

# Exploring the Food Security System

## Food security

Food security occurs when everyone has guaranteed regular physical, social and economic access to healthy and affordable food [1]. This food needs to be of good quality, and in sufficient amounts to meet people’s dietary, social and cultural needs [1]. Community food security refers to sustainable and resilient food systems that provide healthy food that is available to everyone and benefits the local community. Food security is underpinned by six dimensions: food availability; access; utilisation; stability; agency; and sustainability [1-5]. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the food security dimensions and a range of associated determinants.



Figure 1: Determinants of food security

## The Food Community project

The Food Community project utilises a Systemic Innovation Lab approach to identify, map, evaluate, and strengthen government and community-led initiatives that support different dimensions of food security across regional WA. This approach focuses on addressing complex issues (like food security), has a place-based focus and develops strategies with initiative leaders to strengthen their initiatives’ contribution towards regional food security systems change. This project is being delivered in partnership with Edith Cowan University, the Public Health Advocacy Institute, Eventide (formerly Wicked Lab), and the WA Country Health Service.

### The Food Community project aims to :



Identify



Map



Evaluate



Strengthen

food security initiatives across WA regions, to support food security action.

# The Food Community project process

The Food Community project utilises a six-stage approach (outlined in Figure 2).

The Food Community project formed their core team and statewide advisory group, and mapped existing food security initiatives operating in the Wheatbelt, Midwest, Great Southern, Kimberley, Pilbara and Goldfields regions (**Form**). The team then launched the project in each region and conducted interviews with initiative leaders to better understand their work supporting food security (**Explore**). The interview data was uploaded to Eventide’s online Tool for Systemic Change (TSC) to visualise how these initiatives are supporting food security systems change (**Map**). The TSC was used to identify ‘windows of opportunity’ - attributes of the system of initiatives requiring strengthening (**Learn**). Initiative leaders were then brought together through a Results-Sharing and Action Planning Workshop held in their region to co-create action plans to address the ‘windows of opportunity’ and further strengthen their work (**Address**). Finally, the team communicates project findings widely through the reports and resources available on the [Food Community website](#), journal articles, presentations and more (**Share**)!

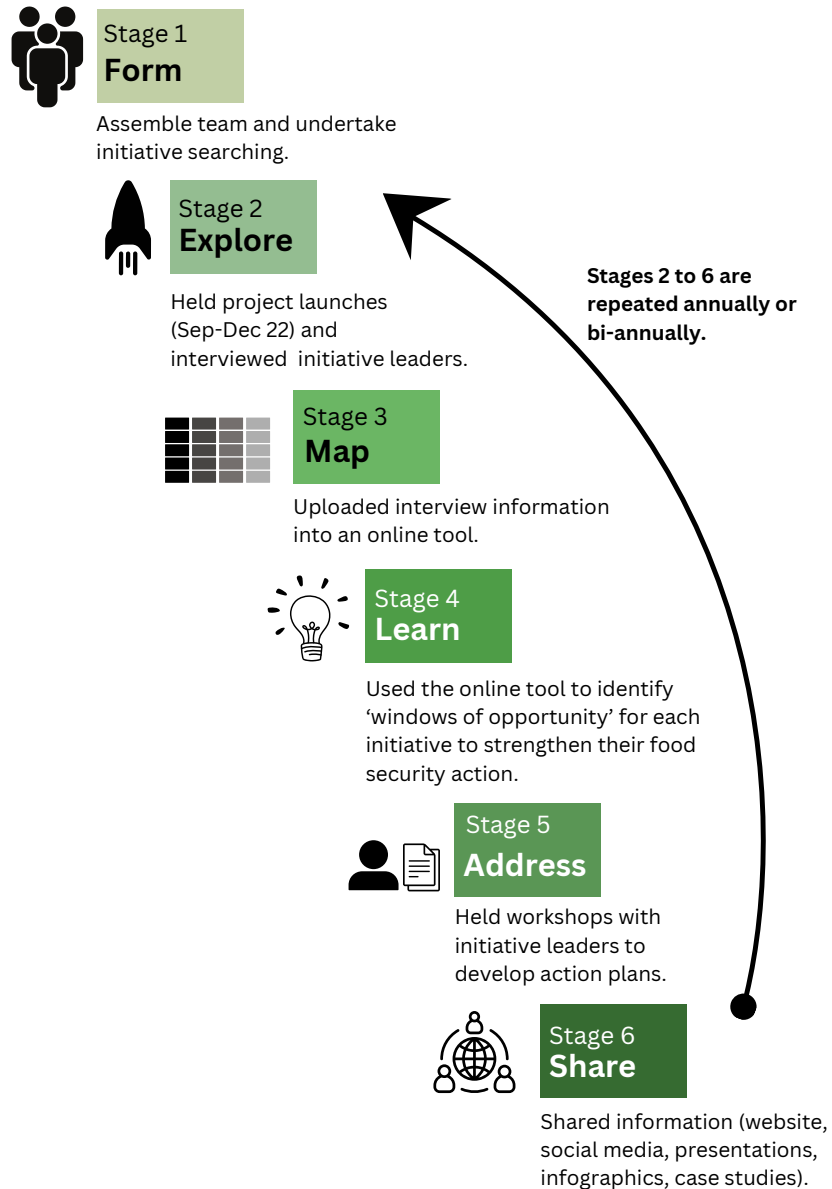


Figure 2. Food Community process – adapted from Wicked Lab’s Systemic Innovation Lab approach [6].

