



Transformation of higher education

Launch of a new GFAR Collective Action: 1.5-hour international webinar

14 September 2023, 7am (San Jose) / 15:00hrs (Rome) / 20:00 (Bangkok)

Introduction

In today's complex and dynamic world affected by the pandemic, conflicts, and changing climate, the '5F crisis' of lack of food, feed, fuel, fertilizer and finance has pushed millions more people of the world, including women and children, into hunger, poverty, and malnutrition, as well as a significant social and economic insecurity. In this context, today's agriculture has become more important than ever as a way of sustaining life on the planet through its crucial role in the well-being of societies, economy, and environmental sustainability.

Hence, the current way agricultural education is equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to address the current and future problems requires innovative pedagogy, and more effective and integrated educational systems that go beyond teaching the basics of agriculture, food and natural resource management. Agriculture needs to be studied in relation to other disciplines and sectors, such as health, nutrition, biosciences, engineering and environmental sciences. It requires students' engagement with society, communities and businesses, as well as values and ethics to effectively contribute to the transformation of agri-food systems.



Moving away from top-down educational approaches and considering the system-level perspective, agricultural education institutions need to critically reflect whether their programmes are adequately preparing graduates with relevant skills, and whether they are sufficiently adapting and advancing to better address the interlinked world challenges. The new Collective Action has been designed to motivate higher education institutions towards the much-needed change in higher education.



The Collective Action on Transformation of Agricultural Education

The Global-Inter Regional Collective Action on Transformative Learning of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)” aims to identify concrete cases of successful higher education transformation and develop a model of “agricultural universities without walls” based on student-centred experiential learning, ethical leadership, participatory curricula development, co-innovation, and integration of trans-disciplinary approaches. Experience shows that with such an educational approach, students grow into qualified graduates with the professional, entrepreneurial, ethical and social capacities needed for engaging in the collaborative management of innovation with farmers, rural communities and other stakeholders. The Collective Action will document and disseminate these pioneered initiatives, concepts and practices. It will also provide a knowledge-sharing and learning platform to enable such systematic transformation to happen and harness opportunities to create ethical leaders and agents of change for the future.

Objectives of the webinar

The first international webinar that will take place on Thursday, 14 September 2023, will aim to introduce the Collective Action to the higher education community working on agricultural subjects and educational innovation, and specifically to:

1. Raise the participants’ in the Collective Action
2. Motivate the participants to contribute to the Collective Action through the baseline survey and sharing of good transformational practices in education
3. Enable the participants to learn about the successful initiatives the Collective Action will build on
4. Strengthen the participants’ understanding of the need for change to accelerate agri-food system transformation

[Please register for the webinar here, and add to your calendar.](#)





The format

The 1.5-hour webinar will be conducted in an interactive way, (i) providing an introduction, rationale and objectives of the Collective Action; (ii) sharing the challenges and successful examples of education through an interactive panel discussion; (iii) seeking feedback and examples of other successful education practices from the participants; and (iv) launching the baseline survey.

The participants

The invited organisations will be those identified through the Action's stakeholder mapping conducted in July-August 2023. This will include higher education institutions that have been experimenting with the integration of some innovative concepts and practices in pedagogy; as well as those more conservative ones that are interested in transformation but need to be more informed and motivated to take transformative actions.

Partners of the Collective Action

The Collective Action is facilitated by the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) with support of the European Commission's DeSIRA funding. It is coordinated by the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions (APAARI), in collaboration with the European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD); Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences (GCHERA); Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS); Promoting local innovation in ecologically oriented agriculture and natural resource management (Prolinnova); and Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM).

Register here:

