

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Friday, 21 May 2021 15:00 GMT -10:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	Healthier Islands Through Sustainable Food Systems 2: Food as Medicine
CONVENED BY	Roella Foronda and Susan Mercado (Hawai'i Public Health Institute), Dexter Kishida (City and County of Honolulu), Christian Gloria (Department of Public Health, Hawai'i Pacific University)
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/6508/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	No borders

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

57

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

14

19-30

28

31-50

9

51-65

1

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

11 Male

45 Female

1 Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

2 Agriculture/crops

1 Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

1 Agro-forestry

Environment and ecology

Trade and commerce

13 Education

1 Communication

Food processing

1 Food retail, markets

Food industry

Financial Services

6 Health care

Nutrition

6 National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

7 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

Multi-national corporation

1 Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

11 Local Non-Governmental Organization

International Non-Governmental Organization

4 Indigenous People

19 Science and academia

Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

6 Government and national institution

Regional economic community

United Nations

International financial institution

2 Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

1 Consumer group

10 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

"Healthier Islands through Sustainable Food Systems: Food as Medicine" is the second of a two-part dialogue series organized by four partners: 1) Hawai'i Public Health Institute; 2) City and County of Honolulu- Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency; 3) Hawai'i Pacific University - Department of Public Health, and 4) University of Hawai'i at Mānoa - Native Hawaiian and Indigenous Health, Office of Public Health Studies. This core group consists of members representing different fields. These organizations made a commitment to participate in the UN Food Systems Summit through a memorandum of understanding and to build trust. Prior to the Independent Dialogues, a state-wide round table discussion was held on March 31, 2021 which was entitled "Our Health, Our Food Systems, Our Islands, Our People" with the intent to create a process for introducing the UN Food Systems Summit to Hawai'i. Through this initial event, the organizers developed a better understanding of the complexity of food systems and the need to accommodate a wide range of participants representing different sectors. Subsequently, the Independent Dialogues brought to the table participants working on governance, food systems, agriculture, aquaculture, culinary art, culture, indigenous and ancient knowledge and practice, among others. Participants in this second dialogue included resource persons from Hawai'i, New Zealand, Puerto Rico, Tonga and the Virgin Islands. To show respect to all those engaged, the core group reached out to participants and speakers on a personal basis and had conversations around the dialogue and its purpose. Inclusivity was one of the most important aspects of developing the dialogue topics and inviting participants.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The Independent Dialogues on "Healthier Islands through Sustainable Food Systems: Food as medicine" exemplifies acting with urgency as the organizers were able to mobilize speakers and participants in a short period of time. A briefing on the UN Food Systems Summit by the curator at the opening of the meeting, provided a context for the Independent Dialogue in relation to global challenges and action and commitment to the summit as a vehicle for engagement with all possible stakeholders, particularly stakeholders in island food systems. Participants in the dialogue reflected multisectoriality by including farmers, teachers, advocates, community champions, policy-makers, project managers, health professionals, lawyers, urban planners and indigenous peoples. Throughout the dialogue, participants were encouraged to share their thoughts and sentiments. Breakout groups were small, enabling more time for participants to share their views. This created a respectful environment where everyone's voices could be heard.

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

Participation in the global orientation and training for convenors, curators, and facilitators was very useful in appreciating the principles of engagement and the potential impact of linked and interconnected efforts on food systems change. Having a core group that represents different fields of expertise is extremely useful in identifying the right participants and speakers. Forward looking statements need to be agreed upon and framed in a way that encourages engagement of a wide range of stakeholders. The UNFSS dialogue manual was very helpful in the development of some of the framing questions that were used to focus the discussions. To create a respectful environment, it is critical that facilitators are prepared and trained to handle different situations during the dialogue. The use of a short video in the plenary enabled participants to grasp the complexity and far-reaching impacts of a food system. Sending out information to registrants prior to the dialogue session helped to inform participants prior for the event and prepare them for a productive event. Putting photographs of the speakers on the invitation is helpful. Given this was a global virtual setting, anticipating any technical challenges beforehand ensured smooth execution of the event.

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

Yes

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

Healthier islands through sustainable food systems seeks to underscore the convergence of food systems, public health and nutrition through the forward looking statement:

‘Food as medicine’, as a core strategy for healthier islands through sustainable food systems is a holistic approach to the prevention and control of non communicable diseases like diabetes and risk factors like hypertension and obesity --- as environmental modifications focus on food as a solution and not a cause of ill-health by ensuring that all people in all islands have access to healthier, affordable and locally produced and gathered food from sustainable resources.

