CCARDESA

Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa

BACK TO OFFICE REPORT

4th GLOBAL FORESIGHT4FOOD SYSTEMS

HELD IN BANGLADESH

June 3 to 7th 2024

20th June 2025

Table of Contents

1.0 Background

The Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA) is a SADC sub-regional organization created by member states to coordinate regional cooperation in agricultural research and development. It is implementing the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme EX Pillar 4 (CAADP XP 4) Programme. The CAADP-XP4 Programme is financed through the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for a period of five (5) years, 2019 – 2024. The CAADP-XP4 seeks to deliver five key outputs, one of which is to raise awareness of Foresight for food systems, including sensitisation on the use of relevant tools in foresighting. Foresight methods can be used to investigate the future, incorporating climate change implications, thereby allowing for the creation of resilient agricultural development policies and strategies.

CCARDESA supported five participants to the Global workshop on Foresight4Food in Dhaka, Bangladesh between 3rd to 7th June 2024. The participants were: Stephen Kabwe (Zambia, Indaba Agricultural Policy Research Institute), Vivian Milembe Kazi (Tanzania, Economic and Social Research Foundation), Mirriam Matita (Malawi, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources), Bridget Ndalela Kakuwa (Bostwana, CCARDESA) and Magagula Futhi Felicity (Botswana, CCARDESA). This report presents the workshop highlights and opportunities identified for enhancing integration of foresight in food systems transformation practices, research and policy.

2.0 Highlights of the Workshop

2.1 Workshop Objectives

The workshop was designed with the following objectives:

- To strengthen the international community of foresight practitioners, users, researchers and food systems experts.
- To identify opportunities for enhancing the use of foresight in food systems transformation initiatives.
- To deepen the understanding of effective foresight approaches, methods, and tools
- To explore how foresight approaches and methods can be applied to food systems transformation.

- To explore how foresight and scenario analysis can be most effective in contributing to societal understanding, policy, innovation, and systemic change.

2.2 Delivery Approach

The workshop was delivered through a series of presentations, group discussions, plenary sessions, panel discussions and field visit. Keynote addresses were made by the Bangladesh Ministry of Food and other dignitaries emphasising the importance of foresight in food systems transformation to address multiple challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, conflicts, urbanisation that have a bearing on access, availability, utilisation of food and related systems.

3.0 Proceedings of the workshop

Highlights of workshop proceedings are presented for each workshop day.

3.1 Day One: Monday 3rd June 2024; Master class

This was the first day of the workshop which started with a Masterclass delivered using both plenaries and group works. After the welcome and warming up session, Jim Woodhill the PI of the project delivered a short presentation on the introduction of the project including the project objectives, scope and expected output and impact.

The participants were arranged into 6 groups and the following themes were discussed:

- **Understanding the System mapping**: Causal Loop mapping
  The objective was to develop a framework for understanding and analyzing the root causes and underlying factors contributing to complex problems, events or issues. The group managed to identify an issue, its causes, value and myths.

- **Trade off & Synergy Analysis**
  The group discussed the case of Kenya: the reliance on imports and exports to enhance food security. Trade-offs occurs when achieving one food system outcome might limit the ability to achieve another food system outcome. Synergy was when one activity can serve one food system outcome as well as another food system outcome.

- **Explore the future: futures wheel (Building better futures toolkit)**

  In this group, the participants were assigned to construct four plausible future scenarios of the food system using the most uncertain and important drivers shaping the system using Building better futures toolkit

- **STEEPLE Analysis**

  This is an analysis of the contextual environment for the issue considered to identify and characterise the drivers that are or will be at work and to consider what effect they might have on future development of the issue. In this group, participants were asked to brainstorm factors which are driving change in the food system, thinking about how these link to the research question.

- **Mobilize for change (Back casting)**

  This is a method for determining the steps that need to be taken to deliver a desired future. This is about exploring a pathway including identification of action/obstacles and opportunities. Participants were asked to introduce or develop the preferred future, discuss how the desired future differs compared to the current situation and use a large flip chart, draw a timeline from the present to the desired future scenario.

  After the group work, the moderator asked each participant to move around to other groups for the purpose of learning what others have discussed through the stickers which were placed on the wall/flipcharts. The group works was very engaging and helped participants to learn from other countries on various approaches to strengthen food system and the programme of Foresight4food.

