PFM Philanthropic Foundations Mechanism

PFM Statement - ITEM II Regional Panel. Anna Lappé.

Question: Ms Lappé, philanthropic foundations play an increasingly important role in shaping food systems investments and innovation. Based on your experience, what are the most effective entry points for foundations to integrate CFS policy products into their strategies, programmes, and partnerships, and how can stronger collaboration through the CFS platform help amplify their impact in support of food systems transformation? (7 minutes)

Thank you so much for this question about encouraging philanthropic foundations to integrate CFS policies. It's been a huge priority for the philanthropic foundations mechanism this year, and today we are launching a guidance tool to support just that.

We see incredible untapped potential for CFS policy products to be better integrated in the work of philanthropic foundations aligned for food systems transformation. We see how that integration can help to advance our collective vision of a food system that addresses the roots of hunger and that provides nutritious and culturally appropriate food for all.

We stress in the guidebook how the opportunities for integration for foundations are opportunities across three areas for foundations:

1. their strategies
2. their programs
3. their support of advocacy

Our hope is that, through this work, we are giving greater visibility to these really powerful policy products that we see incredible strength in. For us, we emphasize how these policy products are built out of deeply inclusive and multi-stakeholder processes. They are evidence-based and, as such, powerful roadmaps to help orient foundations' work. We stress how these policy products are adaptable, applicable around the world, and then adaptable in really context-specific ways that make them meaningful on the ground.

We found that there is widespread foundation interest in tapping into these policy products to advance transitions to more healthy and just food systems, knowing that these policy products can help show the way and provide a roadmap.

Despite this appetite, we found two key barriers:

1. Many foundations are not aware of the policy products, and even those who are don't necessarily see clearly how to integrate these policies to benefit their impact.
2. Too many foundations don't have the time and capacity to follow the committee and policy development process closely.

We built this toolkit to begin to address these challenges to help tap into these opportunities for philanthropic engagement. We hope to identify the most effective entry points for foundations and help guide them to amplify their grantees' impact on food systems transformation by reinforcing these hard-won policy guidelines.

Again, the toolkit showcases three main ways I mentioned earlier about how foundations can integrate these policy products into their strategic orientation, their program design, and advocacy and campaigning.

In the toolkit, we provide a number of examples to show how foundations are using CFS products and hopefully inspire others to do so. I'll mention a couple of these here.

1. The Agroecology Fund, which is a global pooled fund that supports agroecological collaborations around the world, has a strategy that is built directly on the HLPE report and the 13 principles of agroecology. Across its work, its donors and grantees are working to bring those principles to life through a range of place-specific, context-specific ways around the world.
2. The example we wanted to share was from our member Robert Bosch Stiftung, which works with women-led land organizations, local campaigners, and local governments in Benin to promote the Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance, Tenure, Land, Forestry, and Fisheries. The Bosch Foundation has used these voluntary guidelines to help support the efforts to strengthen tenure rights and bring existing programs into closer alignment with these voluntary guidelines. The Bosch Foundation also brings this work in these place-specific ways in Benin, for example, to the global stage as well, which shows how CFS policies can strengthen advocacy and accountability at a range of levels, from the local, national, to global. The Bosch Foundation has also been using these voluntary guidelines to look for synergies between commitments of all three Rio conventions.

3. In a third example from the USA, PS: the CFS policy frameworks around the human right to food have been used by foundations that have been supporting, organizing, and advocating in the U.S. to bring the right to food into state-level policy. This organizing work got to celebrate, several years ago, a recent win when the U.S. state of Maine was the first in the country to amend its state constitution to integrate the human right to food.

Throughout the toolkit we stress in the toolkit two things:

1. The valuable role of foundations in helping to promote the CFS policy products.
2. We think, even more importantly, the role foundations can play in Listening to their civil society partners to call for even more ambitious action, seeing the CFS policy guidelines as a floor from which foundations can support even greater ambition.

Finally, we underscore throughout how our approach to food systems transformation is deeply collaborative: foundations working with civil society, indigenous peoples' organizations, as well as with local governments, research institutions, the private sector, and local communities.

We see a great opportunity for foundations to help catalyze action around the implementation of CFS policies. We hope our toolkit can encourage more foundations to do so. We see the alignment is already there. The priorities of our members and many other foundations are working towards similar goals: a world free from hunger and an embrace of a truly just and sustainable food system. We hope this guidance tool we've developed can provide some scaffolding around that natural alignment To help follow through with our commitment to uptake

We launch our guidance document today at a side event at lunchtime in the Philippines room. We encourage all of you to join and we are also eager to hear your feedback about how you, in the places where you work, find this tool useful. Find it on our website at futureoffood.org.