the significance of addressing social structural issues while promoting social engagement through food-related activities. Food is a communication tool that brings people together and facilitates social interactions. Community food initiatives act as intermediaries, utilising food to foster interaction and participation, especially among individuals who face challenges such as language barriers, social exclusion, and loneliness.

The case studies investigated in Chapter 3 provided valuable insight into the approaches, strategies, spatial configurations, stakeholders, and design decisions used by community food initiatives to strengthen communities, promote social engagement, and address food-related issues. The findings demonstrated that community food initiatives that use food as a catalyst enhance social cohesion uniquely.

Community food initiatives exhibit variations and similarities in their objectives and approaches. The goals and strategies of community food initiatives vary and share similarities. Community centres, for example, may not prioritise food as their primary focus. However, they may recognise it as one of their tools for facilitating social activities and integrating social gathering spaces into their programmes. These centres encourage social participation through a variety of activities and programmes.

In contrast, the community food hub strategically employs food as a tool and builds its program format and social activities around it. Not only does it strengthen social cohesion within the community, but it also fosters relationships with the surrounding neighbourhood. On the other hand, community food enterprises may address environmental food issues on a larger scale but less emphasise social engagement among residents. This inclination is reflected in their design, which often appears more closed. The urban food hub and community food centre exhibit significant social involvement within a more extensive scale of the urban fabric through their program, activities, concept, and design choices, particularly evident in the urban food hub.

Many community initiatives rely on financial support from investors, government entities, and municipal authorities. Consequently, they often occupy existing structures based on existing floor plans. In contrast, the community food hall is driven by private businesses that generate revenue, enabling greater operational independence. Although the specific financial arrangements for the covered urban food hubs could be more precise, the Van Ness urban food hub appears to have a community-driven approach with support from investors, educational institutions, and municipal authorities, relying on volunteers and students from the UDC. As a result, the financial dependence of this urban food hub seems more pronounced. On the other hand, private organisations collaborating with an umbrella organisation and communities in Space & Matter's urban food hub implement greater financial autonomy, facilitating the realisation of new design concepts for the initiative.

Among the case studies, urban food hubs stand out with their concept in newly designed structures and their integration within a more extensive framework

of the urban social fabric. For example, the focus could lie on urban farming, which requires a substantial amount of outdoor space, or indoor vertical farming, which may be more suitable for cold climates or densely populated urban areas with limited available space. Design considerations for urban food hubs require attention to the necessary floor area. Additionally, the interplay between the openness and closedness of the facade and indoor and outdoor spaces should be considered, as it could impact the social engagement between the urban food hub and its surrounding environment. The Space & Matter's urban food hub design, with facade openings facilitating visual interaction between the interior and exterior, will likely attract residents and other visitors, fostering a sense of inclusion and awareness.

Overall, the research highlights the potential of community food initiatives to address social challenges and enhance social cohesion in various urban environments in London. Some initiatives could be effective long-term solutions compared to short-term emergency measures like food banks. By incorporating the principles proposed by Levkoe and Wakefield, community food centres and urban food hubs can significantly promote social cohesion, individual development, and neighbourhood revitalisation efforts. The research contributes to understanding how architecture can design community food initiatives that enhance social cohesion and serve as inclusive spaces for community members to connect, interact, and participate in food-related activities.

06 Discussion

The process of finding primary sources on the relationship between social cohesion and food was successful. Case studies clarified the relationship and addressed social challenges in London. However, defining the research's purpose, especially regarding design, was challenging. At first, it was unclear whether the goal was to identify concepts through categorizing community food initiatives or to explore design issues and understand stakeholder concepts.