3.2 Day Two: Tuesday 4th June 2024

Keynote speech from Jim Woodhill, leader of the Foresight4food Initiative at Oxford University highlighted that the world was faced with various challenges including food and nutrition insecurity. Most of the world population especially low inform earners and small-scale farmers suffers from food insecurity and have poor consumption diets. He further

highlighted that Food insecurity could cost the global economy almost 3% of the wealth per year by 2035. He emphasized on collective commitment to harness foresight methodologies and drive systems changes through alignment with both national and global priorities to foster nutrition-resilient communities.

Dr. Nurun Chowdhury, the Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture officially opened the workshop highlighting key aspects from the Bangladesh Delta Plan 2100 and the Eighth Five Year Plan (2020 – 2025) which underscore the need for sustainable agricultural commercialization in the provision of safe and diversified food products. She also emphasised the need to support climate resilient agricultural production systems that are better integrated with global and local markets, monitoring of food and nutrition security indicators for improved rural livelihoods.

Other speakers included the Dr. Ruhul Amin Talukder, Senior Advisor of Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), Dr. Rudaba Khondker, Country Director at GAIN, Dr. Arnold Hameleers, IFAD Country Director for Bangladesh, Dia Sanou who all emphasized the need for shaping food systems to overcome existing challenges through a holistic approach guided by evidence-driven, policy formulation approach within the country with involvement of multiple stakeholders. And agreed that the workshop on foresight was timely especially now when the global is faced with various problems.

After the official speeches, the workshop proceeded with 16 strategic case study presentations from various Institutions from Bangladesh, Malaysia, Southern, East, and West Africa. A team from CCARDESA also made a presentation at the 4th Global Foresight4food Workshop. The team illustrated the foresight methods and approaches that were used by the various stakeholders from CCARDESA member states that attended the Foresight Workshop that was held in Lusaka, Zambia from 5th -7th March 2024. In the presentation, Stephen Kabwe on behalf of the team highlighted how foresight methods and approaches that were used to choose sorghum as crop of focus considering changing climate conditions in Southern Africa in recent years more especially in 2024. The presentations illustrated the transformative power of investing in foresight for food systems.

3.3 Day Three: Wednesday 5th June 2024

3.3.1 Strategic Session: Transitions in foresight

Presentation was made by Patrick Caron the co-chair of foresigh4food on transitions in foresight. He explained that foresight is required because we are living in a polycrisis era where agriculture is important to achiever not just the hunger related SDG but all the SDG. The food system connects different outcomes that are aspirations at global level. Further, efforts to use forecasting have not yielded much because our operating environment is getting more complex, uncertain, with all controversies and demands transdisciplinary approach. The approach of working in isolation, silos will not support food systems transformation. We need more interdisciplinary approaches like the HLPE-FSN or the One health – OHHLEP. This also applies to our research work; cross-cutting research/science is rare or non-existent for other areas. Recognising that we do not know it all; gaps exist there is need to engage in dialogue, mediation, agree on disagreements, ensure interface between science and policy, and shift our capacities for foresight.

Other presentations focused on how CGE modelling can be used to support foresight processes. The workshop also exposed participants to experiences that involved the use of qualitative approaches in foresight decision making processes. The participatory processes where strategic alliances are built, priorities set, and decisions made through engagements with multiple stakeholders are all important to make sense of the situations and ensure implementation of something that is jointly envisioned. Qualitative questions and reflections have potential to support the modelling work; to reflect lived realities.

3.3.2 Break away sessions

3.3.2.1 *Facilitation of foresight processes*

Session allowed participants to discuss what are the potential constraints or challenges to steer foresight processes. Among others include the lack of capacities in different aspects such as skills for facilitation, communicating science to laypersons without jargon, managing the diversity of stakeholders, inadequate systems thinking, political nature of the processes requires a new set of skills for facilitators and political commitment to the process. Further discussions were made about how to develop the required capacities for foresight4food.

3.3.2.2 ***What is needed to ensure relevance of foresight for policy makers and businesses?***

Session learnt about the story of anchoring Dhaka Food Agenda 2041. Step by step processes about the process and how foresight was used was explained including the objectives that were agreed by multiple stakeholders. The 6-year multisector consultations, dialogues, consultations and modelling resulted in the launch of the vision for urban food system in Dhaka. Presenters also shared the challenges and how they turned them into opportunities. The key message was that the process should be inclusive, map complex systems, define and identify foresight journey process and its outcomes; consider multiple time horizons – short, medium to long term.

