

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Saturday, 23 May 2026 09:00 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	The Role of Art in Strengthening Scientific Dissemination and Citizen Engagement for Sustainable Food Systems
CONVENED BY	Future Food Institute
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/53677/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	European Union

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	40
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PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0	0-18	18	19-30	11	31-50	9	51-65	2	66-80	0	80+
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PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

17	Male	23	Female		Prefer not to say or Other
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NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

1	Agriculture/crops	9	Education	1	Health care
0	Fish and aquaculture	4	Communication	2	Nutrition
0	Livestock	1	Food processing	2	National or local government
0	Agro-forestry	1	Food retail, markets	0	Utilities
4	Environment and ecology	2	Food industry	0	Industrial
0	Trade and commerce	0	Financial Services	13	Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

3	Small/medium enterprise/artisan	0	Workers and trade union
0	Large national business	0	Member of Parliament
0	Multi-national corporation	3	Local authority
1	Small-scale farmer	2	Government and national institution
0	Medium-scale farmer	0	Regional economic community
0	Large-scale farmer	2	United Nations
6	Local Non-Governmental Organization	0	International financial institution
0	International Non-Governmental Organization	3	Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
0	Indigenous People	2	Consumer group
16	Science and academia	2	Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The Dialogue was intentionally designed as an inclusive, participatory, and interdisciplinary process that reflected the UN Food Systems Summit Principles of Engagement. Recognising that food systems transformation depends on collaboration across disciplines, sectors, and lived experiences, the event brought together researchers, artists, educators, sustainability practitioners, civil society organisations, youth participants, and members of the wider SWITCH ecosystem to contribute as equal partners in the discussion. Following the UN Food Systems Dialogue methodology, participants worked in facilitated small-group discussions exploring the intersection of art, scientific dissemination, and citizen engagement. This format encouraged active listening, constructive dialogue, and equitable participation while creating space for diverse perspectives to emerge without requiring consensus. Rather than debating predetermined solutions, participants were invited to co-create ideas, reflect on shared challenges, and identify practical opportunities for collective action. A valuable contribution came from participation involved in the M.I.S.T.A.K.E. project in Naples, whose experience at the intersection of art, science, and public engagement enriched the discussions with practical examples of interdisciplinary collaboration. Their perspectives complemented those of researchers, educators, sustainability practitioners, local authorities, and civil society organisations, demonstrating how different forms of knowledge can strengthen innovation within food systems. Hosting the Dialogue in Pollica, a UNESCO-recognised territory closely associated with the Mediterranean Diet, reinforced the connection between local cultural heritage, scientific knowledge, biodiversity, and community participation. This place-based setting encouraged participants to consider how global food systems challenges can be addressed through locally rooted, culturally relevant, and collaborative approaches, reflecting the Dialogue's commitment to inclusion, mutual learning, and systems thinking.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The Dialogue reflected the UN Food Systems Summit Principles of Engagement by creating an environment where openness, inclusivity, and mutual respect enabled meaningful exchange across disciplines, sectors, and lived experiences. Rather than treating scientific expertise, artistic practice, local knowledge, and community perspectives as separate or competing forms of evidence, participants explored how these different ways of knowing can complement one another in addressing the complexity of food systems transformation. The diversity of participants, including researchers, artists, educators, civil society organisations, sustainability practitioners, local authorities, youth, and members of the SWITCH ecosystem, encouraged interdisciplinary dialogue that challenged assumptions, generated new perspectives, and fostered collective learning. Participants were invited to engage as equal contributors, recognising that effective food systems governance depends on collaboration across traditional institutional and sectoral boundaries. Respect for diverse viewpoints was maintained throughout the discussions. Facilitators encouraged active listening, constructive reflection, and open dialogue, ensuring that differing opinions were documented without seeking artificial consensus. This approach allowed participants to explore opportunities, identify challenges, and acknowledge areas of uncertainty while strengthening trust among stakeholders. The Dialogue also reflected the Principles through its commitment to transparency and co-creation. Emerging ideas were captured impartially, ensuring that the outcomes represented the collective discussion rather than predetermined conclusions or individual priorities. By focusing on shared learning instead of advocacy, the Dialogue created space for innovative thinking and strengthened participants' capacity to identify practical actions for improving communication between science and society, expanding citizen engagement, and supporting more inclusive and participatory approaches to sustainable food systems.

