

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 15 July 2021 16:00 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Disrupting dominant food systems: Lessons from 5 initiatives
CONVENED BY	Diana E. Lopez - Knowledge, Technology & Innovation Group, Wageningen University & Research
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/20206/
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

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18	3	19-30	28	31-50	11	51-65	66-80	80+
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PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

12	Male	30	Female		Prefer not to say or Other
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

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

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

2	Small/medium enterprise/artisan	2	Workers and trade union
	Large national business		Member of Parliament
2	Multi-national corporation	1	Local authority
10	Small-scale farmer		Government and national institution
	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
1	Large-scale farmer	3	United Nations
	Local Non-Governmental Organization		International financial institution
4	International Non-Governmental Organization		Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
4	Indigenous People	2	Consumer group
10	Science and academia		Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The Dialogue was organized and curated in a way that allowed for diverse, purposeful and respectful exchanges between different food systems stakeholders and participants at all times taking into account the Principles of Engagement. The goal was to connect ongoing critical discussions about food systems with initiatives on the ground to build new synergies across sectors and stakeholders. Therefore, it emphasized diversity and inclusivity both in the initiatives presented as well as among facilitators and participants. The initiatives ranged from farmer-to-farmer digital technologies to permaculture and agroecology in urban settings to traditional agricultural systems to indigenous women's projects and innovative government programmes. Facilitation was done by researchers from different universities and research centres. Participants belonged to most of the stakeholder groups identified in the UN FSS. It was an inclusive and international Dialogue that created a space for people from different professional backgrounds, ages and nationalities to re-imagine food systems. The Dialogue took one month to plan. The Convenor was based in the Netherlands while the Curator was in India. Speakers were located in USA, Brazil, Guatemala, South Korea and Indonesia. Facilitators joined from Germany, Scotland and the Netherlands. Organization and planning was done using Zoom platform, the Dialogue also took place virtually. The event was public and open to interested audiences from all over the world including field professionals, industry players, policy and decision makers, researchers, and students. Participants were invited through an open invitation posted on social media and emailed to different networks and individuals, phone calls and messages were also used to invite key participants without internet access. The Dialogue's language was English, however there was simultaneous translation to Portuguese to ensure all participants felt included and also to facilitate engagement. Four discussion groups were in English and one in Portuguese.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES 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 Dialogue 'Disrupting dominant food systems: Lessons from 5 initiatives' invited participants and stakeholders to re-imagine food systems. Anchored in disruptive thinking, it aimed to challenge conventional approaches to food systems and explore alternate futures in order to build more resilient and balanced local food systems. Overall, the Dialogue advanced a systemic approach that encouraged participants, speakers and facilitators to regard the Action Tracks as inextricably interconnected.

Overview

The Dialogue started with an acknowledgement of the main issues in current dominant global food systems including scientific figures and numbers in terms of CO2 emissions, food waste, biodiversity loss, hunger and obesity. The initial presentation emphasized our shared responsibility to shift the way we think, produce, consume and relate to food. Elements of social justice and people's relationship with the natural world were highlighted as well.

The second part of the Dialogue introduced five initiatives led by diverse actors from across the globe that, in their own way, are contributing to transform the way people think and relate to food in their own contexts. With one exception all initiatives were grassroots. All five emphasized the importance of thinking and acting locally. (Individual presentations enclosed). The Distinguished Speakers included:

- Rikin Gandhi – Co-Founder & Executive Director, Digital Green. Focus: India, Global.
- Viviane Marinho Luiz & Laudessandro Marinho da Silva – Authors of the book 'Roça é Vida' (in English 'To farm is to live'). Focus: Brazil
- Siti Soraya Cassandra – Co-Founder, Kebun Kumara. Focus: Indonesia.
- Rachael Cox – Director & Founder, Earth Empower. Focus: Mexico & Guatemala.
- Seungha Baek – Deputy Director, Rural Development Division, Jeonbuk Provincial Government of South Korea. Focus: South Korea.

