

# OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM



<b>DIALOGUE DATE</b>	Monday, 27 June 2022 20:30 GMT -04:00
<b>DIALOGUE TITLE</b>	Hungry for a Just Food System
<b>CONVENED BY</b>	Charlie Hoffs (co-founder of unBox), Nrithya Renganathan (MIT student, EJ activist)
<b>DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE</b>	<a href="https://goodfooddialogues.com/dialogue/51164/">https://goodfooddialogues.com/dialogue/51164/</a>

The outcomes from the Dialogues will be of use in developing the pathway to a healthier and hunger-free America. Each Dialogue will contribute in three distinct ways:

- Direct submission to the White House in advance of the Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health (for events and feedback received prior to the July 15th deadline)
- Published as public facing and searchable documents on the Good Food Dialogues website
- Rolled into a final report that synthesizes the feedback, ideas, and challenges shared throughout all the Good Food Dialogues. This report will not only be submitted to the White House but will also be used to inform a movement for change well beyond the White House Conference.

# 1. PARTICIPATION

## TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

14

## PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0 0-18    14 19-30    0 31-50    0 51-65    0 66-80    0 80+

## PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

1 Male    10 Female    3 Non-binary    0 Prefer not to say or Other

## PARTICIPATION BY RACE

0 American Indian or Alaska Native    5 Asian  
0 Black or African American    1 Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
8 White

## PARTICIPATION BY ETHNICITY

0 Hispanic or Latino    14 Not Hispanic or Latino

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

5	Academia/education	0	Agriculture	1	Economic empowerment
3	Environment and ecology	0	Finance	0	Food consumer
1	Food distributor	0	Food production	0	Food processing
0	Food retail	0	Government	0	Healthcare
0	Health insurance	2	Hunger	0	Livestock
0	Nutrition	1	Public Policy	2	Other

## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

1	Academic/Expert	0	Advocate
4	Corporation	0	Community Organization
0	Direct Service Provider	1	Farmer/Food Producer
0	Financial Institution	2	Impacted Individual
0	Logistics provider	2	Non-Profit
0	Policy Maker (current/former)	0	Small business
4	Student	0	Supplier
0	Other		

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

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

Prior to even committing to hosting this Dialogue, my co-organizers and I researched the White House Conference values and goals and those of the Good Food Dialogues network. We were impressed and excited to explore the WH Conference's demonstrated commitment to engaging diverse stakeholders, inviting transformative ideas across many sectors of the food system, and following through on actionable policy. Then, in reading the Good Food Dialogue's Principles of Engagement, which aligned deeply with unBox's organizing philosophy, we decided to move forward in hosting a Dialogue. Our process for planning, intentionally designing, publicizing, then hosting the event incorporated the Principles of Engagement, as well as many of our own values around facilitation and organizing: First, unBox always acts with urgency. This is why, when we saw the opportunity to host a Dialogue, we took stock of our already very stretched capacity amongst unBox team members working full time jobs and decided to \*make the time\* needed to do this and do it well. Secondly, respect is central to everything unBox does. Before we are co-organizers and activists, we are a supportive and safe community of friends. Respecting one another's opinions, personhoods, and identities enables us to do the work we want to do. Thirdly, we invite and elevate the perspectives of diverse stakeholder groups because we comprise diverse perspectives. Inviting multiple perspectives and backgrounds is not tangential to our work; it IS our work. Fourth, we wanted this gathering to help bring attention to the leadership of other organizations creating a more just, sustainable US food system. Participants pointed to examples of nonprofits and initiatives they've seen or worked with, transforming systems for good. Fifth, building trust was a central goal: we wanted the Dialogue to feel welcoming, safe, and fun. In order for people to vulnerably share stories from their lived experience, or venture to offer ideas on a topic they are new to from a policy or research point of view, trust was essential.

### HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

Our Dialogue reflected urgency because it was held days after the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, and millions of people across the country felt as if their bodies were under attack. This unprecedented, unimaginable, and for many, life-changing ruling forced all of us to confront the profound ways that policy impacts our lives, the necessity to organize people-power, and the future consequences of inaction. In our publicity of the event and during the Dialogue, we centered this urgency and discussed the explicit link between legislation that takes away the right to choice by people with uteruses, to the right to healthy, affordable food for those living in food apartheid. Both issues represent systemic inequalities that hurt low-income people, people of color, immigrants, people with disabilities, and queer people the most. This juxtaposition heightened the urgency and intersectionality of the discussion. Respect manifested in our Dialogue in the ways that participants thoughtfully listened to and built upon one another's contributions, referencing one another's comments throughout the Dialogue and expanding on them. Our gathering at pika convened young people with a broad range of insight, including people with lived experience on SNAP, biotechnologists, first-generation immigrants, researchers of food systems, fermentation experts, an employee of a farmer coop, farm volunteers, a resident of a US territory, and more. In discussing case studies of food systems successes we can scale and aspire to, people alluded to inspiring examples from their lives: people spoke of family members who taught them how to connect with food and land through cooking, organizations doing direct service and mutual aid in Boston, and grocery coops across the county. Participants built trust with one another by thoughtfully and patiently listening to everyone else, and snapping or nodding along in affirmation. We enjoyed snacks together, laughed, and had space for storytelling, all of which built trust while also building community.

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

My co-organizers and I agreed that respect, trust, and diversity were the three most important values to center in organizing a Dialogue. When those intentions are present and thoughtfully enacted, all other goals will fall into place. Strategies that we deemed successful in organizing this Dialogue around those principles included: - Inviting our friends. We reached out to housemates, new friends, friends of friends, and more encouraging them to come, share, and learn. Having some participants present who already know one another created easy-going familiarity, and the impression that this was a gathering of people who like spending time with each other, regardless of the issue at hand. - We had snacks at the event, which was like a small token of appreciation for folks' time, and always makes the mood for fun and friendly. - We attempted to design a range of questions that everyone - regardless of their confidence in their "food systems expertise" - could answer. All could contribute to the question: "Name one person in your life who has impacted the way you buy, grow, cook, eat, or think about food." And, many could also contribute at a deeper level to suggest specific policy suggestions for reforming US food systems. Allowing space for every level of confidence and experience along that spectrum invited everyone to participate. - We publicized the event widely and urgently. We hosted the event in the coop some of us live in, so we announced the event at successive house meetings, messaged the house group chat about it, blasted and emailed to the list of current housemates and alumni, posted on LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram, and, of course, on the GFD platform. - We compensated a meeting attendee to be our photographer.

# 3. METHOD

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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

The major focus of our Dialogue was elevating youth voices, speaking up about the US food systems issues they care most about. Because our generation has inherited this system, and because we now bear the responsibility of ensuring it can nourish and sustain our bodies, the planet, and future generations, it is critical that the concerns and ideas of youth be centered in future US food policy.

The main US food systems issues that our Dialogue participants want the White House to address are:

1. Expanding healthy, affordable food access:
  - a. for low-income communities, immigrants, unhoused people, other minoritized groups.
  - b. in rural communities.
  - c. for college students, because fueling low-income and first-generation students through college is essential for reducing income inequality and increasing economic mobility. Working tirelessly in school, extracurriculars, and part-time work, while also worrying about how to afford food, forces students to make impossible choices between their basic needs and their education.
2. Moving to a sustainable, circular food economy: that:
  - a. connects Americans more deeply to land, rather than estranging them it
  - b. supports those who try to grow their own food, at a small or even micro scale
  - c. does not exacerbate climate change, and even helps mitigate it
  - d. does not overconsume natural resources
  - e. is environmentally just
  - f. curtails the impending threat of antimicrobial resistance
  - g. transitions to sustainable, regenerative agriculture
  - h. uplifts traditional ecological knowledge, particularly those of Native American land stewards
  - i. reduces food waste
  - j. invests in urban farming
  - k. reduces industrial animal agriculture in favor of conservation grazing and regenerative livestock and dairy
3. Advancing economic justice and supporting small business entrepreneurship by
  - a. curtailing corporate consolidation amongst large farms, distributors, and retail companies
  - b. reducing poverty
  - c. avoiding re-perpetuating colonialism
  - d. eliminating barriers for and supporting Black and Indigenous and other farmers of color

### WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE PILLARS

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 1. Improve food access and affordability                            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 2. Integrate nutrition and health                                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | 3. Empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | 4. Support physical activity for all                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | 5. Enhance nutrition and food security research                     |

