

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Monday, 14 June 2021 04:00 GMT -04:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Trade-Offs Evaluation and Science-Policy Communication
CONVENED BY	Bassel Daher (Texas A&M University); Alicia Powers (Auburn University); Asma Lateef (SDG 2 Advocacy Hub & Bread for the World); Sonja Neve (Unites States Chapter of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN USA))
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/23996/
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

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18	5	19-30	7	31-50	8	51-65	1	66-80	80+
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PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

8	Male	13	Female		Prefer not to say or Other
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

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

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

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

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

Since the start of the Zero Hunger Pathways Project Dialogue series, which began in March 2021, steps have been taken to incorporate, reinforce, and enhance the Summit's Principles of Engagement. This included discussions to increase awareness of the Principles among Co-chairs and Working Group Members, integration of the Principles into the audience curation and outreach process, and using the Principles to inform the Dialogue format, including sharing the principles of engagement with session moderators of breakout sessions in preparation for their session, and verbal reinforcement of the Principles throughout. Dialogue 3 was planned using feedback provided previously through anonymous surveying of past dialogue participants, and Working Group members were asked to reach out to colleagues and stakeholders with relevant expertise, in order to complement the work of others and ensure a productive, respectful, inclusive discussion that was committed to the summit. All Principles were taken into account when planning the Dialogue, including inviting expert speakers to join and discuss their work and facilitate breakout sessions on related topics. These speakers were from the Millennium Institute, Texas A&M University, Georgia Rural Health Innovation Center, and the Carbon Neutral Cities Alliance. Bringing in these experts as conveyors and facilitates allowed the dialogue to complement the work of others. In addition, the Zero Hunger Pathways Project Dialogue series has always embraced multi-stakeholder inclusivity and diversity, and ensures this principle is a part of outreach for the event. We recognize that the metrics used for evaluating the various pathways being considered need to be developed in participation with cross-disciplinary experts and cross-sectoral stakeholders and decision makers, and attempt to bring in the perspectives of those affected by food insecurity while grounding recommendations in evidence-based research.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Zero Hunger Pathways Project Dialogue 3 acts on the urgency of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by using a systems approach to address hunger in the United States. The Dialogue hopes to harness the political opportunity posed by the Building Back Better Agenda laid out by the Biden-Harris administration, which both depends on making progress on hunger and offers an opportunity to adopt new approaches that address the intersectional issues that contribute to existing high rates of food insecurity in the US. In order to achieve SDG # 2 by 2030, the Zero Hunger Pathways Project acknowledges that actionable, scalable, and innovative solutions are needed. Business as usual will return us to pre-pandemic rates of food insecurity that were unconscionably high to begin with. Dialogue 3 Commits to the Summit by working towards a report that will outline social, policy and technical recommendations to reach Zero Hunger and identifying education, engagement, and research activities the SDSN USA coalition and partners can undertake to reach Zero Hunger in the United States by 2030. This dialogue connects stakeholders, seeks input from a variety of perspectives, and identifies ways to move forward collectively and creatively. Dialogue 3 is based on the knowledge that our food system exerts significant pressures on interconnected resource systems and to global greenhouse gas emissions, recognizing the complexity of these systems. New approaches are needed, which could align strategies, outcomes and measures, especially across food, health, education, employment and social protection systems to have a lasting impact and to address intersectional issues and historic inequities. This includes the development of a suite of technical, social, and policy levers whose trade-offs need to be properly evaluated. Models and scenario-based tools can play a role in catalyzing a multi-stakeholder and policy dialogue about the trade-offs associated with different pathways toward zero-hunger.

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

Advice for other Dialogue Convenors about appreciating and fulfilling the Principles of Engagement include: accepting that not all discussions will come to consensus in the given time; embracing the differences in opinions; and encouraging moderators and facilitators to try their best not to take sides in order to respect and elevate the perspectives of all participants.

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 Zero Hunger Pathways Project (ZHPP) is a collaboration that applies a systems approach to end hunger in the United States. The collaborative aims to chart equitable, resilient, and sustainable pathways to profoundly improve availability, accessibility, utilization and stability of healthy food for all. Dialogue 3: Trade-Offs Evaluation and Science-Policy Communication focused on identifying: 1) tools and models to evaluate pathways for improving food and nutrition security in the US; 2) multi-faceted evaluation metrics that reflect food systems sustainability, equitability, resilience, and health outcomes; 3) mechanisms and barriers for proper stakeholder engagement and trade-off dialogue; 4) mechanisms and barriers for science-policy communication. This event brought together cross-disciplinary scientists and expert groups as well as cross-sectoral stakeholders and policy makers.

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

Hunger must be recognized as an equity issue and in order to do so, researchers must get to the root causes of food insecurity. These issues include poverty, systemic racism, income levels, gender disparities, age gaps, and many other societal factors. By addressing these and increasing access to resources, through a holistic and multidimensional approach to equity that takes into consideration people and their vulnerabilities, food insecurity is likely to decline. Increasing multidimensional efforts at the community level will ensure that local buy-in is supported. Community efforts can include grassroots advocacy, community gardens, local health centers and locations where people are able to safely gather and learn about food systems.

In order to promote resilience, our response to COVID-19 requires a systems thinking approach concerning the investment in sustainable communities in the United States. Efforts need to be taken to ensure we don't just recover to pre-pandemic levels of food security, but rather are able to create systems that are sustainable and resilient long term and can anticipate shocks like COVID-19, extreme drought or natural disasters from climate change, etc.

