

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Wednesday, 17 February 2021 16:00 GMT +01:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Bites of Transfoodmation - What will be the role of food in defining people's health?
CONVENED BY	Ludovica Donati, project coordinator Bites of Transfoodmation; Martina Bonazzi, scientific collaborator BoT; Leonetta Luciano Fendi, Strategic Communication Consultant MiRo. Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations organisations in Rome
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/3657/
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

42

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

30

19-30

10

31-50

2

51-65

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

15 Male

27 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

1 Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

1 Livestock

Agro-forestry

10 Environment and ecology

0 Trade and commerce

8 Education

2 Communication

1 Food processing

3 Food retail, markets

1 Food industry

1 Financial Services

1 Health care

Nutrition

7 National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

6 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

5 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

Small-scale farmer

1 Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

1 Local Non-Governmental Organization

International Non-Governmental Organization

1 Indigenous People

14 Science and academia

0 Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

8 Government and national institution

Regional economic community

1 United Nations

International financial institution

2 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

2 Consumer group

7 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The BoT organizing team has selected a group of young and motivated individuals already (or ready to be) projected into the realm of food systems and provided them with a safe space to discuss, openly and creatively, the way forward for a more sustainable and resilient future. As such, both the organizing team and the participants understand the need to act with urgency and are committed, either personally or professionally, to contribute to the vision, objectives and outcomes of the FSS. The BoT participants aim to be agents of change and wish to contribute to the outcome of the FSS. David Nabarro's intervention during the first BoT virtual meeting clearly inspired them and helped them better understand the process behind the Summit. In the organization of the Dialogue, the BoT organizing team made sure to embrace multi-stakeholder inclusivity by inviting participants from different countries, backgrounds and sectors, including but not limited to civil society, government, academia and the private sector. It must be pointed out, however, that the Dialogue has been organized and carried out with a focus on the youth and on the Middle Eastern – Mediterranean region geographically speaking. The facilitators selected were all part of the organizing team, and had been briefed with attention to ensure the creation of a safe space conducive for dialogue based on respect and trust. A number of 'principles' for discussion were shared with the participants at the beginning of each session to foster this sense of inclusivity, mutual respect and trust. These included the need to complement the work of others, build on what the person before has said, challenge only when you have an alternative to propose, and finally seek compromise in order to reach a unifying message.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The Dialogue focused on the relationship between food and health and on the plausibility of moving towards personalized diets, within specific contexts, in the future. The Dialogue is part of a broader set of workshops and events organized by the Bites of Transfoodmation team that aim to take into account and discuss different aspects of the food systems, thus recognizing their complexity. Previous dialogues and workshops have focused on the topics of sustainable consumption and on the future of production, transformation and distribution. The final aim is to achieve a political intention of the group, in the form of a Manifesto and Lines of Action, which will take a holistic and systemic approach to food systems transformation. Yet, as the very name Bites of Transfoodmation suggests, the idea is to propose some 'bites' of change which are coherent to and reflect the vision of the group of young change-makers and the themes identified by the group as key. The principles of inclusivity, respect and trust were reflected in the design and roll-out of the Dialogue and have been an essential feature of the entire Bites of Transfoodmation process. The participants have not only been included in all stages of the project in a transparent and inclusive way but have been its very center. A real sense of trust has been created along the way, and this could be witnessed during the Dialogue as the participants felt they could express their views freely and openly, even when these did not necessarily reflect the views held by others. The Bites of Transfoodmation organizing team has received a lot of positive feedback from the group and is looking forward to the next Dialogue, which will take place on March 16th.

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

Thanks to the fact that there is a team working exclusively on the Bites of Transfoodmation project, a lot of information and knowledge sharing is able to take place both among the participants, and between the participants and the organizing team. The organizing team has ensured that various different avenues and spaces for exchange are created, both during and in the build-up to the Dialogues. This has definitely contributed to building trust as well as to keeping the momentum, engagement and commitment of the participants high. Our advice to other Convenors would be to make sure, if possible, that there is a strong point of contact between the Dialogue participants and the Convenors. This allows for participant's feedback and continued interaction after the workshops and Dialogue so that the ideas can be further refined, and knowledge further shared. Furthermore, it seems to be a valuable approach to choose participants with a diverse background in order to permit exchange about different realities, while working towards compromise and unifying elements.

