Synergos Collaborative Communities

Winter 2026

# SHIFTING FOOD SYSTEMS NEWSLETTER



## IN THIS ISSUE:


- Updates from Action Groups
- Upcoming Events
- Community News & Announcements


*Dear Members & Friends,*

As the year comes to a close, we look back at what stands out most, not any single milestone, but the way we have shown up for one another. The trust this community has built, relationship by relationship, is what makes collective action possible. To those of you who have been with us from the start, thank you. To those who are newly joining, welcome to your seat at the table!

In 2027, we'll deepen what we have started and carry this momentum forward. The work ahead is real, and so is our resilience. We invite you to keep engaging and to keep building the kind of food systems we want to see. We are in this together.

In partnership,

*Melissa Durda*



# Interconnections

**Who will produce the world's food for the coming generations? Whose voices shape food system narratives? Whose knowledge informs decision-making?**

These questions cannot be answered in isolation. The young people who will inherit our food systems, the Indigenous and local communities who have stewarded land and seeds for generations, and the funders who determine where resources flow are all part of the same system, and each shapes the others' possibilities.

That is the thinking behind the Shifting Food Systems community's collective action projects, working across three leverage areas:

- Youth Engagement
- Catalytic Finance
- Local Solutions Grounded in Indigenous Wisdom

Each project has group leads and convenes community members and partners whose capabilities already exist within our network. Rather than building new infrastructure, we are taking stock of the wisdom, creativity, and leadership already within reach, and inviting philanthropic investment in action that is already moving forward.

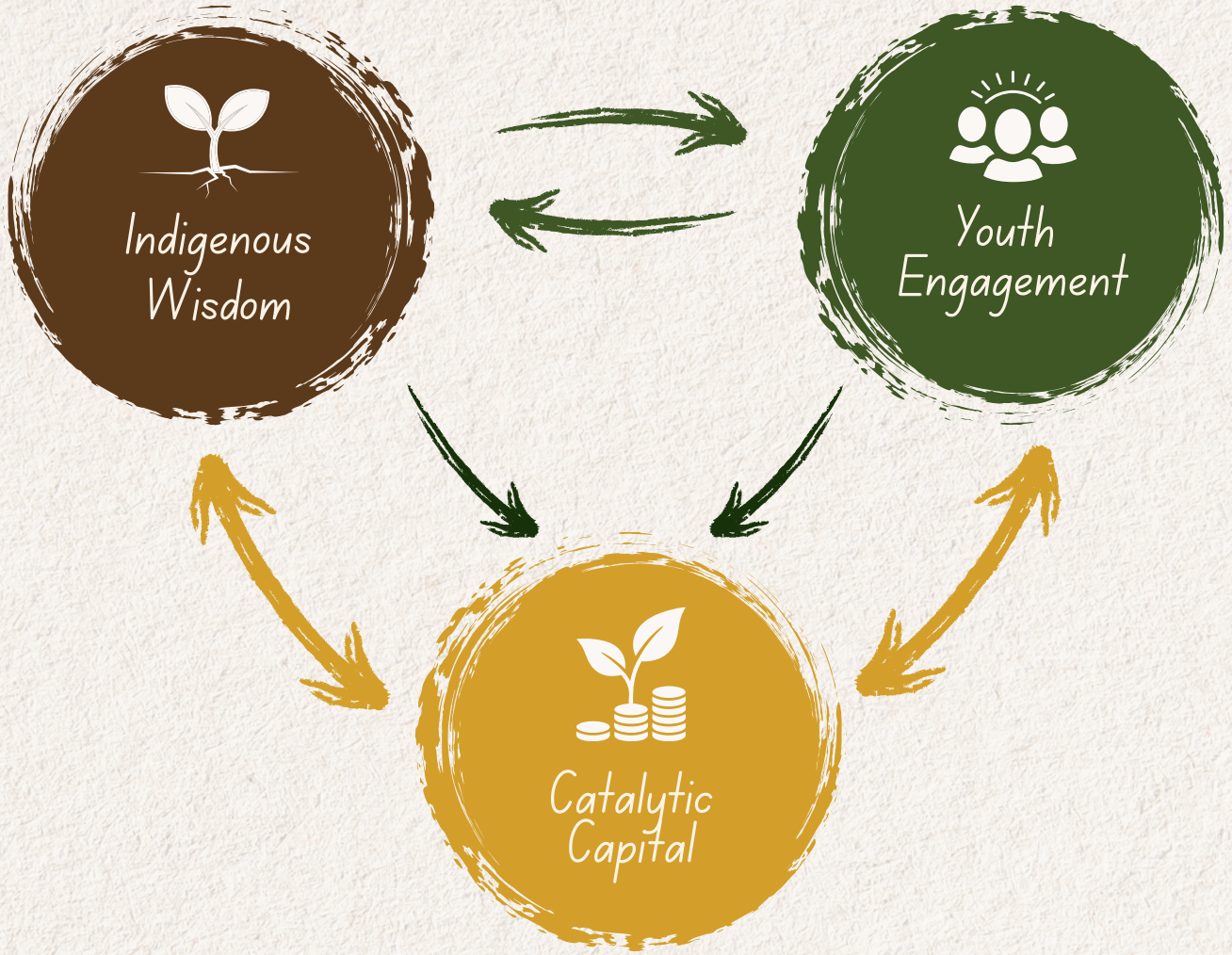
Progress in one area strengthens the others. Youth leadership needs their voices elevated and access to finance. Finance needs to be guided by local knowledge. Local solutions need the energy and ideas of new generations. Together, we recognize the effect each person has on our work, and how each project connects to the rest.