Unhealthy diets are the leading risk factor for death in many countries of the world. The island populations of the world have the highest rates of noncommunicable disease (NCD), premature death and disability (e.g. strokes, amputations) from conditions like diabetes, hypertension and obesity. Among the underlying drivers of the NCD epidemic, unhealthy diets have the greatest contribution to risk for poor population health outcomes in islands. Overconsumption of unhealthy food is underpinned by food systems that make processed food (e.g. canned, packed, preserved) that are high in salt, sugar and trans fats as well as “fast food” -- convenient, inexpensive and easy to access. At the same time historical and structural drivers (e.g. colonization, militarization, urbanization) have displaced small and indigenous farmers and made production of local food from the land and sourced from the sea expensive and difficult to access. Westernization of the diet in islands is exacerbated by aggressive marketing of unhealthy food and easy availability of snacks and other food products that provide high caloric content but low nutritive value as well as an acquired taste for Western food that negates ancestral heritage and indigenous knowledge about "eating for health". This situation is related to trade policies, hence islands are in a dire situation where “We grow what we do not eat, and eat what we do not grow”.

Changing the narrative around the notion of health and the relationship of food systems to population health is of critical importance. We define “health” as not just what is physical, but it includes the mental, social and spiritual dimensions of being. “Eating for health” therefore, is about food that meets the nutritional needs of the body, but also reinforces the “connectedness” of our sustenance to the land, the sea and the seasons. “We are what we eat” - articulates a holistic view of culture and identity in relation to a holistic view of food. Access to “natural” or “ancestral food” is inextricably linked to healing and recovery, especially when one is “unwell”. Eating what is locally produced entails “being comfortable in our own skin” and intuitively leads to balance. In some Pacific islands, people are insulted when taught what to eat. Eating is a natural process and should not be taught. It is important to understand the “natural context” of eating a healthy diet or “healthy eating” as an interaction between human beings in a social and ecological environment where nourishment can come from what is grown and gathered in one’s surroundings.

There is a need to reassess the ecological resources for providing food within islands to include not just agriculture but aquaculture and the use of other resources like seaweed.

Re-educating families, schools and communities about the benefits of producing and consuming local food is an uphill battle in the face of aggressive marketing and advertising of processed food. Educational institutions play a big role in ensuring that the youth experience food production as a part of learning science and culture. Tourism, the hospitality sector and the culinary arts are stakeholders and partners in promoting local food. Community leadership in shifting consumption to healthier diets is key.

ACTION TRACKS

- Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
- Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
- Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
- Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

- Finance
- Innovation
- Human rights
- Women & Youth Empowerment
- Policy
- Data & Evidence
- Governance
- Trade-offs
- Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

Why we need to act urgently

Unhealthy diets and food insecurity are urgent and serious threats to health and survival to more than 63 million people who live on islands.. There are significant data gaps in knowledge about unhealthy diets and food insecurity in island populations. It has been difficult to characterize dietary intake in islands due to research biases in dietary assessment of locally consumed food. Islands have been excluded from the determination of the nutritive content of indigenous food. The US Dietary Guidelines do not contain commonly found food in islands (e.g. "ulu" (breadfruit), jackfruit, sugar apples, "Jacks" (small fish), cassava). The guidelines affect how health advice is given to patients, how institutions purchase food and design meal plans, and how families are fed during emergencies.

The Mediterranean diet and DASH have been cited as guidance. A Pacific food guide with 3 food groups - which is more typical of how Pacific Islanders think about the food: proteins, vitamins and minerals and staple food is available <http://manoa.hawaii.edu/ctahr/pacificfoodguide/index.php/about-the-guide/> However, this is not widely understood, adopted in a systematic way.

Community needs assessments on food security are needed in all islands to enable prioritization of groups at highest risk.

What we need to do together

Advocates for public health and sustainable island food systems of the world need to demand that research funds flow toward expanding the knowledge base on island diets and the assessment of the nutritive value of local produce. Otherwise, institutional procurement of food (e.g. in schools) will continue to be predominantly imported food items, creating a vicious cycle of dependence and preference for imported food.

To shift to healthier diets, communities need to be in charge. Decision-makers need to listen to communities and understand their challenges. Top down approaches alone are not effective. It is important to have a "together approach" - working from the ground up and from the top downward.

Restaurants and the food industry influence what people eat and many establishments are shifting to healthier menus. Chefs have a strategic role in popularization of locally grown products through satisfying dishes. Agro-tourism can be a strategy to stimulate local production of food.

Action is needed to counteract easy access to cheap and unhealthy snacks and excessive consumption of fast food. Policies that restrict access to unhealthy food might include zoning to regulate fast food locations, taxation and other fiscal measures that impact both on supply and demand.

How we will do it

Comprehensive approaches/strategies that engage multiple sectors (i.e. health, education, health insurance companies, nutrition, culinary art, hospitality, tourism, producers, retailers) are essential to changing consumption patterns.

