

**SUSPLUS project: Innovative Education towards Sustainable Food Systems**

**International Summer Course**

**Poland 2017**

Food Systems Analysis

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Manual for Systems Thinking and Foodservice Exercise

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For working groups 1-3

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## Purpose of this document

This document describes the overall purpose, context and task of the group work taking place during the second week of the SUSPLUS summer school 2017 in Poland concerning foodservice systems analysis.

## Purpose and context of the group work

The purpose of the session on Systems Thinking and Food Service is to prepare a visualisation of a system. Such a visualisation is one method to prepare for the study into the behaviour of the whole of a system. We will draw on the two e-learning lectures Systems Research Methods and The Role of Foodservice in Driving Sustainable Diets.

## Case Studies

Three cases are available for closer study so that each working group and case study should comprise about 10-12 students. All cases are from the hospitality sector, specifically restaurants. All cases are certified organic. All cases have an initiator.

Case Study "Alice"	Case Study "Elsa"	Case Study "Nora"
Chez Panisse Restaurant and Café	Restaurant Elsa, in the Monte-Carlo Beach Hotel (Relais & Chateaux)	Restaurant Nora
Alice Waters	Paolo Sari	Nora Pouillion
<a href="http://www.chezpanisse.com">http://www.chezpanisse.com</a>	<a href="http://www.monte-carlo-beach.com/restaurants-and-bars/elsa/">http://www.monte-carlo-beach.com/restaurants-and-bars/elsa/</a>	<a href="http://www.noras.com/">http://www.noras.com/</a>

## Suggested materials and methodology

Have a look at the tasks, guiding questions and suggestions below for your mapping exercise before you dive into all the informational material. As a group, decide how you would like to work on the visualisation and tasks, for example, you may like to divide the elements or task suggestions amongst yourselves or you may like to divide the reading materials amongst yourselves and pool your findings.

Each case has a website which is probably the best place to start getting an idea about the case and gathering first information. You will also have access to a file with a number of mostly newspaper style articles for each case. These are generally 2-3 pages long and may include some photo material. They should yield titbits of further information. You do not have to read them all. There may then be some further information in other formats (audio or video files) to be found online and, of course, at other websites, once you have identified some other elements to your system. There may also be more scholarly (academic) literature in your file. *Make sure you can readily identify the source of your information at all times!*

## Tasks, Guiding Questions and Suggestions

A system always has a function (usually a natural system) or a purpose (usually a human system). What is the purpose (or what are the purposes) of the foodservice element in your case according to the initiator? Has this changed with time?

Start with your foodservice case as the central element. Visualise (map) your case study as a system using the suggestions. This will be the collection of entities connected in order to realise the purpose of the system. It is a good idea to start with a rough mind-map-type diagram on some notepaper before finalising the case visualisation on the pin board.

Identify as many elements of the food system as you can. You could, for example, use small, round pin-it cards of different colours for different types of elements (e.g. such as restaurant, farm, certifier, bakery, school). We will focus on legal entities<sup>1</sup> here so include the legal form.

A suggestion: Use the space on your pin board map as a spatial scale and place the elements you identify nearer or further from the restaurant case, depending on how close or far they are away (km / miles). Don't forget that the spatial scales can range from household, local/regional, state, national, to international.

A suggestion: Use the thickness of the connecting line between the elements to indicate how strong the connection between any two elements is. For example, you could make it one line thicker for every year of connection (relationship). See if, for the connections, you can identify people's names or a function (who deals with whom). Maybe you could also see what kind of values connected elements share (e.g. trust) and explore the nature of the interdependence.

Find a way of dealing with the temporal dimension (time points, rates, durations, frequencies). You will gather information from various points in the past (probably less about the present and future) and it will probably help grasp the system behaviour more fully if you can support some differentiation visually.

Look at the substances (matter, energy, information) and their flows. In this exercise, focus mostly on matter (material components such as water, soil, organisms, money, infrastructure), a little on information (descriptive data that records and explains) and less on energy.

## Presentation

You will be provided with a pin board and pin board paper as well as coloured cards, post-its, coloured pens and various materials needed.

Using these materials your group creates a visual (a map of sorts) of your case and presents it orally, briefly, to the other groups at the end of the session.

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<sup>1</sup> An association, corporation, partnership, proprietorship, trust, or individual that has legal standing in the eyes of law. A legal entity has legal capacity to enter into agreements or contracts, assume obligations, incur and pay debts, sue and be sued in its own right, and to be held responsible for its actions. <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/legal-entity.html>