

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Thursday, 10 June 2021 22:00 GMT +00:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	On Air Dialogues
CONVENED BY	Farm Radio International (FRI), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Vision Canada, and the Canadian Food Security Policy Group (FSPG)
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/28316/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	Burkina Faso, Ghana, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania

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

999

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

999 19-30

999 31-50

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

999 Male

963 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

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

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

Health care
Nutrition
National or local government
Utilities
Industrial
Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

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

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

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

Through the On Air Dialogues, we asked farmers how the food system should be changed to meet their needs and the needs of their communities. In 18 episodes of radio programming, each accompanied by mobile phone-based polling of listeners, we asked: Which issues impact farmers most? How do barriers and opportunities play out differently for female and male farmers? What is the future of food systems? And what needs to change to make life better for farming families? Our goal was to embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity by bringing the voices of farmers, processors, marketers, and more to the global conversation about food systems. Many of these voices come from rural, remote, and vulnerable populations—people who might not otherwise be reached by the Summit, and whose voices would therefore go unheard. Small-scale farmers are the backbone of the global food system. From farm to table, these individuals feed their families, countries, and communities, contribute to local and international economies, and preserve the local environment. From fishers and pastoralists to marketers and processors, small-scale farmers and other rural people are central to the food system and dependent upon it. Each has the knowledge and experience to help transform the food system in positive ways—if they have a seat at the table! The On Air Dialogues recognized complexity in that small-scale farmers' experiences are diverse and varied. In order to transform the food system to meet the needs of all actors in the food systems, we must listen to all kinds of voices—especially those who are underrepresented in agricultural decision-making, such as women. Small-scale farmers need to speak for themselves. In doing so, we build trust between development practitioners and the people they serve, and develop a better understanding of what people really need and want in order to improve their quality of life. Learning from the vast knowledge of farmers brings us one step closer to creating food systems that ensure healthy diets that are equitable, sustainable, and productive for all.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The United Nations Food System Summit (UNFSS) 2021 aspires to be a people's summit that engages and draws input from many millions of people across the world. It has created a mechanism for encouraging dialogues at the national, regional and global levels. In particular, it encourages organizations and individuals to plan and run a variety of dialogues to bring together a diversity of stakeholders and voices. As important as these dialogues will be, a key challenge is the goal of engaging millions, particularly small-scale farmers in sub-Saharan Africa, some of the most important actors in the food system. Digital webinars require internet access, and are almost always conducted in globally dominant languages such as English, French, Spanish, etc. Conversely, radio is the most accessible channel of communication in sub-Saharan Africa. Radio can reach the most remote and rural communities in sub-Saharan Africa—places where literacy is low and the internet is too expensive or unreliable to access. Broadcast in local languages, radio is an inexpensive and convenient way to reach communities that might not otherwise be reached. Combined with mobile phones, radio becomes a powerful two-way street for dialogue and engagement. Using this highly accessible and interactive medium, we were able to exemplify the spirit of the UNFSS as a people's summit by speaking with and listening to people at the heart of the global food system—small-scale farmers and other rural people. In all, we reached a potential listening audience of approximately 12.5 million people in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda. In doing so, we complement not only the work of our partners at IFAD, World Vision Canada, and the Canadian Food Security Policy Group, but all organizations and nations who look to achieve meaningful food system transformation and meet the needs of rural people.

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

Farm Radio International and implementing partners IFAD, World Vision Canada, and the Canadian Food Security Policy Group hope that this project exemplifies that it is not only possible but vitally important to speak with and listen to those at the heart of the global food system. We encourage our fellow NGOs and CSOs to embrace multi stakeholder inclusivity and engage in dialogue with small-scale farmers and other rural people directly—especially those who are underrepresented in agricultural decision-making, such as women—and to reach these groups through the channels they use most. We ask that these channels be used to speak with, listen to, and build trust with the people they serve, as well as to inform and complement their work. We remind the international development community to recognize complexity in the diversity of rural knowledge and experience in order to prioritize local solutions and tackle long-standing unequal, global power relations. Finally, we urge governments and decision-makers to commit to the spirit of the 2021 UNFSS as a people's summit. Locally, nationally, and globally, decision-makers must not only hear but listen to, respect, and act on farmers' opinions and concerns, and take full advantage of their knowledge and experience. Small-scale farmers and other rural people are the backbone of the global food system and must hold a central place in the conversation. The On Air Dialogues demonstrate one of many simple ways to engage small-scale farmers and other rural people in discussions about the systems that directly affect them. When given the chance, farmers are keen to contribute. Inclusive and accessible channels can and must be used to enable farmers to join the conversation—and be heard—no matter what work they do, where they live, or what language they speak. With rural people's voices leading the way, we can achieve meaningful food system transformation for those who need it most.

