

Detailed notes of the Workshop on Partnerships for systemic change: delivering food systems diversification in Kenya, held in Nairobi on January 21, 2025

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Title of the Workshop: Partnerships for systemic change: Delivering Food Systems Diversification in Kenya

Context: Status of Food System in Kenya

The global food systems are facing unprecedented challenges in a world grappling with the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and major geopolitical conflicts. Globally, more than 3.1 billion people were unable to afford a healthy diet in 2021, with at least 735 million people facing hunger in 2022. During the same period, 2.4 billion people globally were food insecure. An estimated 23 million Kenyans are undernourished. Besides, malnutrition of all forms has continued to be a concern among women, children, and other vulnerable groups, particularly in urban slums and arid and semi-arid regions in Kenya.

The Kenya Demographic Health Survey (2022) revealed that 18% of children under age 5 are stunted, 5% are wasted, and 10% are underweight. The survey also found alarming rates of obesity—17% of women and 4% of men. These figures are far above global health targets, indicating that we still have a long way to go.

This crisis impacts individual health, strains our healthcare system, undermines productivity, and holds back entire communities' social and economic potential, especially the more vulnerable.

To address this crisis, we urgently need innovative, collaborative, evidence-based, and driven solutions. This is only possible when we come together, as we have today, to assess our progress and discuss the current challenges and opportunities within Kenya's food systems.

Background

The workshop was convened as part of a larger, ongoing effort to address the challenges and opportunities within Kenya's agrifood systems. Over the years, there has been a growing recognition of the need for diversification in food systems to ensure their sustainability and resilience, particularly in the face of climate change, economic pressures, and evolving population needs.

Like many other countries, Kenya has relied heavily on conventional agricultural practices, which have faced increasing vulnerability due to shifting weather patterns, land degradation, and unsustainable farming practices. The Government of Kenya (GOK) and organisations like the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and CIAT have acknowledged these challenges and have been promoting agricultural diversification to build a more sustainable and resilient food system. However, limited access to diverse agricultural knowledge, inadequate infrastructure, and policy gaps continue to hinder progress.

This workshop sought to bring together stakeholders from various sectors, including government agencies, development partners, research organisations, and the private sector, to address these challenges collaboratively. One goal was to explore the potential for diversified food systems to improve agricultural productivity and contribute to the overall health, nutrition, and livelihoods of people in Kenya.

Ongoing initiatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Nutrition Connect, GAIN Kenya, and other local and international organisations have focused on promoting diet diversity, improving agricultural practices, and advancing climate resilience within Kenya's agrifood systems. The workshop was designed to build upon these initiatives, generating strategic recommendations and clear action plans for driving systemic change in the food system. The broader vision is to create a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable food system that benefits Kenya's urban and rural communities.

Objective of the Workshop

The "Partnerships for Systemic Change—Delivering Food Systems Diversification in Kenya" workshop was hosted by Nutrition Connect, GAIN Kenya, IFSS, and Glocolearning. The event aimed to tackle the complexities surrounding food systems diversification in Kenya. It gathered diverse stakeholders to explore challenges, identify barriers, and collaborate on actionable solutions for systemic change.

The workshop aimed to achieve a more sustainable and resilient food system in Kenya. Through engaging discussions and group work, the event sought to generate innovative solutions that could accelerate progress toward this goal. Participants worked on enhancing the understanding of food systems diversification, addressing key barriers, and strengthening partnerships for systemic change.

Overall, the workshop sought to strengthen partnerships for systemic change, which would contribute to progress in the Kenyan food systems pathway, Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), and Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) goals.

Workshop Agenda

- Kick-off: Setting the scene & contributing to ongoing programs and processes
 - GAIN
 - Ministry of Agriculture
 - FAO
- Visioning & Backcasting: 3 steps in breakout groups
- Insights & Next Steps

Agenda 1: Kick-off: Setting the scene & contributing to ongoing programs and processes

Speech by GAIN Country Director Kenya-Ruth Okowa

The Country Director of GAIN opened the workshop. She welcomed all the stakeholders and reiterated that the workshop's objective is to create a unified community committed to reshaping the future of food systems in Kenya.

