



Food for All is an anti-hunger collective that takes its cue from the London Food Link (<http://www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink/>), functioning as a dynamic network organization to bring everyone in Singapore who is interested in, and taking action, on food issues together in dialogue, discussion and collaboration!

This summary, presented in highly accessible tables and bullet points, is the product of preliminary research conducted from 2007-08 on the issues of local hunger, local agriculture, food security, ethical food, nutrition, and the gaps within the local food system requiring both immediate and long-term action.

Food for All's mission is to encourage conversations amongst various stakeholders in the food industry – producers, consumers and everyone in between - in order to achieve the aim of creating an equitable and sustainable food system in Singapore and beyond.

Our vision is a world with *Food for All!* Bon apertit!

ISSUES COVERED:

- Local hunger
- Local agriculture
- Food security
- Food safety, ethical foods and nutrition (incl. eating disorders)
- Overseas food programmes
- Other food-related environmental issues

LOCAL HUNGER

- , Local hunger issues are currently being further investigated under Food for All's "Sector Scan of Food Rations Programmes", a survey supported by the Community Development Councils (CDCs). See appendix.

	<i>Main Issue</i>	<i>Actions Taken</i>	<i>Actions Forward</i>
1. Significant number of hungry and poor elderly couples/individuals and low income families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment • High cost of transport restricting access to jobs, cheaper food sources • Ignorance about food rations programmes (dried/cooked food distribution) amongst the needy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Door-knocking by RCs/ NCs/VWOs/NGOs to find hungry and poor people and refer them to FRPs • Financial and job assistance from CDCs, RCs and VWOs • Food drives by schools, companies and youth groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed research into reasons for and factors contributing to local poverty • Systems whereby "beneficiaries" can do token community work in exchange for food and/or pay token amount for month's supply of food
2. Significant number of hungry migrant workers (male contract workers and female domestic workers) or provision of culturally inappropriate food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low and low-middle income families cutting FDWs rations to bare min • Insufficient food/wages given to contract workers • No food provided when contract workers in legal disputes • Food costs taken out of workers wages • Kitchen utensils confiscated from dorms as punishment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ad-hoc food rations programmes set up by migrant groups TWC2 (www.twc2.org.sg) and HOME (www.home.org.sg) • Provision of dinners/breakfasts by charitable F&B establishments and temples • School projects, e.g. The Rice Drive: http://thericedrive.blogspot.com/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy to pass legislation on the right to food for migrant workers (of at least S\$X per month, during legal disputes, etc.) • Community kitchens in migrant residential areas, e.g. Little India and Geylang

<p>3. Limited types of food rations programmes – most are free cooked food and dried goods distribution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food is usually purchased from retailers at high cost • Handouts may encourage dependency mentality • One-off help may not sustainable in long run • Lack of consideration of nutritional value and beneficiaries' preference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MYMCA's My Manna shop (https://www.mymca.org.sg/outreach/OS-mymanna.html): volunteer-run "supermarket" in which elderly can themselves choose foods with recommendations from volunteers • Kampong Senang's (http://www.kg-senang.org.sg) 'pay what you want' organic café • Annalakshmi's (www.annalakshmi.com.sg) 'pay what you want' volunteer run quality Indian restaurant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes which allow needy to contribute to the growing and/or preparation of their own food (with nutritional advice, and also a token commission) • Arrangements for greater variety of food to be purchased at lower cost from wholesalers and distributors (or free, if food is in excess) à volunteers to handle transport and distribution
<p>4. No centralized system for knowledge management and logistics for FRPs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No platform for raising awareness of FRPs to donors, volunteers the needy and other stakeholders • Duplication of services and unnecessary competition b/w FRPs • Abuse of system by shrewd people who take food from multiple FRPs and resell to retailers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food for All is developing an online database of food rations programmes in Jul 2009, to be updated bi-monthly, including compilation of FRPs in info-kit for distribution to all CDCs and FRPs à will need assistance in publicity and maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possibility of creating other databases, logistics arrangements and knowledge management systems (do contact us at foodforallsg@gmail.com) • Dialogues between various FRPs and CDCs on how FRPs can be streamlined and made more effective
<p>5. Provision of inappropriate food to the needy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resale of dried goods that needy do not like or are unable to cook • Poor allocation of resources as supply of food rations not linked to demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift from food provision programmes to voucher schemes (e.g. Northwest CDC) à needs evaluation if method is cost effective and sustainable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More research into needs of beneficiaries and active consideration of alternative ways for needy to supplement income/food through active employment • Legislation for the provision of food by children (if any)