## Food security systems

Food security is a complex concept that requires a range of solutions (initiatives) to improve food availability, access, utilisation, stability, agency, and sustainability. A range of initiatives support food security within each community, and these are often implemented in different settings. Considering all the places where we live, work, and play, these settings might include supermarkets, Community Resource Centres, or streets and verges (i.e. ‘Community Setting’), as well as networks of local food producers (i.e. ‘Workplace Setting’). Additionally, some initiatives are based in schools (i.e. ‘Early Childhood and Schools Setting’) while others are led by government and relate to food and nutrition policies (i.e. ‘Policy Setting’). Figure 3 (below) is a graphical representation of the various types of initiatives explored through the Food Community project and the different settings they operate in.

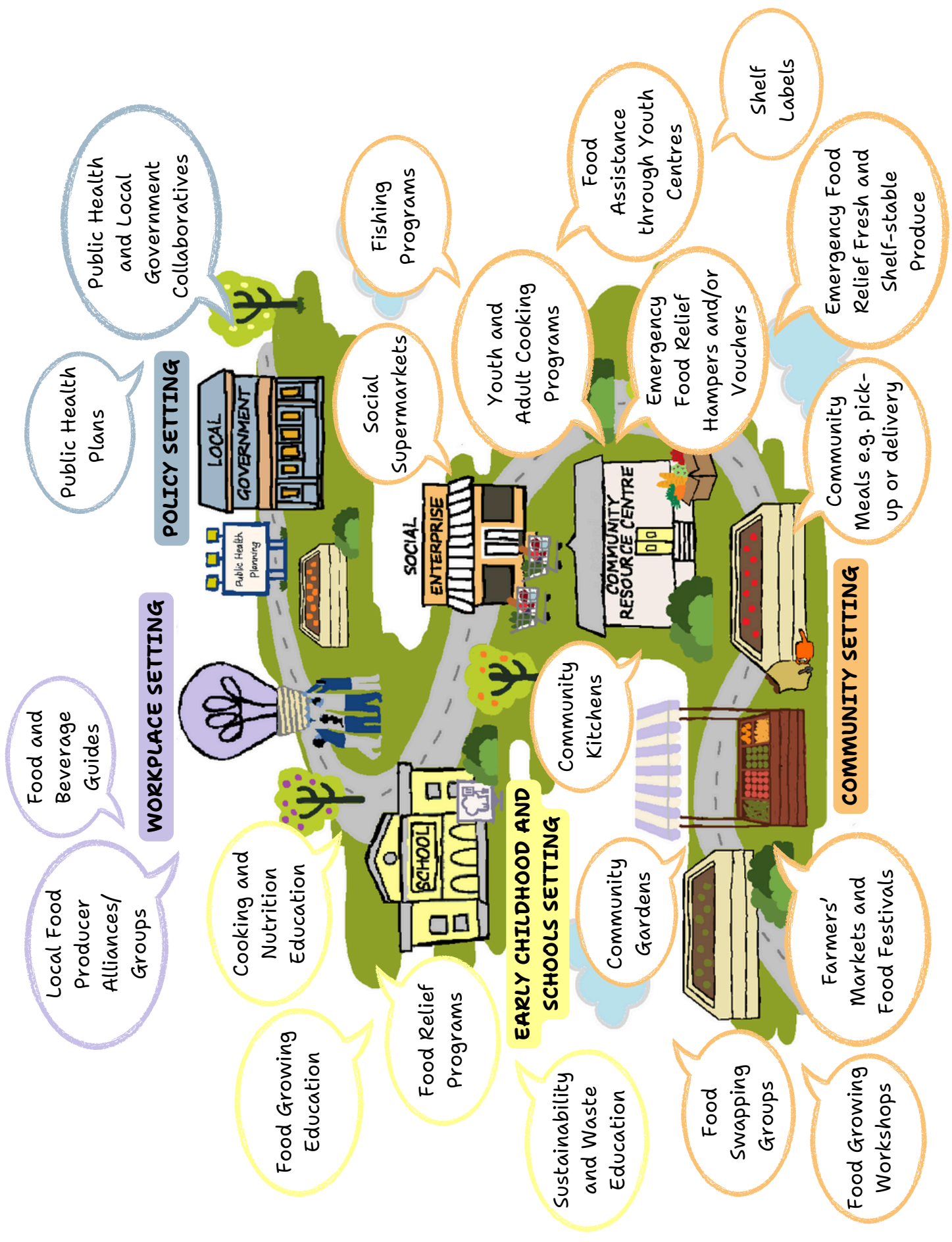


Figure 3. Exploring the Food Security System

## References

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