

## Local Voices in Dialogue about our Food System

### 6 September – 14 October 2021

*The persistence of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown have made hunger and food insecurity the lived experience of more people across South Africa. If we can listen to their voices and hear their stories of food and the food system, much can be learned that will help in responding to their continuing needs. These perspectives, too often unheard, can also help in shaping a post-pandemic food system that is less harmful and more healthful.*

The 2021 Food Dialogues, taking place from the 6 September to 14 October, will prioritise and amplify these local voices of ordinary residents who will share their perspectives and experiences on hunger, food insecurity, health, and other challenges. Through the event, attendees will hear local voices, see local realities, and by doing so have the chance to broaden their own perspectives.

“Everybody eats. So we’re all part of the food system,” says Kurt Ackermann, Executive Manager of the SA Urban Food & Farming Trust. “But we each experience food differently according to our cultures, tastes, resources, geographies, ideas, opportunities and educations. But in a crisis like the pandemic, so much of this becomes scrambled and disorienting. We need dialogue to make sense of something that affects us all but that is too big for any of us to fully understand. Food Dialogues is a way to share our stories, to discuss our hopes and fears, and to imagine better ways to not just feed, but to nourish ourselves, our families and our communities.”

“Solving systemic problems, like the way the food system is failing so many people, requires us to listen authentically and deeply to stakeholders,” says Ann Lamont of SOLVE@Waterfront, a V&A Waterfront initiative that convenes multi-stakeholder partnerships to wrestle with the systemic issues, such as food, which are facing cities in the current era. “Food can help create opportunities within an inclusive and sustainable society. Especially in the time of Covid the urgency of this has become increasingly apparent.”

“The Food Dialogues are critically important because they provide a rare opportunity for citizens and other stakeholders to learn from grassroots activists alongside government officials, university professors, and business owners,” said Professor Julian May, director of South Africa's National Centre of Excellence in Food Security. “Only by connecting these different perspectives and knowledge will we be able to foster meaningful change in our food systems.”

First hosted in 2014, Food Dialogues is a multi-part series of talks on the local food system bringing together diverse voices in an inclusive dialogue to foster a healthier, more resilient, and just food system. For health and safety reasons, the 2021 edition will be a virtual event, introducing new elements to continue to diversify the voices and perspectives included.

The event includes the following components:

- **Local Voices.** A remarkable opportunity to hear local voices, see local realities, and broaden your perspective.
  - **6 September:** A series of pre-recorded interviews covering the perspectives of ten ordinary residents will be launched. Drawing on the realities of the pandemic and lockdown, and the prominence of hunger and food insecurity in the lived experience of so many during this time, there is much to share and much to learn by listening to these voices and their perspectives on food and our food system.

- **6 – 20 September:** Anyone is welcome to record and send in their own 30-60 second perspective inspired by or in response to one of the Local Voices interviews. Selected submissions will be shared on the event platform for viewing by those registered for the event.
- **21 September:** Some of those interviewed will participate in a live virtual panel discussion, where ideas for solutions to the challenges, dreams for the future, and opportunities for ordinary people to help one another will be shared. Moderated by Leonie Joubert, *Daily Maverick* journalist and author of *The Hungry Season* and *Tomatoes & Taxi Ranks*, the session will include opportunities for viewers to ask their questions and share their own perspectives and experiences.
- **Dialogues through Food.** How can food itself speak to us? In a virtual panel discussion on the **22nd September**, three chefs will each present a plate of homecooked food that they have prepared and use this to help us think more deeply and broadly about the food we eat, share, choose, prefer and celebrate. Journalist, Writer, and Food Activist, Ishay Govender will be joined by noted chefs Mokgadi Itsweng and Jane Nshuti to talk about the ways food connects us with each other, with our heritage, our land, beliefs and ideals. They will also ask some of these provocative (and tasty) questions: What is the role and power of food culture in our society? What could it be? And is it okay for food to sometimes just be delicious?
- **World Food Day: Global events, local insights.** What relevance do major international events, such as the UN Food System Summit, happening elsewhere in the world, have to our local situation? Local actors may offer contributions and contestations, but what is the significance of these in the big picture? Consideration of these global-local dynamics will help illuminate our problems and opportunities in Cape Town and make it possible to draw lessons and insights we can put into practice as we struggle with the challenges of our local food systems. A virtual panel discussion on 14 October, in recognition of World Food Day, will see Professor Julian May, director of South Africa's National Centre of Excellence in Food Security, moderating a group of local, national, and international experts on these important issues. Viewers will also have the chance to ask their questions and share their perspectives.

#### Key Dates:

Registration opens:	30 August
Local Voices interviews released:	6 September
Vox Pop recording submissions:	6 – 20 September
Local Voices panel discussion:	21 September
Dialogues through Food:	22 September
World Food Day panel discussion:	14 October

#### For editors:

Food Dialogues is hosted by the SA Urban Food & Farming Trust with co-host and sponsor SOLVE @Waterfront.

Co-sponsored by the DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence in Food Security, event partners include the African Centre for Cities, the Southern Africa Food Lab, ICLEI Africa, City of Cape Town, Western Cape Government, Western Cape Economic Development Partnership, Oranjezicht City Farm and Derrick.

Follow the event on social media with #FooddialogueSA and #FDLocalVoicesMatter and on the following channels:

Facebook: [facebook.com/FairFoodSA](https://facebook.com/FairFoodSA)

Instagram: @food\_dialogues

Twitter: @food\_dialogues

LinkedIn: [LinkedIn.com/showcase/food-dialogues](https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/food-dialogues)

SA Urban Food & Farming Trust Founded in 2014, the SA Urban Food & Farming Trust (Reg. IT20812/2014, PBO 930052666) is a non-profit public benefit organisation that works through food and farming to strengthen South Africa's urban communities and the ecosystems that sustain them. Details at [fairfood.org.za](http://fairfood.org.za)

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