

# Co-Creating Sustainable Food Futures:

integrating perspectives from farm to fork for local food system transformations

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"Food System Transformation –Role of Research"



# Co-creating local food systems in small towns: Why?



- Urban food strategies , mostly in bigger cities
- Small towns between urban and rural realities > combining the different perspectives
- Participatory process allows to study local reality (von Unger, 2014) and engage actors in transformation process (Hebinck & Page, 2017)

# Research questions

- What can a participatory process for developing a food strategy look like in small towns? Which adaptations need to be made compared to bigger cities?
- What are the goals and needs of the different food system actors for the future of the food system?

# 245 food system actors in Wädenswil

Agriculture (organic)



Processing



Retail



Gastronomy



Schools & social institutions



Supporting institutions



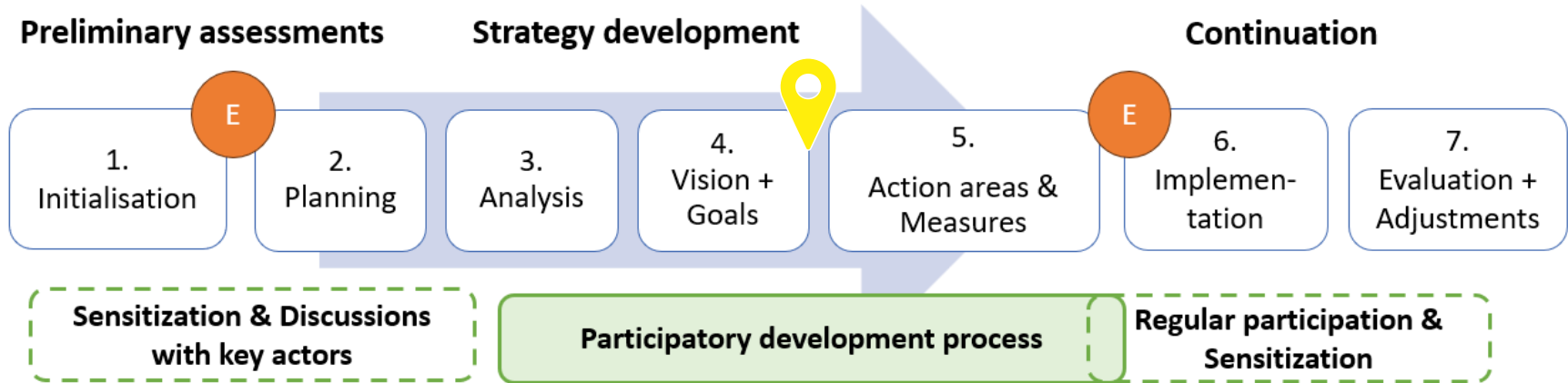
## Goal for Wädenswil

“Promotion and development of a local, resilient food system and local products”

- Masterplan Energie & Klima 2030+ Wädenswil



# Participatory process of developing a food strategy



Bezzola (2023), based on Moragues et al. (2013)

# Participatory methods in the process

## Vision & Goals

- Workshop with each actor group  
(*Agriculture , Retail & processing ,  
Gastronomy , Social institutions , Enabling  
organizations )*  
+ Interviews & survey
- «Low-key» participation (offline  
and online) for civil society

## Measures

- Workshop per action field  
+ Survey to validate &  
prioritize measures

## Guiding questions to identify goals & needs of the actors

- What does a “future proof” agriculture and food industry in Wädenswil look like for you?
- What is needed to get to this future?



# Local adaptations based on preliminary assessment

- **Wording**
  - «Food system » not clear as a term > «Land- und Ernährungswirtschaft»
  - «Future concept for the agrifoodsector » rather than food strategy
  - «Exchange » rather than workshop
- Defining **action fields** before participatory process, based on existing food strategies



# Results Workshops:

## Perspectives on the future food system

- Innovation ~~, research~~ & cooperation
- Climate -friendly & site -adapted agricultural production > **Sustainable** & site-adapted agricultural production
- Local **& fair** food value chains
- No Food Waste & Circular Economy
- Sustainable & healthy diets **for everyone**
- Sensitization & Education

# Results Workshops: Perspectives on the future food system



- **Local & fair food value chains** (*more value generation for farmers , local sales opportunities* )
- **Sustainable & site -adapted agricultural production** (*Preservation of agricultural land, diversification* )



- **Local & fair food value chains** (*diversity in food system, further existence of small businesses, avoiding competition of local retailers & direct sales*)
- **Sustainable & healthy diets for all** (*sustainable consumption patterns , accessible for people with low budgets* )



- **Local & fair food value chains** (*diversity in food system, more direct sales*)
- **Food waste & Circular economy** (*Avoid food waste for environmental & financial reasons*)
- **Sustainable & healthy diets for all** (*sustainable consumption patterns , accessible for people with low budgets* )



- **Sustainable & healthy diets for all** (*healthy & balanced diet for everyone , pleasure of eating* )
- **Food waste & Circular economy** (*Avoid food waste for environmental & financial reasons*)

# Results Workshops:

## Needs to get there

### Education & sensitization

- Knowledge on sustainable food systems > reduce complexity
- Visibility of local products / sales points

### Collaboration

- Bundling resources (knowledge, machines, ...)
- Join forces for local marketing

### Supportive policies & regulations

- Agriculture : more independence, less national regulations, better support of small farmers
- Prioritization of local products / local, small businesses

### Infrastructure & financing

- Affordable infrastructure for processing & stocking
- (Financial) support for projects / start-ups

# Discussion

- **Process needs to be adapted to local context**
  - Needs regular exchange with key actors & time
- **Perspectives of food system actors present at workshops were not so different**
  - Might only show, when we bring them together
  - How to reach those with different perspectives?
- **Wish for collaboration is big, but so is the need for support**
  - Exchange with enabling environment > mobilization
- **Easy to «point fingers»**
  - Second round of workshops with a focus on activation

# Literature

Bezzola, T. (2023). Ernährungsstrategien für alle – Partizipation und Transformation in kleineren Städten. Zwischenbericht Grundlagenetappe.

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**Thank you for listening and  
your inputs & questions!**

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[Project «Ernährungsstrategien für Alle»](#)

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