<p>6. Food inflation – high food prices putting food out of the reach of the poor</p> <p><i>Note: This information is based on preliminary research and needs to be verified.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoarding of supplies by large retailers (e.g. NTUC, Carrefour, Cold Storage...) and airlines (SIA), with excess later thrown away or returned to suppliers when there is no more demand → inefficient allocation of food • Mark-up of 25-30% on part of retailers (listing fees, advertising fees etc. squeezing suppliers) • Control of prices by local monopolies (e.g. Prima for flour, Seng Choon for eggs) • Control of stocks by distributors to capitalize on higher prices (during rice crisis in May 2008) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing of experiences by industry insiders with NGOs (Food for All) and consumers • Distribution of NTUC vouchers by CDCs to the needy • Involvement of the mass media in raising awareness of food price hikes (causes and solutions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More consumer action: lobbying for lower prices (lower markup) and release of supplies. • Ground-up initiatives to enable citizens to buy direct from wholesalers and distributors/suppliers • Distribution of “near expiry” canned goods, and also unwanted veg from wet markets to FRPs • More research into power dynamics within local food system → political economy of food in Singapore and the region
<p>7. Few links between food rations programmes and food industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a proper understanding of local food system and ways “wasted food” can be better allocated to the community and FRPs • Lack of consideration of community needs in the process of “conducting business” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food from the Heart (www.food-heart.org) actively mobilizing volunteers to redistributed unwanted bread from bakeries to FRPs • Number of charitable restaurants providing free or subsidized meals for the poor and homeless • Number of F&B (e.g. Food #03: www.food03.sg) establishments looking to set up community kitchens and soup kitchens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing ethical food businesses that sell and price for the poor (e.g. supermarket that discounts goods closer to expiry); • Distribution company that sells baskets of food to needy in exchange for basic help (work-for-food) • Business entity for brand owners, manufacturers and retailers to ‘dispose’ excess stocks

LOCAL AGRICULTURE

- Research conducted by Heather Chi (breadfly@gmail.com) as part of an undergraduate research module about the impact of state policies on local agriculture. Sources include KCA, AVA officials and local farmers.

	<i>Main issues</i>	<i>Actions Taken</i>	<i>Actions Forward</i>
1. Lack of awareness and understanding of farming amongst public, private and people sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmers contribution to local food security and community development not acknowledged • Stereotyping of local farmers as poor, backward, dirty, old, weird • Failure to understand multi-functional potential of farms: as a source of food, residence, business, educational institution • Lack of appropriate agricultural policies and marginalization in national development discourse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kranji Countryside Association (www.kranjicountryside.com), Singapore's main agricultural cooperative, has brought together a number of farms in Lim Chu Kang to conduct joint advocacy, transport arrangements, promotions and outreach with the aim of promoting SG's countryside • Ground-Up Initiative (http://ground-up.initiative.org) conducts weekly farming activities for team bonding and looks to raising awareness of agricultural sector through sustainable living programmes • A number of farms have opened up their premises for the running of cafes, culinary schools and farm tours to raise awareness. Farms like Green Circle (www.greencircle.com.sg) and Bollywood Veggies (www.bollywoodveggies.com) also do home deliveries of organic veggies. • Cielo Sereno (www.cielo-sereno.net), a group that promotes organic food in Singapore, also organizes farm tours • Filmmaker Eng Yee Peng has produced two films – Diminishing Memories I and II that document the lives of Lim Chu Kang residents past and present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active promotion of farms tours as educational programmes from schools from the angle of understanding food production and environmental principles. • School talks on farming and food production, using Singapore case studies • Summer programmes/ internships whereby students work with a local farm (similar to Worldwide Opportunities in Organic Farming or WWOOF-ing)

