

What is Man Food?



Engaging men with change

Man Food is a project about men, food and the environment. It's created ways of working with men to understand what they eat and why, and how they might change in future. Our focus has been on protein – animal-based (e.g. meat, dairy) and plant-based (e.g. vegetables, soya) – and on addressing the reality that global eating habits are environmentally unsustainable.

With university researchers, a city farm and an emergency food aid charity, Man Food developed a series of workshops for groups of men in Bristol. These gave men opportunities to come together to cook, to eat, to talk, to share stories and to laugh. We were really happy with the results. Researchers and organisations discovered new understandings about the men they work with, and men enjoyed being, doing and talking together.

“I never get the chance to talk with men like this and it was the best thing for me.”

The Man Food Toolbox



A collection of devices, utensils and thingymeboobs

This book is for individuals, groups and organisations who want to explore some of the things we've explored. We see it as crossed between a toolbox and a recipe book. It's a container of things that might be useful for a particular purpose, but also a collection of ingredients and methods to inspire you. You might find that some tools can be adapted, and that some work better for you than others. And that's fine.

The toolbox is a starting point, a set of things for you to experiment with. You could try swapping one ingredient for another, throwing in something of your own, or using some of the tools we offer but with different groups, topics or settings. Let us know how you get on!

"I was pleasantly surprised by high client engagement with workshops."

Why men?



Finding ways to unpack gender together

Everyone has a relationship with food, and one way we can look at it is through gender. We don't believe gender is as simple as male / female (where our character is dictated by biology), but that it's a more complex set of identities formed through practices. The person that we are is shaped by culture, from childhood through to our social interactions and relationships as adults. This personal identity is performed through the scripts we speak, the behaviours we enact, and the encounters that we make with humans, nonhumans and the wider world.

Man Food tries to get past some of the stereotypes around gender (e.g. blokes liking steak, women liking salad). We explore questions that don't just tell us something about our relationship to food, but about our relationship to being in the world.

“ I think we managed to avoid too much stereotyping but it led to me question my male biases. ”



Why the environment?

What it takes to feed a planet

Modern food production has a big impact on the environment – including greenhouse gas emissions, water usage, deforestation, biodiversity loss, and the development of antimicrobial resistance (superbugs). Livestock farming is resource intensive – it's a system that grows food to feed to animals, to feed humans. The world population is rising, and so is animal-based protein consumption. Man Food wants to work out what we can do about it.

Some environmental issues have entered public awareness (e.g. home recycling, reusable shopping bags, electric cars), but with food it's more patchy. If we come to think of ourselves as part of an ecosystem, rather than as just consumers of environmental resources, the shift to a greener diet is a logical one. But how do we get there? And what part can men play?

“ It got me thinking about energy inputs in food production. ”

Why Eco Men?



Trying new ways of being a man

We're inspired by a movement called ecofeminism, which see the dominance of 'mankind' as damaging both to women and to the environment. This doesn't put blame on individual men, but critiques how society values certain things (e.g. dominance, competition, strength, economic wealth, etc.) over others. There are many different ways of 'being a man', and Man Food is an opportunity to unpicking and explore some of them.

What ways are there of 'being a man' that can have a positive impact on the planet's resources and its future? Man Food tries to give men an opportunity to experiment or perform 'being an eco man', through what we call 'becoming an ecological citizen'.

"It got me re-visiting 'men's issues' stuff that I'd not looked at for many years."

What is 'becoming an ecological citizen'?



Connecting with other beings and matter

Our approach tries to connect people with food. And we're interested in how individuals can develop not just as (ethical) consumers, but as 'ecological citizens' - not just citizens of the state, but of the world of humans and non-humans around us. This means it's an identity open to everyone, not just those with the money and knowledge to 'buy ethical'.

Man Food creates workshops and events that mix arts methods (e.g. drawing and scribbling) with more traditional research ones (e.g. focus groups) and social ones (e.g. a meal). By connecting to food through the senses (taste, touch and feeling) and through empathy (sharing a meal with others, and relating to the lives of what we're eating), we try to create new possibilities not just for talking about food but for *doing* food.

"Vegan friends ask me why a person who cares for the environment could eat meat."

Why groups?



Exploring ways of being ourselves together

There are aspects of dominant masculinity that pervade our work, social and family life. We can recognise some of them when we think of men socialising together on a sports team or a pub night out, or when they're in a work environment or being fathers. We're interested in how bringing together men in a group can empower them to change.

We know that men perform themselves differently in different settings. Working together to explore issues like those in Man Food can create new opportunities for sharing experiences, as well as for developing positive ways of thinking, feeling and performing masculinity. These might then spread out into men's social, family and work lives.