Further, Madam Ruth Okowa gave an overview of GAIN and its work towards advancing nutrition outcomes and transforming food systems to make healthier diets from sustainable food systems accessible to all people. Below is a summarised outline of GAIN:

- GAIN has been advancing nutrition outcomes for over twenty years by improving nutritious and safe food consumption for all people, especially those most vulnerable to malnutrition.
- With a presence in 20 countries and 12 country offices, GAIN builds alliances with governments, businesses, development partners, research institutions, academia, and communities to transform food systems and deliver healthier diets for all. Through these alliances, we provide technical, financial, and policy support to key players in food systems.
- Since 2010, GAIN has been contributing to improving Kenyans' nutritional status. Working closely with the Government and key partners, GAIN's work in Kenya is focused on improving the consumption of healthier diets for all, especially the most vulnerable, by enhancing the availability, affordability, desirability, and sustainability of nutritious and safe foods and reducing the consumption of unhealthy and unsafe foods.
- Last year, GAIN Kenya launched its Business Plan (2023- 2027) that seeks to improve the access of over seven million Kenyans to healthier diets and address Kenya's triple burden of malnutrition in collaboration with key stakeholders in the food systems space. This includes addressing the population's undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies, and overweight issues.

GAIN Strategic areas in Kenya include:

- Policy environment and food system transformation.
- Strategies to shift the demand for nutritious and healthy diets;

- Strengthening industrial fortification and biofortification;
- Stronger SMEs supplying safe, nutritious and healthy diets and
- Social inclusion, gender equity and empowerment.

GAIN and Food Systems Transformation

In GAIN, we recognise the need to transform our food systems to ensure that the world's population has the nutritious and healthy diets it needs sustainably.

In the run-up to the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS), held during the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2021, GAIN supported the Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural Transformation Office (ATO) in convening sub-national and national food systems dialogues. Additionally, GAIN has supported the development of Kenya's national position paper, which outlines five pathways to transform the country's food systems. In 2023, GAIN assisted the Agriculture Ministry in preparing the voluntary report submitted to the UN Food Systems Hub Coordinator in Rome during the UN Food Systems Stocktaking Moment. Furthermore, GAIN has facilitated the participation of food systems experts from the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development in regional forums such as the Africa Food Systems Forum.

The 2021 UN Food Systems Summit outcomes and subsequent engagements have provided GAIN with a robust framework for action. Much work remains while we have made significant strides in policy development and advocacy.

FAO Representative- Dr. Washington

Dr Washington appreciated the well-thought-out workshop on **food system diversification**, which is central to our collective efforts to achieve sustainable development and ensure food security for all.

In his remarks, he outlined the following:

- Food systems are the lifeline of our societies, supporting health, livelihoods, and ecosystems. Yet, they face growing challenges—from climate change and biodiversity loss to economic inequities and the lasting effects of global conflicts and pandemics. Addressing these challenges requires innovation, collaboration, and a bold commitment to transformation.

- **Food system diversification is not just about increasing the variety of crops, livestock, and aquatic species. It is about fostering resilience—resilience to climate shocks, market fluctuations, and social inequalities. It is about enriching diets, boosting incomes, and creating opportunities for marginalised communities, including women and youth.**
- For example, introducing underutilised crops such as millet or indigenous vegetables into farming systems can reduce dependence on staple crops like wheat and rice while contributing to better nutrition and soil health. Similarly, investing in smallholder farmers, promoting agroforestry, and integrating aquaculture into rural livelihoods can unlock new opportunities for sustainable growth.
- Achieving this transformation requires partnerships across sectors. Governments, the private sector, civil society, research institutions, and international organisations must collaborate to design and implement policies that promote diversification at every level, from local markets to global trade systems.
- We can bridge gaps and accelerate progress by leveraging data, innovation, and collaboration.

Finally, he assured FAO's commitment to supporting these efforts, highlighting that FAO is working with countries to identify and scale up agricultural value chains that align with their unique agroecological and economic conditions.

