

# Mapping Your Network

Uncovering Connections and Opportunities in Your Local Food Ecosystem

## Mapping Your Network

Mapping your local food network can be a powerful way to visualise existing connections and spot potential new partnerships. By organising your network into four key areas: Grow, Make, Move, and Share, you gain a clearer understanding of how your food ecosystem operates and where improvements can be made.

### Grow

The "Grow" circle encompasses all the individuals, groups, or organisations involved in the cultivation of food. This includes local farmers, community gardens, and urban agriculture initiatives. Consider:

- **Local Farmers:** Who supplies your produce? Are there nearby farms worth exploring for partnerships?
- **Community Gardens:** Are there spaces where community members grow their own food?
- **Agriculture Initiatives:** Are there programs promoting sustainable farming practices?

### Make

The "Make" circle captures those who transform raw ingredients into food products. This can include local bakeries, food processors, and producers. Look at:

- **Bakeries and Cafes:** Do you connect with any local bakeries using locally sourced ingredients?
- **Food Processors:** Are there small-scale producers making jams, sauces, or other goods?
- **Artisanal Producers:** Who's crafting unique, locally inspired products?

### Move

The "Move" circle involves the logistics of getting food from one place to another. This includes distributors, transport companies, and delivery services. Think about:

- **Distributors:** Are there local distributors that prioritise local products?
- **Transport Companies:** How does food physically move around your area?
- **Delivery Services:** What services are available to bring food directly to consumers?

## Share

The "Share" circle highlights those who help distribute food to the community, such as food redistribution, markets, shops, pop-ups and restaurants. Reflect on:

- **Redistribution:** Are there organisations helping ensure food reaches those in need?
- **Local Markets:** Do you collaborate with farmers' markets or co-ops?
- **Restaurants and Eateries:** Which local eateries prioritise locally sourced ingredients?

## Strong Connections and Growth Opportunities

As you fill in each circle, highlight where your connections are strongest. Perhaps you have a robust relationship with a local farm or a reliable distributor. At the same time, identify areas where new connections could be beneficial. Could you partner with a new bakery, or is there a chance to team up with an innovative food delivery service?

## Starting Close to Home

Begin by identifying partners close to home. Even a few collaborations can significantly impact how your food moves through the community and who it reaches. For instance, a partnership with a local farmer might lead to fresher produce for a neighbourhood café, benefiting both businesses and consumers.

## Visualising Your Network

To aid in visualising your network:

- **Circular Web Diagram:** Create a diagram with circles labeled Grow, Make, Move, and Share. Draw arrows to show connections and use different colors to indicate the strength of each relationship.
- **Photo Collage:** Compile a group photo collage of your local partners. This not only personalises your network but also celebrates the community collaboration involved in your food system.

By mapping your food network, you can better understand the complexities of your local food system and work towards strengthening and expanding it.