

Fork to Farm local dialogues

Building partnerships between cities and farmers for a just transition to healthy and sustainable food systems

The road to Paris goes through the farm gate: The way we currently do food and farming accounts for around a third of global GHG emissions and is the main driver of nature loss. Additionally, the link between food, nature and health has been tragically underlined by the pandemic. It is clear that to address these interconnected challenges we must do food and farming differently.

Subnational governments worldwide increasingly seek to take local action on the climate and nature emergencies. They are setting their own climate goals and developing joined-up policies on food and farming. These will impact farmers' lives and livelihoods; however, farmers are often not part of the conversation and while many farmers see the need for change, they require supportive policies and fair returns. Covid-19 further demonstrated the importance of local food systems as well as global trade. Long supply chains mean that farmers often feel disconnected from their local population, from local government and from their nearest cities. There is a need to build trust between urban and rural actors in food systems in order to enact meaningful change.

The Fork to Farm dialogues connect these two ends of the chain: the people in a city or region who need a reliable and sustainable supply of food and the farmers in that area who need sustainable livelihoods. Both cities and farmers need a just transition to a future where food and farming is part of the solution and not part of the problem. Creative and collaborative local solutions, with cities and farmers building mutual understanding synergies and working together, can make the necessary change locally and can inspire transformation globally. The starting point for the dialogues is the assumption that both cities and farmers feel that the way we do food and farming needs to change to tackle the interconnected climate, nature and health emergencies, making the calling question: 'how can we help each other?'

Dialogue framework

At their heart, the Fork to Farm dialogues are about building relationships for change. Relationship-building takes time, and therefore the dialogues are not a one-off meeting but rather a series of equitable local-led interactions. All dialogues will be a result of local places and people and therefore follow an organic rather than set methodology. At the same time, the local dialogues will be part of a global family with the same principles at their core which guide the dialogue process. And while they are integrated with local contexts and existing projects, the local Fork to Farm dialogues have the shared aim of building understanding and trust and strengthening the foundation for new partnerships between farmers and cities. The dialogue framework is set out in more detail in the Landscape of Possibilities below.

Invitation to join a global conversation

Though place-based, the Fork to Farm dialogues are an invitation for participants and facilitators to be part of a global conversation on a just transition to healthy and sustainable food systems. The dialogues aim to build a platform for learning, knowledge-sharing and partnerships. Participants are invited to take part in the dialogues local to their area and are also invited to join a global community of local dialogues and a global dialogue at the 26th UN Climate COP in Glasgow 2021, where the recorded outcomes of the local dialogues will be presented. Read more [here](#).

Objectives and outcomes

1. A horizontal space for farmers and cities to share knowledge, increase awareness of each other's challenges and aspirations and build trust and local partnerships that help ensure a just transition.
2. Co-produced material including examples of partnerships between farmers and cities for healthy and sustainable food systems and descriptions of diverse farming systems that produce our food. To be shared locally, nationally and at COP26.
3. Collective and transferable learning about how to conduct effective city-farmer dialogues in different contexts and their added value.

Additional objectives and outcomes can be determined by the local hosts and dialogue participants.

The role of local host organisations and facilitators

In the year leading to COP26 local hosts and facilitators will invite and guide farmers and cities through dialogues in their locality. In some instances, local hosts and facilitators may belong to the same organisation, however their roles are distinctive:

Local hosts hold space for the dialogues, invite participants and work with the Fork to Farm steering group. Local host organisations should be grounded in place in order to be legitimate convenors and be able to ensure the longevity of the dialogue outcomes.

Facilitators may be part of the local host organisation or external. What is important is that they are neutral and participate as individuals rather than representatives. Facilitators are invited to be part of a global community of practice that learns together through regular online sessions in a partnership with [the Go Deep Project](#). In the sessions we will cover and co-create the facilitation tools and methods and map these, as well as emerging challenges, opportunities and quests for things to do, onto a digital "Landscape of Possibilities" whiteboard.

Participants

As a starting point the Fork to Farm dialogues are for farmers and city representatives. 'Cities' and 'Farmers' are used here as shorthand for a range of actors at subnational government level (city, county/district/municipality and devolved authority/province/state) and primary food producers, including small and large-scale crop and animal producers irrespective of their current approach to producing food. The local hosts, facilitators and dialogue participants may decide that it is important to include other actors such as representatives from community organisations or the private sector in the dialogues.

