



Healthy fast food

Improving poor diets by providing healthy, appealing fast food in low income areas

Shift

Product design for social change

We are putting mobile healthy fast food outlets into low income areas of London dominated by chicken shops and other unhealthy options, in order to provide young people with access to tasty, affordable, healthy food.

The outlets are selling food that meets Department of Health nutritional guidelines at locally competitive prices. A youth employment scheme also offers training and catering experience to local unemployed young people.

The need

More than 1 in 3 children aged 11–15 years are overweight or obese. The prevalence of childhood obesity in the most deprived 10% of the UK population is nearly double that of the least deprived 10%, and low-income areas have the highest incidence of health issues related to poor diets, including Type 2 diabetes.

There is a range of contributing factors, but it's clear that a major influence is fast food. There are over 8,000 fast food outlets in London alone and each meal they serve provides an average of 68% of recommended daily calories, 56% of saturated fat and 53% of salt.

There is a clear need to increase the availability of healthy fast food in low-income areas, encouraging young people to substitute a proportion of the unhealthy fast food meals they typically eat with much healthier meals, reducing their intake of fat, salt, sugar and calories and increasing their consumption of vegetables, fruit and micronutrients.

“Some local government money is being spent on healthy-eating education programmes but those tend to be exercises in preaching to the converted... Compared to that this project starts to look like the only practical effort to do something.”

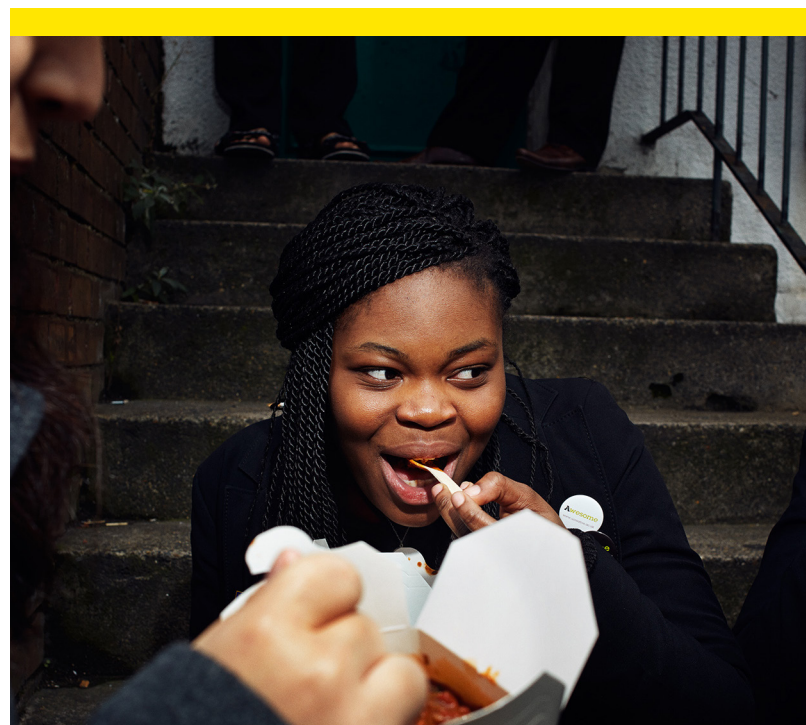
Jay Rayner, The Observer

These services must thrive in the areas most affected by poor diets, competing on price, convenience, taste and appeal in order to become permanent influences that can shift diets and health outcomes measurably and sustainably.

Progress so far

We've completed a year of research and consultation, including ethnographic studies of young people and interviews with a range of stakeholders including youth workers, chicken shop managers, nutritionists, teachers, and public health officials.

In October 2013 we ran a small pilot in which we opened a mobile food outlet called Box Chicken serving healthy, affordable meals for a four week period in Forest Gate, Newham. We developed a menu and brand that was appealing to our target audience and served meals for £2.50 to young people. We served 1362 portions. 95% of the students interviewed who had tasted Box Chicken agreed that the food was tasty and 90% wanted it to continue trading in the area. Compared to an original recipe meal at KFC, a 300g Box Chicken meal and 200ml of orange juice has 60% fewer calories, 85% less saturated fat, 70% less salt and 20% less sugar.



Current work

We are currently extending our trial, expanding to six pitches from September 2014 in the London boroughs of Camden, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Newham, located near secondary schools and fast food hot spots. We are working with a range of vendors, exploring which menus, brands and offerings are most popular with our target audience and ways we can use technology to support the vendors to maximise their success.

We aim to gain insights into what makes a successful food enterprise in these particular conditions. We will use these findings to establish a network of financially-sustainable outlets across the capital selling affordable, appealing fast food.

Catering Partners

The following food businesses are involved in our current trial:

Papi's Pickles

A community-driven social enterprise. Their chefs have decades of experience in cooking homemade South Indian dishes using the best seasonal, local and organic produce.

@papispickles

Riojaes Cuisine

A husband and wife outfit, who pride themselves on their creation of Caribbean street food with a unique modern twist, as well as homemade sauces & marinades.

@RiojaesCuisine

Soul Food Rocks

Yvette Thomas, foster carer, parent and keen chef serves her healthy take on Caribbean street food at markets and pop up events.

@soulfoodrocks

Arawak Catering

Brothers Robert and Stephen Robinson merge fresh Caribbean style food with world wide fusion flavours. They cater for events and have a regular pitch at Greenwich Market.

@ArawakCatering

“Rather than restricting takeaway food we should seek to transform it, by making healthy food as visible, tasty, and cheap as unhealthy food.”

Fiona Godlee, editor in chief, British Medical Journal



Contact Ella for more information



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