

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Saturday, 22 May 2021 08:00 GMT -06:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Exploring Local Food System Challenges & Opportunities to Build Sustainable Partnerships for the Future
CONVENED BY	City of San Antonio, Gardopia and Food Policy Council of San Antonio.
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/14974/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	United States of America

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

131

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-18 17 19-30 80 31-50 26 51-65 8 66-80 80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

37 Male 85 Female Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

4	Agriculture/crops	30	Education	5	Health care
1	Fish and aquaculture	6	Communication		Nutrition
1	Livestock	3	Food processing	21	National or local government
	Agro-forestry	2	Food retail, markets		Utilities
11	Environment and ecology	3	Food industry	1	Industrial
	Trade and commerce	1	Financial Services	31	Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

16	Small/medium enterprise/artisan	1	Workers and trade union
	Large national business		Member of Parliament
1	Multi-national corporation	21	Local authority
6	Small-scale farmer	13	Government and national institution
	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
	Large-scale farmer	1	United Nations
15	Local Non-Governmental Organization	1	International financial institution
	International Non-Governmental Organization	3	Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
8	Indigenous People	4	Consumer group
18	Science and academia		Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

We utilized this opportunity to bring together multiple city departments and partners agencies to organize and facilitate this event. Many of the facilitators attended the United Nations training offered by the Summit Dialogues team. Stakeholders across various sectors were invited to participate in the dialogue. A panel discussion from an inclusive group of leaders working in the realm of food systems kicked off the Dialogue. Participants were then able to join two different facilitated breakout sessions. The aim of this dialogue was to learn more about the work already being done, and to initiate a respectful conversation with a diverse group of community members and organizations aimed at improving the sustainability and resiliency of the city's food systems. In addition to raising community awareness regarding the complexity of sustainable food systems and the challenges, the Dialogue intended to identify linkages, overlaps and gaps between the existing programs related to these topics, as well as to create new synergies and partnerships city-wide.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The principles of engagement were shared with participants on the registration form prior to the event. To open the dialogue, a land acknowledgement was presented by a local tribal chairman of the Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe of Texas. The Mayor of the City of San Antonio and local panelists shared their role and commitment to building partnerships to plan for the future of our local food system. The event streamed live on social media, with an estimated 486 views. During the breakout sessions, videos were played to share local programs and initiatives that support different sectors of the foods system. After the event, participants were encouraged to provide feedback on the event. We hope to count on their interest and involvement in future events which will result in the development of a roadmap for a sustainable and resilient food system.

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

One suggestion for Dialogue convenors would be to attend the Summit Dialogue Guidance for Convenors, Curators and Facilitators training offered by the UN Summit organizers. Attending this training was beneficial in understanding and appreciating the Principals of Engagement.

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

The focus of this dialogue was to explore our local food system's current challenges and opportunities to build sustainable partnerships for the future. All five of the action tracks were discussed among various sectors of the food system, stakeholders, community organizations, institutional partners, government leaders and community members. Common key words throughout the summit were centered around human rights, governance, policy, data, innovation and empowering our community to take part in advocating for an equitable food system. There is a need to improve transparency, gain trust and build partnerships to develop a strategic roadmap for a resilient food system that can flourish despite any shocks or stressors. Planning future forums will help align ideas, programs, and help to identify roles of stakeholders and community members so that we can transform our food system. To ensure a more equitable food system, improving policy was an important theme throughout the dialogue. Changing policy to improve agriculture, land use, food procurement, and health disparities in our community will be key to changing the current infrastructure and roadblocks that we have in our food system. To advocate for policy change, obtaining data on our local food purchasing, production, and distribution is needed. Additionally, innovation and investments at all levels of the food chain is crucial for sustainable changes. Technology advancements throughout the food chain, from farmers to consumers, will be key in addressing disparities. Stakeholders in the food service industry should have an opportunity and role to think creatively on new ways of addressing food insecurity to ensure there is nutritious food for all. Lastly, community engagement and participation will be the foundation to addressing many of the challenges in our food systems. A common theme among all breakout groups was to focus on education and getting the community more involved in learning about the food system. Building a strong education and communication plan will help connect the community to local initiatives and support advocacy to strength our food system. Suggested education topics included learning about the food culture from past ancestors, growing your own food, connecting food to health, and the understanding the economic and environmental impact of shifting to a sustainable movement.

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

An agreement during the dialogue was that returning to “normal” post the COVID-19 pandemic should not be an option due to preexisting inequalities in the food system. Participants expressed a willingness to help influence changes to the structural inequalities that our current food system has in place for those working on the frontline to consumers. More discussions and exploration of all sectors of the food chain are needed to include more voices at the discussion table. It will be important that city leaders listen to the voices of the community to drive the changes needed in policy reform, securing funding for green infrastructure and economic development, and in identifying a clear path to ending food insecurity in our community. To secure more investment opportunities on any of these initiatives, collecting data will be essential in developing clear actions, determining indicators for success and identifying roles for each stakeholder. Another conclusion of the dialogue was to have more transparency, collaboration, and a clear plan in place during times when our food system is prone to shocks and stresses like the COVID-19 pandemic or natural disasters. There was an agreement that during an emergency response we should not have a top-down or government centered approach, but instead a bottom-up community driven approach. Building a network of community partners should be a top priority during times when our food system is disrupted. Additionally, there is a need to focus on education. Education was a top priority among participants throughout all the actions tracks. Incorporating more hands-on learning activities throughout the lifespan was encouraged through school and community gardens. Focusing on the history of native foods in our region and educating on traditional cooking techniques is crucial to appreciating the abundance of food that surrounds our community. There is also a need to educate the community on how climate change affects food availability, cost and distribution. Finding ways to optimize environmental resources by eliminating wasteful patterns of food consumptions, reducing water use, soil degradation, and greenhouse gas emissions sill needs to be further discussed.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/5