Ministry of Agriculture - Madam Josephine Love

Madam Josephine Love expressed her enthusiasm for GAIN organising such a workshop to address this gathering on the critical subject of food system diversification, a cornerstone of our nation's agricultural and economic future. In her remarks, she noted the following:

- In today's rapidly evolving world, the urgency of developing sustainable and resilient food systems cannot be overstated. Climate change, population growth, global supply chain disruptions, and rising food insecurity are challenges we face not as an isolated nation of Kenya but as a worldwide community.
- **Diversifying food systems is not merely an option; it is an imperative.**
- By encouraging the cultivation of diverse crops, livestock, and fisheries, we can address the pressing issues of food insecurity, malnutrition, and environmental degradation.
- Diversification is also an economic opportunity, opening new pathways for rural incomes, job creation, and market growth. In our country, we have seen firsthand how over-reliance on a few staple crops increases vulnerability to climate shocks, pest outbreaks, and fluctuating markets. It is time to embrace a broader, more inclusive

agricultural strategy that ensures long-term food security, economic stability, and environmental sustainability.

- There is a need to scale up investments in innovation and infrastructure.
- Advocate for greater awareness of diversification of nutritional and economic benefits and build stronger partnerships that ensure equitable opportunities for smallholder farmers, particularly women and youth, who are critical drivers of change.

The government is fully committed to supporting food diversification efforts through:

- Policy Support: We have revised and introduced agricultural policies that prioritise diversification. These policies promote agroecological practices and invest in crop rotation and integrated farming systems.
- Research and Innovation: We are partnering with universities and research institutions to develop and disseminate improved crop varieties, farming techniques, and technologies that enhance productivity while respecting biodiversity.
- Market Access: Diversification will only succeed if farmers access stable and profitable markets. We are establishing partnerships with the private sector to create value chains for non-staple crops, expand local and international trade opportunities, and invest in agro-processing industries.
- Involvement in the Kampala Declaration, the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Ten-Year Strategy and Action Plan (2026-2035); and in 2027, there will be a bi-annual review report for the Kampala Declaration:

Further, Madam Love informed the stakeholders of the Ministry's commitment to a community-driven system that integrates indigenous knowledge and aligns it with local populations' specific needs and preferences. As such, she affirmed that the Ministry of Agriculture is our ally and champion in this mission and pledged its unwavering support to all efforts that promote food system diversification. **In conclusion, she called upon all stakeholders to unite and lay the foundation for a healthier, more prosperous future, where every household enjoys the benefits of diverse, nutritious, and accessible food.**

Agenda Two: Visioning & Backcasting: 3 steps in breakout groups

Collaborative Group Work: Breakout Sessions Overview.

The workshop's collaborative group sessions were designed to generate targeted insights. Participants were divided into three groups, focusing on rural, urban, and peri-rural contexts. This approach allowed for a broad exploration of challenges and solutions, recognising that food systems diversification must address unique conditions and needs in each setting. All groups worked toward developing a vision, identifying barriers, strengthening networks, and proposing key steps, accelerators, and collaborations.

Rural Set-Up

This group focused on the challenges and opportunities in rural areas, where agriculture is the primary livelihood for most households.

Vision:

To empower rural farming communities to adopt diversified and climate-resilient agricultural practices, improving food security, incomes, and overall resilience to climate change.

Step 1: Visioning

Consumer Side	Production Side
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shifts in mindsets, cultural means & demand: 'we are what we eat', embracing the diversity of Indigenous/orphaned crops, awareness & knowledge about healthy foods, diverse diets• Shifts in food environment: positive messaging about healthy foods, access to knowledge and transparent information (e.g. related to GMOs), higher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shifts in structures: well, organised in cooperatives, community groups, and part of active multistakeholder platforms that are inclusive and participatory and provide good access to different types of capacity building• Shifts from subsistence to businesses (SMEs), with more cost-efficient regenerative production systems less dependent on rainfall, high-precision, climate-smart, motorised, and adaptive supported by Artificial Intelligence (AI), participatory research and a merge between local and research knowledge. Participants had