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

The On Air Dialogues took a unique approach to the Food System Summit dialogue format. Farm Radio International partnered with six stations to produce and broadcast three episodes of On Air Dialogues. Episodes were 45-60 minutes each, and broadcast weekly. Many stations used time slots already allocated to agricultural programs to maximize the number of listeners engaged in agriculture. The episodes were broadcast in six languages: Dioula and Nuni in Burkina Faso, Ewe and Twi in Ghana, Swahili in Tanzania, and Luganda in Uganda. Using local languages ensured that the programs were accessible to the intended audiences and enabled wide listenership and participation. The programs were broadcast from June 10 to June 27, 2021. The content of the episodes was informed by three of the five UNFSS Action Tracks, each of which was broken down into three sub-themes. For each sub-theme, broadcasters invited local experts, farmers, and other guests to discuss, exchange, and debate. Listeners were then invited to join in the discussion through a phone-in segment. After each episode, we used our mobile polling platform, called Uliza, to present callers with two multiple-choice questions and one open-ended question. The Uliza phone number was announced at the end of each episode, and broadcasters encouraged listeners to call. We also sent messages to encourage others to listen to the radio program and respond to the poll questions. The polls were launched immediately after an episode finished and were open to receive responses until the following episode aired one week later. Asking both open and closed questions provided a rich quantitative and qualitative glimpse into the unfiltered views and perspectives of rural people. Analysis on both these levels showed both divergence and convergence in responses, often based on the age, gender, and/or country of the respondent. Self-initiated surveys such as this are a powerful way to collect input and feedback from a large number of people over a short period of time. Combined with interactive radio programs, the On Air Dialogues were able to stimulate compelling discussions about food systems on- and off-air, as small-scale farmers and other rural people were encouraged to join in with their own thoughts. Ultimately, we used this non-traditional approach to the dialogues in order to reach and engage those at the heart of the global food system: small-scale farmers and their families. This approach ensured that farmers could join the conversation about global food systems—and be heard.

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The On Air Dialogues focused on three of five UNFSS Action Tracks, as follows:

Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks, and stress

Each of the three episodes from the series was dedicated to one of these action tracks. Within each action track, the On Air Dialogues also focused on a wide subset of topics (3 per episode), as follows: Safe food, nutritious food, diverse diets, land and land tenure, gender inequality in food systems, a role for youth in food systems, instability and conflict, infrastructure and finance, and climate change.

The questions we asked were as follows.

Week 1:

If you think about the safety and quality of the food your family eats, are you most worried that:

- 1) It might cause illness due to poor food hygiene practices
- 2) The range of available foods doesn't have all the nutrients needed for good health
- 3) It might contain harmful chemicals
- 4) I don't worry - the food my family eats is already safe and nutritious.

When food is scarce, what is the first thing your family does to cope?

- 1) Those most in need eat first and others sacrifice
- 2) Ask everyone to cut back equally
- 3) Sell assets like animals
- 4) Find other ways to earn money

In the place where you live, what would need to change so that everyone has equal access to safe, healthy, nutritious food all year round?

Week 2:

Which of the following five options would give you the most success as a farmer?

- 1) Loans or credit
- 2) Secure access to and control over land
- 3) High quality inputs
- 4) Better information
- 5) Better market access

What will farming look like in the future for today's children?

- 1) They will be successful
- 2) They will struggle to succeed unless things change
- 3) Young people should avoid farming and pick another occupation
- 4) Young people will farm, but they will need to earn money from other sources too

If you had more power to change things, what would you do to make life better for farming families?

Week 3:

Where would you turn to for information to help you cope with future threats to your family and livelihood?

- 1) Family, friends, and neighbours
- 2) Farmers' co-operative/group
- 3) Radio
- 4) Agricultural experts
- 5) Input suppliers

Climate change can have a big effect on farming. Which of the following would help you as a farmer to best deal with changes in the weather?

- 1) Improved inputs
- 2) Good information on how to adapt
- 3) Better use of water
- 4) Protecting the natural environment
- 5) Moving to another place

What is the biggest threat to your family eating enough safe and nutritious food?

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

First, participants anticipate that their children will be involved in farming. Only 1 in 9 felt that today's youth should choose another occupation. However, over one-third felt that changes would be necessary to enable the next generation of farmers to succeed. Further, 1 in 4 people believed that young people will farm but will need to earn money from other sources as well.

Second, while climate change is increasingly affecting small-scale farmers, few rural people think that migration is necessary to help them deal with climate-related threats. Over 90% of participants felt there was something they could do in their community to cope with climate change. To increase the resilience of their farming activities and livelihoods, these farmers need support in protecting the natural environment, and receiving improved inputs and better information.

Third, while many participants said that quality inputs would improve their yields, they said the single most important factor for success in agriculture was access to loans and credit.

Fourth, many people were concerned about the safety of the food they eat and whether it meets their family's nutritional needs.

The On Air Dialogues show that small-scale farmers and other rural people are concerned about the food they eat and the future of farming. They see the impacts of climate change on their lives, and in their communities. They want more—and better—resources and information to improve their livelihoods. The initiative also demonstrated that small-scale farmers are ready and able to offer solutions.