Initially, there was a choice between conducting broader research encompassing multiple case studies or achieving a more detailed examination of specific cases. Due to the limited availability of first-determined concepts of community initiatives and challenges in scheduling appointments, a decision was made to pursue a more global study. Online resources became the primary source of information, as many initiatives provided their knowledge only on their websites. As a result, the research expanded to include community initiatives beyond the United Kingdom, utilizing scientific sources from various locations. However, this approach led to less comprehensive case studies as they couldn't be evaluated using the same parameters. Some initiatives were analysed through maps, while others relied on assumptions based on photographs. Another limitation was that concluding a single example within each category of community food initiatives needed more conclusive evidence due to significant variations in the size and programs offered by different community centres.
Nevertheless, this research provides a foundation for future specialized studies

iand a comprehensive categorization of community initiatives. Further studies could explore design implementation, stakeholder concepts, or financial aspects.

Although extensive research on urban food hubs using literature no longer fits within the research framework, research and analyses conclude that establishing an urban food hub positively impacts the urban fabric and social infrastructure. Studying current community food initiatives in London and other cities inspires initial concepts and informs the design process. Layout and functionality prioritize workflow, efficiency, and safety. Sustainable design principles are incorporated, including circularity, sustainable materials, water harvesting, and green roofs. Architects also design programs for social interactions, food system education, and social engagement.

In summary, urban food hubs hold architectural significance, positively impacting urban fabric and social infrastructure. They create a sustainable, resilient, and equitable food system, serving as models for replication in other cities in the future. The urban food hub serves as a unifying force, connecting the entire region and fostering the exchange of knowledge, meaningful interactions, engaging encounters, improved food access and security, economic development, education and skill development, cultural preservation and celebration, environmental sustainability, community building and social cohesion, health and well-being and employment prospects. It is pivotal in revitalizing the Olympic Park and addressing various challenges, including integrating existing residents, newcomers, neighbouring communities, and tourists.

Additionally, it fulfils a critical function by bridging currently separate areas and

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Note

08   Reflection graduation process

Although the graduation studio in Architecture is comparable to several other master's track project studios, I believe that the distinction lies in the length of time and the fact that the graduation process brings together everything you have learned throughout your studies. Research plays a significant role in the design, especially at the beginning of the design process, but also in later stages. The graduation studio for Architectural Design crossovers is also known as a research studio, where preliminary research ultimately leads to a design, and a crucial dialogue between the two is essential. I will reflect on how I have occasionally undervalued this in the following paragraphs.

Starting in your first year of architecture, you will be required to engage with designing and the design process. With each project, you and your instructors will evaluate your work more critically. While the design process may not be entirely new, the initial graduation phase is particularly novel. Until now, the primary focus has been on concept formation, followed by design. However, it is only during graduation that preliminary research becomes a significant focus.

In this graduation studio, there is a strong emphasis on research that swiftly leads to identifying a theme. Through the aid of specific urban analyses, this process leads to identifying problems, developing solutions, and exploring architectural relevance within a specific urban context.

I overestimated the research as it is not one of my greatest strengths. Consequently, this was a challenging period during which my design may not have initially stand out in terms of research. Looking back, I realise that the investigation could have a deeper focus, and information could have been gathered earlier.

Nonetheless, it has been an immensely instructive process, highlighting the significance of research in making a design more academically robust.

In reality, clients often ask architects to design a building or concept that aligns with a specific area vision formulated by multiple stakeholders, such as municipalities, urban planners, and residents. Alternatively, the location may already be predetermined. However, in this graduation studio, you can start without any constraints and explore any direction you desire, which was overwhelming and made it challenging to determine where to begin. Even if a specific theme was in mind and the location is London, I still encountered challenges in taking the initial steps.

I have always been greatly inspired by food. However, when it came to starting the design process without fixating too much on a specific location or subject, I found it particularly challenging. I experienced numerous setbacks during the initial phase. I thought, having a clear direction, topic, or area from the beginning would expedite conducting analyses and research. However, it turned out that this was different. So, my research tutor told me to step back and zoom out, examining London as a whole, considering where I could be relevant as an architect with the design process in mind. My primary focus was on issues like food poverty that required addressing through action plans or solutions from a municipal perspective. I also thought that phenomena such as food poverty or insecurity might persist indefinitely, which posed a challenge for me as an architect to perceive the relevance of these issues.

