



The SDC Agriculture and Food Systems Network

# Global F2F-Meeting 2023

Bridging Approaches, Linking Outcomes

Rome, Italy, 26<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023

# MEETING REPORT



Group photo, Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023, FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy.

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# Background

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Since the [last Face-to-Face \(F2F\)](#) in 2016, the institutional and real-world parameters in which the [A+FS Network](#) and the institutions of its members are operating have shifted substantially. The positive trend of hunger reduction has reversed over the last six years, armed conflicts are on the rise, and the planetary boundaries and the effects of climate change are becoming ever more tangible. In response, the approach to food security is being sought more than ever from the systemic angle through a food systems approach. Similar developments in adjacent fields have further led SDC and other organisations to seek a more joined-up approach by accentuating the need to work closer within the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, and pursuing a more holistic and fluid approach to thematic/sectoral cooperation. But many of the challenges are global in nature and cannot be addressed in isolation from international, multilateral processes and the work and services of the UN agencies.

These considerations have been reflected in the past few years through SDC's institutional restructuring, notably the renaming from Food *Security* to Food *Systems* section and Network, embodying the more holistic approach sought, and the accelerated efforts to work on multisectoral approaches. With a lot of groundwork now in progress through the likes of the [Food Systems Learning Journey](#), and a structural review of the relationships between various networks, the timing was deemed right to invite interested and active network members to an in-person meeting in order to jointly take a look at the recent global developments and how this impacts our work, reflect on what should come next, and build on a reinvigorated sense of community.

The F2F was co-organised by SDC A+FS focal points, the designated network backstoppers (Helvetas, HAFL), the SDC academic trainee with support of the Swiss Mission to the UN Organisations in Rome.

## **Objectives:**

The F2F's declared objectives were to:

- Work on possible priority food systems transformation pathways which could be pursued jointly in the years to come – developing a joint understanding, sharing the current state of things and building on individual experiences.
- Identify areas of collaboration at different levels (global, regional and national) from the interaction with the Rome-based Agencies.
- Discuss how the A+FS Network should work in the future, and what on.

## **Participants:** (see Appendix 2)

The A+FS F2F meeting was attended by 51 participants (including organisers) hailing from SDC headquarters (6) and SDC country offices (14), the Swiss Mission in Rome (3), the Federal Office of Agriculture (1), Swiss-based institutions, NGOs & research (16), Swiss private sector (1), national development agencies (2), and international NGOs (8). Additional people joined on a daily basis based on content engagement, opportunity and topical interest, e.g., from the FAO and IFAD (3).

## Approach

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The F2F programme was designed with the goal to form a bracket around a number of major topics arising from the Food System Learning Journey and bring these into relationship one another, and by having the various topical thematic sessions build on one another in the course of the first two days (ref. “Wireframe concept” in Annex 6), and by consolidating the findings in relationship to the life and work of the network on the third day. During this period, a strong emphasis was laid on direct interaction with the technical specialists of the three Rome-based UN agencies FAO, IFAD and WFP (“the RBAs”). Notably the second day which was held in two of the three RBA Headquarters. An optional fourth-day excursion gave participants the opportunity to explore elements of the Roman peri-urban food system.

Between sessions, sufficient time was afforded to participants to interact, network and consolidate the content of the sessions, and exchange experience in the form of a so-called “marketplace” in which participants highlighted their specialist activities across food systems.

As such, the F2F was designed as a knowledge-exchange and -creation event, and not as a teaching exercise. The means that while the conceptual framework was set, the content and the technical outcomes were not.

## Programme Overview

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### **Day 1 – Systems Thinking operationalised through Agroecology and Markets**

The first day rehearsed recent efforts to propagate systems thinking, applying it to agroecology, and considering its significance in market systems development (MSD). Space was also created for colleagues to showcase their flagship projects and relate them to a food systems approach, being lensed through the two priority themes of agroecology and MSD. The two main sessions entailed engaged working group sessions. In the case of Agroecology, these covered the landscape approach, farmers’ practices, policy environments, the human-rights-based approach and impact assessments and measurements; in the case of Markets, these covered ingredients of a well-regulated market, options and behaviour of consumers, rural-urban linkages, financing and impact investment, and managing the commons.

### **Day 2 – A Day hosted by FAO and WFP – Youth, Nutrition & Healthy Diets, and the Humanitarian-Development Nexus in Food Systems**

The second day took place on the premises of two of the three UN Rome-based Agencies. Participants were shown the headquarters of FAO and WFP and got a feeling for how these institutions interact with one another at a high level. In doing so, they got a topical understanding for what the RBAs can contribute in terms of conceptual know-how and operational clout, in a way which can be linked to their own concerns or interests. The day opened with two preparatory sessions on the UN Food Systems Coordination Hub and youth participation across food systems before re-entering the food systems discussion from the following day through a nutrition perspective. After relocating to WFP, the afternoon was dedicated to the question of the Humanitarian-Development Nexus and how it could be (but is currently not sufficiently) linked to food systems approaches.

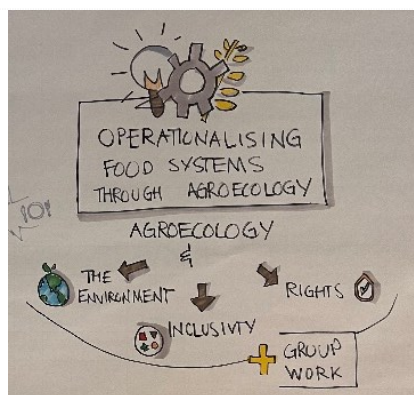
### **Day 3 – The Consolidation Sessions**

Back to the workshop venue, the third day focused on making sense of the many inputs and discussions of the previous two days. The morning was used to consolidate the information, in a first session focusing on gender and youth as important cross-cutting topics, and in a second, undertaking

a more sweeping summation of key findings and linkages between the various sessions. In the afternoon, the group turned to the question of what the A+FS Network should make of food systems, and what kind of topics the community might focus on going forward. A high number of ideas were put forward, and the focal point team will be concentrating on consolidating the many excellent suggestions in the year(s) ahead.

#### **Day 4 – Field Visit & Final Good-byes**

On this fourth and final day, the participants of the “optional excursion” again braved the busy Roman traffic to pay an early-morning visit the urban market of Testaccio, where they tasted a few Italian specialties, and learned about how the food is sourced and who frequents the different types of markets in the city. An interesting bit of trivia revealed that the Testaccio market was built on the site of an ancient Roman market, thereby linking it to a food tradition harking back 2000 years. After that, following the food trail back, the group headed out to the organic cooperative farm Agricoltura Nuova beyond the southern outskirts of Rome. Here they toured the farm with an Italian farmer, studied the production and processing capacities of the cooperative, and compared notes on the challenges of farming in Italy and elsewhere. They also learned how the cooperative markets their products to consumers, be that locally or nationally. After a hearty lunch, the group headed back to town to go their separate ways, be that by train or plane.



## Agroecology

### Operationalising food systems transformation through agroecology

*“Agroecological food systems can tackle the climate, biodiversity, land degradation and hunger crises together – because they are based on diversity, resilience and equity.”*

Oliver Oliveros

<b>Speakers</b>	<p><i>Francesca Grazioli, Associate Scientist for the Biodiversity for Food and Agriculture Unit, Bioversity International</i></p> <p><i>Lauren Philips, Deputy Director, Inclusive Rural Transformation and Gender Equality, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)</i></p> <p><i>Cristina Cambiaghi, Senior Thematic and Global Policy Specialist, International Land Coalition (ILC)</i></p>
<b>Working group facilitators</b>	<p><i>Amritbir Riar, Swiss research institute for organic agriculture (FiBL) and Nicole Harari, World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT)</i></p> <p><i>Ruedi Lüthi, Helvetas, and Clemence Moinier, IFAD</i></p> <p><i>John Garcia, Biovision, and Madeleine Kaufmann, Swiss Federal Office of Agriculture</i></p> <p><i>Sarah Mader, Swissaid, and Ivan Cucco, IFAD</i></p> <p><i>Christa Suter, Fastenaktion, and Cristina Cambiaghi, ILC</i></p>
<b>Moderator</b>	<p><i>Stéphanie Piers, SDC</i></p>
<b>Summative remarks</b>	<p><i>Oliver Oliveros, Agroecology Coalition</i></p>
<b>Rapporteur</b>	<p><i>Andrei Stratulat, Swiss Cooperation Office in Moldova</i></p>

#### About this session

Be it building on the 10 elements as defined by the FAO (2018) or on the 13 principles defined by the High-Level Panel of Experts (2019), agroecology (AE) represents an overarching and comprehensive systems framework to guide food actors, public policies, and the society in general, towards more sustainable agriculture and food systems. The concept simultaneously applies ecological and social dimensions to the management of these food systems, from the local to the global scale.