“ I was surprised by how "laid back" the structure was, but it left room for participants to benefit as much as researchers”

Creating the Workshop Space



Fostering a space that is productive and safe

The workshops have many functions – as well as being a tool for community research and change, they offer a space for companionship, play, and personal growth. All of these things require people to feel safe and unafraid of sharing stories, feelings, reflections and the desire to change. As a facilitator or existing group, you may feel confident in creating this environment yourself. Or you might want to set aside some time in the first session to collectively generate some “ground rules” about respect, listening, acknowledging difference, agreeing to disagree, etc. We found it useful to always remember that everyone’s knowledge and contribution has value, and that there is never a right or wrong answer.

As well as social ground rules, it is important to remember the organiser’s responsibility around health and safety and accessibility. Is your venue wheelchair accessible? Is it near a bus route? Is it somewhere different men would feel welcome? In terms of health and safety, you may have your own organisational guidelines, but we would recommend having someone with a food hygiene certificate to supervise the cooking. This doesn’t mean them *doing* the cooking but making sure it’s done safely.

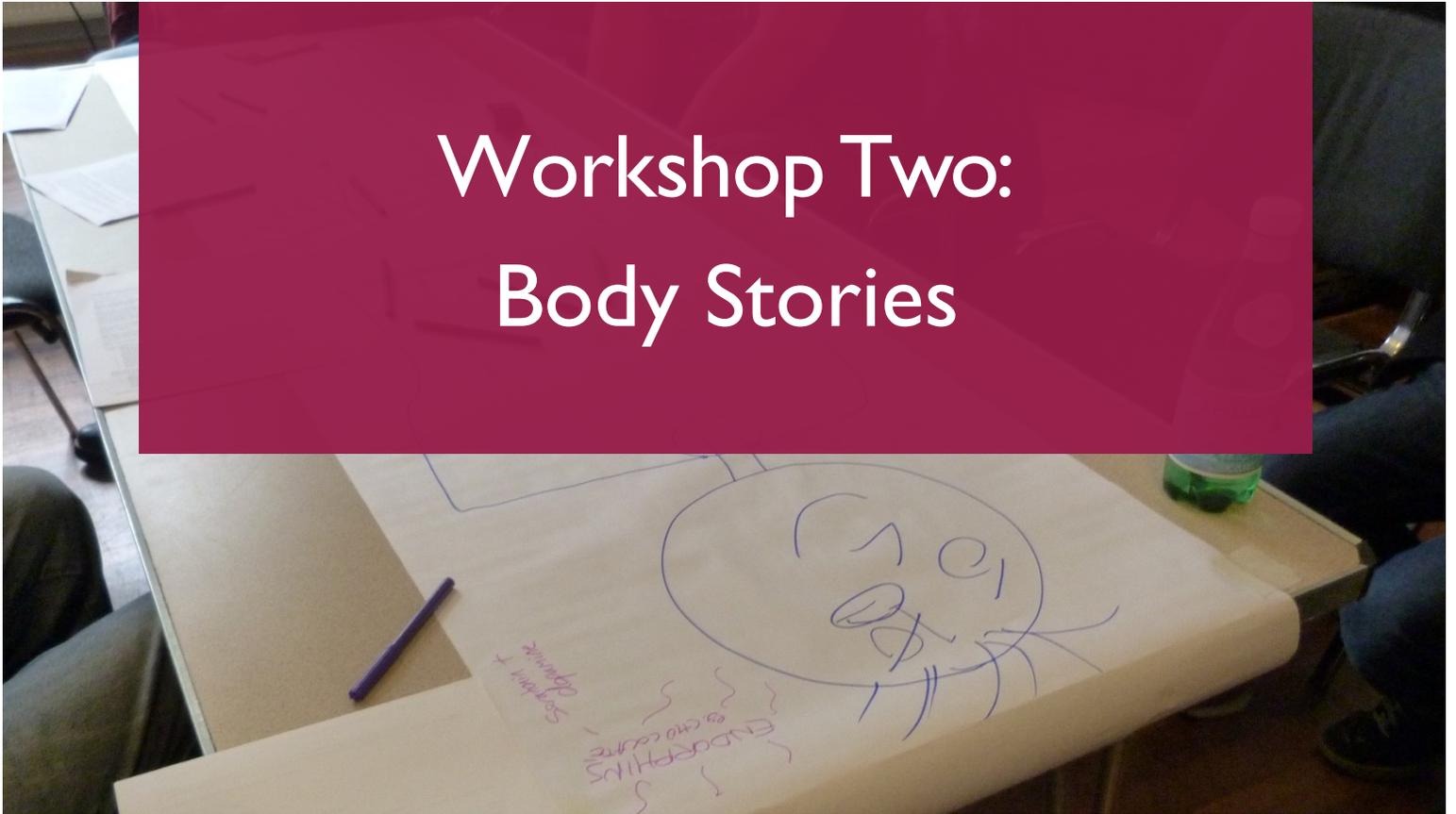
Workshop One: What is Protein?