<p>2. Lack of integration of farming into the rest of Singapore community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farming is potentially an avenue for low income families to generate income by empowering family members who cannot be employed to produce crops that supplement their diet and help them save cash for other uses • Farming has potential to bring families together and, through healing the earth, heal themselves and encourage further cohesion (copyright Ground-Up Initiative) • Urban farms can contribute to a vibrant urban landscape and make better use of 'empty' void decks and cosmetic green spaces to grow food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground-Up Initiative (http://ground-up.initiative.org) conducts weekly farming activities for team bonding and looks to raising awareness of agricultural sector through sustainable living programmes • Kampong Senang (www.kg-senang.com) is currently running a programme to deliver healthy local organic vegetables to people with cancer • Go Organic Farm (http://www.goorganic.com.sg) utilize a unique method of growing food in boxes to prevents spread of diseases and optimize growth and have developed 'farms' for hotels & prisons here, a possible model for HDB 'farms' too! • Initiation of neighbourhood gardens and hydroponics farms in a number of estates and schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased initiative among local retailers and F&B establishments to promote local veg (tends to be safer and healthier, with local demand now increasing too) • Renting of small plots of unused land within current farmlands for family cultivation • Establishing small scale "guerilla" farms in HDB to provide "employment" to the young and elderly • More research into ways in which current agricultural land can be better utilized for national development • More dialogue between farming, public, private and people sectors
<p>3. Farmer's concerns: insecure tenure, misuse of agricultural land, high cost of farming and lack of transportation and market options</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenure of 10-15 years makes it difficult for farmers to break even/ make profit as they do not dare to expand farms for fear of not being able to have the same plot of land in the future • Upfront, once-off payment of rent favours cash-rich farmers • Use of agricultural land for storing granite instead of crop production in areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active lobbying and dialogue between farmers (largely represented by KCA) and the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority, Singapore's food regulation body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More research into appropriate agricultural land-use policies that complement Singapore's development • More active promotion of local organic farming and organic food for environmental and health reasons by NEA and MOH, and groups working with them

FOOD SECURITY AND WASTAGE

- Research conducted by Heather Chi (breadfly@gmail.com) as part of an in-house assignment, sources include AVA officials and food distributors and suppliers, as well as retailers, F&B workers and consumers.

<i>Main Issues</i>	<i>Actions Taken</i>	<i>Actions Forward</i>
<p>1. Narrow definition of food security in Singapore</p> <p><i>Note: Singapore has 274 farms covering 753.22 hectares of land generating income of S\$97.9 million in 2007. (AVA Annual Report)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AVA’s food security team completely devoid of agronomists or agricultural specialists, business oriented with focus on diversifying sources of food imports only • Singapore has no agreements with any governments regarding food imports (unlike water imports, with deals sealed between Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia) • Singapore imports 97% of food, with most local production concentrated on high-profit temperate crops (and not tropical crops which are quick-growing and sturdy), and ornamental flora and fauna • Singapore only self-sufficient in quail eggs • No expertise in Singapore with regards to food production EXCEPT farmers (no AVA division, no courses in universities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kranji Countryside Association (www.kranjicountryside.com), Singapore’s main agricultural cooperative, has brought together a number of farms in LCK to conduct joint advocacy, transport arrangements, promotions and outreach with the aim of promoting SG’s countryside • Dialogues between food distributors and suppliers about how to secure food supplies • Food for All actively raising awareness of food security issues through public talks and workshops
<p>2. Problem of food wastage and inefficient allocation of food in Singapore, exacerbating food inflation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoarding of food by suppliers during price hikes to capitalize on higher prices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FoodXervices’s (www.foodxervices.com/) innovative method of selling baskets of goods (rather than full cartons) to F&B establishments with specific needs to reduce wastage
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Food Conference to encourage dialogue between various stakeholders (govt. bodies, food suppliers and retailers, consumers, environmental groups, farmers, etc. • More public talks and exhibitions on the local food situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a business entity (Food Bank) for brand owners, manufacturers and retailers to “dispose” food rather than dump 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoarding of food (esp. seasonal food like cranberry sauce during Xmas and abalones during CNY) by giant retailers • Hoarding of food by F&B establishments: poor planning of inventory needs by cooks and managers (esp. airlines, army, caterers, but also cafes and restaurants) • “Hoarding” of food by consumers: kiasu and “culture of abundance” • Wastage of large amounts of fresh veg at wet and wholesale markets • Lack of mechanisms to collect near-expiry or “expired” stock from retailers and redistribute to community • Lack of incentives to reduce wastage of food: cooked, produce and dried goods • Food competitions such as Sakae Sushi’s sushi-eating competitions, waste large amounts of food and risks hurting people competing • Utility of food waste not extended through energy-generation, compost making, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food from the Heart (www.food-heart.org) actively mobilizing volunteers to redistributed unwanted bread from bakeries to FRPs • Number of trial community kitchens, such as Food Not Bombs and Food #03 (www.food03.sg) utilizes “wasted” veg from nearby markets • Alpha Biofuels (http://www.alphabiofuels.sg/), our home grown biofuels company, makes environmentally-friendly fuel from used cooking oil collected from hawker centres • Go Organic Farm (http://www.goorganic.com.sg/) sell homemade fertilizer made from soy bean waste and fish meal • NUS canteens and several other F&B establishments sending food waste to IUT Bio-methanization Plant (www.iutglobal.com) to be used in energy production. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of an open information platform for the industry in order to equalize prices and achieve a more efficient allocation of food for society (seen as a Human Right) • Courses in Shatec and hospitality schools on inventory planning (per dish/meal/working day) to reduce food wastage in actual F&B operation • Promoting of CSR initiatives among local restaurants – to give unwanted but fresh cooked food to homeless and needy locals and migrants • Consumer action to pressure food suppliers and retailers to reduce hoarding and mark-ups • Legislation on food wastage in SIA, SFI and F&B outlets • Distribution of food “wasted” from catering but nevertheless fresh to migrants’ dormitories – collection from volunteers at catering HQs • Donation of excess stock of seasonal foods to FRPs in community
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FOOD SAFETY, ETHICAL FOODS AND NUTRITION