Working from the political, environmental and sociocultural dimensions of agroecology, the three guest speakers set the stage by exploring AE's relationship to topics such as environment, inclusion and rights.



These thoughts were further developed through five simultaneous working groups, looking at the strengths of agroecology as a way to work over the broad spectrum of a food system, through discussion of farmers' practices, policy environments, the landscape approach and human rights. Particular discussion points were inclusion, rights and the environment. Other emerging topics were agrobiodiversity, soil health, water management, landscape, gender issues and land access viewed through the lens of human rights. As such, the value-based behaviour of AE took centre-stage.

Two important thoughts were that (1) we are operating in a planetary emergency and (2) land is one of our most precious life-sustaining resource. Accordingly, the foci on biodiversity, soil health, sustainable livelihoods and resources management should be a central concern.

## Insights & take-aways

- **Scope.** Agroecology should continue to focus on the needs of rural populations, but also seek to develop commercial business opportunities within the keeping of the agroecological principles.
- **Resources sustainability.** Conservation of biodiversity and soil must gain greater attention in the discussions around agroecology, which is crucial to systemic resilience. The role of biodiversity and soil health will become increasingly difficult to ignore in “mainstream” agriculture, providing the space to leverage on the knowledge of agroecology practitioners.
- **Gender.** Considering the position of women notably in subsistence farming and the markets, Women's empowerment and agroecological transformation are intrinsically linked, and must be developed in a coordinated way under the inclusion of both genders. Women's knowledge must become better recognised, and they must be more formally involved in decision-making processes. This must include decreased time-burdens and increased resilience by access to labour-saving and climate smart technologies. It also entails access to resources, such as land and financial credit.
- **Youth.** The trend of ageing farmers is a global challenge. Young people must be better integrated into the process of further developing agroecological practices and enterprises by providing space for innovative approaches which also offer a dignified livelihood. This will entail a willingness to consciously work with youth movements.
- **Land.** Land is the platform of all human activity and the provenance of the resources on which development is based. Development is only sustainable if pursued with the concerns of all stakeholders in mind and in respect of the production capacity that land can sustainably offer. Accordingly, it can be argued that within a sustainable-development framework, equitable access to land is a prerequisite for social justice and peace. With agroecology being so fundamentally tied to the use of land, this illustrates how agroecology is also inseparable from the pursuit of social justice and good land governance. Agroecological principles and practice must therefore be shown to work for the greater good of society and promote the social stability of rural communities in which they are being exercised. To raise the vested interest in sustainable land use, to give young people and women better access to productive resources and enlarge the basis for people to pursue dignified livelihoods, agroecology programming should be connected with efforts to reform land market regulations and taxes and review collective and women's land rights, while maintaining the productive capacity of land and its ability to produce food and incentivising good land stewardship.
- **Smallholders' role.** The largest 1% of farms cultivate more than 70% of farmland, while 84% of farms are smaller than 2 ha and cultivate only 12% farmland, yet it is small farmers that are at the front end of agroecology innovation/testing. It has been established that with secure land rights, farmers invest more in their land and are more interested in sustainable land stewardship. Smallholder land tends to have a higher level of biodiversity and host a wider range of crops than larger farms do. Where land rights are secure, smallholder farmers are less likely to work their land for a short-term profit, but take a more holistic approach to it as it is the basis of their long-term livelihood, the place of their home, and environment in which they and their family live.
- **Potential barriers.** Agroecology is an ideal field of practice for operationalising food systems thinking. However, in implementation, it is faced by a number of barriers, e.g. (1) lack of commercial incentives, (2) insufficient coherence, (3) no true-cost accounting, (4) misconception of what AE entails, (5)

challenges related to context-specific agricultural characteristics, (6) “conceptual confusion invoked by the wide range of approaches and practices. In response, agroecology would benefit from the conscious effort to (1) work beyond silos, (2) seek to improve network effects and knowledge exchange/awareness, (3) improve access to financing, (4) promote AE advantages through policy engagement at national and global scales, (5) build the macroeconomic and business case for agroecology, establishing its financial viability.

- **Working group insights.** Some notable insights from the five working groups:
  - **Farmers’ practices:** Agroecological practices are very much context-specific. There is a need to further capacitate farmers, share global knowledge and practices, invest in research, but also overcome the current global competition between diverse approaches (climate-smart, regenerative, organic, etc.) and build a consensus on principles and impacts. On the other hand, more evidence needs to be built and presented which focus on the 3 aspects of sustainability.
  - **Landscape approach:** Landscape approaches are a powerful conceptual framework for explaining how agroecology might be integrated into food systems in a holistic sense. This requires conditioning the necessary enabling environments, and notably building multi-stakeholder partnerships to balance out interests and needs. Many landscapes throughout the globe have been affected by serious degradation and can be restored only as far as effective accountability mechanisms and a sense of common ownership can be brought to bear.
  - **Policy environment:** Key elements of the emerging discussions were the importance (1) of breaking down silos (both in terms of institutional setup and policies), (2) of ensuring policy coherence including looking at aligning incentives, (3) increasing public (& private) funding, and (4) supporting awareness raising and evidence-bringing to the decision-makers.
  - **Human rights-based approach:** Social values, good governance and recognition of cultural values all form an integral part of the wider scope of agroecology. Agroecology is therefore central to enhancing the right to food, land, natural resources, and ensuring food justice, climate justice and economic justice. The legal frameworks must therefore embrace human-rights principles and should be enforced. The progression of digitalisation might help increase transparency, accountability, and ensure inclusion and participation, further including consumers.
  - **Impact assessments and measurements:** The need is two-fold: (1) increase the evidence of the value and benefits of agroecology for policy and awareness, and (2) enhance the impact of agroecological practices. This can be resource- and time-intensive. There is a need to balance the cost against the expected outcome. A variety of tools are being/have been developed for various scales and users, e.g. TAPE (farm-level) from FAO, ACT (project-level) and B-ACT (for businesses) and F-ACT (farm-level) from Biovision, Agroecology Assessment Tool (project / portfolio level) from the Agroecology Coalition, etc. The multiplicity makes comparability difficult.

## Follow-up / Next steps

- The importance attributed to agroecology in SDC’s work portfolio is one that should continue and more systematically streamlined in the years ahead.
- Further concentrated engagement with like-minded and neutral partners will be necessary to improve the quality and appeal of agroecological action and gain additional visibility and political leverage and support.
- There is the need to further strengthen the narrative and evidence building to make the case for agroecology as a viable and sustainable option.
- Increased investments in agroecology must be encouraged, which will mean (1) (re)orienting public and private sector funds, and (2) using alternative means to leverage funding which is can be used to invest in agroecological programmes (e.g. blended and impact financing financing).
- Seek ways to move agroecological practice and approaches further into the mainstream within all spectrum of the food system, from producers to consumers to the enabling environment and service providers.



- Agroecology should be more centrally positioned as an approach which can help the countries fulfil their international and national engagements, notably by showing how it can respond to the biodiversity, climate and food crises.

