

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Wednesday, 2 June 2021 09:00 GMT -04:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Who's missing at dinner? Bringing farmers into the conversation on food systems through inclusive communication platforms
CONVENED BY	Farm Radio International
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/15672/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	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

97

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

19-30

31-50

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

36 Male

61 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

33 Agriculture/crops
Fish and aquaculture
Livestock
Agro-forestry
Environment and ecology
Trade and commerce

13 Education
22 Communication
Food processing
Food retail, markets
Food industry
Financial Services

Health care
Nutrition
4 National or local government
Utilities
Industrial
25 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

3 Small/medium enterprise/artisan
1 Large national business
3 Multi-national corporation
3 Small-scale farmer
Medium-scale farmer
Large-scale farmer
7 Local Non-Governmental Organization
27 International Non-Governmental Organization
Indigenous People
13 Science and academia

Workers and trade union
Member of Parliament
2 Local authority
5 Government and national institution
Regional economic community
11 United Nations
2 International financial institution
2 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
Consumer group
18 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

We wanted to organize a dialogue for development practitioners that talked about the importance of communication in agriculture interventions and projects - and specifically one that addressed how communication can be used to create equitable and inclusive food systems. We truly believe that addressing communications, and aspects of inclusion and meaningful interaction is an urgent need when it comes to creating equitable food systems, and that communication, done right, will allow us to meet the 2030 SDGs. It is from that point of view that we chose the topic to look at different ways communications are done in a way that can inform the Food Systems Summit. It was organized to include different stakeholders - from every-day farmers, to organizational representatives that take on different aspects of communication and food systems, to more influential actors in food systems and development. We wanted to ensure these opinions - like when you communicate well - were balanced and reflected in a variety of ways - we did this through arranging speakers, video participants, and polls for general participants over the course of the webinar. We also wanted to tackle the wide reaching effects of communication - it's an area that interacts with the complexity of the food system as a whole.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Urgency Communication is a necessary & important step in engaging farmers in creating sustainable & equitable food systems. During the dialogue, we reflected on examples of the different ways that people and organizations could start doing this type of work now. Commit The entire conversation of the webinar focused on how communications specifically can influence Food Systems & contribute to more equitable systems as a whole. Be Respectful By engaging participants from different aspects of the food systems (from farmers to organizations & higher-level actors) and encouraging questions from all participants we ensured that different opinions could be seen as on similar levels and as similar importance. We thoroughly discussed the importance of respecting farmer's opinions, views, knowledge, languages & roles in food systems on the same level as interveners. Complexity By discussing gender, relationships & various methods of reaching farmers, we looked at the diversity of methods & impacts communications can have on food systems. We explored how one solution will not have a fit all approach, but rather how different actors are working in different ways to influence food systems. We also ensured that different perspectives are brought out in the dialogue including those of farmers through videos, panellists & the audiences in the Q&A session. Multi stakeholder inclusivity By placing the opinions of farmers side-by-side with experts we placed their knowledge on a level playing field We distinctly discussed the importance of treating rural small-scale farmers as knowledge-holders & as those with the answers when it comes to improving food systems. The discussion also included how communication affects & is affected by different actors across value chains. Complement work of others Each intervention discussed was valued similarly & was recognized as a way to appreciate differences, learn from their solutions, & see how different innovations could compliment others. Trust We sought to motivate different groups to work together to explain how they work

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

Find ways that, despite the medium that you use to convene your dialogue, include different voices who may or may not be able to attend.

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

We used this dialogue as a precursor to a series of on-air dialogues which are using radio programs combined with live polling to identify the opinions of farmers on various FSS action tracks in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda. We wanted to use this arena to discuss the importance of taking actions like that to communicate with farmers. Instead of discussion groups, we used polling to garner the reactions of participants outside the main speakers, of which you can see the results below. We also tried to conven voices from those outside the digital sphere, by questioning small-scale farmers about communications and their needs and sharing the results via video during the Dialogue itself. Additionally, we had an open discussion and Q&A session at the end of the event to put questions to the main speakers and address points of interest from the dialogue.

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

We explored the link between communications and the open, active, and inclusive participation of farmers in food systems. Our participants explored what it means to have dialogue with farmers and the role of communication in ensuring that the systems we design are designed with farmers to meet their specific needs. We took deep dives into principles of engaging rural communities and farmers, and the different types of tools that are necessary to do each one: whether through radio and music, through active participation, through IVR phone in lines, through systems designed to entertain as well as educate, and through other methods of open communication.

Too often farmers and rural folks are left out of the conversations that directly involve and are made to benefit them, so the focus of this Dialogue was to discuss how communications brings farmers and rural folk into the conversation, and what is necessary to do that in a meaningful way. On the program explored the various tools and projects different organizations use to include farmers in the discussion and communicate with them; polling participants to explore the different ways they use communications; and amplifying the voices of some few every-day farmers who explained key communication needs.

This Independent Dialogue was a precursor to our on-air dialogues which are using radio programs combined with live polling to identify the opinions of farmers on various FSS action tracks in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda.

