

Oakland, USA

Oakland Food Policy Council: towards a sustainable, local and equitable food system

In 2010, the Food Policy Council released its first strategic plan, 'Transforming the Oakland Food System: A Plan for Action', advocating for a local and customised policy approach to bring about greater resource efficiency in the local food system.

Urban NEXUS Case Story 2014 - 17

August 2014

The project in brief

The catalyst for the Oakland Food Policy Council (OFPC) came in a 2005 Local Government report commissioned by the Mayor's Office for Sustainability, which sought to establish a more equitable and sustainable food system in Oakland. In response, local government, residents and NGOs founded the Oakland Food Policy Council. The OFPC is comprised of a 21-member volunteer board with representatives from the local council and county health department, numerous NGOs, consultancy firms and other private enterprises. The Council's strategic plan, a comprehensive set of policy recommendations, seeks to 'transform the local food system' into one that promotes local production, waste management, energy savings and positive health outcomes. Ultimately, the OFPC intends to reach its goal to source 30% of Oakland's food needs from within the City and surrounding region and to create a "zero-waste" food system, where organic waste is converted for agricultural use. In order to strengthen the community and make fresh, locally sourced food available, the Council aims to expand urban agriculture initiatives, increase the number of farmers' markets, recycling rates through inter-institutional linkages between government agencies. The OFPC additionally provides funding, technical systems and land to carry out their plans. In order to foster community-led initiatives and raise awareness, educational campaigns in the form of workshops and civic meetings are held in order to engage citizens.

What makes it "Urban NEXUS"?

The Council's policies and structure target the local and regional food system to holistically integrate food and waste sectors, making it an excellent example of an institutional NEXUS for resource optimization of systems and services. The broad public and private stakeholder support, evidenced in the Council's own volunteer board, breaks down institutional silos and encourages interaction. While initially, \$50,000 seed funding was provided by local government, at present, the Council receives its primary support from the Department of Public Health, a number of non-profits and community fund-raising initiatives. Together, the Urban NEXUS supports the Council's aim to expand metropolitan agriculture, waste management and economic growth while generating positive public health outcomes.



| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Date | 2008-ongoing |
| NEXUS Sectors | Food-Energy-Education-Health-Environment |
| NEXUS Innovations | Communications + User behavior; Institutions |
| Scale | City-wide |
| Budget | \$US 100,000 |

Urban NEXUS Definition

The Urban NEXUS is an approach to the design of sustainable urban development solutions. The approach guides stakeholders to identify and pursue possible synergies between sectors, jurisdictions, and technical domains, so as to increase institutional performance, optimize resource management, and service quality.

It counters traditional sectoral thinking, trade-offs, and divided responsibilities that often result in poorly coordinated investments, increased costs, and underutilized infrastructures and facilities. The ultimate goal of the Urban NEXUS approach is to accelerate access to services, and to increase service quality and the quality of life within our planetary boundaries.

ICLEI / GIZ 2014

Further Reading

Oakland Food Policy Council official website: <http://oaklandfood.org/> (20 Aug 2014)

Oakland Food Policy Council, 2012, Transforming the Oakland Food System: A plan for action: <https://docs.google.com/a/sciencespo.fr/file/d/0B-7qYKICGHyLSV9iMV9uVjhrbkE/edit> (20 Aug 2014)

Oakland Food Policy Council (OFPC), 2014. Quick Facts: <http://oaklandfood.org/resources/faq/quick-facts/> (20 Aug 2014)

GIZ and ICLEI, 2014, Operationalizing the Urban NEXUS: towards resource efficient and integrated cities and metropolitan regions, GIZ Study: www.iclei.org/urbannexus

Scope for improvement

This NEXUS policy approach focuses directly on the core sectors of food, agriculture and waste management and in this regard, it succeeds. However, to more effectively achieve these goals in the future, it might seek to improve the integration of other services and facilities. For example, through systemically taking stock of available land in Oakland, via food mapping which is currently available for urban farming. Further, the policy initiatives could consider addressing social relations and behaviors within the community as part of their initiatives.

Replication

The specificity of the Council's advocacy and customised urban policy is in line with the City's 2006 Zero Waste Strategic Plan. However the methodology of the policy approach could be appropriated and applied in different jurisdictions and locations, with sufficient customisation to local geographic and cultural context so that other cities in the US could embark on a legislative approach to make essential food systems more efficient and sustainable.

Acknowledgements

Authors: Angèle Cauchois, Martin Abbot, Chaitanya Kanury, Louise Cousyn, and Victoria Vital Estrada (Master GLM, Sciences Po - ICLEI Capstone Project)

Editors: Lucy Price, Louisa Weiss (ICLEI World Secretariat)



On behalf of:



The Urban NEXUS project 2013-2014 was funded by GIZ on behalf of BMZ to develop the "Operationalization of the NEXUS approach in cities and metropolitan regions". The Urban NEXUS project included: a baseline study and report (GIZ and ICLEI, 2014), the identification and preparation of case studies and shorter case stories, and the design and implementation of action-oriented pilot projects supported by the German Development Cooperation. ICLEI, as implementing partner of the Urban NEXUS project, is responsible for the content of this Case Story.

ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability has various series of brief Case Stories focusing on urban sustainability activities of ICLEI Members and local governments that are part of projects and processes across the globe.

The media are free to use the content and pictures of this case story, giving reference to GIZ and ICLEI: www.iclei.org/publications.

ICLEI World Secretariat, Kaiser-Friedrich-Straße 7, 53113 Bonn, Email: urban.research@iclei.org © GIZ and ICLEI August 2014