### **Related resources / Links**

- FAO's Agroecology Knowledge Hub <https://www.fao.org/agroecology/knowledge/>, including their Tool for Agroecological Performance Evaluation (TAPE) <https://www.fao.org/agroecology/tools-tape/>
- Agroecology Coalition's resources platform <https://agroecology-coalition.org/agroecology-resources/>, including their Agroecology finance assessment tool <https://agroecology-coalition.org/agroecology-finance-assessment-tool/>
- Biovision's Info Pool <https://www.agroecology-pool.org/>, including their Agroecology Criteria Tools (ACTs) for assessment of the agroecological-ness of projects, policies, farmers and businesses: <https://www.agroecology-pool.org/tools/>



# Markets

## Expanding into markets

*“For markets to function, you need various elements, but: start with the demand!”*

Thouraya Triki

<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Thouraya Triki, Director of Sustainable Production, Markets and Institutions Division, IFAD</i>
	<i>William Grant, Global Practice Leader, Market Systems Development, Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI)</i>
<i>Working group facilitators</i>	<i>William Grant, DAI, and Fauna Ibramogy, Swiss Cooperation Office in Mozambique</i>
	<i>Elco Baan, SNV</i>
	<i>Thomas Bernet, FiBL, and Bernita Doornbos, Helvetas</i>
	<i>José Luis Pereira, Swiss Embassy in Bolivia</i>
	<i>Carl Larsen, GFRAS and Uwe Singer, Swisscontact</i>
<i>Moderator</i>	<i>Bruce Campbell, SDC</i>
<i>Rapporteur</i>	<i>José Luis Pereira, Swiss Embassy in Bolivia</i>

### About this session

Building on the previous session on agroecology, Expanding into Markets explored similarities and intricate interlinkages between the approaches of development agencies to Market Systems and Food Systems. Starting from these premises, the two guest speakers sought to explore the incentives for market participants to behave in certain ways and consider what is needed to build resilient market systems. After the previous reflections around agroecology and value-based action, here the emphasis was more on the utilitarian approach taken by market participants.

The subsequent working sessions explored the question of market incentives in pursuit of characterising what is needed to define positive enabling environments in which markets work both for the good of society and market actors while managing resources sustainably. This entailed what elements must be considered in a well-regulated market, consumer behaviour, rural-urban linkages, impact investment and managing the commons.

An important result was the importance of the “enabling environment”, i.e., the conceptual space in which consumers and producers meet and where the food system outcomes are negotiated between market participants with elements such as natural resources, regulatory frameworks, cultural norms/tradition and infrastructure to name but a few. Going forward, the understanding of what a positive enabling environment entails will merit greater discussion as an entry point for directing investments in a food system context, made more complex by the diverse scales which need to be addressed, from the individual to the community, the State, and the global market interplays.

## Insights & takeaways

- **Markets at the core of food systems.** In the alignment of supply and demand which occurs in markets where buyers and seller meet, there is also an alignment of incentives takes place. To a considerable degree, these are modulated through price and profit margins, but there are also other factors at play. Working with markets requires the consideration of various elements and actors: the supporting functions (service providers, infrastructure, information, finance), the supply & demand (suppliers, producers, processors, distributors and consumers) and rules & regulations (informal rules, laws, standards, regulations, price transparency, product traceability, etc.). It becomes apparent that the core of food systems is substantially governed by market forces. Ingredients for well-regulated markets involve innovation, investments, accountability, producer-consumer loops. For markets to function, there is need of stability, in terms of ownership, of policy environment, of good governance, of financial conditions, etc.
- **Encouraging and guiding innovation.** It is important to take into account that different markets can function very differently. However, in general, it is private participation that carries sustainable markets, as it is in private initiatives that innovation and solution-directed creativity can be found. Fair competition, and linking consumer demand to production can also breed further innovations. Such innovations can be technological, or simply responding to market demands by adapting products or production. Market regulation is crucial to establishing conducive behaviour by market participants, price transparency and product provenance.
- **Enabling environments.** Enabling environments should be directed at attaining positive food systems outcomes (environmental sustainability, nutrition and food security, economic and social wellbeing), and keep these in equilibrium.
  - The regulator has to be astutely aware of the prevailing incentives behind market participants' behaviour(s) and in a position to independently set rules which guide the incentives and initiative of participants towards good outcomes.
  - Markets are not static, they develop over time which means that regulation needs to change as well, however without making markets unpredictable (e.g., through frequent and abrupt regulatory changes).
  - Market participants and stakeholders are adaptive. They adhere not only to the standards set by regulators, but also work in an environment of informal rules and practices which need to be recognised and taken into consideration.
  - Regulators and development agencies must be aware of these conditioning factors and be prepared to shape these in pursuit of better market functionality. Understanding these market forces, through data collection, monitoring, evaluation & understand of the feedback loops, allows for informed and appropriate regulatory decision-making. In this respect, systems thinking is a step ahead of the classical value-chain approach and offers better entry points to working holistically on markets through systems-based development programming.

In summary, enabling environments are highly dependent on effective regulation which is underpinned by the rule of law, access to land and finance, social inclusion, and skills & innovation. In this pursuit, the values and objectives of agroecology have a lot to offer.

- **Modulating incentives.** Examples of incentives which drive markets consist of revenue perspectives for producers and sellers, access to resources/raw materials for producers, good reputation for sellers, quality and affordability for consumers, etc. These have to be fully considered in market and food systems analyses. As far as these various incentives can be held in equilibrium and aligned with environmental sustainability, markets have good perspectives of developing positively. The various incentives can be modulated by the likes of competition promotion (e.g., through antitrust legislation), subsidies, taxes, minimum pricing, labelling, certification or participatory guarantee systems, standards & monitoring coupled with penalty mechanisms (e.g., fines), consumer information & education, etc.
- **Tipping points.** Market systems are fundamentally driven by behavioural patterns, which can be subject to change. Systems are often resistant to change, but until certain "tipping points" are reached after which mass-adoption of new practices takes place, thus shifting behavioural patterns and

disrupting markets, sometimes in unforeseen ways. Tipping points are often not reached due to behavioural inertia or because a certain range of products are not automatically economical. Regulators can use a number of the levers mentioned above to push market system behaviour towards a tipping point. Two notable levers are venture capital and blended financing, which underline the importance of financial services for developing sustainable food systems. Strong financial services linked to good regulation help market participants experiment with new product ranges.

- **Anticipating winners and losers of change.** Programmes which aim to introduce changes to markets and improve enabling environments must not only undertake an in-depth analysis of markets, but also investigate the broader political economy around markets, and factor in that change will produce winners and losers who will often respond in accordance with the protection of their interests. Anticipation of these will allow to address the push-back responses (e.g., through compensation measures, or protective barriers).
- **Consumer agency.** Consumers have an important role in market systems, but are disparate and often not collectively aware of their power. Consumers are beholden to their food environments which channel nutritional choices that are often exercised unconsciously. However, this can be changed through public discussion, awareness raising and demanding accountability, consumer advocacy and consumer association that allow consumers to consciously shape the demand and change their food environments, influencing the markets by impacting the supply through shorter supply chains [nutrition governance].
- **Working group insights.** Some notable insights from the five working groups:
  - **Producer agency.** Well-regulated markets enable farmers to make choices, they enable products and standards to gradually increase in standard through certification and traceability of provenance, they encourage innovation
  - **Consumers' options & behaviour.** Consumers need to become more aware of their agency. Here, authorities and consumer organisations play an important role in terms of raising awareness, providing information and demanding accountability (e.g. through advertising regulation, labelling, "naming and shaming", discussing social norms, conducting real-cost analysis, etc.). Retailers need to be encouraged to provide the produce necessary for healthy diets. Ideally producers and consumers are reconnected through a process of localisation – here again, retailers play a decisive role.
  - **Rural-urban linkages.** There is a need to recognise the continuum-contagium of rural-peri-urban-urban landscapes and the food systems that connect them. This entails undertaking specific investments in rural areas and the improvement of consumer awareness within cities. It also means connecting producers to consumers and ensuring an efficient flow of food in one direction and organic waste management in the other. In a bid to improve urban nutrition, other possible measures are the production of highly-nutrient urban fresh foods.
  - **Financing and impact investment.** A diversity of availability of instruments, digital access and crucial support service coupled with independent sources of advice are critical. Additionally, a strong banking system and access to credit is important to investors. Connected to this is the importance of technical/financial advice and derisking mechanisms for strategic investments, which are directed towards building the overall vision of a sustainable food system, and particularly improve conditions for localised investments. Here partnerships with the private sector will be important.
  - **Managing the commons.** Local stewardship of land and other natural resources is important. The importance of the commons can be highlighted by assigning an asset value to them which is based on their long-term economic value if used sustainably versus short-term free-for-all plundering.