3.3.2.3 Strategic session: National data & knowledge platforms to underpin transformative foresight.

Two platforms were shared that can be used for knowledge and action to support foresight planning including the Food Systems Dashboard (FSD) www.foodsystemsdashboard.org and the Food Systems Countdown Initiative (FSCI) www.foodcountdown.org. Selected countries are covered in data coverage, but data gaps remain. Not all indicators are alighted to country context. However, the platforms are key for actionable evidence, complement monitoring and tracking and contributes to science/knowledge among stakeholders.

Dhaka experience where modelling planning was supported for improving Dhaka food system was presented. This was followed by a panel discussion responding to questions like: What is the uptake of the several platforms that exist? For what reason? Who decides what data is credible than another? By focusing on the data are we not forgetting the key question about the trigger of transformation; what transformation itself mean?

There is need for dialogue between developers of data platforms and users, an elaborate plan for institutionalisation to ensure continuity of use, transparency and credibility; keep up with the dynamics of the situation given most are development partner driven. Meeting observed that using the national entities that are authorised to collect and manage data would be more sustainable.

3.3.2.4 Strategic session: Foresight and financing of food system transformation

This session focused on foresight and financing for food system transformation with presentations from World Bank, IFAD, and Asia Development Bank. The session tackled key questions on financing outlook and how foresight can be used to support financing processes, investment, and risk management decisions. Food systems transformation financing is a challenging task because there are hidden costs in global food systems, costs such as waste/loss from food systems are not internalised in the financial system, the returns to food system investment are not easily communicated let alone calculated to assist managers, agriculture sector investments require long-term investment but there is often a mismatch with maturity periods given by the financial sector, there are also high risks with lacking mitigation measures in food system investments including high transaction costs for small and medium enterprises. Governments also face budgetary pressure to allocate resources to food systems transformation as opposed to other visible and tangible results. This calls for innovative financial instruments that can unlock private investment in food systems. The instruments should support de-risking of agriculture, repurposing of public financing and amplifying impact of the funding. The session was followed up with panel question and answer session that teased out the options for financing foresight and in particualt how to ensure food system transformation makes rural areas attractive to the youth to decongest cities. Bangladesh was mentioned as an example of where migration from rural to urban areas is increasing because rural areas lag the urban settings.

The workshop day closed with speeches from government officials including the Minister of Rural Development and Cooperative Division. He observed that reducing poverty, increasing food and nutrition security is important for marginalised populations in rural areas, excluded from formal structures, affected by climatic disasters and hazards, threatened by rising ocean waters in Bangladesh. Cooperation and funding from development partners is urgently needed to support government efforts to reduce poverty in rural areas, social protection measures/grants that can support rural communities would be helpful.

3.4 Day Four: 6th June 2024 Learning journey field visits

Field visits were organised to allow participants learn and reflect on realities about the practice and policy about food systems in Bangladesh. Individuals registered for a field visit

of their choice to a Mushroom Development Institute under Department of Agriculture Extension, Central Cattle Breeding and Dairy Farm (Savar Dairy Farm), Wholesale, retail, and modern markets in Savar, Rice processing industry (Auto-rice milling) with industrial fortification, Workforce Nutrition Intervention: Snowtex Dhamrai Garment Factory, and Agro processing Industry- Charoen Pokphand Group (CP) Bangladesh.

Reflections on the visits were shared in plenary in an interactive synthesis session about what is needed to strengthen national capacities to utilize foresight to support the implementation of food systems transformation strategies. The workshop also generated a shared agenda for the future of foresight at the national scale (key priorities). In small group discussions participates explored and made suggestions about the kind of support services, products and events that they would like Foresight4Food to offer in the next 3 years at different levels. The information will be used to develop a five-year agenda that will be pursued by the Foresight4Food network.

4.0 Way Forward

In closing the workshop participants identified what they could do at organisational and individual level to take forward the foresight for food system change agenda. There will be community of practice in the network focusing on simulation modelling, foresight for systems change development, quality criteria for impact of foresight in food systems transformation and capacities for facilitation of foresight. Participants were encouraged to register to be working in these smaller groups to enhance the practice and linkage between policy and science using foresight processes.

Other potential activities include capacity building for foresight, establishment of regional hubs for foresight4food, creating a repository for best practices and sharing of information, supporting integration of foresight in government planning processes and translation of foresight work into actionable priorities.