There is room to improve health education by highlighting food as medicine and teaching about the health effects of food insecurity.

Identify who the "story tellers" are to create effective science policy communication. The best storytellers are not the academics and experts of the field, but the people who live within and experience the systems. Ensure that stories encompass the whole system, and answers the question of why this problem persists. In addition to identifying storytellers, interdisciplinary researchers also play a role, in close coordination with cross-sectoral stakeholders, in developing evidence to support informed decision making by policy makers.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/4

Tools and models:

Tools and models can be useful in supporting evidence-based decision making related to addressing hunger-related challenges. They can aid in the evaluation of different policy interventions. However, these tools do not necessarily offer a holistic assessment of the impact that might be expected by adopting different scenarios. For example, impact on GDP is not does not cover the complete impact of a scenario, unless paired with other development indexes (ex: Human Development Index) and social-economic metrics which can better assist researchers in creating more effective programs.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/4

Evaluation metrics: It is necessary to approach hunger while also acknowledging the other connected issues that Americans are facing. We cannot fix food insecurity without fixing parallel issues that are tightly interconnected with hunger. Additionally, data is inconsequential if we are unable to facilitate change on complex, interconnected issues. Some discussion members argued that a greater focus on research and information gathering distracts from acting on hunger based on what we already know to be the root causes and solutions. The evaluation and metrics side of hunger can correspond to the four values in order to broaden the way in which we view hunger in the US. Hunger can be examined at the individual, household, local, and national level. Do they differ? Is it worth it to examine hunger on different levels if the end goal remains the same? Is current national data the best measure of hunger? Is examining heterogeneities or homogeneities more effective for systemically implementing food security? Participants also suggested the examination of rural vs. urban perspectives.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/4

Stakeholder engagement & trade-offs: In this session, participants examined the definition of 'Stakeholder' within the context of food insecurity systems. In tackling issues of food insecurity, it is vital for individuals to recognize their multifaceted role as consumers, stakeholders, and agents of change in their communities. The most effective ways to bring about transformative stakeholder change within American food systems is to start organizing at the grassroots level, as well as to utilize the value of pathos and storytelling to engage people in supporting the fight for zero hunger. As organizing can be difficult due to varying levels of access within communities, the group discussed existing barriers people may have for engaging stakeholders, and expressed the need to acknowledge power imbalances which prevent active change from occurring in the United States. The discussion ended with brainstorming specific policies to enact communal change, such as the USDA partnering with and supporting Black farmers to alleviate food insecurity in the country's largest food deserts (which are primarily composed of American BIPOC communities).

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/4

Science-policy communication: This session focused on the relationship between systems-thinking and storytelling. It is difficult to capture a complex system in a narrative, but it is doable. It is important to have a “story bank” of useful narratives to pull from. Additionally, it is important to select good storytellers. The best storytellers are not the academics and experts of the field, but the people who live within and experience the systems. Stories must encompass the whole system--many stories try to break up the system and describe only fragments of it, leading to inaccurate stories (e.g. farmers are the key to fixing hunger). It may be simpler to show a fragment- who is hungry-, but needs to go beyond and shift to why they are hungry. There needs to be an increased focus on discovering why hunger persists and what the systemic issues are. Story-telling hunger provides an opportunity to explain a complex system that isn't always included in the narrative- the SDGs. Story suggestion: there are statistics about minority farmers in the U.S. and systeming challenges against them, but no one is telling this as a story. (Black farmers were also mentioned in topic 3).

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

There is a lack of models and tools that are representative of the complexity that comes with exploring solutions to hunger related challenges and all the systems interconnected with it. We need tools and models that acknowledge these interconnections, and that are able to holistically quantify the impact of adopting different policies.

There are trade offs found in prioritizing health vs equity; group members suggest incentivizing healthy choices rather than restricting SNAP users.

Group members supported the idea of food sovereignty and food justice, due to evidence that suggests that when people have a choice they often feel more free to make healthy choices. Elevating efforts to advance equity can positively impact the other pillars.

There are trade-offs between short-term versus long-term solutions for reaching zero hunger. Representing short-term solutions, focusing on increasing the eligibility and benefits of the SNAP program (in the context of the U.S.), as well as maintaining low food prices nationwide is presented as a viable solution for immediately addressing American food insecurity. Representing long-term solutions, focusing on changing the economic policies and systems of the United States so that wealth inequalities decrease overtime is presented as a viable long term solution for addressing American food insecurity. While it could be useful to do both simultaneously, some solutions are at odds. For example: immediate solutions, like availability of cheap food, often times that is more highly processed and lower in nutrients, cause 'low diversity' on plates (not enough variety of healthy and available foods) which leads to ruptures in long term sustainability (ex: soil health, water cleanliness) as well as a health cost. Having a long term view allows us to understand the real cost of cheap food on health/nutrition, resilience, sustainability, and equity, making systems level solutions worth the investment over time. TLDR: opposing viewpoints on whether solutions which focus on supplementary nutrition assistance programs as a solution to hunger, or solutions which focus on the root causes of hunger as it links to equity, health, systemic racism, etc., are more valuable.

Some group members view innovative solutions including urban agriculture and food banks to decrease food waste, and/or increase food availability as good priorities, while others criticize these as not on a large enough scale to solve the problem. However, localized and diversified systems are much more effective for alleviating food insecurity. Identified a need for more research on the trade-offs of different models of agriculture.

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