



The Boost Recipe for a Regenerative Local Food Economy

Cali, Colombia. May 2022
Proposed by Délice Network & Food Union Media

There are many layers to the food sector within a city's economy, from the Food produced locally to the food distribution, the foodservice sector, and all the side sectors relying on these industries. The impact of this mega-sector can be monitored through figures such as employment or growth. It is how we have looked at the food sector for decades.

However, in 2021, our perception of Food has drastically changed. The tons of potatoes produced are no longer the sole indicator. The trend is different.

Food will always remain an important sector that will provide economic growth and jobs to citizens of a city. But today, financial monitoring is shifting to include quality assessment and any additional added value that the activity can bring at the local level.

The local production has the best value when distributed and consumed locally. More and more business models are reviewed with consumers willing to pay the fair price and entrepreneurs looking to reduce the intermediaries to reduce costs and control quality.

How can city food strategy build pillars that enable a diverse, engaged, sustainable and viable local food economy? Check out the Boost Recipe!

ABOUT THE DISH:

A Regenerative Food Economy

- To re-grow after loss or damage
- To bring new and more vigorous life (especially in economic terms)
- To replenish, renew, rebuild.



THE MAIN INGREDIENTS:

1. Restaurants and hospitality businesses

- **Raise quality through certification programs**
 - Have started a program to certify restaurants. Incentivises development in-line with tourism goals and objectives.
 - Restaurant certification program in-line with Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Always give priority to quality**
 - Respect seasonality, even in a challenging climate: it can become your asset (Chile en Nogada example)
 - **Ambition:** 1/3 of all tourism spend should be spent on local food!
- **Build Bridges between restaurants and different other local partners**
 - Join forces between the restaurants. Forced by the pandemic, to be supported in the long term (Bristol Food Union / GUT – Gastronomic Union of Tuscon)
 - Challenges: how to push more collaboration between restaurants and hotels? (Les Petites Cantines in a Lyon Hotel)
- **Actively increase the promotion of local producers**
 - Listed on menu's
 - Profiled in-venue
 - Meet the producer talks and events
 - Helsinki markets all businesses equally, so avoids any competition around marketing outputs

2. Tourism and destination place-making

- **Develop the right common strategy:**
Quality food products and tourism – **virtuous circle** – inextricably linked.
Development of both can go hand-in-hand
- Develop new **food places**: closing streets to turn them into food events
- **Create new economic opportunities for your food partners:**
 - Sponsoring coffee breaks of international events with good, local food
 - Improve the food offer in all events (cultural, sports and business)
- **Focus on your local ambassadors**
 - Build pride in local food culture through local people – encourage them to become ambassadors of a place.
 - Food Tourism does not exist: if the locals choose some food places, then the tourists will come



- **Action:** create campaign with taxi drivers: implement a QR code in taxis that show people good food places to go.
- Same with **tour guides**. Tours often do lots of programming, but not necessarily connected into local knowledge on the best local food businesses (example: GastroTours)
- City ambassadors programme: For the month of June, ambassadors get 50% off industry experiences (Montreal)

Possible improvements of the recipe:

- *How can you work to improve the quality of restaurants that have no need for more business?*
- *When you have a local & national reputation, how do you build an international image?*

3. Youth inclusion and job creation

- **It's not just about the restaurant industry**
 - Not only for being chefs but also to be producers of local products – young farmer projects, new entrants. The young can be supported!
 - Scholarships for bar tenders
- **Encourage food and hospitality vocations**
 - Disadvantaged youths have training for free with a view to getting them employed in restaurants
 - Mentoring and activities that encourage young people. For example, one of the prizes for 'El authentic sabor caleno' involves a trip to other regions of Colombia – experience and knowledge transfer
- **Engage the youth on the challenges of tomorrow**
 - Educate students about food culture's importance from a financial economic development perspective
 - Train your students to cook local cuisine – honour local food culture and not just focus on international gastronomy
 - Holistic food education to inspire food leaders of tomorrow: staff and educators will be more motivated if a project has strong social values
 - Extend the concept of sustainability to staff managers
- **Advocate for the improvement of working conditions**
 - Work on the informal job market
 - Better consideration of social welfare and working conditions
 - Increase recognition of front & back of house staff as a rewarding, respected & highly skilled career path. Food related careers fairs in schools.



4. Building good food culture

- **Focus on local and healthy product**
 - Local pride matters: Recognise your own value & return to your origin
 - Chefs using local ingredients not commonly known restaurants showcase them in order to inspire others
 - Adapt to meet the fashions – vegan, vegetarian, etc.

- **Support local food economy**
 - Highlight importance of gastronomy: 1/3 of all tourist income will be spent on food
 - Communicate about the businesses & projects included in the local circuit and the cost from farm to plate
 - Support for local businesses focusing on healthy products: Money stays within the region with strong benefit to local economies
 - Possibly creates a snowball effect, led by strong reputation on gastronomy

- **Communicate on the good and the positive**
 - Develop the image of a city or region
 - Promote the original and the unique: Highlight essential ingredients as ancestral ingredients and climate sensible ingredients
 - Chefs as ambassadors to educate visitors and local people about use of local ingredients

- **Kids are tomorrow's food buyers**
 - Improve kids' menu in restaurants
 - Create social spaces for youth – away from or outside of fast-food places

Possible improvements of the recipe:

- Lack of cultural exchange – how do you drive more cultural promotion and sharing of best practise?
- How to communicate ethics and values?

OTHER INGREDIENTS:

- Enabling policy environment - local food plan, plus resources!
- Biodiverse local food ecosystem - access and options at every economic level
- Relationship between city food strategy, tourism and hospitality
- Relationship between health and well-being strategy
- Focus on job creation and youth unemployment
- Consider food skills essential - resource training and education opportunities (Growing, transforming, cooking)
- Local infrastructure and collaborative distribution networks
- Business collaboration on buying essential services and equipment
- In the business of building a place-based culture of good food - good for people, good for the earth, good for business.