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

One of the most important lessons from this Dialogue is that meaningful engagement begins long before the discussion itself. Convenors should invest time in bringing together participants with diverse expertise, experience, and perspectives. Engaging researchers, artists, educators, policymakers, community organisations, youth, and practitioners creates opportunities for new ideas to emerge and helps participants understand food systems challenges from multiple viewpoints. Creating an environment of trust is equally important. Participants are more willing to share uncertainties, question assumptions, and explore innovative solutions when discussions are facilitated in a respectful, inclusive, and non-hierarchical way. Small-group conversations supported by experienced facilitators can encourage deeper dialogue, ensure quieter voices are heard, and foster genuine exchange rather than debate. Creative and participatory facilitation methods can also make complex issues in food systems more accessible. Integrating storytelling, visual approaches, or place-based learning alongside scientific discussion helps participants connect evidence with lived experience, encouraging broader participation and strengthening collective understanding. Finally, convenors should recognise the value of local context. Connecting global food systems challenges to local culture, heritage, landscapes, and community knowledge makes discussions more relevant and increases the likelihood

that participants will identify practical actions that can be sustained beyond the Dialogue itself. Ultimately, the Principles of Engagement are more than guidance for organising a Dialogue; they are a foundation for building trust, fostering collaboration, and enabling the long-term partnership needed to accelerate food systems transformation.

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?

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Yes

☐

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The Dialogue explored how artistic and creative practices can strengthen scientific dissemination, public engagement, and collaborative action in support of sustainable and regenerative food systems. Rather than focusing on a single component of food systems, participants examined how interdisciplinary collaboration between science, culture, education, and communities can act as an enabling mechanism for systems transformation.

Participants recognised that achieving sustainable food systems requires more than scientific evidence and technological innovation. It also depends on society's ability to understand complex challenges, build trust in scientific knowledge, and actively participate in shaping solutions. The Dialogue therefore explored how communication, creativity, and cultural participation can bridge the gap between research and society, making food systems knowledge more accessible, relevant, and actionable.

Particular attention was given to storytelling, artistic expression, participatory design, and cultural heritage as approaches for translating scientific knowledge into meaningful public engagement. Participants reflected on the Mediterranean Diet as a living example of how biodiversity, local knowledge, cultural identity, scientific research, and healthy food environments can reinforce one another, demonstrating the importance of place-based approaches to sustainability.

The Dialogue also examined how public spaces, educational institutions, museums, cultural organisations, and community initiatives can serve as platforms for lifelong learning, civic participation, and interdisciplinary collaboration. These spaces were recognised as important environments where citizens can engage with food systems not only as consumers, but also as active contributors to more resilient and equitable food futures.

Ultimately, the Dialogue positioned creativity not simply as a communication tool, but as a catalyst for strengthening relationships between researchers, policymakers, educators, artists, communities, and other stakeholders. By fostering collaboration across disciplines and sectors, participants highlighted opportunities to develop more inclusive forms of governance, strengthen food literacy, encourage citizen participation, and support long-term food systems transformation.

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

The Dialogue highlighted that transforming food systems requires strengthening the relationship between scientific knowledge and society. Participants consistently recognised that while scientific evidence provides the foundation for understanding sustainability challenges, evidence alone is rarely sufficient to inspire behavioural change, build public trust, or generate the collective action needed to support long-term food systems transformation. Effective communication therefore emerged as a strategic component of governance rather than simply a mechanism for disseminating information.

A central finding was that artistic and creative practices can play an important role in making scientific knowledge more accessible, engaging, and meaningful for diverse audiences. Participants identified storytelling, visual arts, participatory exhibitions, creative design, and other cultural approaches as valuable tools for translating complex food systems concepts into experiences that encourage dialogue, strengthen food literacy, and foster active citizenship. Rather than replacing scientific communication, these approaches were seen as complementary methods that broaden participation while maintaining the integrity of scientific evidence.

The Dialogue also highlighted the importance of public spaces, including schools, museums, cultural institutions, markets, and community initiatives, as places where food systems knowledge can be experienced collectively. Participants recognised these environments as important platforms for lifelong learning, civic participation, and collaboration, helping to connect scientific research with everyday decisions about food, health, biodiversity, and sustainability.

