

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Saturday, 26 June 2021 10:00 GMT +01:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Future Food - Engaging Locally
CONVENED BY	OmVed Gardens / Village Raw / Where the Leaves Fall
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/14970/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

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

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-18 1 19-30 10 31-50 7 51-65 6 66-80 0 80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

4 Male 20 Female Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

3	Agriculture/crops	4	Education	2	Health care
	Fish and aquaculture		Communication	3	Nutrition
	Livestock	1	Food processing		National or local government
	Agro-forestry	1	Food retail, markets		Utilities
5	Environment and ecology	5	Food industry		Industrial
	Trade and commerce		Financial Services	8	Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

10	Small/medium enterprise/artisan		Workers and trade union
	Large national business		Member of Parliament
	Multi-national corporation	1	Local authority
1	Small-scale farmer	2	Government and national institution
	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
	Large-scale farmer		United Nations
2	Local Non-Governmental Organization		International financial institution
	International Non-Governmental Organization		Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
	Indigenous People	2	Consumer group
	Science and academia	10	Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The dialogue was a local community event covering a few London boroughs. We put out calls for people to engage - whether they were growers, producers, consumers or something in between. We also actively contacted people and invited them to come along. The aim was to have around 20-30 people representing different areas of the food system. Once we gathered we introduced the topics we would be covering, the two break-out sessions, and asked people not to photograph the event, and that everything said was in confidence. We broke up into four groups for the sessions. At the end we came together for a larger group session.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

We asked people questions based on local experience and thoughts about the food system, and touched on themes from the five action tracks.

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

No.

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

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

There were three sessions - two break out group sessions and a larger group session. Each session considered one main question:

Session 1 - Do people in north London have access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food?

Session 2 - Is there social justice in our food system? Can we make improvements?

Session 3 - What do we want to see this picture look like in 10/3 years' time?

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

MAIN FINDINGS

Most participants, on a personal level, thought they did have access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food, although many were keen to acknowledge their privilege and that not everyone does have this access. It was suggested that the key barriers to access are available resources and education.

When it came to the question of social justice in the food system the answer across the groups was a resounding ‘no’. It was suggested major corporations are largely responsible for this as they shape the food system to match their own agendas. Some people have too much food and waste it, others are starving.

Other takeaways include that farmers could be made more visible in the food system, and connected to consumers. Food hubs is one way to achieve this.

The local food system should be linked and connected better.

Access to land is key to achieving sustainable production and access.

Change needs to happen at a policy level.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/5

Do people in north London have access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food?

PT1

Most participants, on a personal level, thought they did have access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food, although many were keen to acknowledge their privilege and that not everyone does have this access. It was suggested that the key barriers to access are available resources and education.

It was recognised that north London has a wide range of incomes. There are very wealthy people living alongside families who are really struggling. It was noted that the intersection between people's level of education and their income is stark. Education is also key when it comes to food - people don't know what to do with food and how to cook it. People often say that they don't have enough time to cook but perhaps it's more a question of not knowing how to cook fast, simple, but healthy meals. It was suggested that we no longer prioritise food and healthy eating, or eating together and enjoying food in the way that other cultures do. The question arose whether this is also a political question: the politics of convenience and the food lobby. Have we lost our interest in a creative food culture and does this benefit big business? It was also pointed out that some people's living situation makes it difficult to cook food- they have no facilities, utensils, space etc.

People might compromise on the food they buy due to other factors such as rent and bills. Also people who are chronically ill, not earning, or need support can't always access healthy food. There are people locally who are starving/can't afford food. There are also elderly people who can't chop veg, lift pans etc. so end up microwaving their food. The point was made that food banks are great as a lifeline but do not always provide high quality or fresh food. Much of it is pasta, tinned food etc.

Variety of food isn't a problem in the area, with there being a lot of choice on the high street with a diversity of cultures and diets catered for. However it was argued that local councils should regulate the high street better to create a more mixed high street with cohesive planning, to build better, stronger more resilient communities. An increase in smaller independent shops and less betting shops, hair dressers and estate agents. It was suggested that Belsize Park and Marylebone are good examples of this. It was however also mentioned that independent shops can be expensive.