The presentation of initiatives was followed by facilitated group discussions. Each Speaker was paired with one Facilitator, participants were given the option to choose the group/initiative that interested them the most. Three main themes were discussed: (i) issues related to gender, women's empowerment and social diversity; (ii) innovation; and (iii) human rights. Participants engaged in a creative and critical process as they explored opportunities and challenges to build more balanced and resilient local food systems. All the Facilitators were researchers and included:

- Annemarie van Paassen – Associate Professor, Wageningen University & Research
- Birgit Boogaard – Researcher, Wageningen University & Research
- Katharina Schiller – Senior Scientist, Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research
- Simon Fraval – Researcher, University of Edinburgh
- Diana E. Lopez – Lead, The Sandbox T-Lab/Doctoral Fellow, Wageningen University & Research

The final part of the Dialogue had Facilitators reporting back and presenting three take away messages from the group discussions which were framed according to all or one of these questions:

- How were the gender/social diversity, human rights, and innovation aspects integrated into the discussion?
- What were the tensions (divergences-convergences) in the group?
- What aspect (concept, initiative, participants, argument, etc.) was found 'disruptive' and why?

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

In general, Dialogue participants found it both important and 'refreshing' to step out of their professional or academic silos or areas of expertise and become exposed to initiatives and ideas from across the globe that are not only inspiring but can also be scaled and replicated in other geographies or in similar contexts.

In the case of the Brazilian participants and speakers new relationships were created as they did not know each other but found enough shared interests (and challenges) to express their commitment to develop the relation further. Likewise, researchers based in Europe and in Brazil committed to translate the book 'Roca e Vida' from Portuguese to English as a way to honor and value local agricultural knowledge, and in particular, the dissemination of the traditional agricultural system of the Quilombo communities in the Ribeira Valley in Brazil to non-Brazilian settings.

Likewise, researchers and entrepreneurs noted the innovativeness of the initiatives presented, particularly the farmer-to-farmer technologies and how 'old' concepts such as permaculture, agroecology and respect for nature resurfaced in a creative way that needs to be integrated in subsequent UN FSS discussions about food systems.

Political will and government support were also identified as main challenges in reconfiguring the way we produce, consume and relate to food. Importantly, as exemplified in the case of Jeonbuk Provincial Government of South Korea, carefully designed food value chains that prioritize local farmers can report both social and economic benefits for all and not just for the farming communities. However, genuine and continuous support in terms of funding and expertise is necessary.

Importantly, all the initiatives had a strong gender and diversity component with one, Earth Empower, specifically working together with indigenous women from Guatemala and Mexico to ensure local economic opportunities.

Overall, and although many challenges were identified (see next section) participants highlighted the importance of embracing multiple solutions and diverse approaches to address the manifold problems in our current food systems.

Importantly, there is a need to reconfigure our (global) behavior to food, to nature. In particular, to move away from thinking about nature as a mere provider of 'resources' and to value it as a living system that needs large-scale commitments from different stakeholders to regain its balance.

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KEYWORDS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/5

Participants discussed issues of related to (i) gender, women's empowerment and social diversity; (ii) innovation; and (iii) human rights in the context of each initiative. Follow key points for each initiative including specific challenges and actions needed.

1. Farmer-to-farmer digital technologies represented by Digital Green.

Through digitalization and data farmers strengthen their position and gain voice to engage in constructive ways to change pre-existing power imbalances, such as top-down agricultural extension approaches. Farmers understand the value of their own data and have control/agency over it. Farmers use the cumulative information to make informed decisions and become empowered. This is possible through:

- Targeting of elder, women, poor and landless farmers to work with them in equal pairing to build resilience and increase their empowerment.

- Engage in atypical capacity building, farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing.

- Develop effective tools to help farmers to become empowered.

- Ensure enabling elements such as supportive policies.