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

*Margaret Mead*



# Interconnections




## FIVE KEY RELATIONSHIPS

| | |
|---|---|
| Indigenous Wisdom to Youth Engagement | Indigenous knowledge offers young people proven practices, such as indigenous seeds and stewardship of the land, as the basis for viable enterprises. |
| Youth Engagement to Indigenous Wisdom | Young people keep traditional knowledge alive by applying it, sharing it and passing it on to the next generation. |
| Catalytic Capital to Youth Engagement | Investment turns young people's interest in agriculture into lasting businesses, jobs and market access. |
| Indigenous Wisdom to Catalytic Capital | Indigenous principles shape how money should flow: patiently, with reciprocity, and without extraction. |
| Youth Engagement + Indigenous Wisdom to Catalytic Capital | Community-led solutions give funders credible, long-term opportunities to invest in food security and restoration. |



# Working Group Update

## Farming the Future: Youth Employment in Agri-Systems

NIGERIA

Farming the Future is a 24-month youth entrepreneurship pilot in Kaduna State, Nigeria, co-designed by the Sustainable Agriculture Network (SAN), Sasakawa Africa Association (SAA) and Synergos. This pilot tests a model for making agriculture a viable livelihood for young people, and comprises of 3 components:

- **Training of Trainers:** Certification of agricultural extension workers, with priority given to women and youth
- **Youth Entrepreneurship:** Integration of regenerative farming and data literacy into existing agripreneurship programs
- **Market Pathways:** Connection of verified organic soybean producers with domestic and international buyers seeking sustainable, and traceable, supply.

## PARTNERS

SYNERGOS

SAN Sustainable Agriculture Network

KADUNA STATE GOVERNMENT NIGERIA

羅桂祥基金 Lo Kwee Seong Foundation
Sow Hope, Change Lives, Create Community

INCLUDING:
Prof. Hon-Ming Lam, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Nigerian youth and farming organizations

Nigeria-based businesses

**FIND OUT MORE**

### THE HEART OF THE MATTER

The global farming population is ageing, and without the entry of young people into agriculture, long-term food security is at risk.

# **Working Group Update**
## Youth Story-Sharing Podcast Series

GLOBAL



The initiative will launch soon, beginning with five stories. In each, the spotlight will be on a young farmer, or youth leader in agriculture, as they are interviewed in their native language by a trusted, local community partner. As the guests share on challenges faced and solutions implemented, they offer a credible pathway for other young people. The 30-minute episodes (with English subtitles) as complete or segmented pieces, will be shared on social media platforms including LinkedIn, YouTube Shorts, Instagram Reels and TikTok. The model is designed to be replicable, enabling partners in additional countries to produce stories using the same methods and principles.

The initiative is governed by a commitment to ethical, non-extractive storytelling. Featured guests retain ownership of their stories, and benefit from the resulting visibility.

**FIND OUT MORE**

*Stories create community, enable us to see through the eyes of other people, and open us to the claims of others.*

Peter Forbes

**PARTNERS**

SYNERGOS

instituto maniva

Project Biome

Young Agrarians

Farmer's Footprint

A Growing Culture

SAN Sustainable Agriculture Network

**THE HEART OF THE MATTER**

Young farmers are frequently discussed, but seldom heard.



# Working Group Update

## Elevating Local Solutions Grounded in Indigenous Wisdom

GLOBAL

**Knowledge that has sustained communities and ecosystems for centuries continues to be treated by others as “novel” or “experimental”.**

Our initiative, which is Indigenous created and led, will produce a framework and set of principles, developed and articulated by Indigenous communities, guiding multistakeholder collaboration. In its first year, the project will:

- Co-create a collective statement, an engagement framework and a practical workbook to guide respectful, non-extractive collaboration
- Compile case studies and a landscape review
- Advocate for joint, and less burdensome, funding models
- Amplify Indigenous-led work through global advocacy platforms

**FIND OUT MORE**

## PARTNERS

SYNERGOS

FOUR DIRECTIONS Indigenous Consulting

HOME PLANET FUND

CONSCIOUS FOOD SYSTEMS ALLIANCE

Life Comes From It

INCLUDING:
Individual Indigenous leaders

## NEXT STEPS

Indigenous leaders will guide a series of focused online gatherings with partners to build relationships and trust. This will culminate in a 2027 gathering (in-person), where a global delegation of Indigenous leaders will come together, to create the framework themselves.