## Follow-up / Next steps

- Taking a systems approach, invoke more discussion on the nature of enabling environments and what this can mean in different market settings.
- Investigate how various measures can be better aligned to one another in order to strengthen and accelerate the positive transformation of local food systems, which also implies ensuring policy coherence – and what the sensible geographical boundaries are for any given food system.
- From impact perspective, improve visibility and importance to establish local food systems by bringing consumers closer to producers and service providers (incl. seed systems) through shorter supply chains.
- Recognising that financial services are crucial to developing sustainable food systems, improve the access of a wider range of beneficiaries to these services more
- Continue to advocate for and seek to facilitate the capitalisation of SDC and partners in terms of systems thinking and in an approach which is oriented towards food systems.

## Related resources / Links

- Examples of projects:
  - InovAgro – Innovations for Agribusiness, <https://beamexchange.org/practice/programme-index/278/>
  - Agricultural Marketing Systems Development Programme – IFAD project in Tanzania, <https://www.ifad.org/en/web/operations/-/project/1100001166>
  - Making Markets work for the poor – SDC project (now closed):
    - Synthesis paper of the approach, <https://www.eda.admin.ch/deza/en/home/sdc/publications.html/content/publikationen/en/deza/diverse-publikationen/synthese-de-la-demarche-m4p>
    - Focus article in RURAL21, [https://www.rural21.com/fileadmin/downloads/2016/en-04/rural2016\\_04-S30-32.pdf](https://www.rural21.com/fileadmin/downloads/2016/en-04/rural2016_04-S30-32.pdf)
- Engaging with the private sector – SDC handbook, [https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/deza/en/documents/die-deza/strategie/Handbook\\_PSE\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/deza/en/documents/die-deza/strategie/Handbook_PSE_EN.pdf)



# Nutrition

## Nutrition and healthy diets

*“We’re not talking about feeding the world,  
we’re talking about nourishing the world.”*

Lynnette Neufeld

<b>Speakers</b>	<i>Lynnette Neufeld, Director of Food and Nutrition Division, FAO</i>
<b>Working group facilitators</b>	<i>Fatima Hachem , FAO</i> <i>Bridget Holmes, FAO</i> <i>Diana Carter, FAO</i> <i>Wendy Gonzales, GAIN</i> <i>Helen Prytherch, Swiss TPH</i> <i>Aimée Umurungi, SCO Rwanda</i>
<b>Moderator</b>	<i>Alessandra Roversi, SDC Bern</i>
<b>Rapporteur</b>	<i>Bulisani Lloyd Ncube, Swiss Cooperation Office in Zimbabwe</i>

### About this session

Building on the previous sessions, this third priority theme looked at food systems from the outcome perspective of nutrition and healthy diets. The keynote speaker introduced the recently renewed concept of what a healthy diet is and how some food systems interventions and policies can contribute to tackle all forms of malnutrition and deliver better health outcomes while reducing environmental impact and contributing to climate change mitigation.

A working-group session introduced seven concrete tools to design more impactful nutrition-sensitive programmes: food-based dietary guidelines (FBDG) to guide food and nutrition, health, agriculture and nutrition education policies and programmes; data tracking tools to measure and analyse malnutrition and diet quality to inform better decision-making; e-learning and training modules tools for decision-makers to mainstream nutrition through multi-sectorial policies and programmes; how to set up large-scale advocacy and communication campaigns engaging adolescent and youth to choose more nutritious food; opportunities and challenges of multi-stakeholder and multi-sectorial food systems governance platforms at municipal / city levels (i.e., food policy council); how to empower communities to change diets by encouraging adoption of agro-biodiversity (behavioural change, triggering understanding and special focus on intra-household gender relations); integrated approach of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive actions against chronic malnutrition.

## Insights and key takeaways

- **If we are what we eat, then we're in trouble.** Unhealthy diets are the common cause of all forms of malnutrition. The world is off track to meet most of the globally-agreed nutrition goals, specifically reducing low birthweight, stunting, wasting, and overweight. Globally aggregated data masks the fact that enormous issues of inequalities in all world regions persist, but also, that some regions are more badly affected than others.
- **Things are not really improving.** 1.6 billion women and pre-school aged children are deficient in one or more vitamins and minerals (affecting most countries including high income). Indeed, there has been no tangible progress on anaemia reduction in the past 10 years, and indeed reversal has been seen in some areas (e.g. women of reproductive age). Meanwhile, obesity has continued to increase at a global scale, in some cases affecting more than 40% of the adult population, notably in countries with emerging markets.
- **Data and skills are lacking.** Few countries have quantitative data at national level on nutrition and diets. Many surveys are old, highly variable methods of collecting data and analysis lead to inconsistent and non-comparable reporting. Adolescents are a particular age group which is insufficiently covered. Knowing what we know about the importance of diets, it may appear surprising that healthy diets and nutrition are central components in all food-system-based action. The major impediments to doing more in this respect are insufficient capacity and skills (to embed nutrition actions), inconsistent messaging (media and among nutrition experts), and the difficulty to obtain consistent and reliable data to feed into the decision-making.
- **The essence of a healthy diet.** There is no received consensus on what a healthy diet consists of, but in general terms, it would be governed by the principles of Adequacy; Balance; Diversity; Moderation. Diets remain highly contextual, being influenced by the “5 A factors” (availability, accessibility, affordability, acceptability/preferences, and agency), culture, traditions, religion, etc. Going back from nutritional outcomes, there are immediate determinants (e.g., diets and care), themselves caused by underlying determinants (e.g., food, practices and services), which in turn are shaped by enabling determinants (e.g., governance).
- **The pursuit of a healthy diet requires a food-systems approach.** Demand- and supply-focused actions are critical for better dietary choices (informing about and respecting the rich traditions and diversity of dietary patterns that are or can be used to contribute to healthy food choices) and better production systems (including environmental sustainability and food safety), and must be underpinned by effective policy and governance (addressing contextual realities at macro and micro levels). In this respect, the quest for healthy diets must be pursued across the entirety of food systems, and not, as commonly assumed, only from the consumption end.
- **Nutrition-specific vs. nutrition-sensitive.** Nutrition-specific interventions are those which address immediate and/or specific causes of nutrition (i.e., dietary intake and noncommunicable diseases, which are largely addressed by the health sector). Nutrition-sensitive interventions are those that address underlying causes of malnutrition (such as diversifying agriculture for a richer and more varied nutrient intake, improving market access for certain producers and consumer groups, looking at the wider food system environment, etc.).

## Follow-up / Next steps

- Use the holistic food systems approach to think about the question of healthy diets (as a major food systems outcome) across the full range of food-systems activities rather than only in terms of consumers.
- Design projects in recognition that food choices are highly personal & culturally conditioned, and that it is important to meet people where they are on these issues in an effort to understand their cultural, social, economic and environmental context.



