

Highlights of Science Days side event organized by GFAR : A new paradigm for research and innovation; a practical application with forgotten foods based on the global manifesto on Forgotten Foods (FF)

Key points and recommendations stemming from the 6 July 2021 side event:

- The Forgotten Food Manifesto process undertaken by a coalition of actors (including FARA, AARINENA, APAARI, AFA¹, Swaminathan Research Foundation and their partners) with the facilitation of GFAR (together with the Alliance of Bioversity Int. and CIAT, Crops for the Future) as one of its sponsored Collective Action, is an appropriate modality to mobilize actors in a bottom-up manner, putting farmers, including women and youth, at the center;
- Forgotten Foods, which do not receive enough development and research attention, are essential to the rural population and in particular the poor smallholder to be able to tackle the main crisis of our time, including climate change, hunger, malnutrition/undernutrition, loss of biodiversity and land degradation;
- The thousands of farming communities consulted have highlighted that at the moment their main source of knowledge regarding Forgotten Foods is their own experimentation and practice. They wish to engage with formal research, particularly in the area of seed system and marketing, provided they are recognized as fully fledged actors and not mere beneficiaries, hence fully participating in the decision making bodies;
- The mobilization of farmers' knowledge blended with scientific knowledge offers an avenue to improve the acceptability and affordability of the research results, hence speeding up the processes of adoption while responding to farmers' required orientations for innovation;
- There is a need to: establish a Forgotten Foods dedicated and functional research and innovation system/network; strengthen appropriate innovative capacities around Forgotten Foods; forge specific Forgotten Foods partnership and strategic alliances at the regional and local levels ; facilitate the engagement of the private sector and create a regional pool of financial resources;
- An enabling environment for Forgotten Foods needs to be fostered including raising consumer awareness and supporting communication strategies that are based on the documented advantages of the integration of scientific/community knowledge;
- Capacity strengthening, including functional capacities, of all actors to engage into co-research and co-innovation modes, hence jointly developing knowledge and sharing learning, needs to be promoted at all levels;
- The Plan of Action to implement the Manifesto needs to start from and integrate existing, on-going activities, focussing on some pilot initiatives which fit as part of the global framework;
- A Forgotten Foods Community of Practices with the main actors of the Manifesto will be convened by GFAR, the Alliance of Bioversity and CIAT, Crops for the Future, and generate collectively a Plan of Action to be discussed with donors.

¹ FARA : Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa; AARINENA: Association of Agricultural Research Institutions in the Near East and North Africa; APAARI: Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions; AFA: Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Development