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

Overwhelming consensus during the Dialogue was that communications should be a key component of any agriculture project or intervention aimed at small-scale or small-holder farmers in rural areas. For interventions to be truly successful, they need to consider how best to reach farmers in accessible and persuasive ways, but also how to fit feedback into all parts of an intervention, from design to conclusion.

Key outcomes:

- Use of vernacular and local languages encourages participation and respect within programs
- Communications should be first, rather than an afterthought, when it comes to the design of programs and interventions - they are strategic openings for possibilities
- Rural communities need to be considered as equal players in the agriculture field - they carry solutions, and tremendous knowledge that should be amplified
- Without communication, meaningful change to food systems cannot happen - farmers will not be empowered to make transformative changes based on their own circumstances. In this sense, people-based solutions are important.
- There is so much relevant information out there to benefit farmers, but there is often a disconnect between that information existing and it reaching farmers.
- Convergence of different communication platforms is critical to meet all farmers informational needs (ie phone in lines, in person training, radio programs, and comic books)
- Entertainment is as important as information - to drum up interest, as well as provide education, entertainment alongside relevancy should be considered (a lesson from the Shamba Shape-Up TV programs)
- A paradigm shift is essential - we consider how to invite farmers to the table at dialogues and during interventions like this - instead we should be doing the work to be invited to the tables of farmers, so to speak. Relationships are key to this.
- Gender gaps must be considered when designing communication systems that are effective (ie during radio programs designate time to address needs of women, or on IVR systems include call-in lines for women)
- Interactive radio allows conversations between different members of society - brings farmers' voices up to the same level as authorities in the region.
- Solutions such as Farmerline, Shamba Shape-Up, and Farm Radio International's interactive radio programs are examples of interventions that consider communication from the beginning.
- For effective food systems we need to ensure that we are responsive to the needs of farmers, and this can happen through effective communications

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

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> | Policy |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Innovation | <input type="checkbox"/> | Data & Evidence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Human rights | <input type="checkbox"/> | Governance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Women & Youth Empowerment | <input type="checkbox"/> | Trade-offs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | | <input type="checkbox"/> | Environment and Climate |

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

In terms of survey responses, the responses were as follows:

Do you think development organizations are doing enough when it comes to communicating with farmers?

5% yes

25% no

70% they are doing some but not enough

What do you think is the biggest barrier to communicating with local farmers:

Limited resources 23%

Access to technology: 18%

Literacy: 13%

Infrastructure: 10%

Language: 8%

Cultural barriers: 8%

Gender divide: 8%

Distance: 7%

Affordability: 3%

If your organization communicates with farmers, how does it do it (multiple choice)

Radio: 59%

Mobile phone: 57%

Extension officers: 48%

In person: 43%

Social media: 28%

Internet or apps: 22%

In print: 17%

Television: 11%

I don't know how best to: 4%

Other: 2%

How do you involve farmers in your projects (multiple choice)

We conduct baseline research with farmers 72%

We give them opportunities to give feedback throughout the project 59%

They are involved in regular monitoring and evaluation: 51%

We involve them in the design and proposal of our project 44%

We hire them as trainers for other farmers 36%

They are only involved as recipients: 8%

Additionally, as part of the dialogue, we featured the voices of regular farmers from Mali and Burkina Faso, who we asked questions about their experiences. Of note were these opinions:

"On the subject of aid, you should know that the government often forgets to address the real questions that interest us. They provide aid that does not help us. For example, the government has just bought agricultural machinery that is so expensive farmers cannot buy it."

"For aid, certain partners like the government, and other NGOs come without consulting us, they don't know our problems, they just come and impose their program. And it never works. We must exchange before any action in order to orient our actions. This is how we will all be satisfied with the collaboration."

"The agricultural officials over here are few and because they are not here a lot it is difficult for them to come one by one to educate us. These are what prevents us from accessing that information."

ACTION TRACKS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
<input type="checkbox"/>	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

<input type="checkbox"/>	Finance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Innovation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Data & Evidence
<input type="checkbox"/>	Human rights	<input type="checkbox"/>	Governance
<input type="checkbox"/>	Women & Youth Empowerment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trade-offs
<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Further exploration could be taken into what platforms are most effective to reach farmers with - or whether the variety of platforms is the most useful. Also, different platforms came out as different ways of reaching farmers.

The gender gap is a key consideration when it comes to designing programs and not enough projects and programs are adequately addressing this.

The difference between designing something for farmers, rather than with farmers. There was plenty of discussion on how to involve farmers/reach farmers, but more work needs to be done into including them to begin with, from design and identification of challenges, throughout interventions to place them and value their own knowledge.

Additionally: What is a key outcome when it comes to communications? Is it a farmer taking up a new and/or improved practice, or is it a farmer making an informed choice to do, or not do, this same thing? What should the goal of communications be when it comes to this?

The issue of young peoples' involvement in the food system noting that most of the communication platforms target generally adult audiences hence there is need to ensure the balance in targeting between the youth and the adult farmers who are becoming fewer in sub saharan than the burgeoning youth population.

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

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Watch and read a summary of the Dialogue**
<https://farmradio.org/watch-communication-is-key-in-creating-equitable-food-systems/>