OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Friday, 6 August 2021 07:00 GMT -04:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	The Critical Role of Agricultural Extension in Advancing the 2030 Agenda: Lessons from the Field and Empirical Evidence
CONVENED BY	Kristin Davis (IFPRI), Hiroyuki Takeshima (IFPRI), Makoto Kitanaka (Sasakawa Africa Association)
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/7173/
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 107

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

	0-18		19-30		31-50		51-65		66-80	0	80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

67	Male	40	Female		Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

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

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

2	Small/medium enterprise/artisan		Workers and trade union
1	Large national business		Member of Parliament
	Multi-national corporation		Local authority
	Small-scale farmer	16	Government and national institution
1	Medium-scale farmer		Regional economic community
	Large-scale farmer		United Nations
11	Local Non-Governmental Organization		International financial institution
36	International Non-Governmental Organization	4	Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance
	Indigenous People		Consumer group
32	Science and academia	4	Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

The Dialogue was organized closely following the UNFSS' Principles of Engagement. Participants had been closely following the past dialogues and were informed of the summit vision, objectives and action tracks. The agenda was developed with principles of engagement in mind prior and shared with the participants prior to the online event, briefly reviewed by the conveners, facilitators and curator.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The Dialogue was organized with a focus on developing contributions to the FSS by clarifying the linkages with key Action Tracks, and elaborating pathways toward transformation and modernization of food systems with a view to contributing to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The choice of focus on agricultural extension and advisory services (AEAS) for food systems transformation very much addressed the cross-cutting relevance of AEAS across a range of food system issues, and filled the gap due to relatively limited focus of the past UNFSS dialogues focusing specifically on AEAS. The participation of multiple stakeholders was encouraged by bringing together a diverse group of actors engaging in AEAS policy formulation, implementation and operation, and research. The Dialogue invitation was sent to actors in government institutions, implementing institutions, research and academia, farmers groups at various scales, private sector actors, etc. Perspectives from researchers and practitioners were both shared, which informed the breakout session discussions. The Feedback from the breakout discussion was reported back to the plenary sessions to share the key messages and recommendations to the FSS. Breakout room discussion topics covered diverse key areas within food systems transformation (sustainability, nutrition-sensitivity, market-orientation of AEAS), and the ways to expand and enhance efficiency of AEAS to contribute to each of these areas.

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

As was also recommended in various other earlier dialogues, it is recommended to set the stage early on regarding the 'purpose' of the Dialogue by explaining the UNFSS' objectives and vision and action tracks, as well as key outcomes from Pre-Summit to keep the discussions up-to-date within UNFSS process. Structuring the event by a diverse set of sessions, through presentations of research and field evidence, sharing of perspectives by practitioners through panel discussions, in addition to breakout sessions, significantly informed the discussions. Livestreaming the event also significantly expanded the viewership to audience who are not familiar with AEAS and thus not join as registered participants, but still want to learn regarding AEAS as audience.

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

To feed its growing population amid climate change and other challenges, Africa needs a flourishing food system that is nutrition-sensitive, efficient, safe, healthy, and environmentally sustainable. This requires bringing modern technologies to local communities, helping stakeholders to acquire the relevant technical know-how, and building strong partnerships and institutions. Developed countries around the world, including Japan, can play important roles in these efforts. Disseminating modern technologies and enhancing knowledge and skills among Food Systems Actors are important components of these efforts. Different models exist for agricultural extension and advisory services (AEAS).

Considering these challenges in today's global food systems, it is paramount that more consideration is given to the important role of AEAS as the primary enablers of enhancing knowledge and skills of food systems actors. Enhancing the effectiveness of AEAS, and providing relevant research and field evidence will require bold actions and new mindsets directed at enhancing human capital among food system actors to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Independent Dialogue was convened in partnership between the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) and Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) to discuss the role of AEAS for Food Systems Transformation in developing countries including Africa. Insights emerging from this multistakeholder dialogue will be presented to contribute to the United Nations Food System Summit (UNFSS) in September 2021.

