

Our Research

PARTICIPATORY OBSERVATION

- FSS Public Forums
- FSS Science Days
- Bites of TransFOODmation workshops within the FSS Independent Dialogues
- Three-day Pre-Summit of the FSS
- Two-day Summit

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF:

- official FSS documents
- articles and websites

21 EXPERT INTERVIEWS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF

- All five Action Tracks
- The Champions Group
- The High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE)
- The Philanthropic Foundations
- UN Committee on World Food Security (CFS)
- Civil Society and Indigenous Peoples' Mechanism (CSM)
- United Nations member states from Asia, Europe, Africa, Oceania and South America



The *Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development* is a member of the *Leibniz Association*
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Further Information



IOER project website

<https://www.ioer.de/en/projects/transfoodmation>



ResearchGate project website

<https://www.researchgate.net/project/TransFOODmation-Prospects-for-Future-Food-A-Paradigm-Shift-towards-Sustainable-Resilient-and-Fair-Food-Systems>

<https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/vision-principles>
UN FSS. (2021). Summit Vision. (Accessed 07 March 2022)

TransFOODmation

The 2021 Food Systems Summit (FSS) – a transformative force?


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Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA

Why food systems need to change

Current food systems lead to:



Under- and malnutrition



Loss of diversity in food systems



Ecological degradation

They manifest a negative influence on people and planet by leading to unjust distributions of food and the ability to produce food, by leading to soil degradation, overfishing, deforestation and climate change.

What the FSS wants to do about that

“The Summit will awaken the world to the fact that we all must work together to transform the way the world produces, consumes and thinks about food.”

(UN FSS, 2021)

» The FSS wants to initiate a process that will finally lead to a global transformation of the currently unsustainable food systems

Our research questions:

? Did the UN Food System Summit 2021 contribute to a sustainability transformation of our food systems?

? Did the FSS process take procedural justice adequately into account?

How transformative was the FSS?

In order to initiate transformative change, transformative capacities are needed. This requires for example:

- A clear and concrete vision and *definition of sustainability* and how future food systems should look like
- A permanent presence of *system-thinking*
- A focus on both social and technical innovations
- An understanding of the role of spatial aspects from the local to the global scale

How has the FSS dealt with these transformative capacities?

- Many interviewees had difficulties articulating a concrete *sustainability understanding*
- *System thinking* was not permanently present at the Summit
- A systemic approach that some interviewees suggested as a *vision* for future food systems: Agroecology
- To many Summit attendants the concept of system thinking was new, so it could gain attention and learning processes could be sparked
- The discussions at the Summit mostly remained in approaches of technical solutions, not taking much into account social innovations and spatial aspects like land use conflicts

How just was the FSS?

Three dimensions of procedural justice:



BRINGING IN DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

- Outreach of the Summit was huge
- Participants from all over the world with very different backgrounds
- Still, many were left with the feeling that their participation had no real impact



ENSURING TRANSPARENCY

- A vast majority of the interviewees agreed that the Summit process had a rather opaque organization



CREATING A JUST INSTITUTIONAL SETTING

- It seems that power imbalances between stakeholders have not been adequately tackled by the organizers

“People are saying, we want to use all the tools in the toolbox. Yeah, it is fine to have some agroecology, but we also have to use the other tools in the toolbox [...], by which they mean we need genetically modified organisms, we need high input agriculture, not recognizing that agroecology is not one innovation, it is a different paradigm.

(Taken from an Interview)

“The Champions Group was an attempt to create space for civil society. But it was, what some people call, *astro-turfing*. It gives the appearance of grassroots, but it is artificial, hence the term, right? In that sense of, the Special Envoy had to approve everyone who was allowed into the Champions Group. So it was very top down. And it had no clear mandate.

(Taken from an Interview)