- Advance a mindset of democratization of knowledge production with capacity for global scaling.

Challenges include:

- Climate change is red herring for data usurpation.

- Different approaches of government engagement, continuation of top-down approach and consideration of farmers as non-experts.

- Further marginalization as data is taken away from smallholder farmers.

- Exploitation of aggregated data, i.e. through future trading on prior knowledge without farmers' consent.

- Farmers lose all data.

- Real danger of having a few multinational agri-food corporations privatize farmers' data.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/5

2. Permaculture and agroecology in urban settings represented by Kebun Kumara.

Well-being of people living in cities improved by permaculture and regenerative approaches to produce food. Expansion of awareness and education about the origin and means of production of food. Gardening as a 'perfect melting pot for communities' to learn together and lead more healthy lives. This is possible through:

- Peer-to-peer marketing that helps to reconnect people with food through showcase by growers in local areas.
- Emphasis on local production reduces CO2 for food transport.
- Farming and taking time to prepare the soil derives in mental health benefits.
- Besides growing own food, surplus and replication of urban farming model can become profitable activities in a small scale.
- Get children involved in the recovery and caring of empty lots or 'dead spaces' in the cities to educate future generations with different values.
- Create digital content on YouTube and social media.

Challenges include:

- Pandemic limits community interactions but 'Zoom gardening' can still happen.
- Local government is not supportive.
- Urban landscapes cannot satisfy an entire city demand for food.
- Urban farming is a fragile initiative without the support of private and public partners.
- Still very new model, slow pace for transformation.
- Dominance of large scale food retailers.

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KEYWORDS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/5

3. Traditional agricultural systems represented by Authors of 'To farm is to live'

Traditional communities (Quilombos) are empowered individuals and not victims. There is much knowledge and artistic talent in these communities that can contribute to disrupt unsustainable food practices. People from these communities commit to take concrete steps to continue and revive their traditional agricultural systems and transfer their cultural traditions, knowledge and practices to the next generation and to the society at large. This is possible via:

- Continued process of revalorization of local culture and empowerment and taking pride in traditional values that prioritize a respectful relation with nature, especially with the land.
- Strengthening of collaborations with external actors, in particular with government officials and researchers.
- Dissemination of sustainable agricultural practices.
- Responsible tourism in their communities that values nature and respects their culture.
- Creation of role models derived from their own tradition rather than from the outside so that children no longer feel ashamed of their skin color or love for farming.
- Develop other books and education materials to ensure better food practices are upheld within their communities as well as in other cities.

Challenges:

- Lack of government support.
- External imposition of modes of food production and of land exploitation.
- Continued denigration of their identity, belief systems and values by others in positions of power (teachers, government officials, etc.).
- Selling of land or appropriation by large agrobusinesses.
- Limited national and international forums to share about their traditional agricultural system.

ACTION TRACKS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/5

4. Local financial opportunities for indigenous women represented by Earth Empower.

Development of locally food-based businesses owned by indigenous women to reduce migration. The innovation is social and consists in development projects, researchers, private sector and others working together with indigenous women to create financially viable local businesses that at the same time value and recognize the women's knowledge and expertise of particular herbs and other food. This is possible thanks to:

- Development of partnerships with local and international actors.
- Capacity building of the women that are part of EarthEmpower, including in relation to business, marketing, product design and use of computers to contribute to their economic and social empowerment.
- Not dependent on external funding or donations but rather financially self-sustainable via selling of tea products, consultancies and capacity development.
- Pandemic regarded as an opportunity to democratize further the organization and to the development of small home factories.

Challenges include:

- Land used to grow cash crops rather than herbs for tea or for other traditional foods.
- Extensive bureaucratic hurdles to allow for certification and export.
- Migration and social unrest.
- Pandemic constrains women's mobility for the business due to curfews, and limited transportation.
- Business remains small.

