

**Themes in
Building Community Food Webs
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(References refer to chapter and page numbers)

Build Trust & Connect Diverse Stakeholders

- Tackle easier goals to build up trust before taking on larger goals
- Encourage natural networkers and visionaries (CO 184)
- Offer facilitation for specific group processes and/or offer guidebooks (68)
- Form stronger personal trust to reduce polarization; engage civic leaders, entrepreneurs, and business people in common action (73 AERO, OH 154, MN 195–96, MN 202–03)
- Precede planning with broad public conversations (MN 196)
- Forego purist approaches for broader appeal to larger constituencies (AERO 81)
- Enlist local governments to promote common goals (e.g. conservation) (MN 197)
- Connect producers to consumers as closely as possible (e.g., CSAs, cooperative groceries, branding campaigns, membership, investment (AERO 77, Hawai'i 112) One broker does this through brokering, without taking ownership of food items (Red Tomato 241)
- Hire outside consultants who work through participatory processes (CO 174)
- Negotiate difficult conflicts transparently and creatively; e.g. conflicting land uses for agriculture or real estate; recognize that the same people can stand on both sides of the fence; e.g. landowners who want both rural quiet and to sell land for development (CO 179, 249)
- Address conflicts openly and creatively (new farmers v old farmers, large farms vs small farms) (AERO 78)
- Use governmental powers to intervene for the common good; e.g., purchasing land at its development value to preserve for agricultural use (CO 183); use conservation easements (CO 183, MN 198–200)
- Encourage cooperation of public agencies with neighboring jurisdictions (CO 184)
- Enlist diverse stakeholders through local government convenings; e.g., landowners willing to pay higher taxes to meet desirable goals (MN 196)
- Explore multi-stakeholder co-op models to better integrate value networks (WI 216, 224)

Build New Capacities

- Promote co-Learning (AERO) and infrastructure that supports it; Include farmers and researchers in the FRICs (AERO 61)
- Ensure that farmers lead the effort (AERO 61)

- Educate the public to change food habits; Foster food trade that connects farmers and consumers with each other (AERO 67)
- Involve children in school gardens (Hawai'i 96)
- Develop capacity building programs (Hawai'i 109); Connect these to cultural institutions (Hawai'i 109); Engage colleges in appropriate roles (AERO 79–80)
- Offer capacity building through processing centers & food banks (AERO 77, 80, AZ 119, IN 140, OH 146); One great success story in Tucson: La Tauna Tortillas — later Natural Grains Tortillas (AZ 119–122)
- Develop outlets for new products (e.g., lentils grown in Montana as a cover crop that can be sold commercially) (AERO 77)
- Offer leadership training (AZ 127)
- Open and support cafés serving healthy foods (Hawai'i 100)
- Use storytelling as process for sharing insights (Hawai'i 102)
- Working in the garden opens personal conversations (AZ 123–124)
- Connect to spiritual dimensions: to place, to others, to past, to future, and to self (Hawai'i 99)

Think Systemically

- Engage residents in mapping exercises to energize participants (AERO 68, IN 137); to inform decision-makers and politicians (AZ2, 166); to detect best decisions (MN 194–95); to make the best use of available funds (MN 199).
- Create different ways of mapping (AZ2 166); Use the power of presenting facts visually to highlight current strengths; redirect decisions, induce new conversations, and change minds
- Embrace the reality of complex systems and the limitations of short-term business or political thinking; engage the uncertainties we face (251–52); Identify and use leverage points to simplify complex discussions (252)
- Pursue a vision (IN 134, 221) with a clearly defined goal (e.g., community food networks that foster food trade that connects farmers and consumers) (IN 135–36)
- Pursue Asset Based Community Building (ABCD): e.g., through interviews; mapping of business clusters and community linkages. (IN 136–37)
- Broaden the scope of interventions: e.g., food bank expands its vision to commit itself to fighting poverty and increasing dignity (AZ 126)

Foster Stronger Networks

- Engage all sectors (OH 150)
- Engage the natural network weavers (AERO 81, MN 194)
- Forge new types of relationships (67 AERO): e.g., organic and local (AERO 77)
- Address self-interest in the first stages
- Build a culture that fosters collaboration
- Involve farmers, businesses, students and researchers (AERO 77)
- Create new partnerships (AERO 81, Hawai'i 95, AZ 118): e.g., Farm to institution (colleges, hospitals, schools) (AERO 77 OH 152)

- Create synergies among constituencies: e.g. preservation and conscious development (MN 199)
- Create networks of networks (Hawai'i 103)