## Related resources / Links

- UN (2022) 'Stakeholder mapping' – SUN Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships toolkit, available at: <https://msptoolkit.scalingupnutrition.org/topic/stakeholder-mapping>
- "Data collection and analysis tools for nutrition and food security", CFS High-Level Panel of Experts' Report 17, Sept. 2022 - <https://www.fao.org/3/cc1865en/cc1865en.pdf>
- A global repository of around 100 dietary guidelines from the different regions <https://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-based-dietary-guidelines>
- FAO's Guiding principles on Sustainable Healthy Diets: <https://www.fao.org/3/ca6640en/ca6640en.pdf>
- Literature:
  - Bennett, S., Glandon, D. and Rasanathan, K. (2018) 'Governing multisectoral action for health in low-income and middle-income countries: unpacking the problem and rising to the challenge', BMJ Global Health, 3(Suppl 4), <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjgh-2018-000880>
  - Branca, F., Lartey, A., Oenema, S., Aguayo, V., Stordalen, G. A., Richardson, R., & Afshin, A. (2019). Transforming the food system to fight non-communicable diseases. Bmj, 364. <https://www.bmj.com/content/364/bmj.l296>
  - Brouwer, H., Woodhill, J., Hemmati, M., Verhoosel, K., & van Vugt, S. (2019). The MSP guide: How to design and facilitate multi-stakeholder partnerships. Practical Action <https://edepot.wur.nl/543151>
- Tools introduced in the various working groups:
  - E-Learning modules on nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems
    - Nutrition, food security and livelihoods. Basic concepts <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=194>
    - How to conduct a nutrition situation analysis <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=393>
    - Improving nutrition through agriculture and food systems <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=307>
    - Design and monitor nutrition-sensitive agriculture and food systems programmes <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=603>
    - Agrifood system pathways to healthy diets: A stepwise approach <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=976>
    - Sustainable Food Value Chains for Nutrition <https://elearning.fao.org/course/view.php?id=566>
  - FAO's Food-based dietary guidelines, <https://www.fao.org/nutrition/education/food-based-dietary-guidelines>
  - FAO/WHO Global Individual Food consumption data Tool (GIFT), <https://www.fao.org/gift-individual-food-consumption/en/>
  - FAO's Communication handbook and toolkit, <https://www.fao.org/3/ca5472en/ca5472en.pdf>
- Projects:
  - Nutrition in City Ecosystems (NICE)
    - project factsheet: [https://nice.ethz.ch/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/NICE\\_Project\\_Factsheet-2023.pdf](https://nice.ethz.ch/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/NICE_Project_Factsheet-2023.pdf)
    - Paper on "Increasing the demand for nutritious and agroecologically produced foods": [https://nice.ethz.ch/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/NICE\\_O3\\_Rwanda\\_demandcreation\\_leaflet\\_2023\\_FINAL.pdf](https://nice.ethz.ch/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/NICE_O3_Rwanda_demandcreation_leaflet_2023_FINAL.pdf)
  - Global Diet Quality Project, and its set of tools: <https://www.dietquality.org/>
- Coalition of Action on Healthy Diets from Sustainable Food Systems for Children and All (HDSFS), <https://www.unnutrition.org/coalition-action-healthy-diets-sustainable-food-systems-children-and-all-hdsfs>



# Humanitarian- Development Nexus

## Building resilience

*“It’s the context that drives the answer, not the institutions.”*

Volli Carucci

*“We don’t want your theories of change; we want practices of change.”*

Country Minister

<b>Speakers</b>	<i>Volli Carucci, Director Resilience &amp; Food Systems, WFP Gianluca Ferrera, Senior Programme Policy Advisor, WFP Luca Russo, Team Leader, Office of Emergency and Resilience, FAO Giampiero Mucci, FAO</i>
<b>Moderator</b>	<i>Riff Fullan, Helvetas</i>
<b>Rapporteur</b>	<i>Patrik Aus der Au, Liechtensteinischer Entwicklungsdienst (LED)</i>

### About this session

The linear progression of relief through recovery to development and growth is no longer a reality, as multiple crises can build on each other, or happen sequentially. The line between humanitarian assistance and development cooperation has therefore gradually been blurring, particularly in fragile contexts and protracted crises, the two approaches must be undertaken concurrently, and linked to one another. The objective of this session was for participants to hear more about the work that is being performed at the UN Rome-Based Agencies on the basis of practical experience and programming. Set in WFP’s Auditorium, subsequent presentations explored how the often-linear problem-solving approaches taken in emergency assistance might be extended to include a systems approach to context analysis as a preparatory step to enabling food systems recovery and transformation. A major conceptual vehicle for this is building the resilience of individuals, households and communities.

FAO and WFP presented how the two approaches - humanitarian assistance and development cooperation - are taken into account in practice and programming. The focus was on how to make humanitarian interventions more systemic, integrating the two approaches to build more resilient food systems capable of coping with often protracted crises. Volli Carucci (WFP), Luca Russo (FAO) and Giampiero Mucci (FAO) presented how they are increasingly basing their interventions on an understanding of the context and how they aim to strengthen their cooperation in the humanitarian-development nexus.

## Insights and key takeaways

- **Humanitarian Aid is drawing more financial resources from donors than development.** Only 4% of humanitarian assistance is spent on supporting agricultural livelihoods; more emphasis on working with farmers is needed. The recent increase of needs has led to a situation in which funding for humanitarian assistance has far outstripped funding for development. This calls for greater fluidity between the two.
- **Bringing the food systems approach into humanitarian and fragile contexts.** The underlying conceptual challenge is to introduce the holistic and longer-term endeavour of improving food systems in humanitarian contexts, where emergency assistance is seen as an immediate logistical intervention with relatively little concern for the contextual structures in which this is taking place. Particularly in protracted crisis situations, there is the opportunity – and the need – to consider how the long-term structures for food security can be improved, often without having the legal and financial regulatory framework that stronger States have. This is a particular challenge, as it is left to food systems actors to self-regulate. One promising avenue of exploration is that of resilience. It is here where emergency assistance and longer-term planning can meet, and it is here where food systems thinking can be applied. This also entails a mindset in how assistance is administered, and with it, the need to tackle the four "curses" of scattered, siloed, short-term, and small-scale interventions:
  - Convergence, not scattered activities → Integrated packages and concentrated interventions which are tailored to the context
  - Scale, not small projects → Seek "high-impact interventions" to be complemented by partners
  - Community owned, not externally motivated → government and community participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of programme
  - Partnership focussed, not siloed, uncoordinated actions → early engagement with dedicated resources for multiple years
  - Resilient food system to reduce future humanitarian needs → identify priority actions that can support communities today while building the enablers of future food security
- **Localisation, but with broader cooperation.** The narrative on relations with countries is changing: patience with Western paternalism and top-down approaches is waning, while the demand for more horizontal cooperation is on the increase. This offers opportunities to work on more localised solutions and strengthen community resilience. However, at the operational level, arguably the opposite is taking place. Contextual complexity and the recognised need to provide more joined-up approaches are pushing donors and implementers in the direction of more inter-agency convergence and programmatic integration to increase the impact of assistance.
- **Thinking holistically as the first step to acting holistically – but everyone has to do it.** We cannot address root causes if we ignore key mega-issues and potential entry-points in the context of fragility. Different crises feed each other amidst structural causes, making it difficult to even isolate food systems from the broader context. This necessitates a shift of mindsets: The various links between fields must be appreciated by all as a first step to building a triple "HDP" agenda. By thinking in broad systemic terms, and not simply in chains of causality, it becomes easier to encourage all actors to link the dots.
- **Collaboration areas.** Collaboration areas for more resilient food systems might be focussed in three areas:
  - Mindset shifts: Global leadership for concomitant humanitarian-development action, advocacy and championing tangible actions for resilient food systems in fragile settings.
  - Tools development and technical support: Evidence-based action is key for larger interventions.
  - Capacity building: All stakeholders must receive context-specific training.
- **Linking and layering.** Important pursuits are factoring in environmental, social, economic and institutional considerations into value chains analysis and how these might change over time. Equally important is to layer economic and peace-building activities and promote dialogues. Youth and women need to be proactively considered – and represented in these dialogues. Interventions should also include low-hanging fruits such as a focus on post-harvest losses and the restoration/construction of suitable infrastructure and degraded land that will enhance the functionality of food systems.

### **Follow-up / Next steps**

- Based on this session, map out ways in which food systems thinking can be more conclusively introduced into work in fragile environments and how action can be coordinated between various actors.
- Explore and catalogue available measures for applying food systems thinking to work in fragile contexts and areas where regulatory frameworks are weak.