Once again, I took a step back, a process that had to be repeated several times, to question my architectural relevance and how research could support the design

process. I often wanted to quit during this time, but the desire to graduate was too strong. Being surrounded by friends who already work further motivated me not to give up. Additionally, conversations with others about my research and emotions proved beneficial. These discussions not only gave me energy but also provided me with new perspectives each time.

The continuous and critical feedback ultimately sparked the idea of exploring how, as an architect, I could bridge the gap between people and food and translate this into a concept, master plan, or building. The focus shifted away from a specific redistribution centre and food poverty, as solving these issues alone would not address the underlying problems that persist. Instead, I redirected my attention to social cohesion and its relationship with food, which provided a stronger foundation for further research.

In collaboration with the research tutor, it was decided to delve into this topic to study relevant case studies. These case studies aimed to shed light on my research questions and offer insights and ideas for a design that utilises food as a tool to foster or strengthen social cohesion. Community food initiatives emerged as potential intermediaries in this context, as they bring people together through the shared food experience.

Ultimately, the essence of both the research and design was centred around "bringing people together through food," a fundamental aspect that I occasionally overlooked but rediscovered along the way.

I found the approach and structure of my research quite clear. Initially, I aimed to investigate the interconnectedness between social issues, social cohesion through food, and community food initiatives, relying on relevant literature for support. Subsequently, I planned to delve deeper into this topic through case studies, which would provide valuable insights into the design process.

However, I soon encountered difficulties in selecting the initial case studies.

The first four case studies I had in mind were based in London, and I had planned to visit them during the first site visit. However, this proved more challenging than anticipated, as I could not secure appointments or obtain in-depth information. In three out of four cases, I could only observe the community food initiatives from the outside, as I either couldn't schedule a meeting or didn't feel welcomed. Additionally, these initiatives had less emphasis on food than I had initially assumed. Consequently, I could only utilise one of the four as a viable case study.

Furthermore, I discovered that the concept of community food hubs, which had emerged from the literature, was almost non-existent in London. As a result, my progress stagnated, and several weeks were lost. Fortunately, discussing these challenges with my research tutor proved helpful. He advised me to step back and clarify my research goals and what I, as an architect, aimed to achieve with the knowledge gained for the design. I realised that I had searched for answers while my research question had already indicated that I had found the result.

To move forward, I reformulated my research question to 'How is social cohesion strengthened through food in community food initiatives?'. This step back allowed me to gain momentum and make the decision not to focus on community food hubs overly but instead on community food initiatives in general, using them as case studies. With abundant examples available, the next step was to categorise and prioritise those from London, as they would provide a more comprehensive understanding of their functioning within the urban context. If there wasn't one in London, I determined somewhere else in the UK or outside the UK since they also could be helpful. Eventually, I selected one example from each category, resulting in eight case studies for further analysis and discussion.

The next challenge I faced was determining what specific information I wanted to gather from the case studies. However, for

a long time, I failed to recognise the value of these case studies for the design process.

What was my ultimate goal? Was it about gathering data on square meters, generating program ideas, understanding spatial interactions, making aesthetic design decisions, or considering contextual aspects? Or was it simply about categorising community food initiatives?

Given the limited word count, I struggled to envision what valuable research information to integrate into the design process effectively. It became even more complicated when I discussed the wide range of community food initiatives as case studies with my research tutor. Completing the research paper after P2 was challenging, and I kept postponing it. For this reason, it was beneficial to pause the research temporarily and focus on the design phase. However, I realised something was missing during the conceptualisation, sketch designs, subsequent iterations, and tutor feedback. I needed the support and motivation that had emerged from the research. Simultaneously, what I wanted to extract from the case studies and my goal became clear.

For a long time, there needed to be a stronger connection between my research and design. However, by taking these steps, everything gradually fell into place, and the value of research only strengthened the relationship between research and design.

The case studies ultimately illustrated how spatial interactions and food concepts could unite people. They also highlighted contextual aspects that influenced specific design decisions, such as the building's shape, program layout, material selection, and the balance between openness and privacy in the facade. This architecture project's design and research process contributed significantly to a deeper understanding of contextual factors and user needs, ultimately influencing the final design outcome, which answered one of the reflection questions.