- Research conducted by Heather Chi (breadfly@gmail.com) as part of an undergraduate research module about the relationship between organic food, environmental health and personal health, as well as eating disorders and the Fair Trade movement. Sources include food science and nutrition graduates, organic retailers, farmers and consumers.

<i>Main Issues</i>	<i>Actions Taken</i>	<i>Actions Forward</i>
<p>1. Lack of consumer protection due to vagueness of 'Healthier Choice' label and total absence of organic standards and credible labels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant number of food scares (e.g. Prima Deli, melamine, etc.) throwing Singapore food safety into question • 'Healthier Choice' labels largely measures salt, sugar, fat, saturated fat, dietary fibre and calcium; little consideration of full nutritional value of food (mineral water and many snacks are 'Healthier Choice') • No organic standards governing organic foods farmed and sold locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public education on nutrition and organic foods by groups such as Cielo Sereno (www.cielo-sereno.net) and Vegetarian Society (www.vegetarian-society.org). • Initiative by large number of retailers, including Organic Paradise (www.organic-paradise.com.sg), Kampung Senang (www.kg-senang.com.sg), etc. (full list can be found on Organic SG yahoo group: http://groups.yahoo.com.sg/group/_organicSG)
<p>2. Food allergies and intolerance among Singaporeans : little awareness amongst food industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty in eating-out for people with severe allergies due to ignorance of serving and cooking staff (and management) of people with special dietary needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Allergy Singapore (http://foodallergysingapore.org/) is a support group set up to raise public awareness of food allergies, help parents with children who have food allergies and promote research into the condition.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dialogue between HPB, food science and nutrition academics, holistic lifestyle practitioners and organic retailers and consumers regarding nutrition and food standards • Dialogue with AVA and HPB regarding risks of imported foods • Development of more informative food labels, including organic labels • More food science and nutrition research into viability of eating "expired" goods that may have 2-3 more years of life