Another key finding was the need for stronger interdisciplinary partnerships. Participants emphasised that researchers, artists, educators, policymakers, local authorities, civil society organisations, and communities all have complementary roles in designing more inclusive approaches to science communication and public engagement. Such collaboration was considered essential for developing solutions that are scientifically robust, culturally relevant, and responsive to local contexts.

The Dialogue further recognised the Mediterranean Diet as a living example of how scientific knowledge, biodiversity, cultural heritage, and community practices can reinforce one another in supporting healthier and more sustainable food systems. Participants highlighted the value of place-based approaches that connect global sustainability objectives with local identity, traditions, and lived experience.

Overall, the Dialogue concluded that food systems transformation is not only a scientific, technological, or policy challenge, but also a cultural and societal one. Participants agreed that strengthening creativity, participation, trust, and cross-sector collaboration can help bridge the gap between knowledge and action, supporting more inclusive governance and accelerating progress towards sustainable and regenerative food systems.

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KEYWORDS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

Discussion Topic 1: Reclaiming Public Space as Living Infrastructure for Food Systems

Participants recognised that public spaces play a critical role in strengthening community participation, food literacy, and collective action, positioning them as essential social infrastructure for more sustainable and resilient food systems. Schools, parks, cultural centres, museums, markets, libraries, and other shared community spaces were identified as places where citizens can reconnect with food production, biodiversity, local knowledge, and sustainable consumption through inclusive and participatory experiences.

The discussions highlighted that reclaiming public spaces for food systems education and engagement can strengthen relationships between communities, institutions, and local decision-makers while encouraging greater civic participation in shaping food environments. Participants emphasised that these spaces should not only support awareness-raising but also enable dialogue, collaboration, and long-term learning across generations.

Priority actions included integrating food systems education into public programming, supporting community-led food initiatives, promoting participatory urban food planning, and strengthening partnerships between municipalities, educational institutions, cultural organisations, and civil society. Participants recognised that collaborative governance and place-based approaches are essential for ensuring that food systems initiatives remain locally relevant while contributing to broader sustainability objectives.

Progress could be assessed through increased community participation, the establishment of new cross-sector partnerships, expanded educational activities, and greater public awareness of sustainable food practices. Participants also noted the importance of monitoring the continuity and inclusiveness of these initiatives to ensure they generate lasting community engagement rather than isolated events.

Key implementation challenges include unequal access to public spaces, limited financial and institutional resources, and maintaining long-term citizen participation beyond individual projects. Addressing these barriers will require sustained collaboration, local leadership, and continued investment in participatory approaches that strengthen both community resilience and food systems transformation.

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KEYWORDS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

Discussion Topic 2: Artistic Practice as a Catalyst for Food Systems Awareness

Participants recognised artistic practice as a valuable catalyst for strengthening public understanding of food systems by translating complex scientific knowledge into experiences that are engaging, accessible, and culturally meaningful. Rather than viewing art as an alternative to scientific communication, participants highlighted its complementary role in fostering curiosity, dialogue, empathy, and critical reflection, helping diverse audiences engage more actively with sustainability challenges.

The discussions emphasised that creative approaches, including exhibitions, storytelling, participatory performances, visual arts, and community-based cultural initiatives, can create opportunities for citizens to connect scientific evidence with everyday experiences, local identities, and food culture. Participants considered these approaches particularly valuable for strengthening food literacy, encouraging behavioural change, and supporting more inclusive forms of public engagement.

To maximise impact, participants recommended expanding long-term collaboration between artists, researchers, educators, museums, schools, local authorities, and civil society organisations. Such interdisciplinary partnerships were seen as essential for co-designing initiatives that combine scientific rigour with creative expression while remaining responsive to local contexts and community needs.

Progress could be assessed through increased public participation, audience engagement, educational outcomes, the establishment of new interdisciplinary collaborations, and the replication or adaptation of successful initiatives in different settings. Participants also recognised the importance of developing evaluation approaches capable of capturing qualitative outcomes, including changes in awareness, dialogue, trust, and community engagement alongside quantitative indicators.