A research network and centralized data center among island states, territories and jurisdictions is needed to identify and fill knowledge gaps that inhibit policy and programs for food equity

ACTION POINT: Establish a multi-centered research initiative involving all island food system stakeholders to assess nutritional content and pricing of local food as an urgent public health measure.

Preserve and transmit indigenous and ancestral knowledge and practice in food production by including this in the school curriculum and make it a requirement for graduation. Food production can be an effective way to teach science and culture in a practical way.

ACTION POINT: Prioritize the opening of funding tracks to support new educational programs for all youth on food production that links science and culture education.

Tourism and the hospitality sector can play a positive role in making healthier diets easier to access. Policies and campaigns to promote local produce can become part of tourism promotion.

ACTION POINT: Engage with the tourism sector at global, regional and local levels (e.g. hospitality sector, airlines) to market the local tastes and flavors of indigenous food as part of tourism promotion.

"Produce prescription" should be part of the standard of care, covered by health insurance other health financing modalities as a therapeutic model for the prevention, management and control of noncommunicable conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity.

ACTION POINT: Establish a global, national and regional network of public health institutions committed to developing guidance on the use of "produce prescription" as a non-pharmacological and community-based intervention that is universally available to communities at risk for NCDs.

The medical and public health sector should support advocacy for food sovereignty in all islands in order to achieve better population health outcomes, particularly among farming and fishing communities.

ACTION POINT: Create global, national and local coalitions of medical and public health practitioners that will champion transformation of food systems as a strategy to prevent and control NCDs and develop strategies to address the health and nutrition needs of farmers, fisherfolk and other producers.

Who the key actors are

Food distributors
Health workers who provide produce prescription
Political leaders
Chefs
Medical professionals
Consumer groups
News organizations and media
Community leaders
Cultural practitioners
Tourism sector and organizations
Researchers on aquaculture and seaweeds

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KEYWORDS

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| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environment and Climate |

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC

Health advocates should support food sovereignty of islands, as an intervention to address the epidemic of noncommunicable disease. New coalitions, alliances and networks of health professionals committed to food systems change would be a good indicator of progress

Give farmers back their land. Address colonization, militarization, land conversion and urban sprawl. Land ownership and access are difficult issues that require legislative and executive action as supported by communities. Good baseline indicators of marginalized farmers is necessary to set targets.

Support should be provided to small and indigenous farmers and fisherfolk by providing opportunities to expand production through financial and technical assistance. National, state and local policy and decision-makers have to move local food production higher in the political agenda and link it to health outcomes, preventable death and social costs.

Change the narrative around noncommunicable disease and instead of blaming individuals, address the underlying causes of health disparities, such as the food system as a determinant of health. Public health should focus on social determinants of unhealthy diets and undertake research involving communities to immediately respond to ill-health caused by the food system. Use family-centered approaches within communities to address unhealthy diets.

Food prescriptions or produce prescriptions should be expanded as the standard of care for a therapeutic model for noncommunicable diseases and conditions. Community health workers can play an important role in non-pharmacological interventions for better health by enabling communities to grow their own food and consume more fresh produce from land and sea.

Current food systems destroy the "connectedness" of people to the land and sea that sustains them. The dominant food culture reinforces the expectation that all food should be available all year round. Seasonality of food is a traditional concept that reminds people that they are part of a larger ecological system that sustains life. At the highest level of governance of islands, campaigns should be mounted to "eat local", "grow and gather local" and "eat healthy" within the context of indigenous wisdom and cultural heritage.

Nutrition and healthy diets through sustainable and resilient food systems is the ultimate form of prevention of noncommunicable disease. Public health institutions must include this in their curriculum.

Designate national farm lands, in the same way that national parks are designated to protect these. High level decisions need to be made about land use and land use policy to cover the long term impacts of mono-cropping and loss of biodiversity. Communities can manage "endangered agricultural land" by using ancestral knowledge and practice.

Research on healthy diets need to be inclusive and useful to the communities. It is of critical importance to engage communities in meeting the gaps in data. Community assessments of needs in relation to availability of food and alternative ways of providing for nutritional needs of various age groups.

Economic and financial planners should redirect tourism strategies toward promoting local food production and providing tourists opportunities to eat local food. Agritourism is a viable approach. Organize local food festivals. Shine a spotlight on delicacies and special foods of a region.

The education sector needs to be provided with financial support and capacity to educate the next generation in food production and food security as a matter of human survival. Courses need to be developed, teachers equipped and students provided with opportunities to explore how culture, science and values intersect in the field of food production.

Use social network analysis and a social constructivist approach to understand how stakeholders are invested and use this to mobilize different sectors toward policy and act

Counteract aggressive marketing and promotion through regulations like zoning of locations of fast food establishments, taxation of harmful products, product labelling among others.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

How can islands leverage trade policies? They do not have the economies of scale to negotiate. Colonization and militarization of islands is a continuing policy. How can this be addressed?

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