### KEYWORDS

- |                                     |                         |                                     |                      |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Nutrition               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Food Security        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Healthcare              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Economic Empowerment |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Technology              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Data & Evidence      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Environment and Climate | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Finance              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Human rights            | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Innovation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            |                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Policy               |

## MAIN FINDINGS

Our Dialogue participants proposed specific policy recommendations derived from members' own lived experience with food and financial insecurity, members' work on local, state, or national food systems policy and research, and other diverse experiences interacting with the food system as eaters, cooks, growers, activists, and thinkers:

1. **Involve youth.** The White House must actively involve young people in policy development and implementation. We gathered at this Dialogue because we were frustrated with feeling unheard and unrepresented; we are excited at this rare opportunity to be heard amongst the halls of power. The White House should proactively engage BIPOC, LGBTQ+, immigrant, and disabled youth, farmers and rural youth, and youth who receive or whose families receive SNAP, WIC, free or reduced price school meals. The WH can do this by A) working with USDA to create regional food systems visioning committees on which young people serve, B) expanding internship opportunities for young people to work in the White House and USDA before, during, and after college, C) increasing AmeriCorps VISTA program pay, D) helping schools design civic engagement curricula covering how to pre-register to vote, research legislation, contact their state and federal representatives, and provide public comment, and E) supporting campus groups engaging their communities on food systems issues.
2. **Increase SNAP.** Today, the US government's most powerful tool for helping prevent Americans from falling into food insecurity is increasing SNAP.
3. **End student food insecurity.** The White House must act creatively, urgently, and in partnership with student-led groups to end campus hunger for good. Education is the most important lever for equalizing opportunity and economic mobility. Students who must stretch their mental bandwidth and financial budgets to afford basic survival needs do NOT have the same chance at educational success as students who don't carry that burden. Eliminate student SNAP restrictions.
4. **End consolidation and monopolization at every level of the food system, to make way for innovation and entrepreneurship.** Massive mono-crop farms, big meat giants, and grocery retail mega-corporations get bigger by the year and swallow up competition. The WH should work with the FTC to regulate and limit monopolies and restore competition. Support small farmers, grocery retailer entrepreneurs, and grocery cooperatives.
5. **Support Americans' reconnection with land.** Eliminate barriers for Black and Indigenous and other farmers of color. Support urban farming initiatives, particularly BIPOC-led initiatives incorporating food justice experiential education for youth. Fund "Double Up" SNAP incentives at farmers markets. Repeal the Jones Act to reduce food insecurity in Hawai'i and the US territories and invest in sustainable, regenerative agriculture on US islands.

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| <input type="checkbox"/>            |                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Policy               |

## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/4

We need a stronger social safety net. One dialogue participant, a first-generation immigrant and student leader in their campus's first-generation low-income (FLI) organization, shared, "I grew up in Vegas. The food stamps program has been vital for my family. Having an extra couple hundred dollars was really helpful. The Salvation Army would also have food give-away days, and we would pick up five big packets."

Another participant, a recent college graduate, explained, "It's difficult to navigate what the best program is. There are no centralized resources to accessing the programs that exist, and those who can't find them are those who need them the most. I'm from Guam. It's a modern-day colony; I've seen how colonialism affects our access to food. It's an isolated and small island. Due to certain naval laws, it's expensive to ship food to Guam. The food on the military bases is cheaper and fresher. This upholds modern-day imperialism. But there's also abundance. In mango season, for example, we're overflowing. My friends will spear fish; we're abundant in those ways." This participant went on to describe how the Jones Act artificially and prohibitively raises prices in US territories and should be repealed.

Another participant, a nonbinary student from the Midwest, reflected on income-based nutritional disparities: "In high school, many students were getting free or reduced price lunch, and they were less quality than the ones you'd pay for."

Dialogue participants convened around the shared ideas that a stronger social safety net boosts food security, reduces poverty, and helps equalize opportunity.

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### KEYWORDS

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Nutrition	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Food Security
<input type="checkbox"/>	Healthcare	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Economic Empowerment
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		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy

## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/4

Food brings people together. The US food system should empower, not decenter, that truth. Today, food insecurity, poverty, environmental degradation, and monopolism robs the food system and everyone who participates in it of their dignity. Instead, young people want to experience food as "joy", "a vehicle for health", and "a means of communication, in a way that language fails." When we circled the room, asking "who is one person who changed the way you think about food?", people shared about learning intergenerational knowledge through cooking with grandparents, and reflections on living in a coop in which everyone cooks for one another. As one participant said, "Community makes it taste better." Sometimes eating well and nourish our bodies feels like "an act of rebellion" against the current food system. Young people long for a food system that helps them connect with food, land, and other people with dignity.