<p>affordability of healthy diets, diversified school meals combined with related education, diversity of markets/types of places to get your food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-household inclusive approach - women, men, youth, children, elderly, disabled 	<p>different perspectives on the role of GMOs & external inputs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong local seed systems, less dependent on big seed companies, with facilitated local sharing of seeds, access to drought-tolerant seeds, biofortified crops • Shifts in agency: farmers who remain are the ones willing to farm/ produce and are enlightened and motivated as providers of food and stewards of the land • Shifts in youth engagement and agency: farming is fun and attractive again to youth through digitalisation, motorisation, nature-connection, creativity and business mindset
On Market Side	On the Governance Side
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of trade: local, with cities, peri-urban, and international • Easy access to markets • Good infrastructure, including roads, storage, electric motorbikes, • Less wastage • Access to efficient and transparent market information • Functioning traceability systems • Multistakeholder platforms • Strong community groups and community-driven initiatives • The whole household economic approach • Innovative Youth entrepreneurs & businesses • The private sector works with the public and civil society to contribute to more diversified food systems, including accountability and transparency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data & results-based decision making • Cross-sectoral approaches • Different perspectives among participants on government investments & subsidies: some imagine more government investment and incentives across the food system (not just agriculture), others imagine less government costs and investments & more independent food system businesses • A government's primary function is to protect its citizens (specific regulations, fewer conflicts) • Leading role in creating a conducive, enabling environment that engages citizens and enables locally driven initiatives • Transparency and accountability systems, with committees that will allow to reduce/fight/prevent corruption

measures.	
On the Research Side	On the Social/ Demographic Side:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shifts in ways of how research is driven and done: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o More co-creation and setting research agendas with communities and producers o Much more participatory research, monitoring, evaluation and learning o Research feedback much more systematically included • More coordination in research and data management and access • More ethical research • Harmonised and transparency in data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different perspectives on population shifts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Some imagine many people will have left for urban and peri-urban areas, with the smaller population left more really willing and driven to farm and manage livestock, this more efficiently on better-managed land and better integrated with the natural environment - like an integrated landscape approach o Others imagine a higher population in rural areas with many smallholders with small plots but very efficient production, as a mosaic landscape with many small businesses and different farmers producing highly efficient things. • Fewer conflicts (partly because of lower dependency on rainfall & more efficient use of land) • Stronger community organisations, bottom-up approaches, and multistakeholder platforms • Higher accountability and transparency across the food system and landscape • Communities identify and drive their visions and solutions, less donor/funder-driven • Local Innovation hubs with youth entrepreneurs • Value-driven capacity-building efforts

Step 2: Barriers

Key overarching barriers

- Mindsets (& Cultural barriers)
- Climate change
- Non-functioning policies and government/ political structures
- Uncoordinated efforts
- Lack of accountability and transparency
- Competing interests

Competing Interests / Agendas	Non-functioning policies and government/ political structures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor-driven agendas versus community-driven agendas • Short-term gains versus long-term investments • Top-down versus bottom up • Developed versus developing priorities (e.g. carbon footprint) • Politicians versus long-term government Efforts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of implementation of policies • Some bad policies e.g. limitations on seed sharing • Over-reliance on some value chains • Corruption = huge & has been increasing • Subsidies are very limited to productivity not to other food system parts, extension, labour - which are essential for diversification
Limited capacities and knowledge	Financial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities don't know their rights and power • Lack of knowledge of different food species • Misinformation and misguidance • Lack of involvement of the masses in food systems & diversification • Limited farmer's extension on diversification and related benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to credits and insurance schemes • Subsidies focused on productivity • Limited schemes for sustainable finance <p>Cross-Cutting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption is vast across actors, not only in government • Conflicts • Lack of accountability • Over Reliance on just a few value chains

Step 3: Key leverage points, solutions and accelerators

Accountability & Traceability	Policy implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitalisation • Data harmonisation, protection and • Co-create and Co-design research with communities - local ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitisation on policies so that different actors and different levels of government can act upon them - Domestication at the county level and grassroots level • Better coherence between national and county level • Incentives to help act upon policies e.g. incentives to farmers to practice nature-based solutions
Shifts in mindsets	Strengthening community-driven approaches, organised groups & communities of practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitisation on benefits of diversity of species, varieties and ecosystems • More Value-based, targeted capacity building - e.g. with youth - more fun, digitisation, art engagement, motorisation, deep listening sessions, under-the-tree workshops, results-based approaches, local champions and ambassadors • Capacity building along the value chain along the value chain • Participatory research, MEL, and feedback sessions - to more co-own research, results and systems thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice - different media - youth groups • Setting strict requirements as a donor in terms of community participation <p>Different approaches to research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multidisciplinary • Strengthening local research groups - KALRO • Co-create and co-design research with communities
Strengthening partnerships and complementarities	Climate change adaptation & mitigation