Transforming #foodsystems is among the most powerful ways to make progress toward all 17 #SDGS. The dialogue discussed the importance of enhancing knowledge and skills for a diverse set of actors for all aspects of food systems, with a focus on achieving sustainable, nutrition-sensitive, and market-oriented agriculture. The dialogue also highlighted measures related to AEAS that ensure equity, inclusion, capacity, innovation and sustainability, including insights on how food systems need to change to achieve no poverty (SDG 1), zero hunger (SDG 2), good health and well-being (SDG 3) through nutrition-sensitive agriculture, reduced inequalities (SDG 10) through enhanced human capital formation among vulnerable smallholder farmers, responsible production and consumption (SDG 12) through relevant knowledge and technology disseminations, climate action (SDG 13) through climate-smart agriculture. This pre-UNFSS2021 session therefore sought to achieve the following goals:
• Explore how extension can best contribute to promoting climate-resilient sustainability, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and market access; answering the following questions: what knowledge and skills do farmers require in these areas? What are the priority actions for countries, funders, managers, and implementers to improve extension for these areas?
• Share what SAA and IFPRI are learning, as implementers and researchers, in these areas
• Highlight ongoing IFPRI-Japan collaboration in the areas of AEAS applications
• Prepare for a virtual summit side event for the Food Summit (by bringing recommendations from the dialogue to the Summit for action)

ACTION TRACKS

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

KEYWORDS

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

MAIN FINDINGS

Farmers remain central to food system transformation. How to share knowledge and information with farmers, while critical, has been one of the most often neglected issues in transforming today's food system.

Participants agreed with various key issues associated with agricultural extension and advisory services (AEAS) within the food system. First, it was re-emphasized that AEAS is one of the weakest links in the agrifood value chain, such that ensuring the successful transformation of food systems is not possible without significant strengthening of AEAS, no matter how much development is made in other elements of the food system.

Second, scaling-up and scaling-out of successful AEAS models is urgently needed. Numerous pilot interventions based on different modes of AEAS have been implemented with insufficient evaluation and subsequent uptake elsewhere. Enhancing capacity is also critical for enabling such scaling-up / scaling-out.

Third, building and strengthening institutions for AEAS continue to be essential. These include institutions for extension workers in general, through colleges, universities and technical/vocational training and continuing education for skill enhancement. While training individual staff is important, it is also crucial to simultaneously strengthen extension systems / institutions.

Fourth, identifying and strengthening the enabling environment for AEAS is important. These include the policy environment and national extension policies / strategies, which not all countries have established. Critical strategies for the enabling environment also must be backed up by sufficient public resource allocation and funding. Developing sufficient public-resource mobilization toward extension is crucial in ensuring that extension efforts do not operate at individual farms or farming communities in isolation, but are connected back to the agrifood policies and strategies at the national level.

Fifth, conscious efforts are needed to reorient the capacity building efforts for AEAS within a context that is becoming increasing broader. These means expanding from a traditional focus on production into broader aspects including climate change, emerging markets, nutrition-sensitivity, and sustainability. These should not be achieved by merely focusing on disseminating knowledge and skills exclusively through extension workers, but also mobilizing broader frameworks to support farmers from the bottom up to enable them to be market-oriented and market-intelligent, understanding and responding to market demand. It is equally important to strengthen extension systems, not only for production, but also along the entire value-chain focusing on marketing, consumption, environmental sustainability, food safety, and improved post-harvest handling.

Sixth, AEAS can also benefit from, and drive improved inclusiveness, including engaging youth in food systems. Helping youth to join extension systems in both the formal and the informal sectors, by designing appropriate programs, is essential - whether as providers or recipients of AEAS. SAA's current approach offers valuable insights in this process.

Seventh, digitization, digital transformation of extension systems, must be capitalized on more than ever to compensate for the low extension-to-farmer ratios in developing countries including those in Africa today. An e-extension platform implemented in Ethiopia, as well as successful apps developed and disseminated by SAA can offer useful lessons for other countries.

Social behavioral changes are likely to play key roles in transforming eating patterns, dietary intake, and consumption behaviors. The discussions revealed that, especially in rural areas, much of these are both affected through direct communications to induce behavioral changes as well as the crop diversification at farm household levels, both of which can be directly informed through improved AEAS.

The discussions also highlighted the need for transforming AEAS to meet regional food systems challenges, not only national challenges, given the fact that food systems are increasingly integrated globally, and sharing knowledge across countries is essential to exploit economies of scale in boosting the effectiveness of AEAS overall.

Given the increasing complexity of challenges faced by today's food systems, it was also emphasized that it is essential to extend collaboration among diverse actors involved in AEAS, including health, environmental sectors, various government ministries, and sectoral organizations. Bringing together AEAS implementers and researchers, as is ongoing IFPRI-SAA collaborations, is important in enhancing AEAS effectiveness through positive evidence-implementation cycle.

Along similar lines, combining governmental and private-sector systems remain some of the most effective options in strengthening AEAS. For example, while Ethiopia has large government extension system, other African countries like Uganda have AEAS systems primarily led by the private-sector leads (including farmer-to-farmer, village-agent systems). Harmonization between government and private systems is key for exploring the complementarity and synergies to boost overall effectiveness of AEAS.