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<input type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy



## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/4

Instead of 24/7 access to over-processed fast food, we want access to farm-fresh produce and relationships with the people who grew it.

One current student reflected on her hometown, which "had a centrally-located farmers market. It was nice going every week and seeing people from the community gathering there."

Another participant reflected on "the joy of Haymarket", a large, 300-year-old open-air market in Boston in which farmers sell produce they couldn't sell to grocery stores, at very affordable prices. They compared the Haymarket experience to "the sadness of growing up in a place where there were fewer connections to local farms".

Sharing a different perspective, another student explained, "Coming to America, in the past two years, it's markedly easier to access fast food. You can feel the fast food regime. I don't know if it was Canada, or growing up poor in the countryside. We had to make all our own food, so of course it isn't processed."

Another recent graduate and Consumer Citizen Representative with Equal Exchange, an organization supporting farmer co-operatives and Fair Trade, shared, "I am from Virginia, many folks are growers. People grew up on farms and appreciate food grown locally. But then people left the farms. Now I'm in Ohio, a part of the country where the most food grown locally is consumed locally."

Other students spoke about inspiring initiatives working to close the loop between farms, grocery stores, dinner plates, and food waste. There are campus listservers which spread the word about safe, plentiful dumpster-diving opportunities. Daily Table is a nearby nonprofit grocery store. "Too Good to Go" is a new app connecting stores with surplus produce with those seeking food. Food Not Bombs runs local food security programs and food justice education workshops. Reflecting on the ways our disjointed system disconnects people from the sources of their food, while generating waste and also leaving millions food insecure, one student summarized: "Ideally there would be better systems for this."

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- |   |   |
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### KEYWORDS

✓	Nutrition		Food Security
	Healthcare	✓	Economic Empowerment
✓	Technology		Data & Evidence
✓	Environment and Climate		Finance
	Human rights	✓	Innovation
		✓	Policy

## OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 4/4

The US food economy should be fair and competitive. Corporate monopolies reduce innovation and opportunity. A major issue participants identified was "anti-trust", arguing, "Maybe companies shouldn't gobble up one another, and maybe that doesn't happen naturally. There's Tyson and Purdue dividing and conquering regions of the US.... Farmers need a price floor to keep farmers employed, otherwise big farms scoop them up."

Participants also spoke to the inspiring rising tide of unionization at companies like Starbucks and Amazon, and wanted to see an end to corporate union-busting.

One student from upstate New York shared about proudly shopping at ShopRite, a member of Wakefern, the country's largest retailer-owned grocery cooperative.

One student summed up the conversation by explaining, "Voting with your dollar is a cop-out." To help enact real systems-wide change, we need to vote with our votes to elect politicians that refuse to let corporate interests and campaign funding sway their ideology, that believe in competitiveness, fairness, anti-trust, and small business entrepreneurship, and that listen to their constituents over companies.

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		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Policy

## AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

Two key areas of divergence emerged during our dialogue. First, participants had different views about which part of the food system supply chain was most impactful to influence to increase sustainability, reduce food insecurity, increase economic fairness, and achieve food justice. Some focused on nutritional benefits programs, retail grocery store prices, farmers markets, and other demand-side interventions. Others focused on subsidies, corporate agriculture, and food distributions networks. While each of us thought that action at specific points in the supply chain may be more or less impactful than other points, we all agreed that holistic food systems transformation must happen at every level. Part of the challenge facing food systems reform today is the siloing of various stakeholders into niches of the supply chain, when in fact, the whole chain is connected in a large circle.

The second area of divergence regarded which level of impact would be most change-making: local, city, state, federal, or international action. Some participants argued that all change is local, while others spoke to the power of massively-funded federal programs. Ultimately, all agreed that coordinated, organized action at all levels is necessary to transform the food system. Some people, however, might be best equipped to act at certain levels for greatest impact, so all should reflect on their strengths, positionality, and skillsets when choosing the niche and community in which to rally.

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