### **Related resources / Links**

- WFP's Contribution to Resilient Systems in Vulnerable Shock-prone Settings: [https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Agriculture-and-Food-Security/news/F2F%20Rome%202023%20%20All%20slides/Resilient%20Food%20Systems%20Framework\\_LV\\_NOV2022.pdf](https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Agriculture-and-Food-Security/news/F2F%20Rome%202023%20%20All%20slides/Resilient%20Food%20Systems%20Framework_LV_NOV2022.pdf)
- Evidence from WFP's Integrated Resilience Programme in the Sahel – 2023: <https://www.wfp.org/publications/evidence-wfps-integrated-resilience-programme-sahel-2023>
- The IPC Acute Food Insecurity (IPC AFI) classification: <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipcinfo-website/ipc-overview-and-classification-system/ipc-acute-food-insecurity-classification/en/>
- FAO's Guidelines for Developing sustainable and resilient agrifood value chains in conflict-prone and conflict-affected contexts: <https://www.fao.org/3/cc6662en/cc6662en.pdf>



# Youth

## Main Session & Consolidation

*“Youth are the leaders of today, not just the leaders of tomorrow.”*

Genna Tesdall

<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Pio Wennubst, former Swiss Permanent Representative to UN Organisations in Rome Genna Tesdall, Director of Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD)</i>
<i>Moderator</i>	<i>Riff Fullan, Helvetas Zurich</i>
<i>Rapporteur</i>	<i>Marion Reichenbach, Liechtensteinischer Entwicklungsdienst (LED)</i>

### About these sessions

The first session explored the dynamics around the promotion of youth in food systems through the lens of multilateral processes, but also considered how policy documents might be used to bring together disparate actors and enhance operational coherence in terms of outcome statements and communication.

It focussed on why and how youth participation should be encouraged and enabled across food systems and even beyond. Pio Wennubst, speaking first, highlighted that transforming food systems is a highly political act due to its divisive nature, but a task for which youth are particularly suited because they have the political will and unifying vision. Genna Tesdall, speaking next, emphasised that for sustainable youth engagement to take place, support needs to be provided to four areas of intervention, namely (1) building networks, (2) giving a voice in policy, (3) providing knowledge and (4) generating resources. She concluded that working with youth can seem daunting, but encouraged the participants to have the courage to do so.

In the subsequent consolidation session, it was found that youth are still not being systematically considered in most projects, and that there is still a fundamental need to understand the needs and ambitions of young people better and to collect data in a disaggregated way in order to mainstream Youth in food systems transformation.

### Insights and key takeaways

- **“Youth” is a fluid concept.** About 16% of the world population fall into the youth segment. Youth are significant in the demographics of displaced people, they are active in social movements, and they have the power to influence family dietary decisions. Youth are hard to define because they are a highly heterogenous and dynamic group, and various countries have different definitions for the age bracket, rendering an age definition useless at a global level. Rather, “youth” or “young people” should be seen in relational terms.
- **The need for more youth-specific data.** There is a lack of data on Youth and especially appropriate metrics to understand who they are and what they want. Nevertheless, transforming food systems is already a reality in the making, in part driven by young people.
- **Interventions.** 4 areas of intervention when working with Youth:

- Network e.g., link organisations and individuals, to help building a momentum, increasing their voice and opportunities to learn from each other, avoid tokenistic representation, create social capital
- Knowledge, e.g., provide easy access to knowledge. This supports the development of innovative practices, strengthens decision-making and leadership capacities, and helps connect various likeminded actors across networks; digitalisation represents a unique opportunity to transform food systems AND integrate Youth.
- Policy e.g., measures to overcome structural barriers to youth inclusion such as ensuring the voice of young people in decision-making bodies and youth inclusion in organisations, including their own capacities to engage in policy and advocacy.
- Resources e.g., improved access to productive resources such as land and water, or access to education, fair remuneration, financial services.

### **Follow-up / Next steps**

- Collect disaggregated data and invest resources to mainstreaming Gender and Youth
- Put it into practice! For example:
  - Include young people in organisational committees;
  - Co-author a knowledge product with young professionals;
  - Offer paid internships.

### **Related resources / Links**

- Youth and Food Systems Transformation:  
<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsufs.2020.00101/full>
- Bites of Transfoodmation and its manifesto:  
<https://transfoodmation.com/bites-of-transfoodmation/manifesto/>
- HLPE - Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems  
<https://www.fao.org/3/cb5464en/cb5464en.pdf>
- CFS Policy Recommendations on Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition:  
[https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs2122/Youth/CFS\\_Policy\\_Recs\\_Youth\\_Final\\_Agreed\\_Version\\_July2022.pdf](https://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/cfs/Docs2122/Youth/CFS_Policy_Recs_Youth_Final_Agreed_Version_July2022.pdf)



# Gender Consolidation

*“Addressing the gender issue should include men in the debate.”*

Nicole Harari

<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Nicole Harari, Executive management, World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT)</i>
<i>Moderator</i>	<i>Riff Fullan, Helvetas</i>
<i>Rapporteur</i>	<i>Marion Reichenbach, LED</i>

## About this session

While there was no specific session focussing on women throughout the first two topical days, gender and youth issues were being tracked throughout. The idea behind this third-day session was to compile the various gender-related elements which had come up during the week, and provide space for consideration of the role of women and their positioning in food systems transformation and strengthening.

While there is undeniably an increase in gender sensitivity, Nicole Harari clearly brought to the forefront that the inclusion of women had not been prominent consideration in the course of the previous two days, indicating that empowering women remains a challenge. Similarly, the evidence-base of how to achieve gender equity is now very broad, but there is also the need for greater resolve in seeing the implemented by investing financial and political resources in gender mainstreaming rather than paying lip service to it.

## Insights and key takeaways

- **Recognising the needs.** Agrifood systems are a major employer of women globally and constitute a more important source of livelihood for women than for men in many countries. Empowering women and closing gender gaps in agrifood systems thus enhances the well-being of women and of their households, helping to reduce hunger, boost incomes and strengthen resilience.
- **Improving gender mainstreaming.** Addressing gender issues implies:
  - being aware of gender-sensitive language – it all starts with a change of mindsets, and with sensitivity and awareness of what this entails in different cultures;
  - putting in place proper gender-specific data collection and analysis for project design and impact monitoring, it being necessary to regularly revise the assumptions in changing contexts and underlying power structures;
  - ensuring equal access to and utilisation of goods and services, which includes access to land, natural resources, financial services, etc.;
  - ensuring that women and men are equally involved in decision-making – For sustainable change, addressing the gender issue should include men in the debate, with the need of identifying men (& boys) who can champion change.



- designing programmes such that equal treatment of men and women is an integral part of setting processes, that women have safe spaces for build joint positions, express needs and take action. However, encouraging women’s further engagement should not increase their burden – unintended negative direct or indirect outcomes should be screened for or monitored.
- **Addressing the different scales:** Interventions must be designed to close gender inequalities and empower women and, when possible, should use transformative approaches at community and national level to address discriminatory gender norms and attitudes, and set in place an enabling regulatory environment.

### **Follow-up / Next steps**

- In programming be mindful that an inclusive approach is essential to tackling the multidimensional and interrelated challenges that men and women face.
- For better evidence to feed into decision-making and shape targeted interventions, invest early on in identifying appropriate indicators and proper data-gathering procedures, as the collection and use of high-quality data, disaggregated by sex, age and other forms of social and economic differentiation, and the implementation of gender research and analysis are key for effectively monitoring, evaluating and accelerating progress on gender equality in agrifood systems.
- Further concrete suggestions: train staff member in gender sensitivity, cultivate positive gender relationships in project teams, seek to understand typical household dynamics in host culture.

### **Related resources / Links**

- FAO’s “Status of women in agrifood systems”, 2023:  
<https://www.fao.org/3/CC5060EN/online/status-women-agrifood-systems-2023/chapter1.html>



# The life & work of the network

## Who we are & who we should become

*Rapporteurs*

*Bruce Campbell, SDC Bern  
Stéphanie Piers, SDC Bern*

### About this session

This session was designed to pick up from participants how they perceive the network and how it could be improved.

As a listening exercise it was very useful for the network focal points, as it provided some guidance on how current activities have resonated with the network, and it provided a plethora of interesting ideas for the future. In response, some of the current network offerings and services will be altered and/or refined, and a number of new ideas will be taken into the 2024 programme.

However, a network is only as strong as its members. The focal points are happy and eager to drive various activities, but the members must also step forward to provide additional content, suggest activities, share lessons learnt or raise common challenges which can be worked through together.