PARTNERS

SYNERGOS

GENUS
LANDS IN HARMONY

# Working Group Update
## Catalytic Capital & Enterprising Models that Transform Food Systems

GLOBAL

To create real leverage — and make systemic change tangible on the ground — we need to support the transition toward long-term, integrated landscape management and restoration, which includes sustainable food systems.

The Catalytic Finance Learning Series was launched as an initiative to engage our community with architects of catalytic financing, whose work represents what our community believes is needed - patient, systemic capital that supports regenerative transformation.

**THE HEART OF THE MATTER**

Flows of capital should honor what came before us, enable what we choose to stand with together, and be in service of the generations to come.




SCAN HERE TO REGISTER FOR THE FULL SERIES!

# COMMUNITY NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS




## Celebrating World Food Day

Sandra Victor Gwafan, an agripreneur based in Kaduna State, Nigeria, shared on challenges for women farmers and what support is needed for young people and women.

READ INTERVIEW



## Synergos Launches The Collective Action Fund

The fund is a new way to directly support high-leverage projects co-created within Synergos' network of communities, and the collaborative process from which they emerge.

FIND OUT MORE




## Funding the Future Together

On October 19, Synergos partnered with Commonland and COmON Foundation, to discuss landscape restoration and reimagining food systems with like-minded philanthropists and investors. The group shared on stewardship of the natural world, systems change and catalytic financing for regenerative transformation.



# Green Veg Crumble

## Cooking with The Planet in Mind

AN AUTUMN DISH HIGHLIGHTING SUSTAINABILITY

As days have grown shorter, it's the season for dishes that feel like a hug. This crumble from WWF-UK is a good place to start thinking about what goes on our plates: it puts green vegetables front and centre, uses wholegrain oats and flour, and leaves plenty of room to cook with what you already have.



**8**
servings

**1hr 5min**
total time

## Ingredients

### The Veg

- 350g frozen broccoli or cauliflower florets
- 250g frozen chopped spinach or frozen whole baby leaf spinach
- 225g frozen peas
- 1 large courgette, grated

### White Sauce:

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 tablespoons plain flour
- 400ml milk
- 400ml vegetable stock (or more milk)
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard powder (or 1 teaspoon mustard)
- small pinch nutmeg or allspice (~1/4 teaspoon)
- salt & pepper, to taste
- ~ 50 g grated cheese

### For the crumble topping:

- 100g wholemeal flour
- 200g oats
- a pinch sea salt (~ 1/4 teaspoon)
- 110g unsalted butter, room temperature and cubed
- handful of chopped nuts (pecans, walnuts, hazelnuts or almonds)
- handful of sunflower or pumpkin seeds
- more grated cheese to top *(optional)*

*Recipe by Claire Wright (addsomeveg.com) for Veg Power, as shared by WWF-UK.* ***Full recipe:*** *wwf.org.uk/recipes/green-veg-crumble*

## Method

**Preheat oven: 190°C / 170°C fan / gas 5**

**Veg:** Steam the frozen veg (steamer or microwave, per packet). Drain and squeeze excess water from the spinach. Tip into a large roasting or casserole dish with the grated courgette.

**Sauce:** Melt the butter, whisk in the flour and cook for a minute. Slowly drizzle in the milk, whisking constantly. Whisk in the stock, mustard, nutmeg or allspice, salt and pepper. Bring to the boil and simmer a few minutes until thick.
Off the heat, stir through the cheese, pour over the veg and mix well.

**Crumble:** Pulse the flour, oats and salt in a food processor for about 30 seconds. Add the butter and pulse another 30 seconds, leaving little chunks.

Top the veg with the crumble, then scatter over nuts, seeds and extra cheese if using.
Bake 25–30 minutes, until the topping is golden and the filling is bubbling at the edges.



# UPCOMING ONLINE EVENTS




NOV 19
19:00 SGT

REGISTER




NOV 24
10:00 EST

REGISTER




DEC 08
10:00 EST

REGISTER




DEC 15
10:00 EST

REGISTER

## ENGAGE WITH US!

SHIFTING FOOD SYSTEMS EVENTS

SYNERGOS GLOBAL NETWORK EVENTS

LEARN MORE ABOUT US