Ingredients:

1. **Theme:** What does “protein” actually mean? Where do we find it? How is it produced?
2. **Activities:**
 - i) A walk around a city farm to get to know each other and to introduce the subject.
 - ii) A group exercise scaling foods in term of manliness, then protein content, and then eco-friendliness. Roll out a long piece of paper (e.g. lining paper) on the table, draw a long line with points 1-10. Pick c. 10 food objects (e.g. a steak pie, tinned beans, fresh fruit, chocolate bars, etc. – whatever’s in your cupboard or at the shop) and discuss where on the scale they might go. You can all scribble notes on the paper too.
3. **Conversation menu:** How do you grow different types of protein? How do different nonhuman things (plants, animals) become food? What foods do you consume most often? What criteria do you use to decide what to buy / grow / cook / eat?
4. **Dish to cook and eat together:** We cooked pizza from scratch. You can find plenty of easy (no prove) dough recipes online. Some of the group can make the dough while others prepare a selection of meat and veg based toppings, and everyone gets a chance to make their own pizza. We also made a salad and homemade coleslaw.
5. **Reflection over washing up.**

Workshop Two: Body Stories



What makes a protein body?

Ingredients:

1. **Theme:** What does protein do to our bodies? What does it mean to eat other bodies?
2. **Activities:**

A group exercise discussing bodies and protein. Roll out a piece of paper (e.g. lining paper, a paper table cloth) and draw a human body - you could even draw around one of the group! Following the conversational prompts below, write and draw on the body where you identify things related to protein (how it makes you feel, body stereotypes, animal bodies etc.). You can all scribble notes on the paper too.
3. **Menu of conversation prompts:** How do we feel when we eat different types of protein Strong? Full? Farty? Where do you feel it? What is a man's body? As an *idea* and as an *experience* of your own body?
4. **Dish to cook and eat together:** We cooked BBQ – chicken, tofu and tempeh skewers, home made satay and BBQ sauce, and had plenty of salads and rolls on the side. Some of the group can make the sauces, some prepare salads and some cook.
5. **Reflection over washing up**



Workshop Three: My Food Life

Change might not be as strange as we think

Ingredients:

1. **Theme:** What has prompted us to change in the past, and what might in future?
2. **Activities:** A group exercise and discussion. Roll out a piece of paper, and on it draw a long timeline. At one end is 0 years, and at the other end is old age (we picked 100, because we're optimistic!), and along it are 10 year intervals
3. **Conversation prompts:** When have you changed your food practices in the past? What made you change? Was it internal or external circumstances? What might you change in future? What might cause you or others to change? Can you see a role for men to take?
4. **Dish to cook and eat together:**
We made a veggie chilli with rice, and with guacamole, sour cream and extra chilli on the side. You could even try vegan cheese or cream on the side if you fancy and can find it. One chilli recipe we used had beetroot, chipotle and chocolate in it, another had red peppers and bulghur, which gave it a nice mince-like quality and soaked up the flavours.
5. **Reflection over washing up.**

Information about food and environment



There are lots of resources out there dealing with these issues – websites, books and films. Here are a few facts we've found from our research:

- 60% of global terrestrial biodiversity loss is related to food production (UNEP 2016, *Food Systems and Natural Resources*: 14)
- Food production accounts for up to 30% of global greenhouse gas emissions (and 80–86% of these are in agriculture). (Foley JA (2005) Global consequences of land use. *Science* 309:570–574.)
- Emissions from the livestock sector – primarily from cattle and sheep, but also from chickens, pigs and other animals – account for as great a share of global GHGs as tailpipe emissions from fuel burnt in all the world's vehicles. (Chatham House (2015) *Changing Climate, Changing Diets: Pathways to Lower Meat Consumption*: 1)
- The production of animals accounts for around 27% of global consumption and pollution of freshwater resources (Gerbens-Leenes et al. (2013) 'The water footprint of poultry, pork and beef: a comparative study in different countries and production systems', *Water Resources and Industry*, 1,25–36.)
- In the period 1993–2013 the global demand for animal products increased 62%, compared with a population increase of 29% (Food and Agriculture Organization (2014) *State of Food Insecurity in the World 2014: In Brief* (Food Agric Organ, Rome))
- Women commonly face higher risks and greater burdens from the impacts of climate change in situations of poverty, and the majority of the world's poor are women (United Nations Climate Change, Gender and Climate Change http://unfccc.int/gender_and_climate_change/items/7516.php)
- Women and children are 14 times more likely to die or be injured in a natural disaster. 68% of all disasters are climate change related

About Man Food



About the project

Man Food is a project led by Emma Roe and Paul Hurley at the University of Southampton, in partnership with Windmill Hill City Farm and the Matthew Tree Project. It has been funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council Connected Communities Programme.

Hurley, Paul and Roe, Emma (2018) The Man Food Toolbox www.man-food.org/2018/02/12/man-food-toolbox/

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More information about the project, including a download of the audio walk created by project artists-in-residence (Joanna Young, Jamie McCarthy and Kip Johnson), is available at www.man-food.org. You can contact the researchers directly via the Man Food website or at E.J.Roe@soton.ac.uk and P.D.Hurley@soton.ac.uk.



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