The On Air Dialogues are one of many simple ways to engage small-scale farmers and other rural people in discussions about the systems that directly affect them. When given the chance, farmers are keen to contribute. As nations, organizations, and individuals, we must commit to creating inclusive, accessible channels for farmers to join the conversation—and be heard—no matter what work they do, where they live, or what language they speak.

Locally, nationally, and globally, decision-makers must not only hear but listen to, respect, and act on farmers' opinions and concerns, and take full advantage of their knowledge and experience. Small-scale farmers and other rural people are the backbone of the global food system and must hold a central place in the conversation.

Farmers and rural people have a lot to say. As nations, organizations, and individuals, we all must commit to listening and taking action together.

Please refer to the attached report for more thorough analysis.

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

When asked about coping mechanisms when food is scarce, the largest percentage of participants said that their family would cope by asking everyone to cut back equally. A somewhat higher percentage of women than men said that those in need should eat first, and that the family should sell assets such as animals.

We also asked participants what would need to change for everyone in their community to have equal access to safe, healthy, nutritious food all year round. Many participants identified moving away from chemical pesticides and fertilizers as a key priority. Many also placed a significant emphasis on the importance of food hygiene and safety.

Next, we asked what participants worry about most when they think about the safety and quality of their family's food. Almost 75% of participants reported feeling troubled about the safety and quality of the food their families eat.

We also asked participants what would give them the most success as a farmer. The need for finance emerged strongly. The largest percentage of participants said that loans and credit would give them the most success.

When asked about the future of farming for today's children, only 1 in 9 thought that young people should avoid farming altogether. Almost one-third said that young people would be successful in farming, while another third felt that they would struggle to succeed unless things change—pointing to the need to transform food systems to make successful livelihoods possible. A quarter of participants felt that young people would farm but would need other sources of income.

Many participants said that the lives of farming families would be better if they had access to farming inputs. Others favoured more loans, credit, and general financial support. A number of participants said that farming families' lives would improve if markets worked better for them. Finally, many mentioned various types of training and education. These responses underline the need to improve access to the resources, services, and markets that rural people need to improve their lives and livelihoods.

Over 90% of participants felt there was something they could do in their community to cope with climate change. Less than 1 in 12 said that the only way to cope would be to move to another place. The highest proportion chose "protecting the natural environment." Men were more likely than women to think that protecting the natural environment was the best strategy, while women were more likely than men to choose migration.

Participants were also asked where they would turn for information to help them cope with threats to their family and livelihood. This question allowed participants to identify the threats that were most significant to them, as well as where they would go for information to help them cope with those threats. The largest percentage of participants said they would turn to family, friends, and neighbours. A little more than 1 in 4 chose radio.

Participants were asked to name the biggest threat to their family eating enough safe and nutritious food. The four most common responses were: poor hygiene and sanitation, weather-related threats, agrochemical use, and lack of inputs or poor-quality inputs.

Please refer to the attached report for more thorough analysis.

The thousands of people who participated in the On Air Dialogues demonstrated that rural people can articulate what they need to transform their lives, from strategies for coping with climate change to accessing resources and markets. Most see a future in rural areas for the next generation—but say that action to transform food systems and combat rural poverty and marginalization is needed for them to have success as full-time farmers. Their voices are a vital contribution to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

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	Human rights		Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
		✓	Environment and Climate

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

There was a great diversity of opinion among participants who responded to the polling questions we posed during the On Air Dialogues. While there was significant agreement between women and men regarding food systems, there were important differences that should inform actions to create more gender-responsive food systems. Notably, women were more concerned about household nutritional intake, were more likely to consider loans and credit as key to farming success, and relied more strongly on informal networks such as friends and neighbours for information. They were also more likely than men to prioritize those most in need when food is scarce.

There were also some striking differences related to age and to country. For example:

- In Burkina Faso, more than half of participants said loans and credit are the key to success, a much higher figure than in other countries. Just 1 in 5 chose that option in Uganda, while 1 in 4 thought that secure access to and control over land was the key to farming success.
- Men under 30 were most pessimistic about the future of youth in farming for youth, while women over 30 were most optimistic, with more than 1 in 3 confident that today's children will succeed in farming.
- Women under 30 were more likely than women 30+ to turn to radio for information on how to cope with threats to their families and livelihood, while men under 30 were more likely than men 30+ to turn to agricultural experts.

Please refer to the attached report for more thorough analysis.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

✓	Finance		Policy
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		✓	Environment and Climate

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **On Air Dialogues - UNFSS 2021 - Final report submission**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/On-Air-Dialogues-UNFSS-2021-Final-report-submission.docx>
- **PDF - On Air Dialogues - UNFSS 2021 - Final report submission**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/On-Air-Dialogues-UNFSS-2021-Final-report-submission.docx.pdf>

RELEVANT LINKS

- **On Air Dialogues - visualization page**
<https://dialogues.farmradio.org/>