Action Track 1: There were several outcomes or action items discussed among the group to help ensure access to safe and nutritious food. First, there is a need to increase fair pay and social protection for farmers. This could be accomplished through advocacy and changes to current legislation centered around the Farm Bill. It will be important that we find ways to connect the community to local growers and native foods within community to build support for these changes. Additionally, educational programs should focus on the health benefits of food, the importance of purchasing or growing native and local foods and learning about the history of food preparation methods from past cultures. Another important outcome to be addressed is the need to change and improve health and socioeconomic disparities that exist in the community that make it more challenging for all individuals to obtain nutritious food. Some strategies to improve access to nutritious foods was to work towards eliminating food deserts, decreasing food swaps, and improving the logistics of food distribution in our community. It was also noted that ending health disparities and increase living wages can help ensure all individuals can afford nutritious foods. To accomplish this, an inclusive partnership among all of those involved in the food system needs to be convened. This type of collaboration will lead to productive changes and a closer step to eliminating inequities in ensuring access to nutritious foods. Suggestions for progress indicators were to identify changes in consumption patterns, tracking socioeconomic patterns or creating an annual food systems impact report at various levels of the food chain. It was stated that more research on determining progress indicators still needs to be determined to ensure all voices are included in measuring success.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/5

Action Track 2: One action item for determining shifts in sustainable consumption patterns is the need to set aside funding to obtain data on food production, distribution and purchasing. Participants mentioned the need to better understand all sectors of the food systems and the role stakeholders can have on supporting each sector. It's also important to highlight and recognize all businesses that currently promote sustainable initiatives. Creating healthy environments in schools, institutions, and workplaces is essential in shifting healthier behaviors in food consumption. While making these shifts, it's important to promote education within the community on native plants and the benefits of growing or purchasing local produce. Empowering the community, particularly the youth, to take part and advocating for these initiatives is essential to building a foundation for change. It was noted that everyone in our community has a role to play on improving our food system.

ACTION TRACKS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
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<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
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KEYWORDS

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<input type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
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<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/5

Action Track 3: Participants focused on implementing initiatives to support nature-positive food production and distribution particularly during times of a natural disaster. A community emergency response approach was favored as opposed to having government officials navigating and managing a crisis response. Creating an inclusive network of farmers, local food vendors, community health workers, community/faith-based organizations, city departments and academic institutions to respond to a crisis is key to ensuring food is distributed to those in need. Another discussion outcome was to focus on maintaining virtual work environments to continue to make progress on reducing carbon emissions. Additionally, there were suggestions to focus on incentivizing businesses to manage food waste and land use for green initiatives. There creation of food forests throughout the city was well supported among participants. At the same time, there is a need to engage the community on advocating for these changes by bridging the knowledge gap on climate change and how it affects the availability and cost of food. More discussions on this topic is needed to determine ways to optimize environmental resources throughout the food system.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/5

The discussion around advancing equitable livelihoods (Action Track 4) was focused on improving human rights and social disparities that exist among our community. The disparities that currently exist were highlighted because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it's clear that returning to "normal" or pre-pandemic living is unacceptable. There is a need to focus on improving economic conditions, food access and living wages to work towards a future of equitable livelihoods.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/5

Finally, Action Track 5 focused on defining a resilient food system and the actions needed to move towards this vision. A resilient food system was defined around being diverse, ensuring equitable access to nutritious food, and flourishing despite shocks or stress. It was highlighted in our discussion that improving emergency response strategies, communication, and reliability is needed to improve our food system. There is a need to focus on a bottom-up, community-rooted response rather than top-down approach. This type of approach could help all individuals working in the food systems to prepare and recover from instabilities. Possible indicators discussed were to evaluate lower rates of poverty and health disparities, chronic diseases and evaluating demands of the local food supply. Some challenges that might be anticipated are determining how to prioritize action items, allocating funds for implementing and supporting strategic initiatives and identifying the roles of stakeholders. Further discussions are needed to determine future action items.

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<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

An area of divergence in ensuring access to safe and nutritious foods is that we have a high rate of food security and an abundance of food waste. To have a sustainable food system, managing food wastes must be a priority and a responsibility for all. Also, there is a need to strength and increased food distribution while also looking at strategies to reduce our City's carbon footprint. Creating food hubs and food forests within the community and in food desserts was an idea to overcome this issue. We also need to continue to focus on fair pay for all individuals working within the food system as well ensuring all nutritious food is affordable for all. Finally, prioritizing all the challenges we currently face in our food system is an area of divergence. There are local issues that need to be addressed but also federal legislation that can create roadblocks to building a resilient food system. Further discussions are needed.

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