### Feedback on current offerings

At the beginning of the session, participants were requested to give their appraisal of current activities offered by the network on a scale of 1 to 5, from “not appealing at all” to “very appealing”. These are the results and our interpretation.

Best placed was the **Face-to-face**, which at 4.8 from a theoretical 5 scored very high. Going forward, it will be difficult to stage global F2Fs, but they should be pursued at a regional level.

**Thoughts for Food** was well received, with an overall score of 3.9. This finding suggests that the series should be continued into 2024. However, on the basis of discussion, it would be good to give it a little more variation.

The **Food Systems Learning Journey** (also 3.9) was well received, expressing a certain approval of incremental knowledge building. Such processes are however very resources-intensive.

**Stand-alone webinars** (3.7) are well-appreciated. The F2F discussion will influence how these are set up and what topics could be chosen in 2024.

The **Newsletter** had a middling reception at 3.3, suggesting that it has something to offer, but that there is also room for improving it.

The **CUG system** (3.0) and the **Shareweb/Website** (2.8) did not do well. Both the CUG system and the Shareweb will undergo some substantial changes in the course of 2024, as it is moved to a new platform, aligning to a large extent to a common FDFA format, which may bring some improvements but will also limit the scope for change.

## Resulting priorities to be taken forward by the A+FS Network Focal Point Team

The following six areas of activity will be further developed by the A+FS Network Focal Point Team. Of course, network members who would like to become involved, or supply ideas are highly welcome to participate.

1. **Establish thematic communities of practice called “focus areas”.** The F2F has helped us identify a number of key thematic areas which are of particular potential interest to network members and which SDC would like to concentrate on. These will be called “focus areas”, each being managed by a convener who will coordinate activities or meetings taking place under the thematic umbrella of the respective focus area. We aim to launch these in the first half of 2024.
2. **Make the A+FS Network platform more user-friendly.** The platform is currently being migrated to a new platform based on LivingDocs rather than Sharepoint. The new platform will offer better object management and more flexibility in presentation. At the same time, we are seeking a presentational coherence with other SDC thematic networks. All in all, we hope to generate a better user experience once launched and continue to improve it in the months thereafter. With migration now under way, this is planned for the first half of 2024.
3. **Create a guidance framework.** With the experience of the Food Systems Learning Journey and the knowledge being produced by many other international workstreams over the course of the period since the UN Food Systems Summit, and building on the conversations of the F2F, it is now time to bring together this knowledge in a single place which will present SDC’s understanding of food systems and related programming. It will also entail a number of how-to guidance documents. The resulting knowledge hub will be located online and attached to the A+FS Network’s new platform by the end of 2024.
4. **Special events.** The network will continue to look out for important contemporary topics and discuss them. Thoughts for Food will be continued into 2024, and we will also be developing other learning series. Of course, the content of the network is also driven by network members, both within and outside SDC. We are happy to pick up good thematic proposals and content and make them available to the community in an appropriate form.
5. **Cross-thematic events and processes.** Working across thematic boundaries was already a very central component of the A+FS Network’s recent Food Systems Learning Journey. While there was less emphasis on these interdisciplinary linkages during the F2F, going forward, they will continue to play an ever-greater role. Cooperation with other SDC networks will be important, especially with those in the so-called Cluster Green (i.e. Water and Climate-DRR-Environment). There is at least one joint learning journey in the works for 2024 on biodiversity and the Rio Conventions, and more joint events will emerge, particularly in the second half of 2024.
6. **Working with young leaders and the private sector.** We would like to move questions of both private sector participation and the agency of young people with the food sector more clearly to the centre of our work. The topics will emerge in our focus areas and going from there, we will target events in the second half of 2024.

## Ideas for the future

In the course of the session, ideas for future network activities were collected using a Menti. Here below these have been ordered by category, with additional columns for the initial response from the focal points, and suggested lead (FP = Network focal points Bruce Campbell & Stephanie Piers, NM = any Network member interested, or TBD = to be discussed at a later stage).

Networking		Who
Aperos	We would encourage informal in-person network meets and even facilitate them. Anyone interested in holding a reception, dinner or lunch, let us know! These we would be happy to advertise. For members within Switzerland, this is something we may occasionally try to organise ourselves as in-person gatherings going forward.	NM: A network member, with support of the focal points
Membership mapping and matchmaking / Link partners that do similar work / Mentoring pairing / Peer exchanges	One of the things we would like to do is build a database with the expertise of network members. However, this is more difficult than it sounds for current technical and data protection reasons. However, once the network platform has been migrated later in 2024, we would like to reassess the scope for this, considering the strong interest.	FP: Deferred until 2025
Sharing favourite food dishes	This is a proposal of particularly good taste – which we had also considered! We could either add a page to our website or organise mouth-watering short webinars, to highlight receipts from all parts of the world. As we have a lot to do in the first half of 2024, let's keep it on the back burner for now, but certainly take it out again as soon as the appetite for it grows.	TBD: If a network member comes forward, focal points will initiate this
Include more young people	This would be more than welcome. If sufficient interest is voiced, we would be happy to explore the possibility to start a youth chapter, potentially linked to YPARD.	TBD: Please mail the focal points to signal interest!
Thematic practice		Who
Establish thematic communities of practice (or "hub of experts")	This is something we had in the past (sort of), and something we would like to start again in the future. In fact, the reflections of the F2F were an important milestone in this process. So, watch this space!	FP: Focal points will be developing this space
Design / co-creation of a network project	Another welcome idea. We currently do not have the capacity to initiate this, but if any network member would like to step forward with a basic idea, we are happy to support it.	NM: Network members who would like to prepare this contact the focal points!

Event with young leaders and the private sector	We try to host occasionally such events. As both the private sector and young people are important stakeholders in our work, we will certainly be picking up this idea. Here also, to anyone who has any names or suggestions, please share!	FP + NM: Focal points will be developing this space, but ideas/names from network members would make it so much easier. Please mail the focal points to propose speakers!
<b>Knowledge management</b>		<b>Who</b>
Book, or "article" club	If anyone would like to start such a club, we would be happy to give it space on our website and a slot in the newsletter!	NM: Network members who would like to prepare this contact the focal points!
Make A+FS platform more user-friendly	We fully agree! The current platform has technical limitations that we unfortunately cannot change. It will however be migrated to a new one in the course of 2024. Here again, certain parameters are set by the FDFA, but we do hope that it will be an improvement. Certainly, this will be one of our priorities in 2024, just as it was in 2022.	FP: The focal point team is working on the next generation of the platform.
Add Q&A function within the network	We would like the communities of practice to fulfil this to some degree, and in the near future we would like to start rolling out an operational guidance platform of some sort, which might address this idea.	FP: The focal point team will address this in the process of a technical guidance framework which is to be developed in 2024
Showcase stories from the field / Sharing more frequently about work on the ground, including success stories	This we would love to do. In fact, we have Thoughts for Food, as one possible platform to do just that. Anyone with a good story or project you would like to share, please get in touch with us!	NM + FP: Please contact the focal points with ideas!
<b>Events</b>		<b>Who</b>
Excursions (within CH)	As we are almost exclusively focussed on activities outside Switzerland, we are not in a position to give this idea a high priority. However, if anyone in the network would be willing to organise such an excursion, we would be delighted to advertise for it.	NM: Network members who would like to prepare an excursion, please contact the focal points!
Organise (virtual) field visits	This is something we could do as a network. If anyone is interested in organising such a visit, we would be delighted to host it, advertise it and provide some technical support (as far as we can remotely).	NM: Network members who would like to take us on a virtual field excursion, please contact the focal points!
Have in-person workshops focussed on a specific topic /	We would like to pursue the possibility of organising future F2F at a regional level, or creating more space for network members to meet in Switzerland. These might be compounded	FP: Focal points will be reviewing opportunities in the next months, but if interest is signalled by network

More F2F events, either in Switzerland or elsewhere	with regional or national events of other SDC networks.	members for their region, this could accelerate things.
Carry out events with other SDC networks	Yes, and this we are already doing. On the one hand, the FSLJ was heavily connected to other networks, and the recent advent series on biodiversity was comanaged with our colleague from Water and Climate/DRR/Environment networks Going forward, we plan to strengthen this approach, particularly between the 3 Cluster Green networks (= us, Water, and CDE), and the Health network for the angle on healthy people.	FP: The focal point team is working on such events.
Mess-up nights	This is an interesting idea (and thank you for using the politer term for the event!). Indeed, we often learn more from our mistakes than our successes, but those can be more difficult or sensitive to share. It might be good to organise a mess-up night (or Brown-Bag Lunch BBL, depending where you are in the world) at some point in 2024. However, we would need people who would be willing to share examples. Obviously, we would not record the event, and it would be strict Chatham House rules.	FP + NM: Anyone who is interested in contributing to a “mess-up night”, please contact the focal points!
A healthy and sustainable food week	As we strengthen our work on health and nutrition, this might become interesting. Let us see what we can work out with in collaboration with the health network.	TBD. The focal point team will keep this in mind.
Game night (based around topics)	This is a fun idea. Currently, we don't have the resources to organise one and fill it with content, but if anyone does, we would be happy to provide the platform and logistical support.	NM: Network members who would like to prepare this contact the focal points!