Advocate

- Advocate what you are for, rather than arguing against something
- Link food issues to others: e.g., conservation (MN 192); health (Hawai'i); land conservation (MN 200)
- Write proposed bills that speak to everybody (73 AERO)
- Be both entrepreneurial and collaborative (AERO 82)
- Understand the pressures under which politicians operate to better enlist their support (256–57)
- Create win-win alliances: Hawai'i: asking farmers to donate produce to the food bank as well as purchase from those farms (Hawai'i 92); include second-quality produce (Hawai'i 93)
- Connect food and better eating to health (Hawai'i 106)
- Target strategic markets (e.g. Farmers to You)

Weave Community Food Webs

“How does one know when one is building a community-based food system? The distinguishing feature is that social and commercial connectivity are being built. This can lower the costs of doing business, reduce turnover, promote innovation, and foster entrepreneurship.” (229–30)

“To create a world where the farmer, processor, grocer, and consumer are all in the same locale, sharing purposes and risks, we need to create efficiencies in local food trade and increased coordination among local residents. We are building systems, not simply transporting food items to closer markets. We are engaged in an effort to build a new economic structures — or in some cases, to reclaim structures that once existed.”

- Construct Community-Based Food Systems (AERO 56) rather than focusing on how far food items travel
- Shift economic thinking: from creating jobs to livelihoods (256)
- Create win-win alliances: Hawai'i food bank asks farmers to donate produce to the food bank (Hawai'i 92) but also purchases produce from the farms to distribute to their constituents; e.g. helps foster growers' co-op and connects them to consumers; acts as both a distributor and food processor (Hawai'i 93–94)
- Community minded way to calculate an economic multiplier calculation: the strength of social and commercial networks (258–59)
- Strong community support networks are required if a food business incubator is to thrive (AERO 75–76) (OH 147, 245); also for processing centers/food hubs (AERO 77, 80, AZ 119, IN 140, OH 146–47); incubator also offers office space below market price. (OH 146) Space for storage and refrigeration; off-season frozen produce (OH 153)

- Listen to the voices of those who are not yet involved; identify the assets they have and the needs they express. Food bank invites constituents to shape corporate policy (AZ); AERO buys pitting equipment for cherry growers (AERO 79)
- Develop synergistic approaches that serve multiple stakeholders (AERO 79)
- Farmers' markets and community gardens can create gathering spaces as well as economic benefit (AZ 119)
- Low-wealth constituents can form producers' coops (AZ 127)
- Process food on the farm to add value to farm products, and collaborate with local small-scale processors to build strong commercial networks. (AERO 221, IN 137, IN 210)
- Collaborate among farms to build own distribution networks (IN 208–09, 211) and bring buyers onto a multi-stakeholder co-op to ensure greater loyalty over time (AERO 216–218); Explore online sales (IN 209–11); Share ordering platforms (IN 210); Develop specialty products (e.g. frozen) (221)
- Make more efficient use of land and farming innovations: sequential grazing of beef, chickens, and hogs (IN 209–10, 212)
- Vertically integrate food businesses (252)
- Extend loans to micro-enterprises (OH 151)
- Build market power for farmers: establish a fair, true price that all buyers will uphold; Connect farmers to consumers. (251)
- Build consumer loyalty: farm tours, intentional conversations.
- Distributors can convene farmers and consumers, involve them in developing new solutions (219, 224)
- Form intentional clusters of food businesses (259)
- Share the use of physical space: incubator, hub, processing plant, ... (220)
- Remember that “going to scale” is a strategy, not a purpose. Size and scale depend on the level of trust the food web builds; this is the limiting factor for community food webs (234, 245)
- Balance the tradeoffs between large and small scale activities (234–35); Take advantage of both so each complements the other (235, 247)
- Anticipate crises and build up financial reserves (Red Tomato 244, 252)
- Integrate commercial profitability with nonprofit educational functions (e.g., food hubs, 245, 247)
- Leverage private donations to double economic benefits (double bucks in Hawai'i 105)
- Prioritize investments that create multiple multiple benefits (e.g. forge new partnerships) (AERO 78)
- Leverage key contacts within institutions: Whole Foods liaison (IA 206–08); know the limitations of the approach
- Run marketing campaigns through special events that are fun and educational (OH 151) e.g., \$5 per week challenge; regional branding campaigns, food charters (221)
- Create a conscious tourism destination (OH 152, CO 185)
- Public entities can purchase land and private owners can make use of conservation easements; draw upon a variety of approaches (CO 183, 186, 188; MN 200)