First steps: Initial questions for local hosts and facilitators to explore

The questions below are intended to help local dialogue hosts think about the possibilities for their local dialogue, what shape it may take and what the first steps are. They will also help the Fork to Farm team understand the different farming systems and communities engaged in the dialogues. There is no need to prepare answers to all the questions in a specific format - they are meant simply as a starting point.

Regional information

- How will you define the region that is the locality of your Fork to Farm dialogue?
- What are its main agricultural systems?
- What is the climate like and how does it impact farming?
- How have food and farming practices here changed over the last generation?
- What are the major cities and relevant public or other authorities?
- What is their size and relative wealth?
- How is your environment changing and why do you think it matters?

Your organisation and role as a host/facilitator

- Type of organisation and aims?
- Staff number, years of operation, main funders?
- What capacity do you have to host and facilitate the local dialogues?
- What relationships does your organisation have with the local farming communities and the local authorities you wish to engage?

Aims and intentions

- How do the Fork to Farm dialogues fit with your existing projects, what do you hope to achieve?

- What will be the desired long-term impact of your project?
- How will your project contribute to the Fork to Farm aims and vice versa?

The dialogue participants

- Which farming communities will you engage, what farming systems do they represent and what will motivate them to participate in the dialogue?
- Which local government (or other authority) will you engage and what issues will motivate them to participate in the dialogue?
- Who else should participate in the dialogue in order to make the process fair and relevant?

Process

- How will you invite participants and ensure inclusivity?
- What could the dialogue process look like in your local context?
- What methods would you use to help build trust between participants?
- What kind of activities could participants undertake together to build trust and relationships amongst themselves?
- How could you report and share the learnings from your local dialogues?

Facilitation framework for the Fork to Farm dialogues

The Fork to Farm dialogues aim to build relationships between people. Therefore, they are not meant to be a one-off meeting but a series of inclusive and equitable interactions that take place over a period of around six months leading up to COP26. We believe it is impossible to dictate a single recipe for “how to run an ‘effective dialogue’”, as all dialogues will inherently emerge from the relationships between local places and people. The methodology we are suggesting is therefore an organic one. Although this makes the Fork to Farm dialogues inherently diverse they will belong to a global community of local dialogues each guided by a set of shared principles. The guiding principles on this page have been co-created with the people involved in the project and were chosen because we believe them fundamental to achieving the aims of the dialogues.

On the second page of this document you will find the framework that we are collectively constructing to work through the challenges, opportunities and questions that might arise as we begin to hold these dialogues.

Guiding Principles

Just transition and respect for human rights

The Fork to Farm dialogues are guided by the aim of achieving a just transition for farmers and cities to sustainable and resilient food systems that ensure access to fair and secure livelihoods and healthy and culturally appropriate diets for all.

Diversity

The Fork to Farm dialogues are inclusive and will be grounded in the understanding that it is necessary to ensure diverse participation across age, gender, geography, ethnicity and farming and knowledge systems to build and support resilient and life affirming food systems.

Equity and equal participation

Equity must be at the heart of the Fork to Farm dialogues in order to provide a safe space where horizontal dialogue between farmers and cities can take place and where all contributions are respected and carry equal weight.

Respect for different farming and knowledge systems

Equitable and inclusive participation must build on respect for the diverse farming and knowledge systems including indigenous, traditional and mainstream systems existing in the region. Dialogue hosts and facilitators work to ensure that these are represented and equally respected in the local dialogues.

Sustainability and resilience

The Fork to Farm dialogues aim to contribute to sustainable and resilient food systems based on practices that respect and support the natural and social resources they rely on. This means that the dialogues support integrated food systems approaches to climate change adaptation and mitigation that enable relationships of reciprocity within the food system including between social and cultural food practices, farming practices and natural resources; land, soil, water and biodiversity.

Local-led and context-specific

The Fork to Farm dialogues methodology is adaptable to local contexts and intended to be co-designed by people and place. Recognising that the impact of the challenges faced vary between communities and that just and effective solutions to the climate and nature

Why a Landscape of Possibilities?