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

Our first three Bites of Transfoodmation workshops showed us the need for a change of narrative, with a greater emphasis on espousing diversity, whilst nurturing a culture of empowerment, reconsidering our habitats and reassessing the value of food through the lens of a true cost approach.

We acknowledged that shifting the status of food from a commodity to a public good can help in contemplating its true cost and value and we recognized that a new perspective in the way to produce, process and distribute food, orientated towards achieving healthy and sustainable diets for all, will lead to profound systemic changes.

Existing inequalities both in terms of access to knowledge and income often result in affordability and accessibility issues. During this Independent Dialogue, zoomed in on the points of difference within our social fabric. We embraced three cases of what we could define as extreme habitats (refugee camps, the realities of oncology, and high performing sports) that allowed us to dive deeper into the topics of inequality and accessibility and therefore to have an inclusive conversation, truly embracing diversity.

The discussion was focused around three main questions/discussion topics:

- How could food systems and health systems be brought together to reduce the social and economic cost of illness? Should health and food be conceived as public goods? If yes, how?
- How can we get to a point in which everyone has access to a diet tailored to his/her specific needs as some athletes currently do?
- In a context of increasing migration flows due to climate change and political instability, how can we ensure healthy and sustainable food systems that allow for nutritious food and a thriving social fabric?

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

By pushing a bit further the margins of non-mainstreamed food systems, we noticed that what emerged quite strongly was a divisive tendency with a focus on what divides rather than what unifies us as a group. It is clear, that in order to embrace the unifying power of food, we need to spell out the granularity of the unifying message of potentially divisive concepts. From the discussion, it came out clearly that diversity, which is perceived as a positive element, is countered by confusion. How can we make a choice that is sustainable both in economic and environmental terms in such a diversified context? This confusion leads to another potential opposition between personal responsibility and collectivity rights related to food habits in the future. This contrast can be linked to the dichotomy between the narratives (perceived as the truth) versus the trends (perceived as something of the moment).

The example of the refugee camp in Jordan, revealed the power of traditions and the fear of losing identities. Traditions, and food traditions in particular, were perceived as nourishing a sense of belonging, as one of the only things that make you feel like a human being anchored in a societal environment. On the contrary, innovation and personalized diets were considered as a mere response to health necessities, somehow taking away the human and social part of nutrition, and therefore the pleasure and celebration of food.

Within the group, we felt a feeling of opposition between the social and health elements of food. Potentially we can overcome it and have both. We need to dismantle these dichotomies to build our Manifesto as diversity does not imply confusion and fear, but rather the opposite.

When exploited in a positive way, food has a unifying power that works as a vector enacting a virtuous cycle of who we are, what we do and our sense of belonging. This implies new traditions, a new concept of sustainability and affordability (in its broad definition) and social proximity.

The day that we will be collectively able to bring diversity as a fundamental aspect of belonging will imply the creation of a new narrative in the shape of a clepsydra. Diversity will be the unifying factor and the narrative won't imply a homogenization of diversity but will rather embrace it as a source of richness. This will imply the establishment of trust through an empowering culture.

In this narrative, we want new traditions that allow the creation a new sense of belonging. How can we get there? By embedding the issue of personalized diets and food in its broad definition encompassing social and health dimensions. The outcome will be a narrative that embraces, learns, joins, celebrates diverse new food traditions for cohesive, healthy, sustainable habitats where we all live and thrive.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

We all know that food is crucial to perform at our best in certain activities, such as sports. As, in this case, the main objective is to get to the best possible result, the customization of the diet is at the basis. But what if all of us followed a personalized diet with the goal of living a healthy life, without nutrient deficiencies and the risk of running out of food? Surely it would work at the health level, but there are still questions that need to be looked into at the applicability level. In fact, we are not only talking about health but also about wellness, as a personalized diet would have to be at the same time healthy and appetizing. Following this reasoning, how would a family with different diets manage the time and would it be sustainable in terms of waste? Who should tell us what our specific needs are? How could governments help in promoting the consumption of healthy products? A possible way would be to implement specific subsidies both for consumers and producers and build up specific healthcare institutions. Healthy food should become a matter of public interest in order to make it work economically and start to have an influence on the whole food system.