Lastly, as mentioned in the opening remarks, donors in developed countries like Japan continue to play critical roles in sustaining the effective functioning of AEAS that provide key public-goods in the form of knowledge and technologies to food system actors including smallholders.

ACTION TRACKS

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

KEYWORDS

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

Breakout room 1: Promoting sustainable agriculture and the roles of agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

1. What are three tangible ways that AEAS can contribute to food system transformation through promoting sustainable agriculture?
- Continuing and scaling-up existing climate-smart agriculture, nature-positive agriculture development and promotion initiatives. These include the following:
- Training and capacity building of farmers on the use of weather / climate-based information, soil-quality testing, risk management, and management of other information
- Training and capacity building of farmers on new areas including payment for ecosystem services, incentive mechanisms for farmer-adoption of new sustainable practices, instead of simply providing subsidies; these approaches may bring the benefits more in the medium-to-longer terms, but with higher cost-efficiency overall
- Promoting agricultural-resource based incentives through showcasing and field demonstration to improve knowledge ownership by farmers themselves

2. What action tracks or clusters or coalitions should take up the recommendation?
- Action tracks 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
- Action tracks 3: Boost nature-positive production
both of which benefit significantly through improvement management of ecosystems

3. What other actors should be brought on board?
- Bring private-sector, and promote public-private partnership like Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA), universities, government ministries
- Diversify activities beyond traditional extension programs to ensure bilateral and multilateral cooperation partnership and cooperation, instead of simply relying on public-extension

ACTION TRACKS

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

KEYWORDS

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

Breakout room 2: Promoting nutrition-sensitive agriculture and the roles of agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

1. What are three tangible ways that AEAS can contribute to food system transformation through promoting sustainable agriculture?
2. What action tracks or clusters or coalitions should take up the recommendation?
3. What other actors should be brought on board?

Collectively, the following approaches are considered effective:

Increase nutrition awareness among service providers and clients
- Without assuming that the knowledge on nutrition by farmers is sufficient, it is important to recognize that the knowledge including that of researchers and extension staff is still basic

Engage not only the mothers but need to also communicate with entire families and communities
- Without the support from the entire family, informing mothers can only have limited effects on bringing actual nutritional outcomes of the household members

Foster collaboration between health and ag extension service providers (will require reskilling)
- Agricultural extension agents typically have limited skillsets and knowledge on nutrition and health
- Ministries of Health and NGOs working in nutrition and health domains have advanced their skillsets and knowledge in recent years
- It is critical for agricultural extension agents to collaborate with these groups to expand their knowledge and skillsets on nutrition and health, and their links with agriculture

Promote diversity of production and consumption for income generation and balanced diets
- Improved nutrition can be achieved through diversity in both production and consumption
- Income generation is also important achieving this diversity through consumption of more nutrient-dense food from both animals and plants, which tend to be more available through market developments

Package extension material around nutrition sensitive agriculture, promote nutrient dense plants and animal sourced foods as they can complement each other
- While specific agricultural production and other practices may be effective under certain circumstances, they may only achieve a limited set of outcomes, like achieving higher productivity alone without necessarily bringing in improved production of a range of micronutrients
- It is therefore critical to incorporate nutrients and their diversity in designing agricultural extension programs

Use media around food preparation, food safety, etc. (including apps)
- Modern digital media, including smart phones, can be utilized to convey information on agricultural practices and their implications on nutrients, in more practical and creative ways
- These approaches help conveying messages to farmers that the improved nutrition-sensitive production process is not simply about raw materials (nutrient-dense plants, animals and fish), but how to handle, process and store them safely (relating to food safety) in ways that minimize food-borne diseases

Track nutrition related indicators (e.g., increase in dietary diversity)
- Retooling extension staff and overall human resources engaging in AEAS of newer skillsets on Monitoring & Evaluation is critical
- Train extension staff and other relevant actors on key indicators on nutrition and health, and linkages with agricultural production; such training also empower these staff in gathering these indicators

Partnerships across broader set of actors are key in developing AEAS to address emerging needs for transforming food systems in nutrition-sensitive ways
- While the private sector can play roles, allocating sufficient public resources is critical for AEAS to achieve critical knowledge and technology dissemination to transform food systems

ACTION TRACKS

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

KEYWORDS

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

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

Breakout room 3: Market-oriented agriculture and the roles of agricultural Extension and Advisory Services