Generally it was considered that organic food can be inaccessible due to its pricing. It was particularly mentioned that Muswell Hill is expensive for organic fruit and vegetables but there are alternatives close by such as Wood Green Market which is lots cheaper but people don't know about it. This messaging needs to improve so the community are aware of all options on their door step. It was added that if you are aware of local food sources and are resourceful it is also possible to access cheaper, nutritious foods.

It was noted that big supermarkets dominate the local food supply and due to aggressive pricing the smaller independent shops are affected by this. It was also noted that during the pandemic there has been a rise in online shopping. Customers often go for the cheaper deal which is not always the best quality – such as processed fast food. Convenience impacts on our health – in terms of nutrition and physical health and weight gain. And people were generally not happy with the excessive plastic packaging that supermarkets use. It was considered that as the main source of food shopping supermarkets should be more responsible.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/5

Do people in north London have access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food?

PT2

It was felt that the UK had lost its rich history of locally produced good food compared to other countries where the street food markets bring to the city a diverse range of fresh, local food that is affordable and the place where most people shop. Large scale farming in the UK since WW2 meant the loss of farmers markets, market gardens and orchards. There are examples of organic farms within London eg. Forty Hall Farm in Enfield that sells organic veg and meat, but they are often expensive. Rather than being a cheap way for people to get their fresh produce and being a direct route to market for farmers, they have become 'artisan' and 'gentrified'. It was felt that this was due to the commercialisation of public space, where even food markets are expected to generate profits rather than provide a public service. There was also concern that the few remaining genuinely affordable street markets in London are at risk due to new building developments.

It was noted that the environmental and health agenda are connected in the long run and more should be done together. It was thought that subsidies are not always directed towards organic farms and producers and this needs to be addressed at a Policy/government level. A lack of education equals people eating unseasonably which has negative health and environmental consequences. It was also raised that there is little to no transparency about the logistics and delivery chain of the food – both its transportation and origin.

Among the participants there were people with access to an allotment and others with gardens who grow smaller crops. Having children seemed to be a driving force for home growing food – to create awareness and educate the children about seasonal, sustainable food - personally growing food amplifies that message. Allotments also provide escape which is great for mental wellbeing. More growing spaces should become available to everyone. Corporations should free up their space for community plots - some developers have started to successfully do this so it is evident positive intention does exist.

The group went on to discuss the importance of primary curriculum to include gardening and cooking - fundamental life skills that needs to be weaved through the learning from an early age. Schools used to teach home economics but school education now values academic achievement over life skills such as cooking. Totteridge Academy is an example of a school that teaches children how to grow and cook food. People feel that schools are an important place for learning about food and eating healthy and nutrition but the quality of food being served to school children is not always good enough. People felt that the problem was the fact that school meal services have been privatised in many cases. And then post schooling, society puts a lower value on working in the service industries and it is not seen as a good career path. It was noted that improved education and access to healthy and nutritious food would take pressure off the NHS.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/5

Is there social justice in the food system?

The answer across the groups was a resounding 'no'. It was suggested major corporations are largely responsible for this as they shape the food system to match their own agendas. Some people have too much food and waste it, others are starving.

As a safety net, it was considered that food banks, while sadly necessary are perhaps an excuse for the government to not address the underlying issues that create the need for food banks in the first place. In north London there has been a seismic change in attitudes to using food banks with some of the group noting that many of their friends and colleagues who have been adversely affected by Covid (creatives, company directors etc) are using food banks. There were discussions among several groups as to whether food banks are a good or bad thing. It was suggested that if there were no food banks using up the surplus food, there would be a lot more waste going to land fill. However should we be tackling food poverty in a different way? On waste it was also suggested that best before / sell by dates are wrong and scare people into wasting stuff.