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multistakeholder approach & platforms • Landscape approach • Co-finance and co-investment approach • Inclusive dialogues • Re-activating Joint assisted framework, which provided insights into who is doing what • Network for Sustainable Finance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What you do on a day-to-day basis matters (e.g. not cutting trees) • Climate-smart agriculture practices & diversification • Mobilising funding, e.g. carbon credits and sustainable finance mechanisms
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Peri-Urban Set-Up

Step 1: Vision

Vision

To establish peri-rural areas as hubs for diversified agricultural production and efficient food supply chains, bridging the gap between rural producers and urban consumers.

Consumer Side	Production Side
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Affordability and availability of nutrient-dense foods in urban areas.• No over reliance on imported staples and processed foods due to convenience and affordability.• Urban farming initiatives to supplement food production and improve access to fresh produce.• Integration of nutrition-focused policies in urban planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seed sovereignty: Access of seeds to the consumers without the overreliance on big companies to provide seeds• Youth engagement to adopt farming: Education geared towards including the youth to adopt farming as a source of livelihood• Zoning: Specified fertile land demarcated for farming and agricultural activities <p>On the Market Side:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formalised markets for the produce• Improved delivery services for the food produce
On the Research Side	On the Social/ Demographic Side:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evidence-based and data-driven research to inform decisions• The participatory approach includes the community to inform people-centred and tailor-made approaches for different peri-urban communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participatory dialogues involving all the stakeholders• Peri-urban will be swallowed• Emergence of new peri-urban areas• Resilience – Communities

Step 2: Barriers

Markets	Non-functioning policies and government/ political structures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented supply chains and weak market linkages between rural producers and urban buyers. • Inconsistent access to agricultural inputs and technologies due to a lack of targeted support for peri-rural farmers • Pests and Diseases • High cost of farm inputs i.e. seedlings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack / Inadequate political goodwill/ Commitment • Weak enforcement of policies • Lack of prioritised participatory approaches involving the communities, hence less customised solutions • Limited policy focuses on peri-rural areas, which often fall between urban and rural priorities. • Subsidies are very limited to productivity, not to other food system parts, extension, labour - which are essential for diversification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited capacities and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate research technology and dissemination of information • Slow knowledge and behaviour change among the communities • Misinformation and misguidance on Indigenous foods • Limited farmers' extension on diversification and related benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited access to credits and insurance schemes • Subsidies focused on productivity • Limited schemes for sustainable finance <p>Cross-Cutting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corruption is vast across actors, not only in government • Climate Challenges - Erratic weather changes • Lack of accountability • Land and Soil Degradation

Step 3: Key leverage points, solutions and accelerators

Solutions	Enablers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective communication of the food systems from challenges, gaps and opportunities. • Create centralised aggregation and distribution centres in peri-rural areas to reduce post-harvest losses and improve market efficiency. • Support peri-rural farmers with credit facilities and climate-smart technologies to boost productivity and diversification. • Advocate for policies that recognise and prioritise peri-rural areas as critical nodes in Kenya's food systems. • Multi-faceted Accountability approach - Accountability should involve the government, the community and individuals • Marketing our foods • Active Citizenry • Improvement of Infrastructure • Improve local research organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted communication to various players i.e. government, private sector and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), farmers and communities. • Lobbying to have a Parliamentary Nutritious Committee • Investment to education • Investment in advocacy campaigns to educate/ inform the public to advocate for change <p>Accelerators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and Evaluation to monitor the progress of the policies and farming practices to measure their effectiveness and make the necessary adjustments • Effective advocacy for dissemination of information keeping in mind the population demographics i.e age, language barrier, and level of education • Collaboration and Public-Private Partnerships (PPIs) on advancing food systems and food diversification. • Innovative storytelling to advocate to advance education awareness • Have champions for change • Adoption of regenerative agriculture and climate-smart agriculture • Adopt Inclusive research

Urban Set-Up

Step 1: Visioning

This group explored how food systems diversification can address urban-specific challenges, where rapid urbanisation and changing dietary habits transform food demand.