Key challenges include securing sustainable funding, building institutional support for interdisciplinary collaboration, and developing robust methods for assessing the longer-term cultural and societal impacts of creative engagement. Addressing these challenges will be important for embedding artistic practice within broader food systems strategies rather than treating it as a standalone communication activity.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

Discussion Topic 3: Translating Science Through Creativity

Participants discussed that scientific communication should evolve from a predominantly one-way process of disseminating research findings to a more participatory model that actively involves citizens, educators, creative practitioners, and local communities throughout the research journey. They recognised that strengthening dialogue between science and society is essential for building trust, improving public understanding, and increasing the relevance of research to real-world food systems challenges.

Creative methodologies, including visual storytelling, citizen science, interactive exhibitions, artistic collaborations, and other participatory approaches, were identified as valuable tools for making scientific knowledge more accessible and fostering meaningful engagement. Participants emphasised that these approaches can help translate complex evidence into experiences that encourage reflection, dialogue, and collective learning while maintaining scientific integrity.

A key recommendation was for research institutions to integrate communication specialists, artists, educators, and community representatives into research processes from the earliest stages, rather than limiting engagement to the dissemination of final results. Participants considered this collaborative approach an opportunity to improve the relevance, accessibility, and societal impact of research while strengthening relationships between scientific institutions and the communities they serve.

Progress could be assessed through increased public participation in research-related activities, stronger interdisciplinary collaboration, higher levels of trust and engagement with scientific institutions, and evidence of more sustained dialogue between researchers and communities. Participants also highlighted the importance of developing evaluation frameworks capable of capturing long-term societal outcomes, recognising that changes in trust, participation, and public understanding often emerge over extended periods.

Key implementation challenges include institutional structures that continue to prioritise traditional communication models, limited opportunities for interdisciplinary training, resource constraints, and the difficulty of measuring long-term societal impact. Addressing these barriers will require sustained institutional commitment, investment in collaborative capacity, and greater recognition of participatory communication as an integral component of food systems research and innovation.

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KEYWORDS

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		✓	Environment and Climate

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

While participants broadly agreed on the importance of strengthening the relationship between art, science, and citizen engagement in support of food systems transformation, the Dialogue also highlighted several constructive areas of divergence. Rather than representing barriers to collaboration, these differing perspectives reflected the complexity of designing approaches that are scientifically credible, culturally relevant, and adaptable across diverse contexts.

One area of discussion concerned the balance between scientific accuracy and creative interpretation. Many participants viewed artistic and creative practices as essential for making scientific knowledge more accessible and engaging. Others emphasised that these approaches should always preserve the integrity of scientific evidence and avoid oversimplifying complex challenges. Participants agreed that creativity should complement, rather than replace, rigorous scientific communication, while recognising that achieving this balance requires continued collaboration between researchers and creative practitioners.

A second area of divergence focused on leadership and governance. Some participants considered universities and public research institutions best placed to lead innovation in science communication because of their expertise and capacity to generate evidence. Others argued that local communities, artists, educators, and civil society organisations should play a more prominent role in shaping participatory approaches, recognising that effective engagement depends on local knowledge, cultural relevance, and shared ownership. This discussion highlighted the importance of collaborative governance models that draw on the complementary strengths of multiple stakeholders.

Participants also expressed different perspectives on how success should be measured. While quantitative indicators, such as participation rates, educational outcomes, and the number of collaborative initiatives, were recognised as useful measures of progress, many participants stressed that changes in trust, cultural engagement, and community empowerment require qualitative approaches capable of capturing longer-term societal change. The Dialogue highlighted the need for evaluation frameworks that combine both quantitative and qualitative evidence.

Finally, participants discussed the relationship between place-based approaches and scalability. Some emphasised that successful initiatives should remain deeply rooted in local culture, heritage, and community identity, while others highlighted the value of developing adaptable models that could inform food systems transformation in different regions. Rather than viewing these perspectives as contradictory, participants recognised the opportunity to balance local specificity with broader learning by adapting principles rather than replicating individual initiatives.

Overall, these areas of divergence demonstrated that food systems transformation is characterised by legitimate trade-offs and multiple pathways for action. The Dialogue reaffirmed that openly exploring different perspectives strengthens collective learning, supports more inclusive decision-making, and helps identify priorities for future collaboration, research, and innovation.

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KEYWORDS

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		✓	Environment and Climate

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Photos Food Systems Dialogue "The Role of Art in Strengthening Scientific Dissemination and Citizen Engagement for Sustainable Food Systems"**
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1ZCEFHbjzRoIN9P_3eucXpq9GEWGrE4h5?usp=sharing