

RECASTING THE FOOD SYSTEM THROUGH WHOLE-SYSTEM WISDOM AND ACTION

Why a Transformative Scenarios Process?

- Hunger and malnutrition remain serious problems South Africa but the underlying causes are complex and interrelated; spanning environmental, health, economic, socio-political and agro-food issues. These include increasing unemployment, food price volatility, HIV and AIDS, drought conditions, a decrease in government support for agriculture and persistently high levels of urban and rural poverty. These challenges make it difficult to achieve the constitutional right of all South Africans to adequate food, despite national and international commitments to meeting these rights.
- Rising demand for food and fuel, coupled with resource depletion and inadequate governance of the global food system, has increased the fragility of the food economy, giving rise to calls for fundamental redesign of how food is produced, accessed and utilised.
- As the food systems presents us with an unprecedented level of complexity influenced by so many drivers, existing strategies fail to adequately address the food security challenge and recasting the current trajectory requires a multi-level, multi-sectoral and multi-actor response.
- In response, the Southern Africa Food Lab is co-convening a Transformative Scenario Planning process, in collaboration with Stellenbosch University and funded in part by the Ford Foundation and WWF Green Trust.
- Transformative Scenario Planning, developed by Reos (www.reospartners.com/scenarios), helps bring together teams of stakeholders – including ones who don't trust or understand each other – to create stories about what could happen in their problematic situation and what options are available to deal with it. It was selected as an appropriate methodology to support decision-making and action by all players across the public, private and civil society sectors.
- Transformative Scenario Planning enables participants to construct shared understandings, stronger relationships, and clearer responses to change the current reality.

- The scenarios will be developed through a structured set of activities including research and three workshops with participants who represent the entire food system, with a focus on influential leaders in the food system. These leaders will include policy makers, regulators, producers, intermediaries, NGO's and consumers. The scenarios will be created, written up and disseminated.
- In subsequent phases, organisations and sectors addressing food security challenges will use the scenarios to adapt and inform the development of research and action strategies.
- The intention of scenarios is to elevate the profile of the issues and the scenario conclusions to achieve the necessary engagement at an individual, institutional and sectoral level and subsequently deliver a shared response and corrective action in managing the interlocked challenges of water, energy and food security.
- A unique feature of Transformative Scenario Planning is that the process enables the scenarios team to actively lead the transformation they agree on, in this case to transform the food system, rather than only adapt to the stories as they present themselves.
- The purpose, therefore, is through utilising a Transformative Scenarios Process, a set of plausible scenarios can be developed for the future of food in South Africa over the next 20 years which inspire concrete actions and inform government policies and respective institutional strategy towards robust and long lasting food security.

Examples of challenges Reos has worked on using Transformative Scenario Planning:

Around the World:

- Ending the violence in Colombia (1999)
- Improving electricity infrastructure in western United States (2011)
- Solving the drug problem in the Americas (2013)
- Improving independent education in Tanzania (2014)
- Strengthening civil society in Brazil (2014)

In South Africa:

- Moving from apartheid to democracy (Mont Fleur, 1992)

- Creating social cohesion in South Africa (Dinokeng, 2009)
- Understanding risk (natural and infrastructural) for insurance and related industries (2011)
- Understanding economic and social opportunities for Dutch investment in South Africa (2011)
- Reducing violence and unemployment in the Northern Areas of Port Elizabeth (2012)