Vision

To build urban food systems that promote the accessibility and affordability of diverse, nutritious foods while reducing reliance on imported or processed foods.

Production Side	Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Zoning• Introduction of the circular economy, featuring organic waste composting, and innovative recycling technologies• Adoption of Regenerative agriculture• Adoption of urban farming technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Favourable laws/ regulations/policies that support regenerative agriculture• Reduced control of processed foods• Laws that govern food safety i.e. hygiene and handling of foods• Set up segregated food hubs away from the contaminated areas• Laws that govern waste management disposal and eateries' hygiene.• Pro-food system policies
Diets	Cultural / Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to diverse nutritious foods• Access to healthy and safe foods• Fewer cases of malnutrition and nutrition-related diseases• Less pricey nutritious foods that are affordable to everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A knowledgeable consumer of indigenous food consumption and their benefits.• Adoption of proper waste management from the household level.• Value of traditional high-nutrient foods• Community support of agriculture• Minimal eating from non-hygiene food kiosks

Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders

Government of Kenya (GOK)	Private Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulation of policies, regulations and laws • Conducting public awareness education on food systems, GOMs, and diversification of foods • Provide a platform for doing business 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in infrastructure • Identification of gaps and provide solutions in the agricultural sector • Development of markets • Financing of supply chains • Research and innovation
CSOs	Consumer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy for healthy diets • Conducting consumer education • Oversight responsibility on the government • Advocacy through the provision of evidence and data-driven research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability from the consumer level • Shift in mindset to adopt nutritious food intake • Readiness to access information on foods they take

Step 2: Barriers

Production Side	Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excess Use of Chemicals • Expensive • High cost and limited availability of nutrient-dense foods in urban areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak policies on food production • Weak enforcement of policies/ regulations on food safety and nutrition • Regulated markets • Lack of accountability of the government. • Informal regulations which are illegal

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overreliance on imported staples and processed foods due to convenience and affordability. • Lack of urban farming initiatives to supplement food production and improve access to fresh produce. • Weak integration of nutrition-focused policies in urban planning. • No traceability in place • The same production happening around residential areas causing pollution • Production in urban areas is not regulated • Urban agriculture is not common 	
Diets	Cultural / Values
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliance on fast foods • High cost of nutritious and organic foods • Overreliance on the same kind of foods which are highly processed i.e maize, rice • Lack of diversification of foods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumption of highly processed foods is glorified • Organic foods are expensive • Low adoption of changing food from highly processed foods to organic Foods • Low emphasis on minimising food waste in Hotels and eateries

Step 3: Key leverage points, solutions and accelerators

Solutions	Enablers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch awareness campaigns targeting urban populations to encourage the consumption of diverse diets • Promote urban agriculture initiatives, such as rooftop gardening and community farms, to increase local food production. • Advocate for nutrition-sensitive urban policies that incentivise the sale and distribution of fresh, diverse foods in urban markets. • Foster collaboration between urban policymakers, private sector stakeholders, and community organisations to enhance food supply chains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted communication to various players i.e government, private sector and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), farmers and communities. <p>Accelerators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and Evaluation to monitor the progress of the policies and farming practices to measure their effectiveness and make the necessary adjustments • Effective advocacy for dissemination of information keeping in mind the population demographics i.e age, language barrier, and level of education • Collaboration and Public-Private Partnerships (PPIs) on advancing food systems and food diversification. • Innovative storytelling to advocate to advance education awareness

The breakout sessions provided an in-depth analysis of food systems diversification through the lens of rural, urban, and peri-rural contexts. Each group's contributions highlighted the importance of tailored strategies to address the unique challenges and opportunities in these settings. The workshop laid a strong foundation for understanding how to implement systemic change that promotes sustainable, resilient, and inclusive food systems across Kenya by aligning visions, overcoming barriers, strengthening networks, and developing clear action plans.