The landscape represents a non-linear journey that we are all embarking on - one that has already started though we are not sure exactly where we are headed or how we get there. Along the way facilitators of the local dialogues will encounter challenges and opportunities - there will be commonalities and diversity in these. The landscape of possibilities aims to:

- Facilitate the production of a framework of values and approaches, tools and questions for the local Fork to Farm dialogues to create family resemblance.
- Create a foundation for an organic rather than prescriptive process
- Help make conversations and discussions inclusive, safe and engaging
- Be a space to learn together from all the expertise in the group

The Fireside Chats

The fire side chats are the local fork to farm dialogues, the series of conversations we will have with participants. The fire is the gathering place for people, but participants and facilitators will have to visit other places to gather fuel for the fire. Places to visit (and re-visit) along the journey:

The Garden of Identities

Here we find questions that relate to who we are in relation to others and how this might challenge or empower us as facilitators. This is a garden because we can nurture different parts of ourselves and have some agency in what grows and what doesn't.

The River of Invitations

Where we go to gather others and invite them to the fire. Invitations might flow from one person or group to another, like a river, and people may flow away from the group (and back) along the way.

The Forests of Ancestral Ghosts

We all carry ghosts of the past and future with us. Past events and encounters that will participate in a dialogue alongside us even if they are not visible at the fire place. These ghosts are not always 'bad'. They may be sources of knowledge that are important in the dialogues

The Places We Don't Know

As this is an organic process there are places we might need to visit to reflect, learn and bring back different things. These places are likely to be unknown to us at the start of our journeys

The Journey

The footprints in the landscape reflect how in our journeys we will need to stray from the fire-side chats to all these different places to gather whatever we might need to keep the fire alive. It is likely that we will have to visit some places more than once and might even need to double back on our tracks!

How can I interact with the Landscape of Possibilities?

The landscape is designed in an online collaborative platform. The map has a lot of blank space as it is meant to be a place for facilitators to raise thoughts, questions and anything else that might come up along their journey. Facilitators have already started raising what is coming up for them by adding sticky notes to the landscape - some of which you can see here. To visit the online landscape and begin collaborating [click on this link](#).

LANDSCAPE OF POSSIBILITIES

"Nous faisons le chemin en marchant" "Vi finder stien ved at gå den" "Se hace el camino al andar" "We make the path by walking"

The Forests of Ancestral Ghosts

What has happened in the past that might shape our chats today?
Should these ghosts join our chats to share their wisdom or should some stay in the forest?

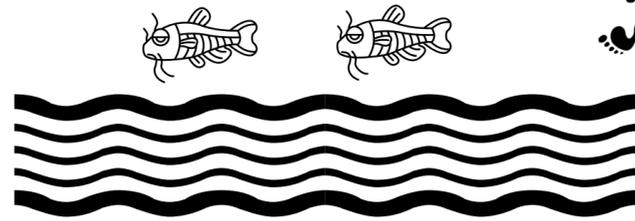
Ancestors should join us in the fire-side chats, we have a lot to learn from their wisdom.

In South Africa, a history of expropriation of land, with people being moved off their land, is likely to haunt these dialogues.

It is important that we acknowledge any ghosts throughout these process, whether they stay in the forest or they join us in the chats.

The River of Invitations

How do we approach people, and how does the place we are in shape this approach?
How can these dialogues be built so they are valuable to those taking part?



Should we be inviting people to these dialogues as individuals or as representatives of their organisations?

What are we inviting people for? It is important we have clear invitations that show we value people's time.

These dialogues seem to be about multiple layers and moments of conversation. This requires a "constant stream of invitations" not a one-off.

The Places We Don't Know

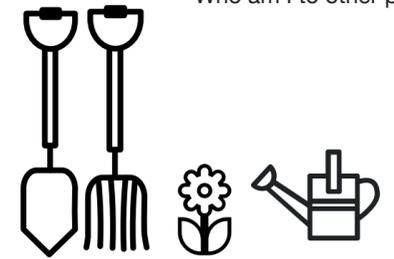
What places are missing from this landscape?
Where else might we need to go to keep the fire going?

Maybe we need a "hill of dreams" or somewhere where we can hold our hopes and go back to for energy when the fire dims down.



