

2.4 Education

Formal and informal education strategies

What problem is your solution addressing?

Curricula around the world do not adequately incorporate education on food systems, including their substantial impact on global environmental issues, or their interconnectedness across health, climate, and biodiversity. At the same time, media coverage regarding the impacts of food systems has been low. This has resulted in a lack of knowledge across society regarding the impacts of dietary choices, and the importance of shifting consumption to meet planetary health goals. The multitude of benefits arising from dietary shifts is also largely unknown across society. While education alone has not been identified as a strong determinant of behaviour change, it has been shown to correlate with behaviour. For example, research has demonstrated for meat and dairy consumption, those with the most knowledge about adverse environmental impacts were the most likely to have already reduced their consumption, or were most likely to do so in the future¹. Hence education is likely to be an important, foundational aspect of facilitating transitions to sustainable consumption.

How does your solution address the problem?

The education solution contains formal and informal curriculum packages, applicable across different societal groups. Providing a standardized package of science-based education materials would help to create an upward movement of knowledge and information sharing, and empower citizens to make changes themselves and steer action across a spectrum, from their local communities to global policy circles.

Formal Education Strategies

The 'Healthy People & Planet' curriculum would provide a standardized set of science-based courses and lessons that could be implemented across the world in formal education settings for ages up to 18 years old (with age relevant content), and give a framework for developing regionally specific complimentary lessons. The 'Healthy People & Planet' curriculum would provide mandatory education on the adverse impacts of current food systems and the changes needed to align them with planetary health goals. Active learning could form part of the curriculum, including cookery classes, sensory food education and kitchen gardening.

Expanding on this, similar formal structures can be used to create curriculums or courses tailored to specific groups or sectors, such as chefs or medical students. Taking a science-based approach allows the creation of transparent curricula, helping to achieve widescale implementation.

Informal Education Strategies

Community-level informal education could also be developed from the contents of the formal curricula – to provide adults with sufficient information and activities to support their shift towards sustainable and healthy consumption. Encouraging attendance by women could be achieved by tailoring courses and providing women-only classes. Context-specific education programs that specifically empower women and girls could also be developed.

Another component of the education cluster is an informal communication solution targeted at gatekeepers of the policy environment in the public and private sectors globally. Having clear and appealing messaging conveyed through stories and entertaining visuals and music

¹ Bailey et al (2014) Livestock – Climate Change's Forgotten Sector. Global Public Opinion on Meat and Dairy Consumption. Chatham House report, available at: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2014/12/livestock-climate-changes-forgotten-sector-global-public-opinion-meat-and-dairy-consumption>

through a set of easily ‘plugged-in’ communication materials in as many languages as possible, available for mass media, social media, events and zoom/Teams meetings/webinars is important to launch this initiative (ideally, this should be done immediately, to build a drumbeat leading up to the Summit). Press briefings and screenings of short Hope-Based films in multiple language materials would be aimed at delegates from member states; and interviews with charismatic spokespersons from diverse backgrounds would help create a repository of Hope-Based clips and materials.

Broadening the education piece out to encompass popular media through identifying role models, pinpointing actionable steps, and obtaining financial support and subsidies from media moguls and large media houses for airing broadcast media is likely to be important. Progressive members of the entertainment industry who are already trying to contribute would be ideal candidates to champion this initiative.

Is this a new solution or an existing solution that needs scaling?

Existing solution that needs scaling, with specific new propositions (the Healthy People & Planet’ curriculum).

If selected as a game-changing solution, how will you leverage the UNFSS to scale your solution?

(a) Member States could sign up to have the ‘Healthy People & Planet’ curriculum incorporated into their country’s mandatory formal and informal education programs and commit to helping shape the regionally specific content. Member States could also commit to education programs that specifically empower women and girls, considering context-specific requirements. Political agents with local jurisdiction could sign up to providing informal education activities for adults in their cities/areas. Culinary and medical schools could sign up for sector-specific curriculum.

(b) Ahead of the UNFSS, a mass media campaign would be launched to position the curriculum on relevant radars. This could be linked to a wider global campaign proposal with education as a foundational component, with other solutions related to Food Based Dietary Guidelines, public procurement, school meals and the youth agenda.

(c) Regarding the informal education package for media, this would be targeted at policy makers and business leaders before, during and after the Summit.

Is this idea applicable to a particular geography, demography, landscape or other type of setting (e.g. high- or low-income countries, aquaculture)? If so, please specify.

Applicable across all geographies. Some regionally specific content would be needed.

Who are the main actors that would put this action into place?

Policymakers (government), education institutions.

Source and process

- Helen Harwatt, Chatham House. ‘Food Systems For A Thriving Planet – Curriculum’, WS1 Deputy Lead.
- Barbara Gates, Lean and Green Kids. ‘Eco-focused, multicultural nutrition education for youth’, through public survey
- Flavour School. ‘Sensory Food Education for children’, through public survey
- Good Food Fund, China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation. ‘The Good Food Pledge’ (GFP), through public survey
- Tina G. Sanghvi, Alive & Thrive, FHI Solutions. ‘High-impact ‘Hope-Based’ communications to spread belief that change is possible by showcasing role models of world and country leaders who have taken replicable steps towards fostering an enabling environment for healthy food choices, WS1 member.