Concluding the breakout sessions, the vision will transform Kenya's food systems into resilient, sustainable, and diversified systems that enhance dietary quality, economic growth, and environmental health by 2050.

Agenda Three:

Actionable Steps

1. Enhance Policy and Governance Frameworks

- Objective: Develop and implement supportive policies to promote food diversification.
Actions:
- Advocate for a National Food Diversification Strategy with clear targets for crop diversity and dietary changes.
- Establish subsidies and incentives for farmers adopting diverse crops, predominantly indigenous and climate-resilient varieties.
- Push for legal frameworks encouraging private sector investments in food diversification and value addition.
- Strengthen land-use policies to promote sustainable farming practices and reduce monoculture dependency.

2. Promote Climate-Resilient Agriculture

- Objective: Build resilience against climate change to support crop and food diversity.
Timeline: 2025–2040
- Actions:
- Train farmers on climate-smart agricultural practices, including drought-resistant crops and efficient irrigation techniques.
- Invest in research and development of climate-resilient and high-yielding crop varieties.
- Develop weather insurance schemes to protect farmers from losses due to unpredictable climate events.
- Increase afforestation and soil restoration efforts to combat desertification and enhance arable land quality.

3. Improve Infrastructure and Market Access

- Objective: Strengthen supply chains for diversified foods.
- Timeline: 2025–2040
- Actions:
- Build modern cold storage facilities, warehouses, and transport systems to reduce post-harvest losses of perishable crops.
- Facilitate the development of rural agro-processing hubs to add value to diverse crops and reduce spoilage.
- Establish market linkages and digital platforms to connect farmers with local and international buyers.
- Provide financial support through grants and low-interest loans for infrastructure investments.

4. Raise Public Awareness and Promote Behavioral Change

- Objective: Shift consumer preferences toward diverse and nutritious diets.

- Timeline: 2025–2035
- Actions:
- Launch nationwide campaigns to educate citizens on the health benefits of dietary diversity.
- Partner with schools to integrate nutrition education and promote the consumption of diverse meals in school feeding programs.
- Work with the media to highlight success stories and promote traditional, indigenous, and underutilised foods.
- Collaborate with influencers and community leaders to champion food diversification initiatives.

5. Foster Farmer Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing

- Objective: Equip farmers with the skills and tools for diversified farming.
- Timeline: 2025–2030
- Actions:
- Conduct training workshops on diversified crop production, pest management, and agroecology.
- Provide farmers with extension services and access to agricultural research data.
- Distribute high-quality seeds and inputs for diversified crops at subsidised rates.
- Facilitate the formation of farmer cooperatives to share resources and best practices.

6. Monitor and Evaluate Progress

- Objective: Ensure accountability and adapt strategies based on outcomes.
- Timeline: Continuous
- Actions:
- Set up a National Food Diversification Monitoring Unit to track progress.
- Conduct periodic impact assessments to measure crop diversity, dietary diversity, and economic outcomes.
- Use feedback loops to adjust policies, programs, and interventions based on lessons learned.
- Publish annual reports detailing progress, challenges, and next steps.

7. Collaborations and Partnerships

There is a need for public and private partnerships geared towards advancing resilient and diversified food systems in Kenya.

8. Inclusion of the Youth “Gen Z” in the implementation plan

Key Outcomes from the Workshop

- **Identification of Key Challenges:** Collectively recognised the multifaceted challenges facing food systems in Kenya, particularly with terms of climate change, limited agricultural diversity, and market access. These barriers must be addressed for diversification efforts to succeed on a broader scale.
- **Proposed Solutions:** A range of innovative strategies were shared, including sustainable agricultural practices, strengthening local value chains, and improving education around nutrition and food security. There was a strong consensus on incorporating indigenous knowledge and technologies alongside modern innovations to build adaptable and sustainable systems.
- **Action Plan Development:** Participants agreed to establish a concrete action plan to guide the next steps, with clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and KPIs for progress monitoring. This will ensure that our efforts are visionary, actionable, and accountable.
- **Commitment to Collaboration:** The workshop's central theme was the importance of building partnerships. Several potential collaborations across sectors were identified. These partnerships will enable resource mobilisation and facilitate the scaling of successful diversification practices.
- **E-Course on Food Systems:** The organisers to share details of an interactive e-course on food systems, facilitated by Wageningen University and enabled by the Netherlands Food Partnership.