Issues with the Universal Credit system were noted – with the application process and the length of time it takes to access/receive funds. One possible solution touted was for there to be a basic universal income which may also help reduce or alleviate food bank demand. It was also discussed that people could be issued a fruit and vegetable box with recipes as part of the Universal basic Income package.

Possible routes to social justice in the local food system discussed include more independent shops, shopping directly with suppliers/producers, further use of allotments (more would be needed), affordable farmers' and local markets. It is complicated to provide social justice for everyone so strategies are needed at policy level – both national and local - thinking about metrics other than GDP.

Buying directly from producers was echoed across several groups. Buying directly - ie from the Milk Delivery Person and using companies like Crop Drop / Odd Box - ensuring the farmer gets the fair return for his produce that major super markets refuse. Generally improved connections with farmers and other suppliers was mentioned.

An improved focus on land management would also help. There is inherently injustice in the management of land which is largely owned by very few people. It is difficult to get access to land for the rest of the population so there is very little land for people to grow food. The question was asked how much land is needed to sustain the population of London. Could parks be used for growing food? London is surrounded by a green belt and we should be accessing food from local farms – but farmers are largely invisible. In the city, there is no or little connection to how our food is grown and access is mainly through large retailers with little connection to the shopper or corner shops with little transparency on provenance.

It was commented that there is racial discrimination in our food systems. POC growers have little access to land, pay is low but it was also suggested that the farming industry is systemically racist and not as progressive as many other industries. There were also local examples of discrimination such as in allotments.

Better intertwined communities was seen as one part of the solution. There is amazing work going in with different projects: Chalk Farm Village is going to be a large urban farm. Grange Big Local is a neighbourhood of East Finchley that has won a grant to be run by residents for the community. The aim to create an inclusive eco system where people support each other. Soup kitchens could also benefit from linking up to make better use of their resources. There is an website born out of the Muswell Hill Soup Kitchen which aims to help people find where soup kitchens are using GPS: nextmeal.co.uk

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/5

Notes from the Circle discussion

It was commented that farmers are fairly invisible in the food system. It was questioned if farmers can afford to grow organic food. The notion of food hubs came up – a much better way for engagement across the food system. But is it easier for people not to engage?

The question was raised as to how we could map out and link the local food system better.

It was commented that the local authorities hadn't been very useful or forthcoming during the pandemic and that most of the support that happened was generated by the community. There's no profit here so private companies not interested.

How do we change the notion that good healthy food is expensive? Food should be an entitlement, and the next step would be for that food to be good food – not just the cheapest.

It was suggested that there is affordable food at supermarkets – but it requires time, knowledge and education. Why pick up lentils when you can pick up processed food which is quick, easy and can taste food? Do people even have the means to cook?

Access to land is key – it was commented that even among local growers/allotments there is racial discrimination.

It was questioned whether food banks improve or decrease social justice. It was commented that food banks are not shameful places. How do we reframe the narrative?

It was suggested that universal income could include a voucher for a veg box. It was mentioned that there is a universal baseline income pilot that is going to happen – there is dignity in having the resources rather than just hand outs. Food is a good way into having wider conversations about equity.

The idea of a community fridge being tested in East Finchley.

It's not just about us managing locally but also about pressure being put on the government. And we have to think wider – the global south – and get involved in action. Food shortages are a racial issue what we're becoming more aware of.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/5

ACTION TRACKS

KEYWORDS

	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all		Finance		Policy
	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns		Innovation		Data & Evidence
	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production		Human rights		Governance
	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods		Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress				Environment and Climate

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Questions were raised about what privilege and access really meant. Even when people in a position of privilege were trying to be open minded and think about wider society - it was very much from their own perspective and a better understanding of the real situation on the ground would change that perspective. One of the people in the group supports people in poverty, but also commented that there were worse situations that what they were dealing with. The situation is bad and people don't fully comprehend that,

Some people thought direct action is necessary to affect change, others thought that this isn't the way.

There was generally a lot of frustration among the group - some were angry and upset.

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

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **Notes from the dialogue FUTURE FOOD**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/dialogue-editing-live.docx>