

UNITED 4 FOOD

The impact of our daily food system into the 4 natural elements.

We are 42 young people from 34 countries spanning five continents. We hold a wide range of perspectives: we are chefs, farmers, gastronomists, lawyers, students and researchers in environmental, food and social sciences, urban planning, economics, and communication. We share a passion and concern for our food systems, and acknowledge an urgent need for a shift in paradigm – but we are full of hope. We propose solutions using the framework of the five elements:

WATER is a common and non-renewable resource facing continuous threats. It must be protected for future generations without compromising quality.

1. Ensure equitable access to clean water by fostering collective management and impeding speculation, financialization and commodification
2. Conserve water use in the food system by improving efficiency of irrigation and processing
3. Prevent water contamination by minimizing pollution from agriculture and industry
4. Invest in innovative practices such as rain water harvesting and recycling of grey water
5. Empower small-scale fishing communities and enhance ecologically-responsible practices in aquaculture

AIR is the circulatory system that regulates our biosphere. We are responsible for irreversible changes to our climate. We must mitigate our impacts on the air and adapt to imminent changes in order to give breath to the next generations.

1. Promote agricultural practices that both reduce emissions and protect air quality
2. Encourage less greenhouse gas- (GHG) intensive supply chains through tracking and taxing emissions
3. Encourage consumers to reduce excessive meat consumption and adopt more plant-based diets

EARTH, the living organism from which we grow, is in danger due to our technocratic culture of limitless growth, negligence and apathy. When we plant poison, we harvest poison. We must integrate ourselves into the cycle of the earth and feed the soil instead of the yield.

1. Address food security and public health in cities through promotion of urban agriculture and community-based models of distribution
2. Strengthen urban-rural connections to facilitate market access and direct contact between producers and consumers
3. Facilitate land reform in order to create fair land tenure systems and guarantee land access for small-scale and young farmers, as well as traditional and Indigenous communities
4. Create policy mechanisms to protect fertile land from the encroachment of urban sprawl
5. Improve infrastructure and change marketing and consumption practices to reduce food loss and waste across the food supply chain
6. Adopt best management practices at the farm level to restore and protect soil fertility
7. Foster organization and knowledge-sharing between farmers as an incentive for resilient and restorative family farming
8. Invest responsibly in rural development and facilitate access to infrastructure, technology and education
9. Foster seed sovereignty and protect biodiversity by valuing local plant varieties and ensuring control over reproductive resources



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FIRE is an expression of energy that has spurred the development and growth of civilization. Energy is not created or destroyed, it is only transformed. Therefore, we must prioritize cleaner sources of energy, appropriately and responsibly managed, to heal our food systems.

1. Transition to renewable and responsible energy sources along the food supply chain
2. Manage and save energy in food production, storage, distribution and waste systems
3. Encourage energy-efficient, local, and short supply chains and seasonal consumption habits
4. Recognize equitable human labour as a valuable source of energy in the food system
5. Ensure that biofuel production does not compromise food security

THE FIFTH ELEMENT unites all others and represents food as more than a fuel or the sum of its parts. It is belonging. It is appreciation. It is connection. It nourishes the human spirit and body. However, it is the missing ingredient in our current food system and integral to a new one. We must revise and uphold our values and nurture connections between ourselves and the ecosystems which support life.

1. Eat mindfully and relish the experience of savouring taste
2. Ensure food quality, human rights, fair working conditions, and animal and ecological welfare
3. Respect cultural heritage, traditions and rights around land and food, and incorporate traditional and Indigenous wisdom into our food systems
4. Foster a human ethic of respect, awareness and empathy towards land, water, air and food
5. Build community by sharing our knowledge and experiences in the food system
6. Acknowledge food as sacred, as a pillar of food sovereignty

We believe that we need to address the root causes of global food and agriculture crises rather than the symptoms. In the short-term, we need to reform our economic system by increasing transparency and redefining measures of success from reductionist to holistic, from quantity to quality, and from growth to stability and resilience. In the long-term, we need a systemic socio-cultural shift from an egocentric ethic of competition and commodification to an ecocentric and partnership ethic of co-operation and community. These changes should be made by fostering grassroots activities and food sovereignty; respecting and integrating cultural heritage and traditional ecological knowledge; re-framing our educational and information systems; demanding an intersectional approach to equity, incorporating gender, ethnicity, socio-economic class, age, and ability; decentralizing and redistributing power to local communities; and reforming political governance mechanisms to facilitate this change.

No one solution will be effective if implemented in isolation, they must be adopted together. As we - the youth of Eating City Summer Campus 2015 - return to our respective regions, we will be working towards these goals through our engagement in the food system. In acknowledgement of the urgency of our current state, we expect that these solutions will be implemented in policy and decision-making at multiple scales. **We call to action a change in our food system paradigm.**



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