Conclusion

The success of advancing food systems diversification hinges on translating strategic discussions into actionable commitments. By developing a robust action plan and fostering meaningful partnerships, stakeholders can create a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable food system that meets.

As the food diversification workshop ends, we reflect on the insights, ideas, and collective efforts that have shaped our discussions over the past day. This workshop has provided a valuable platform for diverse stakeholders—government representatives, NGOs, researchers, and community leaders—to develop a shared vision of creating resilient and diversified food systems.

Annexes

Mentipol 1

Question: What do you associate with food systems diversification?

Responses

Resilience	Variety	Good Health	Available	Behaviour change on food	Equitable Participation
Value addition	Good seeds	Change	Soil conservation	Different way of preparation of foods	Balanced diet
Variety of food	Good	Fair	Diversity of Crops Grown	Good nutrition	Healthy population
Balanced and diversified	Improved health	Innovative	Sustainably	Thriving economy	Partnerships
Wholesomeness of food	Shared value	Different types	Inclusion	Nutrition	Balanced and Diversified
Multi sectoral partnerships	Thriving	Plenty	Novel Infrastructure	Culture	Variety of crops
Different varieties	Diverse production	Sustainability	Accessible	Different crops	Policy

Mentipol 2

Did you learn anything new today that is useful for your own work?

If yes, what learning(s) would you like to share?

- Visioning for 2050
- We have the solutions to our problems
- The power of collaborative approaches to define common visions and seek ways forward
- We need to co-create and co-design solutions with communities to come up with correct solutions
- How to effectively communicate our food system policy to different stakeholders
- The beauty of envisioning and leveraging on partnership to achieve it
- The Vision 2050 the barriers and solutions
- The different scenarios for 2050 visioning
- Backcasting process
- The Vision 2050 of food systems in Kenya
- Partnerships are key
- Vision for 2050
- We need to change messaging to impact the hearts of decision-makers
- Putting all cards at the table by partners
- Partnership
- How food systems emerge with different setups of rural, peri-urban and urban
- Inclusive action for food system transformation
- I also ate seafood called Baas 😊
- Strategising solutions
- Backcasting process
- For things to work, government needs to be held accountable in policy enforcement. People are quite optimistic and ready to work for a diversified food system. Leverage point
- Intentionally tackling corruption by all, including development partners
- Increasing call to collaborations and partnerships

Was there anything that surprised you today? If yes, what surprised you?

If yes, what surprised you?

- The different perspectives on food
- How to project the future in realtime while remaining positive
- How ideas were flowing in the discussions groups
- Despite disparate visions, aligning on solutions and leverage points
- Good turn out of participants for the workshop
- The energy... The discussion are never ending
- The amount of knowledge
- We already know barriers and solutions
- I never knew workshops could be so interesting and participatory
- Only a few people attended the meeting. Everyone talks of political lack of commitment as the major barrier to effective food systems
- We have a systemic problem that needs a solution
- The diversity of thought in visioning
- How people value the same type of food but for different reasons
- That we do not believe that we contribute to GHG that impact negatively on the climate as developing countries
- I didn't expect conversations on seed banks, organic food and systems. It was refreshing. I'd love more discussion on health and natural food interventions
- Nothing more
- Harmonising diversity of ideas
- A team member mentioned that Kenya has the capacity, financially, to ensure effective food systems, I don't believe that
- How common solutions emerge for different setups i.e. rural, peri-urban and urban
- NA

What do you find most important as the next step(s)?

Collaborating for synergy	Walking the talk	Continued collaboration	Climate funding	A cohesive platform
Collaboration	Manifesto building	Implementation	Information Sharing	Partnerships
Real solutions	Change	Storytelling	Political engagement	Youth engagement
Advocating	Participatory planning	Low hanging fruits	Staying in touch	Escalating the discussion
Action to attain	Collating and reporting			