## Summative conclusions - What the ultimate takeaways are

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*“Let's be confusiastic together, i.e. both enthusiastic and confused about food system transformation, but decrease our confusion by discussing and working together!”*

Pio Wennubst

### **Conclusion 1: Agroecology is a powerful approach for thinking – and acting – holistically on food systems at a local scale and should be the primary entry point**

- With the economic and social wellbeing of smallholders and ecological sustainability being at the heart of SDC Food Systems Section's programmatic objectives, agroecology is becoming the umbrella approach and major vehicle for working on food systems. Agroecology offers a shift from simple natural resources approach to wider societal/cultural/governance issues, linking well to local markets, putting communities at the centre of its concerns, and smallholders at the centre of farming choices.
- Agroecological programming should always have the entire food system in view. Through its systemic lens, agroecology is an interesting compass to steer transformation towards sustainable, healthy, inclusive, equitable and resilient food systems. The transformation and upscaling of agroecological practices requires changes that affect not only the management of farms, but also the production and consumption patterns at the food system level, the connectivity to the markets, the institutional framework conditions including policy coherence, the financial mechanisms, and the ways in which we measure the performance of agricultural and food systems.
- Although a lot of evidence exists identifying the benefits and opportunities of agroecology, more work needs to be done to address the challenges and barriers, among which: enhancing education & practical knowledge, devoting more funding for agroecology research and practice including in the sector of entrepreneurship, ensuring policy coherence and enabling policies for agroecology, and strengthen communication and partnerships.

### **Conclusion 2: Characterising and creating enabling environments for functioning food systems goes through addressing markets**

- Markets are at the core of food systems, and by extension have to be a central consideration in any transformational endeavour. Markets are where incentives are aligned and transactions take place. The rules of the market, set by a wide array of factors, modulate these incentives. Taking a value-based approach at the start of any project is important, but also understanding and factoring in the incentives of market participants, who may not necessarily share the same values, is indispensable. Transformation is best reached by targeting the private sector and the consumers as the key agents of change.
- The so-called enabling environment sets the rules and standards for the many market participants all the way from producers to consumers. These set the benchmarks and boundary conditions for behaviour. Stating what an ideal enabling environment should do in any particular time is an important value-based start to a food system intervention. Working to move enabling environments in that direction, bearing in mind the incentives and interests of market participants is fundamental to charting a route to successfully changing market policies and rules. In doing so, we must bear in mind that behavioural patterns in markets (producers, consumers, authorities, etc.) can be stubbornly resistant to change below the threshold of so-called tipping points. An awareness of this can make market participants reluctant to try new approaches. To some degree, this might be overcome by a good analysis of what is feasible in a given context coupled by subsequent investments which are underpinned by de-risking mechanisms for those undertaking them.
- Achieving equitable access to information (product transparency, nutritional value, sustainable practices, prices, etc.) is central to well-functioning markets which also serve consumers and smaller enterprises.



**Conclusion 3: It's not just about calories: we need a greater awareness of the impact of nutrition on human wellbeing**

- The pursuit of food security has long been too focussed on producing sufficient calories, and the pursuit of nutritious and healthy diets has been neglected. Malnutrition, in all its forms, leads to huge costs - direct and indirect, economic and social and environmental - on individuals, families and nations. Notably, calorie-rich, but one-sided diets are storing up health problems which will saddle medium-income countries with huge economic and social burdens for many years to come. In many countries it would not be an understatement to speak of a nutritional emergency.
- Food systems programming tends to focus mostly on farmers and agriculture, while Consumers are often regarded as an inert entity. Instead, consumers should be regarded as a crucial stakeholder group in their respective food systems. More should be undertaken to identify and understand consumer behaviour and the environment they evolve in, and to work out strategies to give consumers greater agency.
- Promoting good dietary outcomes are very much related to the quest for better enabling environments, and as such becomes a whole-of-food-system and whole-of-society undertaking. Setting the right incentives for all market participants, and providing independent and trustworthy nutritional information/education to consumers – who are empowered to make choices through better and availability and affordability of food.

**Conclusion 4: Youth engagement must gain greater currency across our programmes and network activity, while gender mainstreaming must become more transformational**

- The transformation of food systems depends to a large extent on the ability of young people to innovate and disrupt the status quo in a guided and value-based way. Accordingly, the interests and needs of young people must be consciously integrated into cooperation programmes not simply as an additional service modality, but as a central pillar of the theory of change. Programme monitoring should seek to identify the roles and performances of young people as a distinct group of stakeholders, both as agents and beneficiaries.
- Similarly, besides recognising and promoting the agency of young people, the transformative potential of giving both men and women (as actors in their food systems, be they producers, consumers, or any agent in-between) equitable access to resources and decision-making will be key to building the enabling environments for incremental food systems transformation and better decision-making.

**Conclusion 5: Fragility and resilience – we have to be systemic in moving from the former to the latter**

- Working in fragile contexts still entails a detailed analysis of markets, actors, prevailing behaviours and incentives. However, there are fewer regulatory levers available to bring about change. This limits the options for developing better enabling environments. Conflict-sensitive programme management and interagency cooperation become eminently important. Institutional convergence, scaled projects supported by multiple donors and the ability to think beyond one's own project will be important to bringing about change. Agroecological approaches are as valid in fragile as they are in stable contexts.
- Building the resilience of communities will be crucial to exiting humanitarian situations, and the localised approach is one of the most promising conceptual anchor points for “doing food systems” in fragile contexts where institutions are weak. Agricultural methods too will require overhauling to withstand climate-related severe weather events. Planners cannot only respond to the needs and risks of today, but must anticipate the needs and risks a decade from now through good foresight planning.

## **Conclusion 6: The network has to move ahead**

- Building on the UN Food Systems Summit 2021, the network has since built momentum in terms of understanding food systems in their diversity and complexity at a global scale. It must now look at how to contribute to positive food systems transformation.
- With reference to the groundwork laid by the Food Systems Learning Journey and the F2F in 2024, the lines of further activity and enquiry could run along the following lines:
  - Affirming agroecology as the overriding vehicle for local food systems transformation and seeking to explore agroecological practice in these terms.
  - Focussing on the positive enabling environments and local markets that agroecology can contribute to, as this is where food system actors meet and work out their relationships.
  - Systematically embedding nutrition considerations into programming, both during interventions design and monitoring, as an important food systems and health outcome, with nutrition being a lens applied at any point in the food system, from the agricultural production and practices at the start of a food chain to the dietary needs the consumers.
  - Continuing to investigate how food systems thinking can be practiced effectively and to transformative effect in fragile contexts where regulatory levers are weak.

As ever, it will be about “choosing your battles”. The progress in these areas will depend on the people who wish to engage in these various spaces.

## Further information

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For further details about this event, please visit:

<https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Agriculture-and-Food-Security/news/Pages/f2f-outcomes.aspx>

Or contact us:

<https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Agriculture-and-Food-Security/about-us/contact>