

The food system and how Hope makes a difference

The food system has many flaws:

- People on low incomes can't afford to eat, or eat badly (RESULT: food poverty and obesity)
- Food is wasted
- Supply and access is largely controlled by a few corporations (RESULT: no local economic advantage)
- Quality of food is often poor (RESULT – obesity, ill health)
- There are food deserts and food that could grow food sits empty

Local food action often focuses on providing new means of access to higher quality but expensive food for people who can afford it – typically, farmers markets – or focuses on food waste, which is less important than food poverty.

Or, it focuses on offering food banks as a solution to food poverty.

These are not effective or complete solutions

Food banks are no solution to food poverty. They are unsustainable, undignified, meet the needs of people only in crisis, are un-coordinated and misused. They offer no route out of poverty for people in need, just a culture of dependency. They do nothing to enable change¹.

Food waste is a problem, but the scandal is that this is food that should be made available to people in poverty, through controlled access, not just to anyone. The issue with waste is who eats it, not just that it exists².

Farmers markets are fine for people with money, but they are beyond the reach of people on low incomes. We need to find ways to bring farmer's products to people at fair prices.

- Everyone agrees on bringing more land into cultivation in urban areas, but getting enough is a challenge.

¹ <https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/big-hunger>

² See: https://www.bighospitality.co.uk/Article/2017/10/18/Angela-Hartnett-on-why-chefs-need-to-tackle-food-poverty#.Wemvnh8r_i0.twitter

Hope believes in providing radical, multi-dimensional solutions about food, tackling food poverty and addressing food distribution and recovery of urban land for agriculture

The simple food bank model

You get donations from supermarkets

You give it to people

An unsustainable model

The Hope food model - tackling poverty and creating a sustainable food system

We source food from many sources, including growing lots of healthy food ourselves and getting from farmers

We train people to grow food as a route out of unemployment

We give food to people with nothing in our day centre

We supply food at discount prices to people on low incomes

We teach people how to cook as a route out of unemployment

We teach people to cook so they are healthier

We recycle community assets and train to build wealth in the community

How food is central to Hope's mission



Everyone has to eat. Whilst housing is vital you can live without housing for a while, but you have to eat every single day.

Providing food to people in need is the cornerstone of Hope's work.

But Hope does more with food, because the growing, sourcing and preparing, cooking, giving and selling of food offers other opportunities. We find ways to use food for wider good, for people and communities.

Food is a gateway: by offering food or sharing it, you can create companionship, provide opportunity to offer other services, and encourage people to do other things, like training. Learning to cook is a gateway to a career.

Food enables good health, where it is comprised of the right things and meets dietary needs. Learning about food and how to cook means a person can look after their own health. Food by growing and eating offers opportunities to improve health.

Food enables work: Catering is a trade that offers potential for a career and higher salaries: it need not be a dead end job on low wages, if you work at it. Selling catering can offer financial return to the charity. Growing, selling and sorting food provides work opportunities.

Economics: The growing or sale of food offers potential to generate income. Instead of money spent on food just passing straight to the hands of major corporates, let's try to share some of that spend to build local community assets and services.

Food builds communities: Most food we use is donated, or comes through partnerships with shops, restaurants, charities, schools, churches, supermarkets and farmers. Sharing what is available builds communities.

Hope: grows food and trains people to grow it - finds food - sells and gives away food - trains people to cook – trains people to work with food