

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

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| DIALOGUE DATE | Friday, 30 April 2021 11:00 GMT +01:00 |
| DIALOGUE TITLE | Women's empowerment and nutrition - making the connections |
| CONVENED BY | Nick Chisholm (University College Cork), Solange Cullen (University College Cork), Patrice Lucid (Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development - IFIAD) |
| DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE | https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/11393/ |
| DIALOGUE TYPE | Independent |
| GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS | Ireland, No borders |

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

148

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

40

19-30

62

31-50

41

51-65

5

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

47 Male

101 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

14 Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

Agro-forestry

1 Environment and ecology

2 Trade and commerce

2 Education

Communication

Food processing

Food retail, markets

Food industry

Financial Services

5 Health care

33 Nutrition

2 National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

89 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

1 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

14 Local Non-Governmental Organization

18 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

32 Science and academia

1 Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

10 Government and national institution

Regional economic community

4 United Nations

International financial institution

Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

Consumer group

68 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

The event was organised and convened through a consultative process that fully subscribed to the principles of engagement outlined in the convenor's manual. The main model of engagement was a panel of keynote speakers to encourage discussion. Attendees were invited through diverse channels to ensure that the audience was diverse and represented a broad spectrum of disciplines and sectors. The speakers and audience were treated with respect and given the space to voice their comments and questions. The dialogue complemented research and practice currently being done to advance Action tack 1. The event was organised as a collaboration between UCC and IFIAD to ensure a broad reach and encourage a diverse audience to contribute and interact in thought provoking ideas and solutions.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The Dialogue participants understood the urgency of addressing women's empowerment and nutrition through the evidence presented and discussion. Participants actively participated in discussions around solutions. The facilitator of the dialogue was chosen based of their experience and their knowledge of the topic. Each speaker and participant were respectful of the topic, comments and other cultures. The complexity of women's empowerment and nutrition was recognised throughout the event. It was acknowledged that there is no simple solution to increasing women's empowerment while simultaneously improving women's health and community food security, but with increased research and practice, we can start to form solutions to the complex issues. The importance of the role of women and their contribution to the food system was highlighted. The speakers committed to continue their work and the conversation surrounding solutions through collaboration after the event. The webinar brought together a range of participants from different sectors and stake-holder groups, the mix between science and academia and development practitioners and NGO's shows that there was an exchange between the most current research and evidence and current practices in the field. It allowed for an exchange of knowledge and ideas and a discussion about the best way forward.

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

Familiarise the principles of engagement prior to organising a dialogue. When planning on inviting participants identify channels that will ensure a diverse pool of disciplines and stakeholder groups, this will make the event and the discussion more inclusive and interesting. Food systems include everyone, and it is importance to create a virtual space where individuals and groups can access up to date research and current practices on the subject. Prepare a platform on which to share resources relevant to the topic.

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

Yes

No

The dialogue was the third of a three-part online series. It was organised as a webinar to ensure as many participants as possible could access the event. The online nature of the event allowed for participants from around the world to part-take. The registration information showed that there were participants from Asia, Africa, the Americas and Europe. The keynote speakers chosen represented a diverse body of work from India, Niger, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Kenya, that brought an audience from many countries. It ran as a presentation of work done by five keynote speakers, between every section there was time given to the audience to raise question or comment. The dialogue was facilitated by a stakeholder with experience in the area. The facilitator fielded question towards the speakers and allowed time for responses from one or all the speakers. Throughout the presentations there was ongoing discussions between the audience and other speakers in the online dialogue box which was available for everyone. The dialogue box served not only to raise questions but also allowed audience members to share resources of their own work and experience to the large number of participants, this ensured that all participant's voices were heard.

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The main focus of the dialogue was to discuss how programmes promoting women's empowerment can contribute to improved women's nutrition and health, looking towards the Food Systems Summit 2021. The concept of nutritional empowerment as a method to identify barriers to increased nutrition was presented. The discussion presented findings from research and case studies from Irish and other NGOs undertaking projects focussed on women's empowerment. The event was a platform to explore lessons on programme design and implementation of development interventions which can simultaneously contribute to women's empowerment and food security and nutrition.

ACTION TRACKS

- ✓ Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- ✓ Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- ✓ Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- ✓ Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

- Finance
- ✓ Innovation
- Human rights
- ✓ Women & Youth Empowerment
- Policy
- ✓ Data & Evidence
- Governance
- Trade-offs
- Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

The main challenge identified is how to promote women's empowerment and improved nutrition and health in such a way that women's individual needs are being met. Often nutrition programmes that focus on better community and childhood nutrition are targeted at women, but their own nutritional status is neglected. Evidence shows that empowering women can lead to increased household diet diversity and food security, however women's own nutritional status does not correlate to their empowerment status. Gender-based inequalities exist within the nutrition. Women require access to resources, agency, knowledge and institutional support to ensure they are in a position to lead healthy lives as individuals in order to support the promotion of improved nutrition within their households and communities.

This webinar created a platform to discuss the need for a multi-disciplinary approach to addressing a complex challenge. From the discussion after each presentation and the group discussions there was extreme interest in how to use the nutritional empowerment tool. Participants saw the value in measuring women's individual experiences and their own nutritional empowerment. Many questions were targeted at the use and adaptability of the nutritional empowerment index. Both the content of the speakers' presentations and the discussion portion illustrated the complexity of women's empowerment and nutrition as individual issues. The challenge is to identify the main drivers of women's disempowerment and malnutrition and the link between the two issues. Once the drivers and links can be identified, the appropriate multi-dimensional approach to simultaneously address both issues can be designed, without any trade-offs.