<p>3. Eating Disorders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Misuse of good food by people with mental health, self-esteem and body image issues Lack of awareness of these publicly “taboo” disorders Lack of support and avenues of treatment for people at-risk or suffering from eating disorders Eating disorders in Singapore fuelled by slimming ads, mass media, peer pressure and insensitive remarks EDs exacerbated by lack of low-cost treatment available, public taboo and lack of understanding of how societal factors contribute to EDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food Is Not the Enemy campaign launched in 2007 by Project WiTHIN (www.projectthin.com) and Food for All (www.foodforall.sg) to raise public awareness of eating disorders, conduct research into eating attitudes and eating disorders and develop low-cost online and group therapy support platforms for ED survivors and supporters. For more information, please email Jin Yao (run.on.beauty@gmail.com) or Heather (breadfly@gmail.com). SGH Life Centre conducts a free and public ‘Support for Eating Disorders’ programme that features presentations and peer support programmes for ED survivors and supporters every first Thursday of the month, 7.00-8.30pm @ SGH Life Centre, Bowyer Block A (Clock Tower) Level 1, Singapore General Hospital. More information: www.sgh.com.sg/MedicalSpecialtiesnServices/SpecialistCentres/LifeCentre/Support/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public awareness and research on eating disorders Conducting body image and self-image workshops in schools Conducting art therapy and other peer support programmes for ED survivors and supporters (ED survivors can be empowered to lead workshops) Fund raising to support FINTE and SGH
<p>4. Ethical foods: abundance of cheap junk food and shortage of affordable organic and fair trade foods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheap junk and fast food, which contributes to poor health, environmental destruction from mass production of food and human rights abuses, is common and cheap Lack of affordable alternative foods: vegetarian and vegan options, fair trade foods (which ensure farm workers are paid a fair price) “Image problem” for <i>atas</i> organic and fair trade products 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Meatout for 1 Day a Week” campaign to raise awareness of environmental impact of a meat diet in schools Similar public education talks and workshops conducted by Vegetarian Society (www.vegetarian-society.org), Cielo Sereno (www.cielo-sereno.net), Ground Up Initiative (www.groundupinitiative.org) Public awareness through fairs and movie screenings by Fair Trade SG (www.groups.yahoo.com/group/FairTradeSG), and school groups such as Team Shift (RGS), Equator Initiative (RJC) and Food 4 Thought (NUS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive online map to show ‘where our food comes from?’ accompanied by public education and outreach efforts Provide incentives for retailers and F&B and hospitality establishments to provide organic and Fair Trade options at low cost More media publicity on harm of “cheap food”

5. Lack of food options from commercial retailers for babies in elderly in Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insufficient varieties of healthy food for babies and elderly in Singapore 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incentives for suppliers to bring in healthier foods, especially for babies and elderly, given Singapore's promotion of reproduction and aging population
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OVERSEAS FOOD PROGRAMMES

- Inclusive of food aid and agricultural support programmes, packaging of food and transport of food

<i>Main issues</i>		<i>Actions Taken</i>	<i>Actions Forward</i>
1. Potential for Singapore to supply nutritious food for disaster relief around the region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food- and expertise-rich Singapore can do more to help the hungry around the region in disaster relief situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations such as Mercy Relief (www.mercyrelief.org), World Vision (www.worldvision.org.sg), and Red Cross (www.redcross.org.sg) currently conduct such missions The Nargis Action Group (http://www.doubleactionmyanmar.org/) collected and donated food to aid the people of Burma after Cyclone Nargis, as did many temples and community organizations, formal and informal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible involvement of more organizations, such as the International Volunteerism Association (www.iva.org.sg), to monitor food crises around the region and mobilize local response to it
2. Engagement of Singapore-based groups in agricultural development programmes around the region		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vision Network (http://visionnetwork.org/) conducts a series of rural development, agricultural extension, disaster management and ecotourism workshops to assist poor communities around the region. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research and implementation of appropriate agricultural intervention programmes by expert teams and NGOs, or the AVA

OTHER FOOD-RELATED ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- Inclusive of food packaging and food transportation

	<i>Main issues</i>	<i>Actions Taken</i>	<i>Actions Forward</i>
1. Food packaging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem of ‘take-away’ culture in Singapore leading to large amount of disposed food packaging • Problem of environmentally – unfriendly food packaging and controversies over eco-packaging such as corn starch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-based campaigns such as NUS ‘Rebate2Earth’ campaign charging 10c for use of plastic bags at bookshops and drink stalls around campus • Nationwide campaigns such as ‘Bring Your Own Bag’ campaigns every Wednesday • Proliferation of “eco-bags” in local supermarkets, bookshops and home solutions shops • Olive Green (www.olivegreen.com.sg) manufacturers biodegradable cutlery out of corn starch • Rise in popularity of non-disposable cutlery in catering arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step-up promotion of anti-waste, anti-bag culture in Singapore in schools and offices • Research into environmental impact of food packaging, especially locally • Lobby for ban on styrofoam cups and packaging and incentives for F&B establishments to switch to lower-impact packaging options
2. Transport of food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large amount of fuel used in food transportation, especially when excess unsold food from suppliers needs to be collected from individual retail outlets 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of CNG stations in Singapore to encourage food distributors to convert fleets • Encourage “carpooling” between suppliers for collection of unsold stock, possibly by a third party enterprise

~ END ~

APPENDIX

List of Food for All Surveys

- Eating Attitudes Test: www.foodforall.sg/eat.html
- Sector Scan for Food Rations Programmes:
www.foodforall.sg/foodsurvey.html