1. What are three tangible ways that AEAS can contribute to food system transformation through promoting sustainable agriculture?
- Farmer training remains critical in fostering commercial mindset, entrepreneurship, improving farmers' skills to negotiate and engage with market actors, conduct market-surveys and analyses, make critical decisions in terms of identify appropriate markets to sell
- Curriculum overhaul or revisions for extension service providers, expanding more materials on market-oriented approach, value-chain oriented approaches, so that they can empower farmers to undertake different aspects of engaging and interacting with markets; revisions in curriculum can include marketing, entrepreneurships, having market-oriented extension approaches, value-chain based extension focuses, and leveraging more with ICT
- Focus on mobilizing farmers into business-entities, by encouraging the formation of groups and collective actions when engaging with market actors, accessing necessary resources for required investments, through the provision of incentive mechanisms for them to shift from current subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture
- In addition, support for promoting the development of institutions providing AEAS, including institutions that provide market information, remains crucial

2. What action tracks or clusters or coalitions should take up the recommendation?
- Track 4 – Advance equitable livelihoods:
- Track 5 – Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress:
which are both expected to be achieved as AEAS successfully enhance farmers' aspirations to be more market-oriented, as increased market sales help smallholder and vulnerable farmers to transform their farming into more reliable source of economic livelihoods, and also enhance their resilience against future shocks through improved financial resources

ACTION TRACKS

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

KEYWORDS

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

AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Overall, there were no substantial divergence in views and perspectives regarding the roles of AEAS. What was observed during the dialogue was relative diversity in views on which issues are of paramount importance, without necessarily downplaying the importance of other aspects.

Some participants placed greater emphasis on informing farmers of the ever growing set of multi-functional roles that agrifood systems in achieving sustainable development goals, ranging from not only productivity, but also soil health, efficient post-harvest handling to reduce food loss and waste.

Participates also emphasize different aspects of capacity enhancement efforts that are particularly critical for AEAS. These range from focusing on enhancing skills of existing extension staff, or recruiting and training new staff, whether to focus on skills on businesses, group dynamics to promote efficient collective actions, or focusing on developing soft skills and light skills on communications, whether to continue strengthening the focus on production (for which challenges continues to remain substantial), or broader issues along the entire food systems. Some participants also place greater emphases on informing farmers of how natural resources are increasingly becoming scarce, while others significantly emphasized the role of digital technologies as the utmost importance in enabling AEAS systems in coming era.

Other participants highlighted particularly the importance of cultivating greater economic incentives that lead to greater market-orientation and commercial aspirations of smallholder farmers. They emphasized that, developing markets themselves is insufficient in the short-to-medium terms because farmers cannot, in short term, efficiently develop capacity to develop market-intelligence, for example, conducting cost-benefit analyses of their farm production, gathering accurate information about the market demand including quality, safety or nutrient values of food commodities.

Some participants place greatest importance in enhancing AEAS capacity to inform and educate farmers and other food system actors on how to adapt to evolving food environment under the accelerating global climate change.

Much as mobilizing AEAS for modern production technologies is important, participants also emphasized the importance of continued support for informing farmers to address challenges that arise in more traditional production systems, that are rainfed and more extensive that continue rely on relatively limited quantity of modern inputs. Others emphasized the need to capacitate farmers to deal with, for example, low input quality, transportation of harvests and outputs, credit-market imperfections.

Some participants also emphasized that, AEAS should not be try to promote sustainable agriculture, nutrition-sensitive agriculture, and market-oriented agriculture. Some participants argued that, for example, AEAS promoting market-orientation tends to place less emphasis on providing complementary nutrition education to farm household members. Similarly, some participants argued that, part of the existing AEAS in certain countries like Uganda continue to biased toward export-oriented agriculture, with insufficient attention to food and nutrition security.

Other participants place greater emphases on scaling up successful interventions. They mention, for example, the potential of developing agricultural commercialization cluster in which farmers are clustered to improve their access to both inputs and outputs markets through collection actions that exploit economies of scale, as well as strengthening of farmer-training center which is a promising institution in which knowledge of successful AEAS interventions can be more effectively disseminated among farmers.

Some participants continue to emphasize the importance of supplementing AEAS with sufficient provisions of successful materials, including, for example, quality protein maize, legumes, post-harvest handling, introducing metal silo.

Other participants also continue to emphasize the importance of domestic agricultural R&D capacity, as critical providers of improved technologies, without which AEAS cannot effectively enhance the productivity of food system actors.

ACTION TRACKS

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KEYWORDS

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

ATTACHMENTS AND RELEVANT LINKS

RELEVANT LINKS

- **Recording of the events at IFPRI Youtube site**
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXywEVQlCVc
- **IFPRI event website**
  https://www.ifpri.org/event/unfss-independent-dialogue-critical-role-agricultural-extension-advancing-2030-agenda-lessons
- **SAA event website**
  https://www.saa-safe.org/news/news.php?nt=1&vid=253&lng=usa