In Brazil, the COVID-19 crisis has served to exacerbate the already economic, environmental, and health crises across the country. Of particular concern, high unemployment and austerity measures preceding and during the pandemic have resulted in a "SHARP RISE IN FOOD INSECURITY." In the mega-city of São Paulo, however, policymakers have recognized that integrated food policies can deliver multiple benefits. The UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL (SDG) to describe municipal policy integration, where City departments are tasked with delivering as many SDGs as possible through their programs. Of the many integrated food policies in São Paulo, two stand out: the Sustainable Markets and Parks initiative to combat food loss and waste and the Connect the Dots food program to support those most in need. These initiatives have been globally recognized for their economic, food security, and environmental benefits.

**SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL**

**ENABLERS**

**COLLABORATION WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT**

The municipal departments in the city of São Paulo whose work is relevant to food systems proactively seek to collaborate on food policymaking and problem-solving. For example, the City’s Urban Development, Economic, and Environmental Departments were all initially involved in the development of the Connect the Dots initiative. The International Partnership-Building and Recognition program has given international recognition to São Paulo’s work to reduce food loss and waste and compost municipal green waste generated from parks. This recognition has helped open up new funding streams to accelerate action. This is in part due to the support and visibility that the late mayor, Bruno Covas, gave to the city’s successful food policies. The Connect the Dots initiative was the result of the support and visibility that the late mayor, Bruno Covas, gave to the city’s successful food policies.

**INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP-BUILDING AND RECOGNITION**

São Paulo food policies have garnered international recognition, opening up new funding streams to accelerate action. This is in part due to the support and visibility that the late mayor, Bruno Covas, gave to the city’s successful food policies. The Connect the Dots initiative was the grand prize winner of the 2016 ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION'S MAIRONS CHALLENGE, a program to recognize and replicate innovative urban policies that tackle multiple challenges. While Bloomberg Philanthropies provided funding for the project, international recognition also increased awareness of São Paulo as the project among local stakeholders. São Paulo work on food loss and waste and compost municipal green waste also attracted the ELLEN MACARTHUR FOUNDATION to choose the city as a strategic partner to accelerate the transition to a circular food economy. This international recognition has helped to increase the visibility of São Paulo’s food policies and has been instrumental in accelerating and expanding new funding allocations from the state and federal levels.

**BARRIERS**

**FUNDING AND RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS**

Despite international funding support for Connect the Dots, the greatest challenges São Paulo faces in implementing integrated food policies are a lack of sufficient resources and funding. In this mega-city, the number of people in need of local assistance is great, but the municipal government often lacks the funding for the public services required to support them. This creates a policy environment where difficult decisions have to be made about how and when to allocate funding. Women, of necessity, turn to scarce funding as an opportunity, as public servants are creative in finding integrated policy solutions to deliver multiple benefits. Nevertheless, São Paulo’s successful food policies could be accelerated and expanded by increasing funding allocations from the state and federal levels.

**THE GENDER GAP**

The gender gap in Brazil, reflected in inequalities in educational, economic, and political opportunities between men and women, is a major inhibitor to progress. In times of crisis, women experience more severe socio-economic effects and are the last to be integrated into a recovery economy. Only 10-15% of political positions are occupied by women, but it was the few women acting as departmental heads in the municipal government that led the fight against hunger and unemployment during the pandemic. For example, they launched a meal program to support women in crop production and food provision across all areas of government communicate closely the gender gap has the potential to address the socio-economic challenges of the most vulnerable and guarantee progress and prosperity for all.

The Sustainable Markets and Parks and the Connect the Dots initiatives have both received international recognition and funding for their multiple environmental, climate, and socio-economic benefits. The success of these integrated food policies is due to the city’s political leadership and willingness to sustain robust cross-departmental and community partnerships. Brazil entered this DECADE OF ACTION to deliver on the SDGs in the midst of an economic recession and a health crisis. The challenges for the country are many, but cities like São Paulo are finding creative ways to use limited resources to generate multiple benefits for its citizens and the planet.

**SUSTAINABLE MARKETS AND PARKS**

- Targets the city’s MIlk weekly food markets where small food was historically thrown into bins.
- Employees were hired to collect food suitable for consumption. Food banks were contacted for distribution, and composting facilities were built to process food waste unsuitable for consumption and green waste generated from parks.
- The three-pronged food policy reduces greenhouse gas emissions, boosts food security, and generates employment.

**CONNECT THE DOTS**

- Aims to protect the forests, reservoirs, and farms in rural districts on the outskirts of the city from urban development.
- Farmers are offered technical assistance to boost their farms, increase income, transition to sustainable farming practices, and find urban buyers for their fresh, organic produce.
- The food policy aims to improve farming livelihoods, supply local food, and protect the environment.

**GLASGOW FOOD AND CLIMATE DECLARATION**

"Our work in the department for Economic Development is very cross-cutting. Our department are acting on 2030 SDG’s of the Sustainable Development Goals. Our policies fight poverty, fight hunger, fight inequality, and foster a green economy."

"44 Cities are the implementers of food and climate agendas, but people leading cities make the difference. The same city in the same situation with the same resources, but with different people/leadership can get very different results. We need political leaders who are really committed to innovating and finding solutions to transform people’s lives."