



Conference

7th Mercy Corps AgriFin Learning Event

SPARC co-sponsored the recent 7th Mercy Corps AgriFin Learning Event where researchers joined decision makers to explore ways to scale digital innovation for more resilient food systems in drylands.

Event date and time

[Promoting innovative solutions](#) [Reframing aid and resilience](#) [Supporting livelihoods and markets](#) [Understanding land and conflict](#) [Working in a changing climate](#) [Gender equality and social inclusion](#) [Africa](#)



Collins Marita, Mercy Corps AgriFin Director for Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, Accountability and Learning (L) and Nyambura Githongo, communications specialist in the SPARC innovation team (R) at the event - Image by Mercy Corps AgriFin

As a co-sponsor of the 7th Mercy Corps AgriFin Learning Event in Nairobi, Kenya, SPARC joined hundreds of key policy and decision makers from the public and private sector for two days of vibrant discussions on the theme of '**Resilient, inclusive and sustainable food systems: enhancing collaboration to scale digital solutions**'. SPARC co-organised sessions to share its experiences of finding, promoting and scaling up digital innovations among drylands communities across East and West Africa. The conference

included more than 400 delegates attending in person, more than 450 participating virtually and over 80 speakers and 40 exhibitors.

SPARC speakers at the event, from November 7 to 8, included [Alexis Teyie](#), a research lead in the SPARC innovation team, [Rupsha Banerjee](#), member of the programme management committee and a senior scientist at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), and [Kelvin Shikuku](#), a SPARC researcher and scientist also based at ILRI, in the Index-based Livestock Insurance team.



Rupsha Banerjee speaking at the 7th Mercy Corps AgriFin Learning Event - image by Mercy Corps AgriFin

SPARC joined participants from partner organisations including Mercy Corps, Mercy Corps AgriFin and Dalberg Research, and representatives from the public and private sector, to explore opportunities for, and barriers to, harnessing digital tools to drive resilient and equitable drylands food systems at scale.

Sessions included events on: 'Financial services: finding effective partnerships and making it work for agro-producers', 'Growing inclusive and equitable food systems through collective action', 'Exploring innovative revenue models, leveraging partnerships to tailor affordable and inclusive services for smallholder farmers' and 'Leveraging technology towards more efficient, impactful and sustainable food systems.'



Alexis Teyie, research lead in the SPARC innovation team - image by Mercy Corps AgriFin

SPARC collaborated with a range of stakeholders including policymakers from the Kenyan Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy, and experts from the CRDB Bank, the Financial Institutions Group for Eastern and Southern Africa, Financial Sector Deepening (FSD) Kenya, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Google, IDH, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the International Finance Corporation.



Delegates at the 7th Mercy Corps AgriFin Learning Event - image by Mercy Corps AgriFin

Find out more about the event [here](#) and read the event report [here](#).

If you know about an innovation available to pastoralists, agro-pastoralists and farmers in drylands, please let us know by getting in touch via our [Innovations Dashboard](#).

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