ACTION TRACKS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 5/5

5. Innovative government programmes represented by Jeonbuk Provincial Government of South Korea.

In south Korea, the youth tend to leave the rural areas and farmers are relatively old (> 60 years), have small plots of around 1,5 ha and have a hard time to make ends meet. Due to high price elasticity of the global food markets they are prone to high price fluctuations and small margins. Therefore the initiative advanced a potential disruption of global food value chains based on the successful experience of government programmes on local food markets and public meal centers. Potential for outscaling to other industrialised countries with rural areas characterised by an increasing elderly population of smallholder farmers was also identified. This is possible through:

- Government commitment in terms of financial investments, logistics, infrastructure and mechanisms in place for direct exchange with farmers. The local food market enables poor farmers to have stable prices so that they can diversify their cultivation to deliver throughout the year.
- Provision of small-scale food processing equipment and less strict certification, encouraging farmers to start processing such as the production of Tofu for the local food markets.
- Value for community engagement, citizen's organization and for farmers' group activities.
- Attached to the markets there are also public meal centres and connections for delivering meals to various schools and military bases. This provides women in rural areas additional employment, and provide fresh, quality meals for reasonable prices, affordable for ordinary people in the rural and urban areas.
- Rural communities become less depended on fluctuating and uncertain prices and money transfers from supermarkets and traders in urban areas but become more self-providing.
- Cultural change: consumers increasingly show interest in local food markets as it provides them fresh produce and a better feel to be connected with nearby producers.

Challenges include:

- Consumers might not value local food markets and/or (able) to pay a fair price for the fresh food.
- Lack of cohesion, e.g. in highly urbanized areas where people massive started to order food digitally (amongst others due to COVID), supermarkets for digital platforms compete fiercely.
- Poor engagement of the youth may lead to a loss or stagnation of these advances.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

The Dialogue was disruptive not only in its conceptual propositions but also in the way it forced participants, Speakers and Facilitators to reassess their assumptions, expectations and values by exposing them to very distinct contexts and realities. Hence, several areas of divergence emerged.

Non-western values and behaviors were highlighted as 'disruptive' by several participants especially when discussing people's relation to nature and food. Not all value the land or nature in the same way. For instance, one speaker started their presentation by giving thanks to their ancestors and to the land for everything that exists but this was not necessarily shared by others. Not only in Western context, in urban settings, and in particular in densely populated cities people has limited opportunities to encounter 'nature'. As discussed in the Dialogue, this has several implications, for one city dwellers often ignore the most basic information about how food is produced. As noted by various participants, city children do not know where milk, eggs, meat, fish or fruit comes from which results in children (and later on in adults) being unable to empathize, care or respect those who producing it— i.e., farmers and nature.

However, participants also noted that both in the cities and in rural areas value tends to be placed in processed and packed food rather than on fresh fruits and vegetables which results in numerous problems, including child obesity. Another issue is the lack of an efficient waste management system which often translates in open air dumps whose pollutants enter the soil and water that produces our food.

Lack of government support for smallholder farmers, and who produce the majority of the food consumed globally was also a matter of concern and a point of divergence. Especially because some highlighted that current food policies affecting both the global and local markets overwhelmingly tend to support large agri-food companies in detriment of smallholder farmers. Relatedly, agri-food companies tend to rely in intensive and harmful agricultural practices which further soil erosion, biodiversity loss, deforestation, CO2 production and finally directly contribute to global change.

Overall, there was an important reflection on the need to change our values and practices and learn from those participants and initiatives that advanced an interconnected approach to the land and to nature; to learn from those who understand and see nature as a living system that deserves respect rather than continuing with a distant and indifferent position to nature, to food, and to those who produce it.

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CORRECTIONS, ADJUSTMENTS, OR CHANGES

Title	Disrupting Dominant Food Systems: Lessons from 5 initiatives
Date	23/07/2021

Dialogue with 42 participants from different stakeholder groups and nationalities focused on disrupting dominant food systems and advance alternate futures.