Some of the key findings are;

- Women's nutritional empowerment is a concept introduced as a method to capture underlying structural factors determining poor nutrition and health of women.
- The determinants of women's nutritional disempowerment are context specific and require detailed analysis to identify the main barriers to improved nutrition.
- Both women's empowerment and nutrition are extremely complex issues, and have multi-sector influencing factors and therefore a multi-sector approach to address them both simultaneously is needed.
- There are opportunities to use new approaches to identify the main barriers to ensure appropriate future planning on women and nutrition.
- The potential negative outcome of over burdening women with increased workload should always be considered and closely monitored.
- Social behavioural change of relationships within families and communities can off-set the over-burdening of women.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

How to Link Women's Empowerment and Nutrition: the Women's Empowerment in Nutrition Index (WENI)

The Women's Empowerment in Nutrition Index (WENI) was developed by Narayanan et al., (2019) to contribute to a shift in thinking about empowerment in the context of women's nutrition. The index bridges the missing link between empowerment and individual women's nutrition and health.

The WENI introduces the concept of nutritional empowerment as a method to identify barriers to increased nutrition for women. It encompasses the basis of both empowerment and drivers of nutrition to expand on household nutrition but also examines the causes of female malnutrition. It measures women's knowledge, resources, agency and achievements in food, health, fertility, and institutional support.

There was discussion on the adaptability of the WENI, and how it may be used within the food system in different agricultural setting (arid-semi-arid areas), the WENI was developed with interchangeable indicators to allow for this, and the initial research was validated in different geographical and agricultural settings within the food system.

There was interest of how the WENI could be used, participants discussed the role of the WENI index as a tool to use before project design and programme development. One of the main advantages of WENI is that it evaluates the most important factors in an area and could be used to identify the main priorities of a project sample. It will highlight the domains in which women need the most attention or the least. The index can be also used as a diagnostic tool to understand the needs of a community better. It can also be used as an outcome measure. The main role of the WENI is to capture underlining structural factors impacts women's nutritional empowerment.

The complexity of women's empowerment was illustrated through the discussion, with certain domains of empowerment signifying a positive contribution to empowerment or in some cases negative. For example, the index can show that working women achieve empowerment by gaining access to income, however in other cases, women who work are disempowered due to their working conditions.

One of the main outcomes of this webinar is the development of a networking grant proposal to continued discussion and potential for connection and collaboration between speakers and their organisations.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

Evidence and Responses from Irish and International Development Partners

The results of UCC's research 'Women's Economic and Nutritional Empowerment: Gergera Watershed Project, Tigray, Ethiopia.' were presented. The study was conducted by applying the commonly used Abbreviated Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (AWEAI) and the WENI along with a series of food security, diet and health metrics. The objective of the research was to illustrate the complexity in measuring women's empowerment and the links to nutrition. Goal Global has created the UNITLIFE project aimed at connecting women's empowerment to undernutrition prevention and treatment in Niger. The project aims at sustainably contributing to stunting reduction through agriculture market systems and social behaviour changes. The three main expected outcomes are: improved production and availability of healthy foods, improved women's empowerment for child nutrition and wellbeing and improved health-seeking behaviours, nutritional practices, and community well-being. The project recognises that this area requires taking a multi-disciplinary approach to achieve the outcomes by working within the food, agriculture, health, and sociology sectors. COUNSENUTH's project 'Lishe Dodoma' is a community-based gender driven nutrition programme in Chemba District, Dodoma Region in Tanzania. The key programme delivery approaches are stakeholder's engagement, Transformative Reflective Leadership Approach (TRLA) and Village Health and Nutrition Days (VHND). TRLA is an approach which actively engages influential community leaders and whole communities in a participatory way to comprehend existing gender disparities and empowers them to address these for improved nutrition. Chemba is a strong patriarchal society, empowerment of women without active involvement of men is impossible. Maureen Muketha contributed her Food System Summit Action Track 1 Leadership Team's 'Game Changer' solution. This entails a need to increase the availability of safe and nutritious food, making food more affordable and reducing inequities in food access. It focuses on promoting women-led enterprises to grow and sell nutritious but neglected crops. It aims to support women currently facing poverty and inequality to create small enterprises, generating economic empowerment and agency in decision-making in producing, eating, and selling nutritious foods. It may also encourage leadership programmes for innovators at the community level.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

Discussion Panel

There was extreme interest in exploring the reasons that women's empowerment did not correlate with household's food security indicators. The evidence shown from the research in Tigray illustrated why the WENI is important, often individual women's health and nutrition is overlooked when programmes focus on women as a route to improve childhood nutrition. Again, there was interest in all speakers in this group towards adaptation current practices to other contexts.

Throughout the webinar the discussion both from the panellist's and the audience was used to share resources from the speakers and the attendees.

The presentations from Ethiopia, Niger and Tanzania showed that there are complex issues when addressing nutrition and the first step is to identify the main driver factors of malnutrition.

The speaker from GOAL Global based in Niger showed innovative methods to addressing malnutrition through mass awareness by using digital technologies to spread information. Reaching communities that were further away from the sample site.

All presentations added the conclusion that both separately women's empowerment and nutrition are determined by a multitude of driving factors. What was proven to be even more complex is trying to promote both increased women's empowerment and improved nutrition in a multi-disciplinary manner.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

There was a general consensus surrounding the issues of women's empowerment and nutrition, however the approaches to address these did differ. Some could argue that using women's empowerment as a method to improve households or child malnutrition, as successful as that has been in the past, could also lead to the over burden of women and in some cases and ignore the needs of the individual women themselves.

There was also discussion on the nutrition-livelihoods pathway, on whether better nutrition leads to improved livelihoods, the discussion offered that there was a positive relationship between improved nutrition and livelihoods outcomes, however the opposite is not always true, that improved livelihoods lead to better nutrition. There was a note of the amount of research that is available to back these statements.

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