

MORE ABOUT PARALLEL SESSION: CITIZEN-GENERATED EVIDENCE TO DRIVE FOOD SYSTEM CHANGE

Organizers: Hivos and International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED)

The purpose of the session is to illustrate the idea of citizen-generated evidence from concept to implementation. Research, especially about diets and nutrition, is usually “extractive”: experts gather data from people, but these people rarely have a say in how the data is collected, let alone used. Citizen-generated evidence involves people in decisions about research questions, data collection and analysis, and especially how data can be used to further *their* interests. If people are agents of their own evidence generation, rather than simply subjects, then evidence has greater potential to be transformative in addition to informative. Likewise, the partnerships that can develop between professional (i.e. university) and citizen researchers can replace a one-way flow of information with mutual learning.

Despite its promise, the idea of citizen-generated evidence is largely untested. Key questions remain about its specific features, methods and usefulness: What classifies as citizen-generated evidence and what doesn't? Can citizen-generated evidence stand up to scientific scrutiny? Is it necessary that it does? How can citizen-generated evidence be used for advocacy and promoting change? What are the appropriate venues for using citizen-generated evidence?

Our session addresses these questions by drawing from diverse experiences involving people generating (or helping to generate) evidence for food and nutrition. We start with a conceptual overview about citizen-generated evidence. The next paper focuses on the work carried out by Hivos and IIED with KRC in Uganda to document dietary patterns amid a sharp decline in the quality of diets. Food diaries, collected by and with citizens, and interpreted using their input, are being used as part of this work as an advocacy tool to promote healthy and sustainable food and drive change locally. We will also hear from research that ICCO and Tear conducted on food & nutrition security in poor rural households in Ethiopia, which aimed to generate input for evidence-based dialogue between Self Help Groups (informal community-based organizations) and local authorities. Finally, we will learn from BioAnalyt's work using technology to improve people's engagement with data collection. We will then have two short reflections. The first will look at the evidence from the viewpoint of nutrition science, and the second at the implications for policy-making.

Session description and presentations

Chair: Frank Mechielsen (Programme Manager, Sustainable Diets for All, Hivos)

Presentations (15 minutes each)

1. *Setting the scene: citizen-generated evidence and citizen agency.* **Bill Vorley** (Senior Associate, IIED)
2. *Household dietary diversity in Western Uganda: evidence from food diaries.* **Shariff Mohammed** (Kabarole Research and Resource Centre, Uganda) and **Alejandro Guarin** (Senior Researcher, IIED).
3. *Food Security data for evidence-based dialogue with duty bearers in Ethiopia: Bottom up advocacy, using evidence generated by research at local level, to increase attention for food and nutrition security.* **Marijke de Graaf** (Food Security Strategy and Policy Advisor, ICCO) with **Caspar Waalewijn** (Tear)
4. *Tools to enable improvement of nutritional value in the food chain through measurement.* **Anna Zhenchuk** (BioAnalyt)

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Discussion (10 minutes each)

5. *The view from "normal" science.* **Inge Brower** (Associate Professor, Human Nutrition, Wageningen University).
6. *The view from policy.* **Paul van de Logt** (Head Food and Nutrition Security, Inclusive Green Growth Department, Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Panel discussion.