Several speeches were delivered as part of the closing session. Organisers expressed gratitude to participants for begin engaging, sharing their ideas, experiences and networking that is all valuable for moving the food systems transformation agenda.

5.0 Acknowledgement

We would like to thank CCARDESA for facilitating our participation at the workshop. This was a tremendous opportunity to learn, collaborate, network and engage with other policy makers, practitioners, researchers that are using foresight4food. We will begin integrating the methods and tools in our work environment, begin discussions about the future we want, the signals that are shaping it, the multiple scenarios that would be possible and how they interact with our local food systems for better heath, just environment and achievement of SDG.

WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS: PHOTOs

Photo 1: Group photo with some attendees under CCARDESA

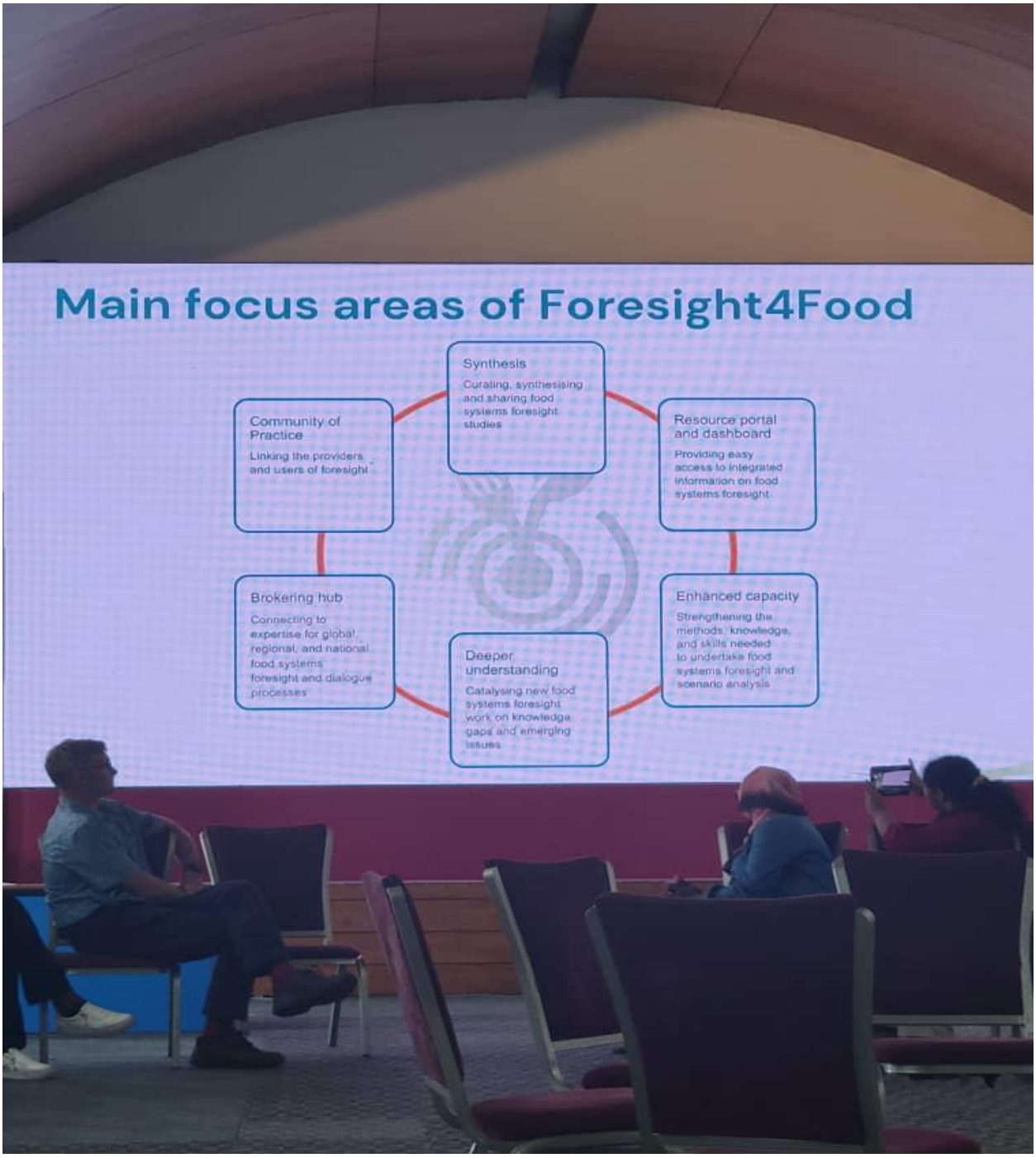

Photo 2: Presentations

Photo 3: Presentations

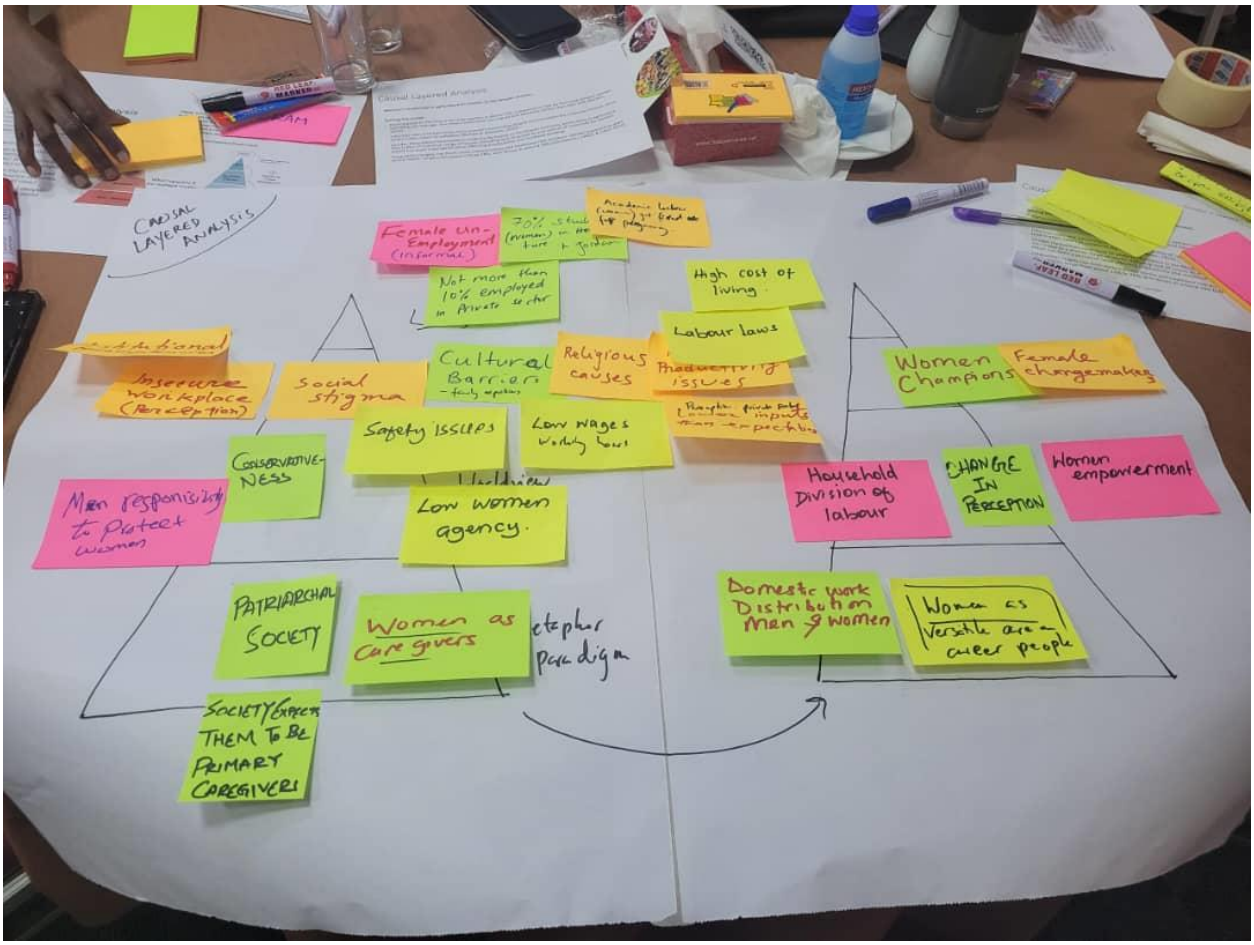

Photo 4: Group works

Field Photos: Bangladesh Market with Chairperson of the Market named Nazrul Islam Marik

Field Photo: Vegetable market

Field Photo: Fish market