During the initial phases leading up to P3, I harboured a sense of accomplishment, convinced that my endeavours had yielded commendable results. However, I lost my confidence and motivation because of the relatively harsh criticism I received at the p3, which was disappointing but somehow fair. I devoted considerable effort in the preceding weeks, assuming that I had laid a solid foundation for the forthcoming P4. However, it turned out to be different, as some issues still needed to be addressed, and I was too adamant about certain decisions and hardly receptive to change.

The next step was to distance myself from the graduation project and take a moment to self-reflect. This period was critical. I needed to absorb and process the feedback because I was discouraged. In addition, it allowed me to rethink everything, including design choices, materialisation, programmatic considerations, building technology, and how well the design fits into the surrounding urban context. Although it appeared daunting initially, I began to make progress after a few weeks because I was implementing the feedback from the tutors in my design.

During this time, I also began to understand what the teachers were trying to convey, and I realised that my tenacity in sticking to my own design choices was possibly holding me back. This introspective moment was beneficial because it helped me realise that the entire graduation process is a developmental journey facilitated by tutor feedback. If I failed to implement the teachers' input and ignored their arguments, the purpose of tutoring and the growth process itself would be undermined.

I've realised how significant research is in the design process. In addition, I have finally recognised the role that an architect could have in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. As an architect, I play a bridging role in facilitating the relationship between people, buildings, and cities, with food as a critical component and enhancing urban resilience. Throughout my graduation journey, the pivotal evaluation at P3 has been a profound revelation, reigniting my awareness of these vital aspects. This newfound realisation will not only help me complete my graduation project successfully, but it will also shape my future endeavours.

Certain design decisions will be critically examined in the coming weeks. Furthermore, appropriate considerations for functionality, aesthetics, and financial aspects must be made. Financial concerns may take precedence over functionality in some cases, while aesthetics or financial aspects may take precedence over functionality in others.

09 Appendix

Mildmay Community Centre

Location:	London, Haringey
Category:	Community centre
Opening hours:	Monday-Friday (9:30am-5:30pm)
Size/ scale:	Medium
Context:	Quiet Residential neighbourhood
Appearance:	It is situated in its own building, grey facade
Focus/goal/vision:	Tackle inequality and empower our local communities for social change and support health and wellbeing. Reduce social isolation and loneliness. Bringing people together to break down barriers, promote shared understanding and strengthen social cohesion. Improving health and wellbeing. Advancing education and skills
Overall programme:	Foodbank, Community kitchen, services for families and Young people, community garden, and arts events space
Social cohesion through spatial encounters:	Community café, food coop, community kitchen, services for families and Young people, community garden, and arts events
Social cohesion through social activities:	Physical wellbeing (indoor bowls, exercise classes, roller skating), Children & young people (After school clubs, youth clubs, Under 5's groups) Food hub (Food coop, community café, food growing), Mental wellbeing (Creative activities, Men's group, Golden oldies social club, Art activities, game activities (bowling, bingo), community activities (woodwork and jewelry making, mental health support, youth club, after school club, cooking lessons, sharing recipes)
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Community food growing project that tries to create a space for residents, local people to come and learn about food growing. They do that for example with classes for young people. 75% of the people there don't have a garden so it's an opportunity for them to give them what they maybe need. The wonderful thing about that is normally you use your garden for yourself or your family but sharing a garden in a community facility that bonds and ensures interaction.

A garden can be a place for building community and growing food locally can have a positive impact in the neighbourhood.

The food coop people pay per head once in a month a small amount of money and in return they get about four times that value of food back.

Another example of a community centre where food is not the focus, but they use it as a tool for people to be with nature, interact and gain knowledge. It helps against food insecurity and inequalities, but it also bonds people, bring people together by sharing recipes, cooking together, take cooking lessons or grow together.

There is a wide variety of programme and activities to look for social interaction. It's a hub or a collection of spaces of encounter for people to interact.