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

Food is closely related to health and in some cases it turns out to be the only cure. Very often this characteristic is not considered and food is taken for granted, undermining the fundamental role it plays for our health. This has led to an increase in the costs of health related to the consumption of cheap processed food, which is not good for human health. Knowledge and education are needed in all sectors to make food become a public and social good, thus giving back its true value. However, it has emerged that in the context of the current food systems it is still too complex to take a holistic approach permitting this new vision of food. In addition, an important role is also played by the image attributed to food: It would be suitable to present a positive image, leading to a shared awareness and, above all, to both an individual and a collective responsibility. We should also try to see food as a nourishment of the mind and be able to make free personal choices based on awareness and knowledge, without getting overwhelmed by the confusion due to the huge offer of choices which characterizes the current world narratives.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

Food is an important part of people's lives, cultures and traditions and can be seen as a powerful unifying force helping to create a sense of belonging within communities. This is also the case in refugee camps and more generally amongst people on the move, for that context food plays a central role in bringing people together and maintaining traditions alive. It is often, however, the case that food aid and assistance in these contexts privileges food quantity over food quality, and that the food delivered does not take into account cultural sensitivities. This could be due to the fact that refugee camps are seen as temporary solutions, although in reality these situations are increasingly spanning over a longer period of time. One solution could be to start projects which create urban food systems, through techniques such as vertical farming and hydroponics, within the contexts of refugee camps. In this way, migrants and refugees would have access to job opportunities as well as quality food, re-gaining agency and independence over their food choices as well as having the possibility to share their own knowledge and help to create a thriving social fabric. Food can, in fact, be a powerful linking factor between local communities and migrants, creating a new food culture bringing together different, multicultural communities and traditions. Food has both social and health elements and both are important; food can be seen as necessary for human nutrition but also as a celebration. In the context of migration, both elements should be taken into account to ensure that migrants and refugees have access to a healthy and nutritious diet, whilst at the same time being able to celebrate food traditions and to create new ones.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Compared to the previous Bites of Transfoodmation workshops, during this Independent Dialogue, some stronger areas of divergence came out within and amongst the discussion groups. Particularly, participants highlighted some critical areas of divergence that involve difficult trade-offs for the following aspects:

- a) The question of how we could attribute the true value of food including people's perception and public subsidies.
- b) A tension in the definition of the terms: "healthy diets" and "personalized diets", how they should be determined and by whom. Participants had different understandings on the definition of these two expressions with stricter interpretations implying new technologies and DNA editing on the one side, and much larger interpretations implying eating what makes you feel good on the other.
- c) The trade-off between tailored diets and its implication or interference with the personalized diets of others and the costs both in economic and environmental terms that such diets could have.
- d) Within the group, we felt a feeling of opposition between the social and health elements of food. Innovation and personalized diets were considered by some participants as a mere response to health necessities, somehow taking away the human and social part of nutrition, and therefore the celebration of food and its anchorage to cultural narratives and traditions.
- e) The risk of over-romanticize the "celebrative power" of food, as for participants food - in some some circumstances - can be a source of conflicts (when it is limited) and of mental stress with a particular focus on eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia.
- f) When talking about the social and health aspects of food, and the prospect of moving towards more personalized diets in the future, the topic of pills (i.e. vitamins, supplements, etc.) came up. Some of the participants highlighted that pills were not the solution nor were desirable, as food is strongly linked to culture and traditions. Other participants, however, stressed that this is fast becoming a reality for industries and companies are investing in it.
- g) Some participants suggested the idea to associate strict personalized diets (as the one adopted by professional athletes for example) with some sorts of rewards in the form of "cheat meals". However, others stressed out the idea that "cheat meals" can be perceived as a punishment and could therefore increase some negative consequences for mental and physical health (feelings of guilt). Furthermore, many pointed out that a "cheat meal" should not be necessary, as we should be eating food we like every day in a balanced way.

No clear answers have been identified to address these challenges, however there has been consensus that we, as a group, have the power to overcome these dichotomies between the social and health elements of food, between personal choices and sense of collectivity and between personalized diets and environmentally and economically sustainable diets. We need to dismantle these dichotomies to build our Bites of Transfoodmation Manifesto as diversity does not imply confusion and fear, but rather the opposite.

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ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

ATTACHMENTS

- **A new clepsydra narrative**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/clepsydra-narrative.png>
- **The unifying power of food**
<https://summitdialogues.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/The-unifying-power-of-food.png>

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Bites of Transfoodmation**
<https://transfoodmation.com/>