The Gardens of our Identities

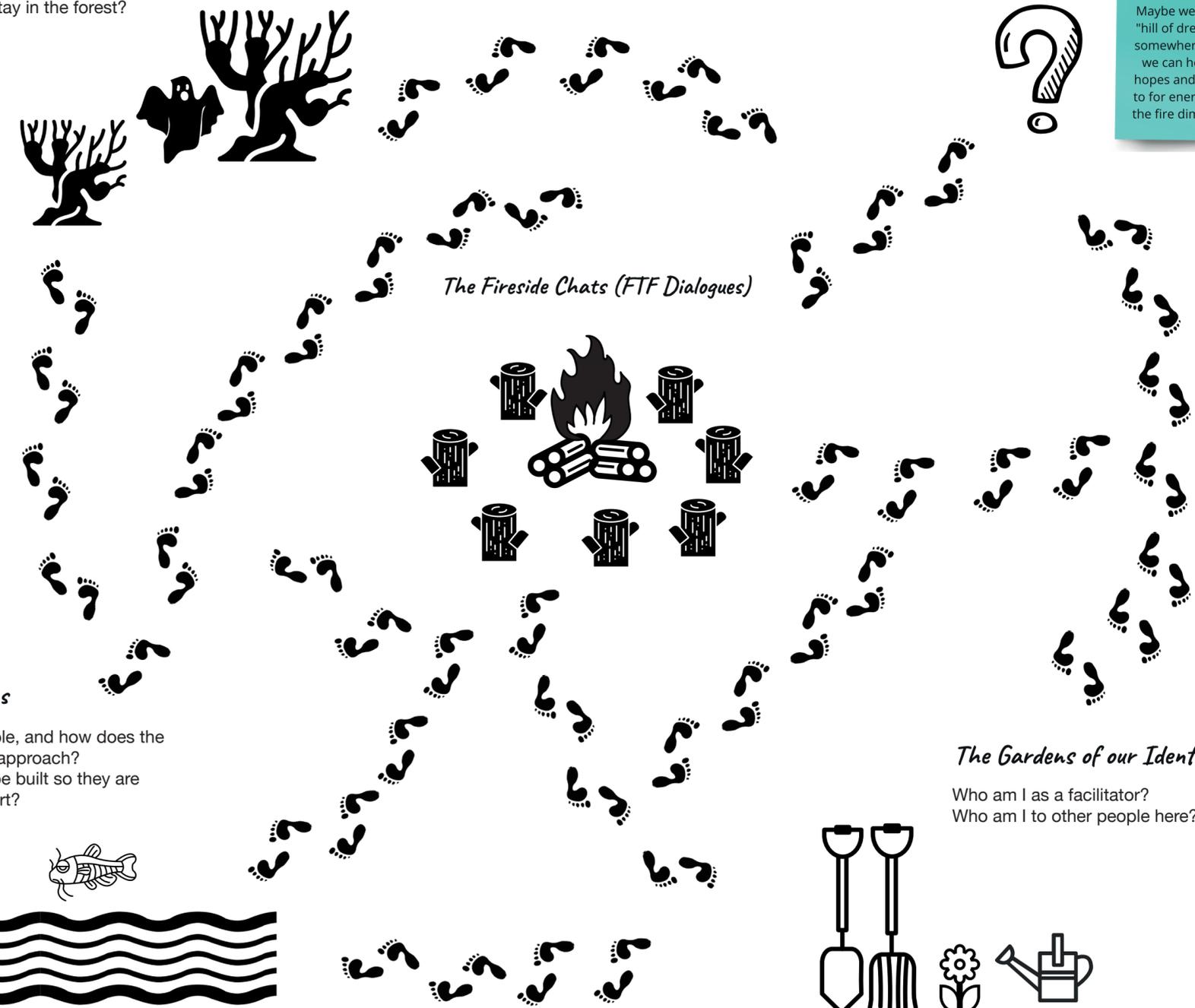
Who am I as a facilitator?
Who am I to other people here?



As facilitators our role is to listen and enable listening. If we were doing this in India we'd have to make sure that the farmers felt they were listened to. Our identities as facilitators need to be connected to the places we are in.

We need to consider how the communities involved perceive us as facilitators. What do farmers think of me?

In my role as a local authority, I have found that having this as part of my identity can influence whether I am listened to or not.



The Fireside Chats (FTF Dialogues)